El Mercurio is a newspaper with the same format as the Globe and Mail. It consists of three sections in which the information is organized more or less in the following manner:

Section 1: News that stands out, both national and foreign, and the editorial page. Here the newspaper gives its official opinion. The rest is advertising.

Section 2: Economic advice, real estate, want ads, and other advertising.

Section 3: National and international information of general character; local information and advertising.

In addition to these three sections, the Sunday edition of El Mercurio adds a fourth section devoted to cultural concerns ("la vida cultural") and to shows and pageants.

From the point of view of the ideological reading of this daily newspaper, and from the paper's intention of how it may be read, we may say that the most important pages are the following: the first, third, (editorial page) and the last pages of the first section, and the front page of the third and fourth sections.

HISTORICAL-SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

El Mercurio is the oldest newspaper in Latin America. From its beginnings to the present day, it has been a faithful example of the liberal press, having as its "ideal" the London Times.

It has always defined itself as a commercial newspaper, whose business is advertising and information service. It pretends to assume in the tradition of the liberal press, the division between information (commercial) and opinion (proselytizing). This is done to conceal its real character,
which traditionally, from the very beginning, has been the genuine representative of the dominant class and one of its principal ideological instruments.

Nevertheless, El Mercurio is a paper neither of nor for this class, but rather, presents itself as a paper for the middle class, independent, and representing the lofty interests of the nation and the Chilean people.

In this sense it fulfills the function proper to the dominate ideology: it hides the conflictive nature of social reality by presenting it in vague, general terms, in the same manner as it disguises and conceals the interests of the dominant classes by presenting their interests as national interests.

It should be further noted that El Mercurio has played an important directive role in the political, economic and cultural life of Chile, and it still continues to do so.

Special mention should be made of the role this paper played in the overthrow of President Allende by the military junta, a fact now widely publicized; and also of its intent to infuse respect for and to buttress a military regime.

OUR HYPOTHESIS:

Our hypothesis concerning the mechanism of ideological manipulation which are used by El Mercurio, is based on the fact that the informative function of the newspaper cannot be divorced from its interpretive function, that is to say, from the opinion which the newspaper gives officially in the face of concrete and determined events (editorial page). And this because that which the paper denominates as informative "is nothing more than that which the determined interpretive (ideological) scheme allows to filter through as appertaining to the present moment".

In this way we can see that we may not only suppose an ideological intention of the newspaper editorial (interpretive section), but also the vision of reality, which in a determined moment, runs through the news section.

Our hypothesis postulates that there is more than just casual relationship between the informative section of the newspaper and its official opinion, that is, in the part where it would appear to make explicit opinions. We say: "would appear" because as we will see, the editorial also forms a
part of an implicit intention that will become explicit only in the mind of the reader, which is actually called to close that which we have called the "informative-interpretive circle". This would be the fundamental axis with which ideological manipulation would operate.

ITEM: Thematic Orientation. Theme. The Climate or Ideological Scenario.

We have denominated "climate" or ideological scenario to the tone and character of the vision which El Mercurio presents of reality in a determined moment or determined span of time, throughout its "news" or "informative" section.

In order to provide ourselves with a methodological Instrument that will permit us to do an analysis of the informative section and of the climate or ideological scenario that the newspaper presents in a given moment, we have elaborated three operational concepts:

1. — Item: minimal informative unity. This refers to the content of the news item itself. Thus, if the paper presents six stories on delinquency, we will say that the delinquency item repeats itself six times.

2. — Thematic Orientation (T.O.): medium informative unity. This refers to the character of the content of the news items. If the paper presents six principal items, two about traffic accidents, two about a dangerou, mortal sickness, we see that the character of all of them is to give an anguished image of the reality of the world. Thus, we have thematic orientation. The anguished image of the world has ten items (2 + 2 + 6).

3. — Theme: maximum informative unity. This refers to the function which is completed, a thematic orientation in the creation of an ideological climate.

For this reason the character of a theme is defined by the ideological strategy which the paper is developing during the period in which the theme appears.

Thus, if the newspaper has developed different thematic orientations tending to give a negative image of the economic situation, others to show an image of inefficiency and incapacity on the part of the government, others to give an image of the international isolation of Chile on the fault of government, we could group all of these under the theme "need to change the regime", i.e., that which brings together all the items contained in the three thematic orientations indicated.
In short, we would say that El Mercurio is creating distinct ideological climates propitious to its strategy, and that it does this depending upon the degree of intensity with which each thematic unity develops.

This ideological climate is not consciously taken in by the reader, inasmuch as the intention and structure does not appear in an explicit form but rather is taken unconsciously, like the reality in which the reader is situated ("climate"). The aim is then to give the mark of veracity and reality to the interpretation of reality presented by the paper; to fertilize the ground where El Mercurio sows its ideology in an "official form".

THE EDITORIAL PAGE.

Closing the informative-interpretive circle, we were analysing the function of the informative section. We will now do a short analysis of the editorial page or interpretive section.

In its informative section, El Mercurio presents itself as an "objective" informer, which limits itself to placing in its scenario that which happens in the world, without further determining the importance so that the reader may have the information, and in the forms in which the techniques of the diagram inform him.

In the interpretive section, the newspaper presents itself as an impartial voice before the conflicts which unchain themselves in reality. It speaks in the name of "reason" and prudence. There is no apparent position, nor is any interest defended other than the "sacred interests of the fatherland".

It appears to express opinions for everyone, for the advantage of everyone. It offers objective and logical conclusions, whose necessity has already been created in the ideological climate; or it appears to be giving interpretations which raise with the unconscious "vision" that the reader has of the reality in which he is situated.

Thus, what is more important than what the editorials say, is what they suppose or mean.

As it was easily deduced previously, there is in them an intention and an anterior implementation of this, which the ordinary reader can, with difficulty, recognize, then it is impossible to take notice of it if one does not take into account the relations which obtain between these editorials and the ideological scenario that El Mercurio presents.
It is for this reason that we are saying that the editorials close the informative-interpretive circle, giving the elements for the interpretation of reality, and that by the form in which the paper presents this reality, one cannot accept any other interpretation but the one given.

THE METHODOLOGY.

We postulate that doing an analysis of the informative section of El Mercurio through a systematic inventory of the thematic orientations and themes and their relations to the apparently explicit opinions of the editorials, it is possible to deduce the long and the short of the strategy which the Chilean dominant classes are developing at any given moment.

To illustrate the above postulate, we will present a brief analysis of the first part of an editorial dated Sunday, February 14, 1976, entitled "Respaldo Ciudadano" (Civil Support).

Likewise, we will analyse the relationships which obtained between this editorial and the thematic orientations which the paper was developing at that time.

An inventory of the contents of the four issues of El Mercurio from December 23, 1975 to February 1, 1976, shows that the high points most frequently correspond to the following Thematic Orientations (T.O.):

- T.O. No. 4 – Beauty, Happiness and Culture – 24 items.
- T.O. No. 2 – Extremism – 14 items.

(see table on page 15)

Prior to the analysis of these thematic orientations it is necessary to give a brief definition of each one:

1. Extremism: comprises those items which refer to the presence and infiltration of extremists, not only in Chile but also in the rest of the world, as defined by the publisher: "That is of the left and not of the extreme right.

3. Social and Economic Development: this refers to social and economic development, but as a product of the new economic and politi-
4. Beauty, Happiness and Culture: this refers to the product of the new regime and gives the image that all the people live happily in Chile, surrounded by joy and beauty.

9. International Rejection of Marxism: this refers to the rejection of Soviet penetration by the countries of the Occident. This rejection can be military, as in Chile, or political, as in those countries which have cut the ways to access to power for any popular movement, as in Uruguay, or Brazil. They also contain some items which refer to anti-marxist fighters.

11. Anguished Image of the World: this consists of all those items that in another form, give an anguished image of the world that surrounds us. In a case of extreme development of this T.O., one may create a state of collective panic in the population, as happened in Chile in September, 1973, during the overthrow of president Allende.

It is also necessary to define the thematic orientation numbers 16 and 2 because they will be utilized in our analysis.

16. Necessity and Preparation for Change: This consists of all those items that give a negative picture of the dictator of Chile, Gen. Augusto Pinochet Ugarte; and those which establish deficiencies in the administration; in the economic and political development; and in external relations, the fault lying with the government of Pinochet.

2. Armed Forces and the Military Junta: This consists of all the items which refer to the activities of the military junta or the presidency. It also includes those items which give a positive image to Pinochet.

INTERPRETATION OF THE THEMATIC ORIENTATION.

The greatest number of items are concentrated in the following thematic orientations: 1, 3, 4, 9, and 11.

We intend to reconstruct a logical discourse that supposes this vision of reality, that the newspaper offers to its unsuspecting readers.

Marxism, principal enemy of Chile and responsible for all evils, is reject-
ed in the entire world (T.O. no. 9) By means of arms, as in Chile, with the intention of installing itself in power. This is to say, suppressing democracy in order to suppress any possibility that democracy may be suppressed by Marxism.

In this heroic struggle, Chile has an extremely important role. To be a struggle of all democratic nations, such as Chile, it is injustice without parallel that Chile isolate itself in order to defend itself internally from this global enemy. This defence necessitates repression and a military regime.

Why does everyone throw accusations at Chile, why does the rest of the "free" world defend itself against marxism, just as Chile does? Above all, has this struggle brought good results for Chile? It has clearly resulted in the eradication of Marxism in Chile, and it has brought important advances in the sociopolitical plain. This translated itself into social progress and economic development for the country. (T.O. 3 and 4), which permits all Chileans to be happy. The reader can see this happiness and social development. El Mercurio takes upon itself the task of bombarding him with images that reflect this picture of reality.

But, not only that, there is also another terrible thing. Extremism, (T.O. 1) never fails to menace our country and the rest of the world. For this reason, one may justify the maintenance of any repressive regime, and for any length of time. To yield even a little in this repression would be to lose the protection of this "strong, authoritarian state", and to leave the country at the mercy of extremists, with the subsequent chaos and disorder that this signifies. Only a military regime assures such order and the continuation of a regime of tranquility. Democracy would signify the return to opening the doors to Marxism.

There should be added to this the appearance of T.O. no. 16 and the total absence of T.O. no. 2. which gives us the image of the disappearance of Pinochet from the political scenario, and of the responsibility of his actions in the problems from which Chile must suffer.

Up to this point, the ideological scenario has been developed by the informative section of the daily in the period indicated. We will now turn our attention to the editorial of February 14, 1976. We will develop the first part of this editorial entitled "Respaldo Ciudadano".

In this editorial, El Mercurio makes note of a Gallup poll conducted in Chile from June to September 1975, and gives its own interpretation of the results. It states that the poll shows ample support for the Armed Forces
and the military regime. But it does show Pinochet in a poor light if not
totally negative. Also, the paper adds, public opinion desires a greater
amount of active and effective civil participation. It should be pointed out
that El Mercurio has been insisting on this fact for several weeks prior to
that. But, it adds, this participation is something that cannot appear even
if it could be democratic. It has to come without electoral means, and with-
out "politics".

One must assume that the daily, in some form, is tacitly giving support to
Pinochet, even though it remains perfectly clear that the principal point is
public support for the armed forces and the military regime which is now in
power. It is not a question of Pinochet. (The editorial made seven positive
mentions of the armed forces but only one of Pinochet).

The editorial is set up in the following manner: a negative image of Pino-
chet – a positive one of the military regime. Paragraph 5 of the text reads:
"The support given to the government and the armed forces unites itself
(they are not the same) with the excellent popular image of the President
of the Republic".

In the first paragraph "...it reflects a massive support of the government,
a unanimous confidence in the armed forces, a full acceptance of the au-
thoritarian government".

Paragraph 3: "The success of public opinion obtained by the government
is the main thing when one considers the figures concerning the suffering
of the population due to unemployment, inflation, low salaries and even
delinquency." (italics added)

The image given here of the government is negative. Some would say that
someone had written against the policies of the military regime, but if we
read slowly, we see that it was written by someone who is against govern-
ment inefficiency, and who wants to denounce it. The insistent and mono-
tonous presence of the idea of civil participation developed by El Mercurio
for some weeks prior, gives us the key. It is because of lack of effective
public participation that the regime is faced with problems of economic or
external relationships. It is not the regime which is inefficient, but rather
the one who administers the government. That is to say, El Mercurio pleads
for a change in power exercised by this civil government and its head of
state, but not by the regime.

In paragraph 4 of the editorial (as in number 3), they demonstrate the in-
capacity of the present government:

"The results of the three month period, July to September, should not show
considerable variations, since no factor of importance has changed in lines of action of the government or in the situation of poverty in the country”.

The following paragraphs refer to public participation, without losing the authoritarian military character of the regime:

Paragraph 2: "...this scene is complemented with the vehement desire for civil participation in the tasks of government along with the desire to exclude any political tendency".

Paragraph 8: "But judging from the results, public opinion shows a strong confidence in the armed forces, yet desires above all, civil participation in the government, a civil participation without party politics and without the electoral route".

Paragraph 9: "It must be understood that the poll-takers asked about civil participation and not about the obedient cooperation of those elements".

THE EDITORIALS AND THE THEMATIC ORIENTATIONS.

We will now try to produce an ideological discourse which presupposes a relationship between the thematic orientation and the editorial.

El Mercurio attacks or gives a negative image to the Pinochet government. This finds its ideological "climate" in the thematic orientations no.2 & 9.

But this negative image does not touch the military and economical regime itself, as the reader already has internalized the situation, is a very convenient regime. (T.O. no. 3 & 4).

The isolated problems that the regime suffers and which the editorial presents, have a scapegoat: the inefficient government of Pinochet. (Paragraph 3 and 4 of the editorial and T.O. no. 16)

Marxism and Extremism are everywhere, they say, so it is necessary to maintain the repression and the military character of the regime. Any step towards democracy could open the door to chaos and marxist and extremist disorder.

We will conclude by postulating that the ideological strategy which El Mercurio has been developing in this period is as follows: To promote a high level of public opinion, it is necessary to change the power structure, to change the administration of the regime, but without changing the economic and political character of it.
THEMATIC ORIENTATIONS WHICH EL MERCURIO HAS DEVELOPED

between December, 23, 1975 and January, 14, 1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Orientations</th>
<th>Sunday, December, 23</th>
<th>Sunday, December, 30</th>
<th>Sunday, January, 7</th>
<th>Sunday, January, 14</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
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