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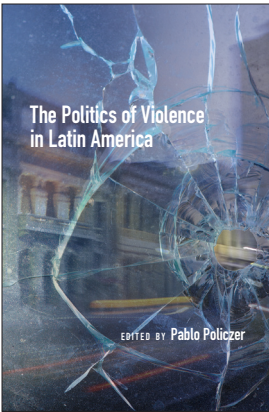
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THE POLITICS OF VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

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Protest and Police “Excesses” in Chile: The Limits of Social Accountability¹

Michelle D. Bonner

In 2006 Chilean high school students mobilized and called for changes to the educational system, including national standards for secondary education and the elimination of the fee required to take university entrance exams. Their tactics included cultural events, “days of reflection,” school occupations, and street protests. One of their largest actions took place on 30 May. On that day, 739,000 students and their supporters across the country took to the streets. The Chilean national police, the Carabineros de Chile, were there to maintain order. To this end, the Carabineros used what was described by the media as “excessive violence,” particularly against protesters in the center of Santiago.

The Carabineros used water cannons and tear gas against the protesters, they beat people as they were detaining them in police buses (almost seven hundred people were arrested), and they also beat bystanders and journalists covering the event.² While media reports were unclear about exactly how many people were beaten or how badly, a few examples of overzealous police action illustrate the seriousness of the tumult. Three journalists—Libio Saavedra, Marco Cabrera, and Fernando Cidler—were beaten and injured by Carabineros.³ Further, an individual Carabinero was alleged to have forced three students (two aged seventeen and one sixteen-year-old) to undress before registering them in a humiliating manner.⁴

The Chilean media coverage of this event was significant. It was the first time in over forty years (since before the 1973 coup) that the national media were so widely critical of the police's management of protests. The coverage signaled to the police, political leaders, and the public that repressive protest policing might no longer be perceived as broadly acceptable, as it was in the past.

The right to social protest is a defining feature of democracy. Yet police use of violence against protesters is not limited to authoritarian regimes, and thus cannot be considered a structural problem limited to postauthoritarian Latin American countries. Even in established democracies protesters can be killed or injured by what I refer to in this chapter as police violence. A more common police approach in established democracies is the use of other tactics (violent or otherwise) to limit free speech, and in this chapter such methods are referred to as police repression. Police repression may include arbitrarily arresting large numbers of protesters without charges, moving the route of a protest by using barricades or other obstacles, using police sirens to drown out protest chants and singing, using a disproportionate number of police officers, or deploying non-lethal weapons, including tear gas. That said, the literature on established democracies has noted a significant decline over the last fifty years or so in the use of repressive tactics by police against social protest. The media are one of the key variables identified in the literature on protest policing in established democracies that explains the reduction in repression. That is, rather than being structurally determined, police repression of social protest is in part contingent upon the role played by the media.

The literature on protest policing in established democracies has found that the greater the number of journalists present and the greater the media coverage, the lower the level of police repression of social protests.⁵ Media presence can have an immediate effect on police reactions to protest, and such accumulated police experience can lead to police using less repression when confronting future protests. In other words, the media act as a mechanism of accountability on protest policing. Enrique Peruzzotti and Catalina Smulovitz refer to this role of the media as social accountability.⁶

Drawing on the work of Peruzzotti and Smulovitz, as well as the literature on the media and protest policing, we can identify three principal

ways the media keep police accountable. First, wrongdoers can be identified, shamed, and forced to account for their actions. This is what Andreas Schedler calls the “answerability” aspect of accountability.⁷ Second, media coverage of police repression can lead to the activation of horizontal accountability. Horizontal accountability refers to state institutions holding wrongdoers accountable through such mechanisms as judicial trials, official inquiries, and forced resignations. This is what Schedler refers to as the “enforcement” aspect of accountability, whereby sanctions are imposed on wrongdoers.⁸

Third—and often overlooked in analyses of accountability, but addressed substantially in the literature on protest policing—the media play an important role in affecting public opinion. They do so by reframing police repression of social protest as wrongdoing. Public opinion matters when police rely on good relations with the public to do their job. It also matters to politicians who hope to be reelected; public opinion can influence politicians’ choices regarding activating (or not) state mechanisms of accountability. In the literature on protest policing, public opinion is most often measured through the media.⁹ Indeed, one author defines public opinion on protest policing as “repeated statements expressed in the public sphere.”¹⁰

While the literature on protest policing recognizes the media’s powerful role as a mechanism of accountability, it also recognizes that the media’s influence does not necessarily favor reduced levels of police repression in all cases. The literature widely recognizes two competing frames used in the media to explain protest policing, which are often referred to as the “civil rights” versus the “law-and-order” frames. The civil rights frame emphasizes the right to protest, the need for police to refrain from violence and repression, and the need for police reform. The law-and-order frame tends to vilify protesters and support police using whatever levels of violence and repression they deem necessary to control protesters and restore law and order.

Research demonstrates that when the media champions the civil rights frame, police repression decreases.¹¹ The choice of the media to emphasize one frame over the other can be influenced by a number of factors, including bias against the group protesting, police stage-managing incidents to gain public sympathy, and the degree to which social movement

groups gain (or fail to gain) access to the media.¹² Another major factor is the choices made by journalists regarding primary sources. The more journalists rely on the police and public officials for their primary source of information, or when journalists are confined to watching from behind police lines, the more likely the law-and-order frame will predominate.¹³ Clearly there are limits to the media's ability to act as a mechanism of accountability on protest policing.

In new democracies, protest policing is also framed by the media in terms of "civil rights" or "law-and-order," but the choice of one frame over the other is influenced by additional factors. In particular, the police forces in new democracies such as Chile have very often undergone little reform, and many of the structures, personnel, laws, and practices from previous authoritarian regimes persist. Similarly, the media may also face important residual restrictions in their work. That is, there are structural factors that explain the persistence of high levels of police repression against social protest in postauthoritarian countries, and these structural factors can impede change. However, structural factors do not necessarily determine the outcomes, and the media can be agents of change, potentially contributing to police accountability in new democracies.

Did the Chilean media act as a mechanism of social accountability on protest policing during the 2006 student protest? I argue that in this instance the media did function in this capacity, but that their role was limited in three important ways. The three limitations pertain to self-censorship, provision of information, and inclusion—all of which reinforce a "law-and-order" frame for understanding the event. Rather than "proving" that this will be the media's reaction to all similar incidents in Chile or other new democracies, this case study aims to encourage studies of police reform in new democracies to consider further the impact of the media on such changes.

This study centers on the coverage of the student protest by the Chilean national newspaper *El Mercurio*. The focus on *El Mercurio* is important. Most scholars argue that the print media in Chile is very influential; more than other mediums it confers social prestige to those covered in its pages, and it is therefore argued to have a greater impact on public and political opinion.¹⁴ *El Mercurio* in particular is widely considered the most important agenda-setting news media source in Chile.¹⁵ Illustrating the

power of the newspaper, Léon-Dermota explains that “no politician can survive without appearing on *El Mercurio*’s pages.”¹⁶

The reach of *El Mercurio* and the *El Mercurio* media group is extensive. The newspaper group benefited tremendously from the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–90), under which it expanded to own 3 of the 5 daily Chilean national newspapers (of which *El Mercurio* is one) as well as 18 regional papers (covering 7 of Chile’s 15 regions). It has also founded a digital radio network (Digital FM) with 33 stations between Arica and Punta Arenas, and hopes to enter television in the future.¹⁷ In terms of the *El Mercurio* newspaper itself, almost all government offices and major businesses have subscriptions to *El Mercurio*, making it available for their employees to read, and almost all newspaper kiosks prominently display *El Mercurio*, allowing pedestrians to read the headlines as they walk by. Many morning television and radio shows summarize or even read major daily stories published in *El Mercurio*.

El Mercurio’s relatively new and (arguably) equally conservative main competitor, *La Tercera* (published by Copesa media group), enjoys similar benefits. However, while *La Tercera*’s coverage of police repression of social protest is not substantially different in content than that of *El Mercurio*, it is often of a significantly lower quantity. There are also more critical media in Chile, such as the weekly political satire *The Clinic* or *Radio Bío Bío*, but the size of their audience does not match that of *El Mercurio*. What is written in *El Mercurio* is a significant part of what William A. Gamson and David Stuart call “symbolic contests” over how police reaction to social protest is to be perceived and whether or not accountability is deemed necessary.¹⁸

That being said, it is important to note that *El Mercurio*, the oldest newspaper in Chile, is a conservative newspaper that has traditionally supported the views of the landed elite. For example, it was actively involved in promoting the neoliberal ideas of the “Chicago Boys,” as well as the 1973 military coup. In this sense, *El Mercurio* has historically supported police repression of social protest; it is not surprising that it continues to support similar action today. The analysis that follows reveals a debate within *El Mercurio* that is particularly significant given this context.

This analysis begins by placing the reaction of the Carabineros to the student protest within the history of police responses to earlier social

protests in Chile. This is followed by an overview of all the articles published in *El Mercurio* addressing the 2006 police repression of student protesters (a total of thirty-five articles published from 30 May to 13 June 2006). Three questions will be asked for the purpose of assessing the degree of social accountability found in the articles. First, who is being shamed for wrongdoing? Second, what are they being shamed for? Third, what institutions of horizontal accountability are being called upon? In each section, competing frames for understanding the answer to these questions are highlighted and analyzed.

Police and Social Protest: The Chilean Context

Police violence in the face of social protest, especially in countries with an authoritarian past, is an area where agreement concerning police wrongdoing is not easily achieved. In Chile, the Carabineros have a long history of repressing social protest that predates the Pinochet regime. The period in which the Carabineros de Chile was established was characterized by high levels of social and political unrest. Thus, among the first roles assigned to the new police force was to control social protest. For example, under the leadership of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (then minister of the interior), the Carabineros violently ended labor demonstrations in the port of Iquique in May and June 1925, and Carabineros were used again in 1931 to quell protest in reaction to unemployment, which led to the death of at least a dozen people.¹⁹ The use of Carabineros to combat social protest continued after Ibáñez's first term as president (1927–31), especially between June and July 1934, when the Carabineros confronted a protest by evicted peasant squatters, killing hundreds of peasants. Again, in 1946, political instability led to strikes and demonstrations, which in turn prompted repression by the Carabineros.²⁰ Repression of social protest in an effort to control “subversion” eventually became a key function of the Carabineros.²¹ This role was strengthened by the adoption of the Law of State Security in 1958, article 4 of which states that anyone who “in any form or by any means rises up against the constituted government or provokes a civil war’ is committing a crime against state security.”²²

The use of the Carabineros and occasionally the military to repress social protest (especially in the copper mines) continued throughout the

1960s, when the Carabineros also became increasingly involved in land disputes. For example, “*Carabineros*, trying to evict some squatters from a plot of land at Pampa Irigoín, just outside of Puerto Montt, killed eight people and wounded fifty more” in 1969.²³ With the 1973 coup, the Carabineros became even more closely tied to the military, and was henceforth tightly integrated into the military government. Together, the Carabineros and the military participated in the killing of people opposed to the regime until DINA (the Pinochet regime’s security agency) was officially created in June 1974.²⁴ With a deteriorating economy in the early 1980s, social protest became more common and police reaction was strong. Mass mobilizations sparked by the 1983 economic crisis exploded, leading to police repression that included “brutal sweeps through the shantytowns” between 1983 and 1986.²⁵ The Carabineros framed these protests as threats to the government and even the institution of the Carabineros itself. In 1985, *Revista de Carabineros* (*Carabineros Magazine*) explained, “The implicit objective of the mass movements is to gravely disturb the peace, which constitutes a direct and unrestrained attack on the system of government. . . . [The term “police brutality”] not only discredits the government but also the *Carabineros* and is an attempt to besmirch the moral authority of both.”²⁶

Incidents of police violence against social protest in Chile have continued since the return of electoral democracy in 1990. A review of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and US State Department annual reports from 1990 to 2004 finds that during this period at least 138 protesters were injured and six killed as a result of the violence perpetrated by Carabineros against protesters. Because of missing data, these numbers do not include similar reports of “excessive use of force” by police that failed to specify the numbers of people injured or killed as a result.²⁷

To be sure, the Carabineros have undergone some reform since the return of civilian government in 1990. For example, most criminal cases are now handled by civilian (not military) courts, a reform of the penal process law has placed checks on some traditional Carabineros practices, and a form of community policing has been implemented. However, none of these reforms have touched on the issue of police repression of social protest. Cases that involve a Carabinero harming a civilian or a civilian harming a *Carabinero* still go to military (not civilian) court. Between

1990 and 1997, 90 percent of the almost eight hundred cases brought to military courts by citizens alleging police violence were dismissed by judges.²⁸ Moreover, the reform of the penal process law applies only to civilian and not military courts, and community policing does not touch on the issue of protest.

Nevertheless, while the Carabineros have an important (and continuing) history of involvement in the repression of social protest, they have an equally important history of being well respected by large segments of the Chilean population as a disciplined police force that is free of corruption and dedicated to its defined community. In an issue of *Revista de Carabineros* from 1927, it is explained that the new police force, unlike those of the past, has a new role defined as “making the *Carabinero* into a true guide and teacher for the general public, someone who is their best friend, and their most loyal defender and counsellor, always effective in stopping anything that might disturb public order.”²⁹ This framing of the role of the Carabineros continues in their promotional material today, and is exemplified by their current slogan, “Un amigo siempre” (“Always a friend”). As recently as 2016, public opinion polls have shown that a majority of Chileans trust the Carabineros (54 percent) compared to lower levels of trust in the judiciary (7 percent) or Congress (4 percent).³⁰ However, this level of support is much lower among the poor and youth, who are often targets of police violence, and it is very possible that the media play a role in shaping public opinion in support of police actions.³¹

Coverage of the 2006 Student Protest in *El Mercurio*: Assessing Social Accountability

While the media play an important role in framing debates, not everyone is included in these debates. Aside from editorializing journalists, a total of 22 people had their positions either quoted or summarized in articles discussing the incident of police “excesses” that transpired on 30 May. In contrast, the Argentine conservative national newspaper *La Nación* presented the positions of 50 different people in one week of coverage of an incident of excessive police violence in that country.³² Of the 22 people whose positions on the event were made public through *El Mercurio*, the majority (12) were government officials or politicians and 4 were current

TABLE 4.1.

Categories of people referenced	Who is cited?	Who is to blame?	For what?	Mechanisms of accountability advocated?
Government officials or politicians	12	7	1. Government used police to silence protesters (1) 2. Government should have resolved conflict before it went to the streets (3)	Resignation of minister (1)
Current or past Carabineros	4	27	1. violated democratic norms (7) 2. bad apples (6)	Dismissal of individual officers (14)—8 in favor, 6 against. Judicial action (4) Institutional change (3)
Students/ protesters	4	9	1. Violent protesters justify police action (5) 2. Protesters and police share blame (2)	Crackdown on street crime (2)
Journalists	n/a	1	1. Journalist who were injured did not follow procedures for covering protests (1) 2. Journalists made this a case of wrongdoing by framing it that way (2)	0
Other	2	0	0	0
Total	22	44	27	24

Source: *El Mercurio's* coverage of the 2006 Chilean student protest, 30 May to 13 June 2006 (35 articles). Notes: The numbers provided in the table refer to the number of references made to a particular person (or group) (from one of the categories) or this person or group's position on the three issues. One reference indicates that in one article one person/group, or the position of one person/group, from the identified category was mentioned. A quote from the person/group may have been provided, their ideas may have been paraphrased, their action may have been noted (e.g., pursuing a court case) or, for references to journalists, the journalist may have editorialized on the topic.

or past members of the Carabineros. Of the remaining 6, 4 were spokespeople for the Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students (the group leading the protests), but their positions were not given much coverage or weight. Indeed, one student leader (María Jesús Sanhueza) quoted as critical of the Carabineros' actions was described in *El Mercurio* as a disputed member of the student leadership who "unjustifiably missed more than half of her classes."³³

The literature on protest policing suggests that the media's preference for approving police actions pushes the public to favor a "law-and-order" frame over a "civil rights" frame. At the very least, the social accountability provided by *El Mercurio* limits the voices of those framing the event as a wrongdoing requiring mechanisms of horizontal accountability to be activated. For clarity, a numeric summary of the positions found in the articles is shown in Table 4.1. The text that follows provides the nuance and analysis needed to better understand the numbers.

Who Should be Held Accountable?

There were 44 references to blame in the 25 *El Mercurio* articles that addressed police repression against the 2006 protesters. In total, the references identify 4 individuals or groups as responsible for what happened. Of the 3 most commonly identified wrongdoers, the Carabineros (as a whole, a group within the organization, or individual officers) were referred to in 27 references to blame. The second most common group identified as responsible for the police repression was the protesters themselves (or violent infiltrators). This was the case in 9 references. Third, 7 references saw the government (including President Michelle Bachelet and her ministers of the interior and education) as responsible. One person, the director general of the Carabineros, blamed journalists. It is interesting that many of these allegations of wrongdoing were offered cautiously, indicating a degree of self-censorship. For example, President Bachelet blamed the Carabineros, but her minister of the interior clarified that she meant only to reinforce the excesses recognized by the leadership of the Carabineros.³⁴

There are a number of possible reasons for this self-censorship, including a legacy of recently derogated but persisting contempt-for-authority laws. Until not long ago, Chile had more contempt-for-authority laws

than any other country in Latin America, and these laws were applied more frequently in Chile than elsewhere. In addition, the punishments for violating these laws were more excessive, including significant prison sentences for some transgressors.³⁵ However, the most serious and widely used contempt-for-authority law, section 6b of the Law of State Security, was derogated in 2001, and articles 263 and 264 of the Chilean Criminal Code were derogated in 2005. In spite of this, significant opposition by some authorities to the derogation of these laws led to articles 263 and 264 of the Criminal Code being replaced with article 264. Instead of punishing those who challenge the *honor* of authorities, article 264 seeks to punish those whose words are interpreted as a *threat* to upset order in the eyes of these same authorities.³⁶ The latter can be interpreted by judges in the same manner as the former, and violations remain criminal rather than civil offences. Articles 413 and 418 of the Criminal Code that address offence and slander (*injurias* and *calumnia*) have also been used more widely since 2005.³⁷ Article 417 of the Military Code of Justice continues to protect Carabineros against defamation; its only modification since the dictatorship has been a reduction (from ten to three years) in the prison sentence attached, and a shifting of these cases from military to civilian courts. Many authors contend that these laws have led to self-censorship by journalists and affects how they present the news.³⁸

Many Chilean journalists and government communications officers I have spoken to argued that they did not perceive any legal limits to what they could say or write. Instead, the primary limit identified by the interviewees was their (or their employer's) desire not to offend the Carabineros for political or career reasons. Politically, interviewees argued that a principal concern of both the government and *El Mercurio* is "citizen security," defined as policy priorities aimed at combating common (particularly property) crime. The owner of *El Mercurio*, Agustín Edwards, founded and financially supported the Fundación Paz Ciudadana, an organization that has lobbied successfully for government money and attention to citizen security since 1992. In order to combat crime and achieve citizen security, the interviewees explained, it is important to maintain the support of the Carabineros; criticizing their actions would not be helpful in this regard. This is a position that was expressed by both government communications officers and journalists.³⁹

Journalists in particular identified the career limitations of not supporting this political position. For example, critical police reporting can result in journalists not being invited by the Carabineros to press conferences, or not being offered exclusives. Given the focus of citizen security on crime, such an exclusion from the main sources of information on crime could force a police reporter to change their specialization or leave their newspaper altogether. Thus, whether for legal, political, or career reasons, it is likely that both journalists and politicians who are evasive in assigning blame for police repression of the student protest are engaging in self-censorship.

What Should They be Held Accountable For?

Of course, social accountability involves more than simply the naming of wrongdoers by the media. It also involves identifying the actions thought to constitute wrongdoing. This section will examine each of the groups blamed for the 2006 incident and assess the statements that indicate what they should be held accountable for. It is important to note that not all references to blame explain why the person identified is responsible for the police repression. For example, while most people quoted or referred to in *El Mercurio* (including members of the Carabineros themselves) agree that the Carabineros engaged in “excesses,” not all of those quoted or referred to explain what specifically they should be held accountable for. Only thirteen of the twenty-seven references to Carabiniro wrongdoing explain what they should be held accountable for. When explanations are provided, each group (the Carabineros, the protesters, the government, and journalists) is linked to the violence in a different manner. These links reveal a debate regarding the degree of wrongdoing committed, and the manner of determining why some actors are held to be more responsible than others.

First, the Carabineros are thought by some to be accountable for violating democratic norms. The Carabineros as an institution were reported to have admitted that “unjustified excesses” were used against the three journalists, but they rejected responsibility for harming students.⁴⁰ Two days later, perhaps following the lead of the Carabineros, President Bachelet gave a speech in which she denounced the police actions. While

she described the “incidents” (*hechos*) against both the journalists and the students as “condemnable and unjustifiable,” she elaborated significantly more on the violence against the journalists. She explained that she “condemns the events that took place yesterday (Tuesday) to representatives of the media. . . . For our government it is fundamental that there be complete freedom of expression and the possibility to exercise this work.”⁴¹ Later, Interior Minister Andrés Zaldívar clarified the president’s comments, saying that “the declaration of the President was only in reaction to the excesses of the *Carabineros*, that which was recognized by their own High Command.”⁴²

It is important to note here that the term “excesses” is the same term used by the director general of the *Carabineros*, and while the term obfuscates what happened, it was quickly adopted by both politicians and *El Mercurio* journalists, likely for reasons of self-censorship explained in the previous section. Zaldívar also repeated the president’s message that, according to democratic norms, “procedures should never lead to abuses or the exercise of force beyond what is assigned to the *Carabineros*. It is not within the role of the *Carabineros* to do what they did with the journalists or bring in a girl by pulling her by the hair.”⁴³

Other political leaders also emphasized that the *Carabineros* went beyond their acceptable role in a democracy, although the term “democracy” was rarely used explicitly. For example, the president of the Christian Democratic Party, Soledad Alvear, condemned the *Carabineros* for their “actions that were completely unmeasured. The *Carabinero*-citizen relationship should continue to perfect itself and events like what happened yesterday don’t contribute to this direction.”⁴⁴ Alluding to Chile’s international reputation as a democracy, the president of the Socialist Party, Camilo Escalona, stated that the *Carabineros* were responsible for “embarrassing Chile in front of the world.”⁴⁵ More provocatively, student leader María Jesús Sanhueza “qualified the action of the *Carabineros* as ‘terrorist.’”⁴⁶ In total, seven of the thirteen explanations for why the *Carabineros* were responsible for what happened make implicit or explicit reference to the violation of democratic norms or the constitutional limits of the *Carabineros*’ role.

The second explanation for *Carabinero* responsibility emphasizes the excesses of individual officers, and six of the thirteen references to

Carabinero responsibility take this position. For example, Interior Minister Andrés Zaldívar explicitly stated, “I . . . defend the *Carabineros*; one cannot disqualify the institution for the acts of a few.”⁴⁷ His position is consistent with that of the Carabinero leadership, which, according to *El Mercurio*, “admitted that the Special Forces engaged in a procedure outside the bounds of regulated procedures when they attacked two cameramen and one photo-journalist meters from La Moneda [government house], as well as other events that made up the hard line anti-disturbance actions taken during the student protests.”⁴⁸ Court cases also tend to individualize accountability. Thus, three references that focus on the wrongdoing of individual officers are references to court cases lodged by civil-society organizations against the Carabineros for specific incidents of violence.⁴⁹

While the majority of quotes or references to blame identify the Carabineros as responsible, many articles imply that the actions of the Carabineros need to be considered in light of the actions of the protesters. During another student protest on 2 June (a few days after the 30 May protest), the Carabineros chose “cautious action” as a form of rebellion against the government’s dismissal of some of their officers who were directly involved, and official condemnations of their previous “excesses.”⁵⁰ Using two different frames, seven quotes or references address explicitly the relationship between Carabineros and the protesters, mostly in response to the “caution” of the Carabineros.

First, it is argued that the “excesses” of the Carabineros were justified considering the threat they faced. This position follows two lines of argument, the first being that the student protesters were infiltrated by violent groups and individuals. Immediately after the 30 May protest, an *El Mercurio* article explained that “infiltrating *encapuchados* [hooded people] and delinquents predominated in the conflicts that occurred yesterday. The students could not neutralize them.”⁵¹ The newspaper also blamed the protesters for some of the violence against journalists. A caption under one photograph states, “This is how a rock came from *encapuchados* and hit the head of *El Mercurio* journalist Francisco Aguila.”⁵² Similarly, Interior Minister Andrés Zaldívar stated in response to the Carabineros’ later inaction that “one should not be weak with the *lumpen* who infiltrate movements, like that of the students.”⁵³

At first glance this argument appears to legitimize the protesters and distinguish them from the alleged infiltrators; however, the line between legitimate protesters and infiltrating delinquents is blurry. For example, it is not inconsequential that the student protesters were blamed for not “neutralizing” the infiltrators; in 2011 the Piñera government put forth a bill (rejected in 2013) that would have seen protest organizers held financially responsible for any damage caused by their protest, even if committed by “infiltrators.” Moreover, the “infiltration” argument was used by those justifying police repression not only against shadowy infiltrators, but against the students and journalists who were the primary recipients of the repression as well. In this sense the response of the director general of the Carabineros is perhaps more honest. Summarizing his position, *El Mercurio* explained, “in terms of the student protest, he admits that there were political and delinquent infiltrators. But he clarified that students were involved in the aggressions against *Carabineros*.”⁵⁴ The director general was quoted as saying, “[students] were involved in the aggressions against the *Carabineros*. It’s a fact. The majority of those arrested were students.”⁵⁵

The second and less common frame is that the Carabineros and the protesters were both equally to blame. The interior minister maintained that both groups committed excesses and should be held accountable according to established democratic mechanisms. For example, he stated, “The civilian who attacks a *Carabiniro*, throws rocks, breaks a public telephone, must be arrested and charged.”⁵⁶ An *El Mercurio* editorial on 2 June placed this equal-blame perspective within a frame that emphasized the need for social order, rather than democratic mechanisms of accountability. As the article stated, “no less indignant, condemnable and unjustified are the destructive actions of the other protesters.”⁵⁷ The author goes on to argue that President Bachelet’s “unilateral” focus on the wrongdoing of the Carabineros could “lead the forces to self-inhibit their actions against those who commit violence. This, for its part, could be understood as an incentive for violent individuals to make their actions more extreme, with the peace of mind that the police will not put up major resistance for fear of sanctions and loss of their professional careers. This framework is dangerous for public security.”⁵⁸ The term “public security” is often used in a manner that is interchangeable with “citizen security.” Thus, it is possible

that the equal-guilt position is taken so as to not offend the Carabineros and thereby avoid potential political or career consequences. Regardless, such a position implies that the actions of the Carabineros, while excessive, may have been justified considering the perceived threat they faced. The police in a democracy have the legitimate right to use violence against civilians when necessary; the question raised in this context is whether or not this protest was indeed a case of wrongdoing.

The third group identified as responsible for the police “excesses” against the protesters was the government. Very often police repression of social protest is thought to be a political decision taken by the government to silence opposition. Indeed, a number of people I interviewed, particularly (but not exclusively) those from human rights organizations, believe that the government supports the use of police repression against social protest. However, only one person in the *El Mercurio* coverage of the student protest was quoted as making this association, and that was student leader María Jesús Sanhueza. She stated, “The government is afraid of what the student organization has done and wants to stop it by whatever means necessary.”⁵⁹ Most others hold the government responsible only for not resolving the conflict before it went to the streets, implying that the actions taken by the Carabineros were justified or predictable once the conflict erupted in the streets. For example, Congressman (*Diputado*) Alberto Cardemil (National Renewal Party) shamed the president for not resolving the conflict, implying that the police were just doing their job: “The dismissal of the police chief is the culmination of a succession of errors committed by La Moneda, because they left the political floor to the actions of the Carabineros in their control of public order. . . . If the President wants to get angry at someone she should get angry at her ministers who have still not resolved the education crisis”⁶⁰

Finally, and focusing solely on the violence of the Carabineros against the journalists, only José Alejandro Bernales Ramírez, at the time the director general of the Carabineros, blamed journalists themselves for their injuries. When asked why the Carabineros “lost their patience” on 30 May, Bernales stated, “While I am not excusing anyone, I ask myself, why were none of the journalists (who suffered excesses) accredited in the police area? They know how the institution works and they know how to approach a group of Carabineros, and to never take photos in the middle of police

action. . . . They were looking for proof of *Carabinero* excesses and, as well, that they lose patience. One in a hundred loses patience.”⁶¹ Supporting the guilt of journalists in another article portraying the Carabineros in a favorable light, an anonymous officer was quoted as asking, “What are you journalists looking for? What are you selling? When a *Carabinero* is hitting, they are responding to those who protest. You [journalists] look and look for the moment. Never when protesters hit a *Carabinero*. This isn’t news.”⁶² In fact, *El Mercurio* published many pictures and much written text showing Carabineros being attacked by students, whereas relatively few examples were given of the opposite.⁶³

Nevertheless, it is important to note that almost half (thirteen of twenty-seven) of those people quoted or referred to in *El Mercurio* who specified particular actions as wrongdoing identified the Carabineros as the wrongdoers in this incident of “excessive violence.” Clearly the police force was being shamed for going beyond their proper role in a democracy. However, it is equally important to recognize that a majority (twenty of twenty-seven) of the total number of these quotes or references present justifications for the level of force used by the Carabineros. These justifications include: the excesses were those of individual officers; the level of force was proportionate to the threat faced; this was the inevitable result of the government not resolving the conflict before it went to the streets; those injured placed themselves in that position. Thus, while the Carabineros are identified as wrongdoers, competing frames question the significance of this wrongdoing.

Also worth noting is that few voices from civil society were included in this debate. We do not know the positions of the unions or university organizations that supported the high school students, and few of those present at the protests were asked their views. We also do not have the perspective of human rights organizations, even though the Human Rights Commission was noted to have been one of two organizations initiating a court case against the Carabineros. Insufficient information was provided to properly judge the level of violence used by police, or for human rights organizations to track such information.

How Should They be Held Accountable?

Finally, social accountability also involves media activating mechanisms of horizontal accountability. While there were 44 mentions of blame found in the articles analyzed, and 27 mentions of why this blame was assigned, in only 24 instances were particular mechanisms of accountability advocated, used, introduced, or rejected. These mechanisms included the dismissal of selected Carabineros or ministers deemed responsible (15), judicial action (4), a crackdown on street crime (2), and institutional change (3).

The most discussed mechanism of accountability was President Bachelet's decision to dismiss 10 Carabineros as well as the head of the Special Forces (the organization in charge of managing the protest) and his immediate subordinate. Of the 23 references to mechanisms of accountability, 14 focused on this issue. Members of Congress from left or left-of-center political parties (the Party for Democracy and the Christian Democrats) were quoted as supportive of the dismissals in 3 quotes and references.⁶⁴ In contrast, members of Congress from the opposition right and right-of-center parties (National Renewal and the Independent Democrat Union) disagreed with the dismissals in 3 quotes and references. For example, Senator (*Senador*) Alberto Espina (National Renewal) explained, "What needed to be done was to investigate the specific incidents of excesses, but not dismiss police personnel or remove police chiefs from their positions. With this type of action one ends up inhibiting the ability of the police to act."⁶⁵

The position of the Carabineros themselves was mixed. Eight quotes or references reveal that the institution was upset enough with the dismissals to engage in the rebellious "caution action" in response to the student protest on 2 June. However, *El Mercurio* reported that there was disagreement within the Carabineros as to whether or not Colonel Osvaldo Ezequiel Jara, the head of the Special Forces, should have been dismissed. Some anonymous officers agreed with Jara's dismissal, arguing that his leadership supported the use of "iron fist" (*mano dura*) policing,⁶⁶ but others argued that neither Jara nor his superior, General (*General Inspector*) Jorge Acuña, should be associated with the excesses. Rather, those who should be held accountable were "those officials who really gave the orders that led to the excesses."⁶⁷ One anonymous officer saw Héctor Henríquez,

the general chief of security and public order (*general inspector y director de orden y seguridad*), as responsible, qualifying Henríquez's decisions as more "political" since he has direct connections with the minister of the interior.⁶⁸ Going further, ex-director general Fernando Cordero of the Carabineros put forth the question, "Is the government going to face up [to their responsibility] and remove the minister that, with two months of leadership has had an awful management [record]?"⁶⁹ In contrast, when Director General José Alejandro Bernales Ramírez was asked why Colonel Jara's superiors had not been held responsible, he responded: "Because the person [Jara] who is on the street with the people, guiding and giving orders, is the prefect."⁷⁰

The debate within the Carabineros appeared to be divided between blaming a few bad apples versus blaming the political leadership. In either case, it was not the institution of the Carabineros that needed to be reformed in order to ensure that such an action would not occur again. It is also interesting to note that within the debate over whether the dismissals constituted an appropriate mechanism of accountability, the perspectives of the Carabineros themselves were given more coverage than those of elected politicians. This may be the result of media bias or of civilians' fear of offending the Carabineros. Of course, missing completely is the perspective of civil-society organizations. Regardless, as the debate in *El Mercurio* reveals, dismissals are very political and may not actually change institutional practices.

Compared to the discussion around the dismissal of Carabinero officers, relatively little attention was given to the judiciary as a mechanism of accountability. Indeed, it was only mentioned in four instances. One politician was referred to as supporting judicial sanctions, and Party for Democracy senator Guido Giardi was said to have argued that judicial and not only administrative sanctions should have been applied.⁷¹ The only other references to the need to involve the judiciary in addressing the wrongdoing were brief mentions of two court cases being put forth against Carabineros for particular instances of excessive violence. One case was presented to the military courts by the Chilean College of Journalists.⁷² The other case was presented by the Human Rights Commission and the Teachers' College of Puente Alto.⁷³ There was no mention of a judicial investigation into the whole event, and the journalists at *El Mercurio* did

not pursue the point raised by Giardi. It appears that judicial accountability was considered limited, and journalists failed to push for further activation.

Another form of accountability referred to in the articles stems in part from the belief that the protesters were to blame for the violence. For example, during the protests that followed the one on 30 May, *El Mercurio* reported that the government was taking steps to prevent other “days of violence” by increasing security. They explained, “A re-enforcement of police contingents in the principal streets of the capital has *Carabineros* prepared for today, with the goal of avoiding the excesses and conflict similar to what occurred last week during the student marches.”⁷⁴ A couple of days later *El Mercurio* explained that the government further “prepared a new law that will be applied more rigorously against all those who are caught provoking disturbances in the street. According to high-level sources in the Interior Ministry, the initiative is due to the preoccupation of the executive with the almost zero percent of formal charges laid by the Public Ministry in relation to the number of people arrested.”⁷⁵ There was no mention of the potential impact of this new law on the right to protest, and there was also no mention of new laws or regulations to assist in restricting future police “excesses.”

However, three people were quoted as arguing in favor of the institutional changes that they felt would ensure that such incidents would not be repeated. One political leader simply argued that the *Carabineros* needed to rework how they deal with adolescents: “For the natural biology of youth, their expression, their movement, their speed, they are distinct to the conversations or maintenance of public order with workers or university students. . . . Maybe they [the *Carabineros*] have gotten out the habit of fighting with adolescents.”⁷⁶ In contrast, other quotes demanded more substantial institutional changes. Both Alejandro Guillier, then president of the College of Journalists, and Camilo Escalona (president of the Socialist Party) argued in favor of creating a Ministry of Public Security and moving the *Carabineros* there from the Ministry of Defense, a move that would place the *Carabineros* under civilian rather than military control. Guillier argued that this needs to be done “in order to advance and develop methods of working that correspond with the rule of law and with

a country with an advancing democracy.”⁷⁷ Escalona argued that the creation of such a ministry was “urgent and indispensable.”⁷⁸

This goal of moving the Carabineros under the Interior Ministry was first laid out in the Program of Government of the Accord among Parties for Democracy, in place since 1990. Despite a long history of Carabineros subordination to the Interior Ministry between its creation in 1927 and the 1973 coup, the Carabineros successfully resisted attempts to restore that arrangement until 2011. The police have argued that the Interior Ministry has “a direct link to the government’s political agenda,” and thus they are more politically independent within the Ministry of Defense.⁷⁹ The government unsuccessfully attempted to move the Carabineros in 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, and 2001.⁸⁰ However, in 1990 President Patricio Aylwin (1990–4) was successful in at least moving some domestic security issues away from the control of the military by establishing a Public Security Council (later Public Security and Information Office) within the Interior Ministry.⁸¹

The history of this proposal might lead one to expect that journalists would pursue the opinions of other public officials regarding the comments of Guillier and Escalona. This would have been an opportunity for journalists to test the water and see if there was more support than in the past for such a change. However, none of these calls for civilian control over the police were put into their historical context, nor did the journalists follow up with other public officials (let alone members of the public) about their perspectives on these proposals. The comments of Guillier and Escalona were not even the focus of their own articles; rather, they were slipped into an article that dealt more generally with political leaders’ reactions to the dismissal of the Carabineros.

Conclusion

El Mercurio’s coverage of police repression during the 2006 student protest did provide a degree of social accountability, and it revealed that support for police repression of social protest is not structurally determined by legacies of authoritarianism. Emphasizing this point, this study has focused on *El Mercurio*, the least likely of all Chilean newspapers to criticize police repression of social protest. From this perspective, the newspaper’s

overall reaction to the student protest was exceptionally supportive of the protesters and critical of Carabineros actions. Indeed, the significance of this media coverage in the Chilean context inspired two young Chilean journalists to produce a well-watched documentary film and accompanying book analyzing how the students were able to gain such positive media coverage and public support.⁸² Relative to other protests in Chile, the 2006 student protest sparked a noteworthy debate in the media regarding police repression. Whether successful or not at achieving other forms of police accountability, media coverage of this event will act as a future reference point.

The *El Mercurio* articles covering this protest give weight to the view that the excessive violence by Carabineros violated democratic norms, and that they need to be held accountable as a result. The published quotes supporting this position came from influential figures, including President Michelle Bachelet, as well as the presidents of the Christian Democratic and Socialist Parties (both prominent parties within the governing coalition, the Concertación). This coverage is important in that it recognizes that police reaction to social protest within a democracy is qualitatively different than that which is acceptable under an authoritarian government. It also emphasizes that Chile is now a democracy, and that old repressive police practices will no longer be tolerated. Thus the media act as a mechanism of social accountability, shaming police for wrongdoing and challenging denials that such actions are wrong.

More broadly, the articles in *El Mercurio* also present competing views (or frames) regarding who is most responsible for committing wrongdoing, what type of wrongdoing they have committed, and how the wrongdoer(s) should be held accountable. The existence of this debate is an important aspect of social accountability as it provides the opportunity for actors included in the debate to challenge old frames that may have simply presented police repression as an unfortunate but acceptable or necessary fact of life.

However, the coverage of the event also reveals important limits to *El Mercurio*'s role as a mechanism of social accountability. That is, while police repression of social protest is not structurally determined, important obstacles do remain. First, many voices were excluded or dismissed within the debate, and only a very few members of civil-society organizations

or the public in general were given a voice. In terms of the amount of coverage and the weight given, coverage favored political leaders and Carabineros whose views were least critical of the police institution. This exclusion or muffling of voices and perspectives might be attributable to media bias, self-censorship, or the efficiency with which journalists access public officials compared to civil-society actors.⁸³ Regardless, such an exclusion of voices from civil society and a reliance on official sources has been shown in previous research to contribute to greater police repression of social protests.⁸⁴

Second, there is an undeniably important practice of self-censorship that constrains how journalists and public officials can hold the Carabineros accountable. If one cannot offend the Carabineros without legal, political, or career consequences (whether real or imagined), the criticisms that need to be expressed in order to shame wrongdoers, activate mechanisms of accountability, or challenge old frames for understanding wrongdoing will necessarily be limited or cautious. This limitation suggests that effective police reform might require a revision or reform of media laws or practices. Moreover, the priority placed on “citizen security” by the government and *El Mercurio* may also play a contributing role in media and political self-censorship, an issue well worth exploring in future research.

Third, while possibly a circular argument, the coverage in *El Mercurio* provides insufficient information regarding details of the tumult; they do not provide information regarding how many of the protesters and journalists were injured, nor do they explain the nature of their injuries. This information is important supporting evidence needed for the media to effectively shame wrongdoers and cause the public, politicians, and social movement organizations to activate mechanisms of accountability. The circular nature of this argument stems from the possibility that the media may not print this information because it is not collected by public institutions or social movement organizations. Regardless of the source of the problem, social accountability requires adequate information. Further research is needed to understand better why such information was not provided in this case.

Finally, the media may work as a more effective mechanism of social accountability when the wrongdoing is more widely accepted in the society as actual wrongdoing. For example, corrupt politicians who have

accepted bribes in exchange for voting in a certain manner are more easily identified as wrongdoers.⁸⁵ The repression of social protest by police has a long history in Chile (as it does in many other countries in Latin America), and is intimately tied to the idea of public order. This history dates back to the creation of the current police forces and has persisted through both democratic and authoritarian governments. Thus, the acceptance of police repression of social protest as wrongdoing is not obvious. For example, many of those referred to in the *El Mercurio* articles analyzed here argued that the police “excesses” were justified, or that there was no need to apply mechanisms of accountability, or both. In the case of police repression of social protest, the media’s role in presenting views that challenge accepted norms or frames becomes an important part of its role in social accountability. The exclusion of many voices from this debate in *El Mercurio* could be one of the most important limits of the paper’s role as a mechanism of social accountability.

In conclusion, police repression of social protest continues to persist in new democracies throughout Latin America. While the levels of repression are certainly not as high as during previous authoritarian regimes, the continuation of this practice places important limits on freedom of expression. The public relies on the media to let it know what has happened and who is responsible. Differentiating police repression of social protest under an authoritarian regime, in a democracy the public also expects the media to tell them how wrongdoers are going to be held accountable for their actions. If they are not going to be held accountable, the media provides a forum for wrongdoers or public authorities to explain why this is so. This is what Andres Schedler calls “answerability.”⁸⁶ Such media accountability of protest policing is not speculative; rather, it has been shown in the literature on protest policing in established democracies to impact levels of repression depending on the frame used by the media to present such incidents. High levels of police repression of social protest are not simply structurally determined; they are in part contingent on media coverage. The media are an important mechanism of social accountability thus far understudied in new democracies, especially as a forum for reframing police violence. Understanding the limits and strengths of the media in this role calls for more research.

NOTES

- 1 Reprinted from *Policing Protest in Argentina and Chile* by Michelle D. Bonner. Copyright © 2014 by Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Used with permission.
- 2 F. Aguila and R. Olivares, “Vuelta a la violencia empañó paro,” *El Mercurio*, 31 May 2006.
- 3 P. Lezaeta, “Carabineros admite ‘excesos injustificables,’” *El Mercurio*, 31 May 2006.
- 4 R. Olivares and D. Muñoz, “Nuevos incidentes marcados por la cautela en el accionar policial,” *El Mercurio*, 1 June 2006.
- 5 For examples see Dominique Wisler and Marco Giugni, “Under the Spotlight: The Impact of Media Attention on Protest Policing,” *Mobilization: An International Journal* 4, no. 2 (1999): 172 and 184; William A. Gamson, *Strategy of Social Protest*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990); Roger Geary, *Policing Industrial Disputes: 1893 to 1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 128–30; Jennifer Earl, Sarah A. Soule, and John D. McCarthy, “Protest under Fire? Explaining the Policing of Protest,” *American Sociological Review* 68, no. 4 (2003): 584; Donatella della Porta and Herbert Reiter, eds., introduction to *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 18.
- 6 See Enrique Peruzzotti and Catalina Smulovitz, eds., introduction to *Enforcing the Rule of Law: Social Accountability in the New Latin American Democracies* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 3–33. Peruzzotti and Smulovitz define social accountability as a form of vertical accountability that, like elections, is used to hold public officials accountable. Social accountability is non-electoral and involves the activities of civil society and the media.
- 7 Andreas Schedler, “Conceptualizing Accountability,” in *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*, ed. Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, 13–28 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).
- 8 Schedler, “Conceptualizing Accountability,” 13–28.
- 9 See Donatella della Porta, “Police Knowledge and Protest Policing: Some Reflections on the Italian Case,” in *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*, ed. Donatella della Porta and Herbert Reiter (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 247–8; Wisler and Giugni, “Under the Spotlight,” 172–3; Dominique Wisler and Marco Tackenberg, “The Role of the Police: Image or Reality?” in *Patterns of Provocation: Police and Public Disorder*, ed. Richard Bessel and Clive Emsley (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 122.
- 10 Wisler and Giugni, “Under the Spotlight,” 173.
- 11 Wisler and Giugni, “Under the Spotlight,” 173; see also Wisler and Tackenberg, “The Role of Police,” 122; della Porta and Reiter, introduction to *Policing Protest*, 19.
- 12 Wisler and Giugni, “Under the Spotlight,” 178–81, 184; della Porta and Reiter, introduction to *Policing Protest*, 19; Geary, *Policing Industrial Disputes*, 131.
- 13 della Porta and Reiter, introduction to *Policing Protest*, 19.

- 14 Maria Aparecida Ferrari, "Public Relations in Chile: Searching for Identity amid Imported Models," in *The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Krishnamurthy Sriramesh and Dejan Verčič (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 389; see also Ken León-Dermota, *And Well Tied Down: Chile's Press Under Democracy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 147.
- 15 See Human Rights Watch, *The Limits of Tolerance: Freedom of Expression and the Public Debate in Chile* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1998), 22; Guillermo Sunkel, "Introducción: La investigación sobre la prensa en Chile," in *Investigación Sobre la Prensa en Chile (1974–1984)*, ed. Fernando Reyes Matta, Carlos Ruiz S., Guillermo Sunkel, and José Joaquín Brunner (Santiago de Chile: Estudios ILET, 1986), 99, 102, 104; León-Dermota, *And Well Tied Down*, 130; Claudio Durán and Arnold Rockman, "Análisis Psico-Histórico de la Propaganda de Agitación del diario El Mercurio en Chile 1972–1973," in *Investigación Sobre la Prensa en Chile*, 29; see also author's interviews, Santiago, Chile, 8 June–15 July 2009.
- 16 León-Dermota, *And Well Tied Down*, 138.
- 17 Walter Krohne, *Las dos caras de la libertad de expresión en Chile* (Santiago: Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, 2005), 92, 333–4.
- 18 William A. Gamson and David Stuart, "Media Discourse as a Symbolic Contest: The Bomb in Political Cartoons," *Sociological Forum* 7, no. 1 (1992): 55–86.
- 19 Anthony W. Pereira, *Political (In)Justice: Authoritarianism and the Rule of Law in Brazil, Chile and Argentina* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 49; Simon Collier and William F. Sater, *A History of Chile, 1808–2002* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 222.
- 20 Collier and Sater, *A History of Chile*, 228 and 245.
- 21 Azun Candina, "The Institutional Identity of the Carabineros de Chile," in *Public Security and Police Reform in the Americas*, ed. John Bailey and Lucía Dammert (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 82.
- 22 Quoted in Pereira, *Political (In)Justice*, 50–1.
- 23 Collier and Sater, *A History of Chile*, 325.
- 24 Pereira, *Political (In)Justice*, 25.
- 25 Collier and Sater, *A History of Chile*, 377.
- 26 Quoted in Candina, "The Institutional Identity of the Carabineros de Chile," 84.
- 27 For an example, see Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2002*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/0001/2002/en/>.
- 28 Claudio Fuentes, "Violent Police, Passive Citizens: The Failure of Social Accountability in Chile," in *Enforcing the Rule of Law: Social Accountability in the New Latin American Democracies*, ed. Enrique Peruzzotti and Catalina Smulovitz (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 161.
- 29 Quoted in Candina, "The Institutional Identity of the Carabineros de Chile," 81.

- 30 CEP (Centro de Estudios Públicos), *Estudio Nacional de Opinión Pública No. 79* (abril-mayo 2017), https://www.cepchile.cl/cep/site/artic/20170601/asocfile/20170601155007/encuestacep_abr_may2017.pdf. Owing to a corruption scandal in the Carabineros in 2017, confidence in the institution decreased to 37 percent that year. However, of the institutions surveyed, the Carabineros were still ranked second in public confidence, tied with the investigative police force, the PDI. Ranked first were the armed forces at 40 percent.
- 31 Claudio A. Fuentes, *Contesting the Iron Fist: Advocacy Networks and Police Violence in Democratic Argentina and Chile* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 64.
- 32 Michelle D. Bonner, "Media as Social Accountability: The Case of Police Violence in Argentina," *International Journal of Press/Politics* 14, no. 3 (2009): 296–312.
- 33 Otón Gutiérrez and Rodrigo Cerda, "María Jesús Sanhueza es cuestionada por su liceo," *El Mercurio*, 6 June 2006.
- 34 P. Molina, "Zaldívar reivindica rol de Carabineros," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 35 Human Rights Watch, "Progress Stalled: Setbacks in Freedom of Expression Reform," *Chile* (report) 13, no. 1 (B) (2001): 20.
- 36 Facultad de Derecho, Universidad Diego Portales, *Informe Anual Sobre Derechos Humanos en Chile: Hechos de 2006* (Santiago: Universidad Diego Portales, 2007), 79.
- 37 Facultad de Derecho, *Informe Anual*, 79.
- 38 Rosalind Bresnahan, "The Media and the Neoliberal Transition in Chile: Democratic Promise Unfulfilled," *Latin American Perspectives* 30, no. 6 (November 2003): 45; Krohne, *Las dos caras*, 192; Aparecida Ferrari, "Public Relations in Chile," 388; CODEPU, *Informe de Derechos Humanos 1990–2000* (Santiago: CODEPU, 2001), 134.
- 39 Part of this analysis is drawn from forty-five interviews conducted by the author in Santiago, Chile, between 8 June and 15 July 2009, as well as preliminary research conducted in Santiago, Chile in June 2006. The author's interviews were with journalists, NGOs, government ministries, and the police.
- 40 P. Lezaeta, "Carabineros admite 'excesos injustificables,'" *El Mercurio*, 31 May 2006.
- 41 N. Yanez, "Bachelet interviene para criticar acción policial," *El Mercurio*, 31 May 2006.
- 42 P. Molina, "Zaldívar reivindica rol de Carabineros," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 43 Raquel Correa, "Los debotes policiales," *El Mercurio*, 4 June 2006.
- 44 "Decisión de remover a jefes policiales no logran unanimidad en el mundo político," *El Mercurio*, 1 June 2006.
- 45 "Decisión de remover a jefes policiales no logran unanimidad en el mundo político," *El Mercurio*, 1 June 2006.
- 46 M. Hüne, "Casi 800 mil escolares pararon en todo Chile," *El Mercurio*, 31 May 2006.
- 47 Correa, "Los debotes policiales."
- 48 Lezaeta, "Carabineros admite 'excesos injustificables.' "

- 49 Lezaeta, "Carabineros admite 'excesos injustificables'"; "Denuncia de periodistas," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006; René Olivares and David Muñoz, "Nuevos incidentes marcados por la cautela en el accionar policial," *El Mercurio*, 1 June 2006.
- 50 P. Lezaeta, "Jefes de Fuerzas Especiales caen por excesos," *El Mercurio*, 1 June 2006.
- 51 Olivares and Muñoz, "Nuevos incidentes."
- 52 "Lesionado periodista de 'El Mercurio,'" *El Mercurio*, 1 June 2006.
- 53 "Zaldívar: El Gobierno no claudicará ante el vandalismo," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 54 Pilar Molina Armas, "General Director de Carabineros: 'Hubo cautela, no repliegue,'" *El Mercurio*, 10 June 2006.
- 55 Armas, "General Director de Carabineros: 'Hubo cautela, no repliegue.'"
- 56 Correa, "Los debores policiales."
- 57 "Fuerza pública y vandalismo," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 58 *El Mercurio*, "Fuerza pública y vandalismo."
- 59 Hüne, "Casi 800 mil escolares."
- 60 *El Mercurio*, "Decisión de remover a jefes policiales." For a similar quote by other congressman, see P. M. Chadwick, "El miércoles fue la huelga de la policía," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 61 Molina Armas, "General Director de Carabineros."
- 62 Beatriz Undurraga, "Cabo relata el rigor del trabajo en Fuerzas Especiales," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 63 See, for example, the photo linked with the article: "Gobierno cedió ante categorical presión de alumnus secundarios," *El Mercurio*, 4 June 2006.
- 64 *El Mercurio*, "Decisión de remover a jefes policiales."
- 65 *El Mercurio*, "Decisión de remover a jefes policiales."
- 66 P. Lezaeta, "Los roces internos por las destituciones," *El Mercurio*, 1 June 2006.
- 67 P. Lezeata, "Remociones generan puntos de vista en mandos de Carabineros," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 68 P. Lezeata, "Remociones generan puntos de vista en mandos de Carabineros."
- 69 *El Mercurio*, "Decisión de remover a jefes policiales."
- 70 Molina Armas, "General Director de Carabineros."
- 71 *El Mercurio*, "Decisión de remover a jefes policiales."
- 72 N. Yanez, "Bachelet interviene para criticar acción policial," *El Mercurio*, 31 May 2006; "Denuncia de periodistas," *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.
- 73 Olivares and Muñoz, "Nuevos incidentes."
- 74 Francisco Aguila, "250 carabineros más a la Alameda," *El Mercurio*, 5 June 2006.

- 75 Rodrigo Vergara and Francisco Águila, “Gobierno prepara dura ley contra violentistas,” *El Mercurio*, 7 June 2006.
- 76 *El Mercurio*, “Decisión de remover a jefes policiales.”
- 77 Yanez, “Bachelet interviene.”
- 78 *El Mercurio*, “Decisión de remover a jefes policiales.”
- 79 Lucía Dammert, “From Public Security to Citizen Security in Chile,” in *Public Security and Police Reform in the Americas*, ed. John Bailey and Lucía Dammert (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 70.
- 80 Candina, “The Institutional Identity of the Carabineros de Chile,” 86; see also Gregory Weeks, *The Military and Politics in Postauthoritarian Chile* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 54 and 79.
- 81 Dammert, “From Public Security,” 63. In 2011 a law was finally passed to move the Carabineros from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of the Interior. The transfer took place in 2012. However, cases of Carabineros harming civilians or civilians harming Carabineros continue to be tried in military courts.
- 82 Andrea Domedel and Macarena Peña Y Lillo, *El Mayo de Los Pingüinos* (Santiago: Radio Universidad de Chile, 2008).
- 83 Robert M. Entman, for example, argues that “the least expensive way to satisfy mass audiences is to rely upon legitimate political elites for most information.” See Entman *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 18. Public officials are seen as legitimate; they supply facts and journalists have regular and relatively easy access to them. Moreover, the media’s tendency to privilege public officials as sources may have been further reinforced in Chile during the Pinochet government, when for almost two decades public officials were the *only* approved source of information for journalists.
- 84 della Porta and Reiter, introduction to *Policing Protest*, 19.
- 85 See Enrique Peruzzotti, “Media Scandals and Social Accountability: Assessing the Role of the Senate Scandal in Argentina,” in *Enforcing the Rule of Law: Social Accountability in the New Latin American Democracies*, ed. Enrique Peruzzotti and Catalina Smulovitz, 249–71 (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).
- 86 Schedler, “Conceptualizing Accountability.”

