

## **From geopolitical borders to social boundaries. Bolivian migration through the Tarapacá press (1990-2007)**

### **De las fronteras geopolíticas a las fronteras sociales. La migración boliviana a través de la prensa de Tarapacá (1990-2007)**

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#### **Abstract**

This article analyzes the relationships between national and Bolivian populations in the Tarapacá border region from the perspective of interethnic relations. Our interest in these interactions is based on both the historical bond between the two populations and the conflict between the countries on each side of the Chilean-Bolivian border. The image of Bolivian immigration and media accounts of trends on the subject during the last 17 years as presented by *La Estrella de Iquique* newspaper are studied through a qualitative content analysis. Consequently, a permanent stigmatization of immigration in general and Bolivian immigration in particular was identified on the part of both the authorities and civil society. Nonetheless, a call for solidarity toward immigration and the need to understand the phenomenon is raised in opposition to the need for a new immigration law.

*Keywords:* social boundaries, immigration in Chile, Bolivians in Tarapacá, border policy, immigration policy.

#### **Resumen**

Este artículo desarrolla un análisis sobre las relaciones entre la población nacional y la población boliviana en la región fronteriza de Tarapacá, desde el enfoque de las Relaciones Interétnicas. El interés por estas relaciones se basa en el vínculo histórico de ambas poblaciones, así como en los conflictos que la frontera Chileno-Boliviana ha suscitado entre ambos países. Se estudia la imagen que presenta el periódico *La Estrella de Iquique* de la inmigración boliviana y los discursos mediatizados durante 17 años de las tendencias sobre el tema, a través de un análisis de contenidos cualitativo. Esto nos permitió identificar una permanente estigmatización de la inmigración en general y boliviana en particular, tanto por parte de las autoridades como de la sociedad civil. Sin embargo, surge un llamado de solidaridad hacia la inmigración y de comprensión del fenómeno, denunciando la urgencia de una nueva ley migratoria.

*Palabras clave:* fronteras sociales, inmigración en Chile, bolivianos en Tarapacá, política fronteriza, política migratoria.

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## Introduction

Beginning in the 1990s, Chile started to become an immigration country (Martínez, 2003), that is, an important place of transit or destination for many South Americans, especially citizens from neighboring countries (Lube-Guizardi and Garcés, 2013). The most recent figures indicate that in the past eight years, the number of South Americans who came to Chile primarily (but not exclusively) in search of better job opportunities has increased by 78.5%.<sup>1</sup> From a regional perspective, it is possible to argue that this phenomenon has acquired unique characteristics and specific dimensions. The 2002 census indicated that Tarapacá was the region with the greatest relative immigration, with an immigrant population of 6.66% relative to the total population. Census data from 2012<sup>2</sup> indicate that this percentage has increased to 7.4%. The Bolivian population represents 32.2% of the total population and is the second in terms of representation in the region, after that of Peru. Although Tarapacá's largest population is Peruvian, Chile and Bolivia's border relations in this region make Bolivian immigration a particularly interesting object of analysis.

It is necessary to first consider that the border area studied belongs to the *Aymara* social space. The inhabitants of this region sought to complement the benefits of the various altitudinal ecological zones of the Andean space (Tapia & Ramos, 2013). For this reason, the movement of people has been part of everyday life for the region's inhabitants since before the founding of the republics (González, 2006). Afterwards, this area corresponded to Peruvian and Bolivian territories until the War of the Pacific (1879-1883). After the Treaty of Ancon in 1883, the Tarapacá region was annexed by the State of Chile. This annexation resulted in a policy of assimilation of Aymara indigenous communities through fiscal school and military recruitment. In turn, the "Chilenization" process carried out by the State exacerbated both nationalism and xenophobia (Díaz and Tapia, 2013). Nonetheless, the demarcation established between Chile and Bolivia in the Treaty of 1904 does not prevent border movement. On the contrary, the phenomenon of border movement is linked to regional business cycles due to the possibilities and limitations afforded by both legislation and job opportunities on both sides of the border (Tapia and Ovando, 2013).

Second, and by the same logic, the Tarapacá region stands out for its growth between 1990 and 2004, which surpassed the national average by one point (Silva et al., cited by Tapia and Ovando, 2013). This growth is due to copper industry investments and the dynamism of the Iquique Free Trade Zone (ZOFRI, in Spanish) —whose port and commercial activity has targeted Bolivia as its primary recipient— in the framework of bilateral trade agreements. Third, despite the previously mentioned links, the 20<sup>th</sup> century dispute over Bolivia's maritime demands has caused instability in the relations between the two countries. Indeed, there have been periods of greater or lesser opening of the international border between Tarapacá and Bolivia. Additionally, central governments have attempted to shield these political boundaries due to an increase in illegal activities and the growth of border migrations (Tapia and Ovando, 2013).

Confronted this situation, it seems worthwhile to examine the coverage given by a specific method of communication to the social fact of Bolivian immigration as a form of border migration in Northern Chile. Furthermore, analyzing a 17-year

<sup>1</sup> According to estimates from the Foreign Affairs Office and the Immigration Department of the Ministry of the Interior, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Although this census is not completely reliable, it is worth mentioning that data show continuity of this trend, as confirmed by the "Foreign Affairs Office and Immigration Department of the Ministry of the Interior Annual Report" (Government of Chile [Gobierno de Chile], 2010).

period responds to the need to observe the evolution of coverage of Bolivian immigration and to discuss its possible effect on Chilean public opinion during a period that witnessed exponential growth of the phenomenon.

It is noteworthy that *La Estrella de Iquique* is a center-right newspaper that belongs to the newspaper *El Mercurio*. The circulation of this newspaper is 23.29%, according to Becerra and Mastrini (2009). Historically, it has been recognized for promoting a strong national identity, for presenting a national subject in opposition to its neighbors and for highlighting national ideals that favor large economic interests, such as national sovereignty.

Throughout this article, we aim to analyze the role of the press in the construction of reality because what is manifested in this field becomes part of the social imaginary and these parameters regulate both perceptions and relationships with other individuals. In that sense, this study becomes part of the sociocultural heritage of the proximity and distance between Tarapacá and Bolivian citizens. Consequently, the role of the press in creating opinion about migration issues is of paramount importance, especially in Chile, where the immigration issue is so prominent.

The objective of this article is to analyze media coverage of Bolivian immigration in the border region of Tarapacá to reveal the image presented by the newspaper during the 17 years studied. We are also interested in observing how ethnic relationships between domestic and foreign groups unfold, according to the local press. This allows us first to investigate how *La Estrella of Iquique* depicts the Bolivian migrant population; the way in which they identify themselves, where they come from, how they enter the workforce. A second objective of this analysis is to identify the time and place at which complicity, solidarity and understanding of the migration phenomenon occur. Third, reviewing the actions of the press intends to be a method of discerning the relationship between border and migration policies of the time. The purpose is to determine whether there is a relationship between geopolitical boundaries—in this case the Chilean-Bolivian border—and social boundaries that emerge between domestic and foreign groups.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework: From geopolitical boundaries to social boundaries**

Geopolitical boundaries constitute a dividing line between the territories of two States. They represent the limit of each administration and materialize in a border area that is "delimited by the presence of both administrations and characterized by the visibility of a physical boundary line with fences, walls, flags and other control mechanisms," as Garcés states (2010, p. 260). Boundary lines have traditionally symbolized national sovereignty (Devetak, 1995, pp. 27-30); therefore, the central government is responsible for its administration (Polzer and Akoko, 2010, p. 281). However, the legal nature of the border only represents the unidimensionality under which it has historically been regarded. Recent studies have changed how these areas are conceived, demonstrating that beyond the limit there is a border region, "*a transition from the fixed space used as a limit, to the dynamic conception of space, marked by the contiguity and the continuity of the social fabric*" (moral, 2010, p. 187). Several empirical investigations have attested to this observation (González, 1995, 2009; Velasco, 2008; Anguiano and Lopez, 2010). Nonetheless, it does not mean that the border is not perceived by local actors such as citizens — according to the press— as a separation line that defines what is national and what is not. Why is this perception maintained when social practices and historical facts show otherwise?

It is possible to find an answer through an analysis of the press based on concepts such as geographical imaginaries and social memory, as understood by Núñez, Arenas and Sabatini, when they refer to the Andes as a "border-barrier" symbol: "The configuration of geographical imaginaries that organize social memory is the result of practices, diplomacies, art and tactics that unfold in a historicity that gives them meaning" (2013, p. 115). One could say there is a "border production" from the centers of power, and its functionality is to "strategically" develop "*symbolisms and materialisms that normalize senses*." In this way, "the *territory* of a nation" is constituted.

The collective representations linked to a border separate "us" from "others" (Núñez, Arenas and Sabatini, 2013). Thus, from a different perspective, it can be stated that geopolitical borders determine social boundaries. For example, Núñez, Arenas and Sabatini argue that "borders are not specifically national or global, there are many other levels: cultural boundaries, internal borders, symbolic borders, language boundaries, borders as places, etc" (2013, p. 132). Social frontiers have been studied by anthropologists to identify the limits of ethnic groups (Barth, 1976). Social frontiers have been defined as "identifiable units that maintain their borders" (Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart, 1995, p. 123). The objective of these studies is to determine how these borders are produced and reproduced by their actors in the framework of social interactions, how they are maintained, and how they are subject to manipulation by social actors.

Barth highlights two discoveries resulting from an empirical investigation on the nature of ethnic boundaries:

First, it is clear that limits persist despite movements of people through them [...] Secondly, it has been demonstrated that certain stable, persistent, and often significant social relations remain in spite of borders and, often, are based specifically on dichotomous ethnic status (1976, pp. 1-2).

In this way, ethnic groups define not only tribal unity but also a potentially universal unity. This entity emerges from cultural differentiation among groups interacting in a given context of inter-ethnic relations, including the structure of center-periphery relations, migratory situations, colonization and decolonization phenomena, pluralistic societies, etc.

In such situations, when borders result from tensions and conflicts between dichotomized groups, references are generally made in relation to cultural difference. Thus, ethnicization is the process of highlighting ethnic categorizations in multiple, specific situations, for instance, by describing and understanding conflicts involving immigrant populations in contexts such as schools, districts, and public transportation—or attention by a public service or a company—in such a way that social or cultural affiliation in contemporary societies becomes problematic. This occurs because social ethnicization processes threaten social cohesion with dissolution (Streiff-Fenart, 1997, p. 55).

Fabio Baggio proposes that "internalized borders" (2010) exclude immigrants from national population. In his text, he identifies three types of boundaries experienced by international migrants in their movements and subsequent processes of arrival and settlement in the countries of destination: national, externalized and internalized. Here we wish to emphasize internalized boundaries, which are:

(...) constituted by prejudices, behavior patterns and discriminatory attitudes and other social and cultural actions, that keep immigrants excluded from certain spaces of social life, with restricted access to labor

rights, citizenship and nationality, and other social and political rights (Anguiano and López, 2010, p. 11).

In a similar study, the concept of border is analyzed in relation to the social representations of external migrants created by nationals. This study was conducted on members of the Argentine judiciary, who were questioned about their representations of national identity. The authors contend that symbolic boundaries that separate or distinguish groups are categorical in nature and are framed within power relations: "In sum, to refer to borders means talking about qualification, classification, nomination and relations of domination, where the state [...] is the one with the authority to carry out all the acts that involve inclusion and exclusion processes" (Tavernelli, and González, 2011).

The study of the press also involves revising the literature related to media research and its role in the construction of reality, usually within the area of communications or political science. In this case, a comprehensive review of the subject has not been undertaken because our focus is on the borders that take place in inter-ethnic relations and how they are developed, built and reconfigured through the press. Nonetheless, we consider it important to provide a brief overview of the main theories of media analysis, addressing not only the relationships between Chile and its neighboring countries but also the treatment of otherness.

In general, the informative coverage of social phenomena and historical facts has been understood as framed by the editorial line of each medium, which in turn is subject to an ideological approach. Ivan Witker (2005) explains that the media select certain topics to develop and quotes van Dijk, for whom ideology is "a system of general and abstract beliefs, shared by a particular group of people—in opposition to other possible groups, with other possible beliefs—that organizes the knowledge and attitudes of those who belong to this group" (Witker, 2005, p. 68). Segments and interpretations of reality along with the situations and actors who receive coverage are transmitted. Similarly, what is not transmitted is of paramount importance in this selection. According to this author, the use of the media in foreign policy allows one to "feed the senses and generate collective perceptions" (p. 11). This analysis is carried out along with studies on public opinion in international affairs because the volume of information, the linguistic nuances used and the selection of what is reported comprise those feelings that contribute to the construction of a nation's identity. In other words, this analysis refers to those "nationalist, xenophobic, warring or warm or admiring aspects present in the journalistic discourse of a country with regard to another" (Witker, 2005, p. 12).

Alex Arévalo (2014) posits that nationalism has been used by elites to manipulate citizens in times of conflict:

Crowds are persuaded to feel obligated and committed to the nation, based on the construction of internal and external enemies, such as immigrants, indigenous peoples or neighboring countries, which are represented as threats to the stability and resources of the national group (p. 153).

In the case of Chile, Peru and Bolivia, the "discursive handling" of the War of the Pacific would have enabled the legitimization of power. Furthermore, this war milestone provided a new opportunity to strengthen the construction of the nation by facilitating the integration of mestizos and indigenous people who had not previously been identified with national projects. Quoting Rodríguez, Arévalo states that "the narratives of facts, circumstances and processes that link the three

countries merged the cultural sphere with the emotional one to identify love for the homeland with hatred of other peoples' nations" (2014, p. 155). Thus, the role of the media in disagreements and conflicts among and between neighboring countries has been to impose on readers the stereotypical and biased conceptions of the news company or to the reporter (Browne and Romero 2010, p. 248).

According to Browne and Romero (2010), Teun van Dijk is one of the leading figures to examine and apply critical discourse analysis (CDA) in reference to migration and racism in Europe. He states that this methodology "works as a hermeneutical qualitative methodology, as a critical analysis of the discursive reproduction of domination and authority in and for society" (p. 239). These same authors claim that it is necessary to observe how "others" are treated in the media and to emphasize the circumstances in which they are discussed. Browne and Romero assert that after analyzing the structure of the news, it is evident that "the other" is subject to prejudice and stereotyping, which readers receive and reproduce (2010, pp. 247-248).

Mayorga and León (2007) confirm this assertion. According to them, the media feed into stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory attitudes toward cultures and nationalities other than those of the dominant group to establish a mechanism of exclusion and typification of the "other." Media representation can build and/or reinforce attitudes, beliefs and ideologies that are present in the set of beliefs that are socially shared by countrymen within a country (Mayorga and León, 2007). Thus, we return to the above-mentioned idea of social memory, which, in the case of this study, is subject to a defined border production.

## **Methodology**

Although there is a vast field of study on methods of communication in which great development has taken place at the methodological level, this study is not situated within that line of research. Instead, it uses the press as a complementary resource in its analysis of the migratory phenomenon from the perspective of ethnic relations. The press is considered a text whose content can be qualitatively analyzed and contextualized. According to Ruiz (2009), qualitative content analysis "allows the collection of information to analyze it and then to develop or verify a theory" (p. 193). The methodology is based on a scientific reading from the narrative approach, in which inferences are extracted from the text to its context. Thus, there is an explicit text that represents and expresses what the author wishes to *communicate*, along with a latent text, which expresses hidden meanings that the author wishes to *convey*. The text is interpreted in accordance with the postulates of the constructivist paradigm, in which the investigator him or herself creates, through a series of interpretative practices, the material and then analyzes its evidence, and develops the final text (Ruiz, 2009, p. 195).

The methodology consisted of a reading of *La Estrella of Iquique* newspaper because this newspaper enjoyed greater stability during the period studied. Moreover, despite the lack of a reliable source to confirm this point, we believe that this newspaper constitutes an informational monopoly in the region, most likely because it belongs to the company *El Mercurio*, as mentioned above.

As a first step, a categorization of the news mentioning Bolivian citizens or relations between Chile and Bolivia that appeared in *La Estrella of Iquique* and *La Estrella de Arica* between 1990-2007 was performed as part of the Anillos SOC 1109 project research on "Border Relations between Bolivia and Chile: Social practices and Paradiplomacy 1904-2004." Sections of that study were included as sources for the preparation of this text.

After revising all of the categorized news in *La estrella de Iquique*, we could confirm a general tendency of the press studied to be led primarily by news relating to sociocultural exchanges —primarily involving sports and the arts— between Chile and Bolivia. Other subcategories include traditions and often news reporting unlawful acts committed by Bolivian citizens, along with police events in which Bolivians have been involved. This brief description of the major journalistic themes related to inter-ethnic relations gave us a first impression of the two-sided account provided by the press in the Tarapacá region with respect to Bolivian immigrants and relations with Bolivia. On the one hand, multiple cultural exchanges are presented in which the Bolivian presence in the region is perceived as an enriching influence. On the other hand, Bolivian people are presented as criminals who adversely affect the region. Similarly, this description allowed us to hypothesize the existence of a contradictory and ambiguous approach to relations with Bolivia and the portrayal of its citizens by the press.

This impression led us to develop a proposal for a narrower reading in which three categories suitable for the current analysis were selected from all of the news relating to this topic. These categories are as follows: legal framework, migratory conflicts and migration. The corpus studied according to these three categories was composed of 94 news stories in various journalistic formats.

The three selected categories belong to the axis of the Anillos project mentioned above that addresses border social practices and includes migration for temporary or permanent work purposes. Consequently, the migration category responds to any information or opinion referring to this phenomenon, with an emphasis on Bolivian citizens' productive activities related to the border. For its part, the legal framework category refers to information or opinions related to the legislation and regulations governing the transit of people and Chile's Bolivian immigration policy. The category of migration conflict includes information or opinions related to conflicts, tensions and problems involving Bolivian immigrants.

From these three categories, the most prominent topics in the corpus of news were differentiated to assemble our final text. Additionally, the inclusion of certain words was particularly significant because it allowed us to unveil the latent meaning of some stories (see table 1).

To identify either consistency or contradiction in the discourse and opinions transmitted by the press of *La Estrella de Iquique*, these categories were linked. Thus, we structured the final text based on two dimensions: 1) Characterization of Bolivian immigration; and 2) Links between border policy and immigration policy, analyzed with reference to the topics found in our reading. The discussion involves the analysis of results, and the conclusion again adopts the chosen theoretical approach.

## **Analysis of results**

### ***Bolivian immigration in Tarapacá according to La Estrella de Iquique***

News related to migration, legal framework and migratory conflict allows us to create a panorama of Bolivian immigration in Tarapacá according to the portrayal given by the journal studied, their characteristics, and their relationship with the national population. However, it is important to emphasize that this press-created characterization sets aside some aspects that remain invisible or ignored, for example, the formation of networks or the development of strategies to access rights.

**Table 1. Thematic categorization table**

Categories	Topics					Words
Migration	Characterization (physical, socio-demographic and job description)	Related festivities and commemorations	New labor immigration	Contribution to development		Aymara, women, children, church, immigration, globalization
Legal Framework	Insertion into the labor market	Border-crossing strategies	Entering with an ID card or a convention that eliminates passports	Administrative irregularity	New law	Illegal immigrants, tourists, human trafficking, <i>perdonazo</i> , drug trafficking, smuggling
Migratory Conflict	Competition for jobs	Collapse of public services	Labor abuse	Discrimination		Undocumented migration, prostitution, crime

### ***The aymara "gen" that reveals and empowers***

With respect to the phenotypic identification of Bolivian population, the "ethnic" component is present despite the fact that it is not continually evident. There are allusions, however, to aymara "traits," as described in the following headline: "Bolivian corpse found in Colchane." "Police officer presumes that he fell off a moving truck where eight other undocumented immigrants traveled. The unidentified victim had aymara features..." (January 11, 1999). However, as noted earlier, ethnic groups are formed by their interactions with other groups. In this case, an ethnic group is a minority group composed of migrants whose identities may refer to their place or origin, their ethno-linguistic group, their gender, their labor activity, their nationality, etc., but once they cross the border, they become "Bolivian immigrants" or simply "migrants" or foreigners. They cannot eliminate this category in the public sphere; the press sometimes treats them as victims and other times treats them as perpetrators. Nonetheless, immigrants may use this category to organize themselves, that is, they may use it to construct a mobilizing ethnicity. Poutignant and Streiff-Fénart analyze the various theories on ethnicity, arguing that there are "instrumentalists and mobilizing theories ... that consider ethnicity as an expression of common interests, a mobile resource in the conquest of power and economic goods, all of this in the context of a competitive process, as Glazer and Moynihan state" (1995, p. 105). In this sense, we can anticipate that repeated treatment as criminals or victims reinforces an immigrant group's ethnicity, creating permanent borders between that group and society in the recipient country.

### ***The "new" immigration***

We know that the presence of foreign immigrants is not recent in the studied region; instead, it is presented as a continuum that has been shaped by the identity of local people, whose cultural diversity has been a historic constant (González, 2006; Tapia and Gavilán, 2006). The Bolivian population in particular has virtually



become part of the territory, if we consider the circulating *aymara* groups (Tapia & Ramos, 2013) and other Bolivian workers that have ventured into the area during different historical moments (González, 1995, 2006).

Nevertheless, there is a generally significant increase in Chile's immigrant population during the period studied, especially in the country's northern border regions such as Tarapacá (Martínez, 2003; Solimano and Tokman, 2008; Tapia & Ramos, 2013; Lube and Garcés, 2012, 2013). *La Estrella de Iquique* reports on this immigration boom as follows: "Astonishing emigration in Iquique" (September 30 1997). Ten years later, they refer to this increase as "15 thousand Bolivians in the region" (October 18 2007). This group primarily represents the border population from neighboring departments such as Oruro and La Paz. The Bolivian population's mutual-aid society [Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos] in Iquique confirms that in 2007, the majority of immigrants came from "neighboring villages, including Sabaya, Oruro and Huachacaya" and that "a significant percentage of them engage in trade" ("15 thousand Bolivians in the Region," October 18, 2007).

A progressive increase in female immigration is evidenced in numerous investigations in the country (Tijoux, 2007; Stefoni, 2003, 2011; Tapia and Gavilán, 2006; Tapia, 2012), a fact that is noted in some news stories related to infringement of the legal framework: "51 detainees in police operation, among which were 16 women searching for work whose destination was Iquique" (30 December 2004); "10% of inmates are female foreigners... In Arica, there is an increasing frequency of women from different nationalities who are detained at border crossings, airports and customs... 20% are Bolivian" (August 19, 2003); or who seek work in domestic service (referred to as pastoral care) or the sex trade (mentioned by Sernam). An interview with the academic Sergio González entitled "Female migration is global" also serves as example (October 4 2007).

### ***Economic immigrants: Crossing strategists***

According to press reports, these migrants primarily travel to improve their economic conditions, having heard of Chile's advantages, because it is presented as a country that has experienced relative economic success. Headlines present Chile as follows: "Bolivian people improve their quality of life in Chile" (August 7 1993). The same occurs with excerpts from interviews, such as that given by a customs officer who made the following statement: "We're really emerging because Chile can be considered to have the image of a developed country...," ("Bolivians improve," 7 August 1993). Similarly, "The widespread economic success of Chile has been a magnet for foreigners who leave their homes and come in search of better conditions..." (Foreign and illegal jobs, May 10 1999). With this purpose in mind, many venture to cross via illegal paths constituted of roads that have historically been used by the area's inhabitants (Vergara and Rodríguez, 2005). Baggio explains, "part of the irregular mobility responds to old patterns prior to the modern definition of national territories. On many occasions, the porosity of borders becomes a "natural" fact, given the geographical configuration of the territory" (2010, p. 54). This "natural" movement is reflected in the countless news stories relating to the detention of undocumented workers in the border area: "Sold identity cards to foreigners. International bus driver... entered Bolivia through an illegal crossing" (July 1993); "Bolivian immigrants detained for illegal entry, in the Camiña, they claimed to be looking for work" (30 October 2001); "31 immigrants detained at the border; 2 for illegal entry, 12 for illegal stay and 15 for smuggling" (3 September 2003); and "Police officers captured an undocumented Bolivian immigrant... 4 Bolivian citizens illegally entered Mamiña and Colchane" (March 15 2004). This is also a consequence of the high price of the migration for Bolivian people; until 2005, they were required to pay for a passport: "Entry of Bolivian

citizens facilitated. The Regional Council and members of the board of directors of the Association of ZOFRI users in CORE session request to authorize entrance to the country without a passport. The objectives are to encourage visits from citizens from neighboring countries to increase their business in the region and avoid the \$100 payment required for the passport and the \$25 to leave Chile" (7 February 2001). Subsequent to this measure—which allows Bolivian tourists to enter the country for 90 days— crossing strategies adapted to the new process and the formula "cross the border" became widespread. A study on female aymara migrants reveals that this strategy consists of "waiting for 90 days until the tourist visa expires, going back to Bolivia for a few days and then returning to Iquique, gaining another 90 days." According to the authors, entry strategies "are modeled by the legal framework on admission and immigration, by employment opportunities, and the advantages provided by closeness to the border" (Tapia and Ramos, 2013, p. 35). Other studies confirm that the main mode of entry to Chile is through "tourist" visas—by land (border crossings) in the case of Bolivian subjects. Nonetheless, crossing the border, even if it is done legally, "leaves a mark, leaves traces in what will be the whole migration project experience" (Jensen, 2013, p. 23). According to that author, the border conditions migrant life in the country of destination. "Physical appearance" and nationality play relevant roles because they either facilitate or hinder crossing in immigration controls, according to the stereotypes of the agents. This situation is maintained in inter-ethnic relationships during immigration. Jensen states that overland crossing is part of a strategy to lower travel costs.

### ***Employability, breaches of the law and conflicts***

Although it is true that a large number of Bolivian immigrants engage in trade because of their ZOFRI client status, many of them migrate to work not only in the valleys of Lluta and Azapa but also in the ravines inside the former province of Iquique.<sup>3</sup> Many illegal immigrants and underage individuals find work in this area, as reported by the press: "Two undocumented subjects brutally assaulted a worker. The three suspects are Bolivian immigrants working in Lluta Valley" (September 18 1990). With respect to the presence of the Mayor of Arica in the Committee of Borders, it was reported that "His presence was based on the reality of undocumented Bolivian immigrants in Arica, mainly in the rural valleys" (October 19 2005). It is important to note that although descriptions labeling this population are presented, the news reports alarming situations. The news headline "Children entered Chile in search of money" (January 18 2004) narrates an accident that took place in a police car in which two Bolivian teenagers working in Chile died while being deported from the country. Conversely, such news reveals the exploitative labor conditions suffered by Bolivian children and teenagers in the interior communes of the province: "Bolivian children forced to work in Iquique. Their own parents illegally bring them into the country to work in agricultural and cattle-related activities" (May 23 2005). Another news story relating to the topic that same year claims that "Children go to the authorities to ask for help." Illegal entry is documented in the study of Vergara and Rodríguez (2005), who claim, "There is a significant presence of seasonal agricultural workers in the pre-Andean valleys, where strong family relationships do not respect borders" (p. 20). The families, mainly aymaras, move permanently between both countries, avoiding border controls and usually having an irregular administrative status.

Living and working conditions vary over the years, but the same is not true of administrative situations, which are permanent situation. This is evident from

<sup>3</sup> Since 2007, Province of Tamarugal. This information is confirmed by the study "The employment of foreigners in Chile and in Region I," by Vergara, M. and M. Rodríguez, (2005). Department of Studies of the Directorate of Labor: Santiago de Chile.

editorials on the subject with worded as follows: "Undocumented workers... Iquique workers feel harmed by unfair competition. They do not have contracts, are paid low wages, have no occupational safety equipment or retirement plans and work a large amount of overtime without pay. Sometimes workers do not even get their wages and they have nothing to fall back on. Trade unions criticize authorities, accusing them of disloyalty to national workers." The immigrant population is also employed by the mining sector: "Bolivian immigrants work in the construction of the Collahuasi mine because they are accustomed to heights" (February 11 1997).

Many stories wave the flag of unfair competition: "Foreigners overwhelm us and the authorities only fill in paperwork" (July 17 1994). The president of the International Drivers' Union of ZOFRI asked for an audience with the regional intendant to complain and was ignored. "The serious harm that foreigners are causing us should be studied because they seem to have all of the advantages that we are denied" (Foreigners overwhelm..., 17 July 1994). "We know that their admission is on the rise, filling workplaces that should be filled with Chileans," (construction workers' union, 5 February 1998). Iquique citizens believe that "Undocumented immigrants harm Chileans" (3 March 1998). "Foreign workers [are] under scrutiny... The provincial government will investigate people who work without authorization, as a result of ZOFRI workers complaint" (April 22 1999). Eight years later, the problem persists: "Shippers of ZOFRI allege employment discrimination. They accuse users of hiring undocumented aliens" (25 January 2007). According to a study by Vergara and Rodríguez (2005), most immigrants (80% of respondents) did not regularize their stay in Chile due to expired permissions. However, they claim that "the fewer possibilities of employment and the greater informality recorded in the I Tarapacá Region in relation to the rest of the country because 2000, coincide with the greater presence of foreigners in its territory, although a cause-effect relation between the two phenomena has not been established" (Vergara and Rodríguez, 2005, p. 26).

### ***Illegality, drug trafficking and crime: A stigmatizing association***

Whereas official figures show a progressive increase in Chile's immigrant population, those statistics refer only to immigrants settled through visas.<sup>4</sup> However, there is a clear distinction between immigrants and "illegal immigrants," a term that stigmatizes all foreigners and strengthens the social boundaries between domestic and foreign groups. In the following story, excerpts from interviews with immigrants in the Foreign Affairs Department of Governance are presented: "We like Chile, and for this reason we stayed... Foreigners in Iquique speak... Everybody has been treated like 'illegal immigrants' since "their permissions expired..."; and "Only some immigrants were willing to talk and they were a bit frightened because they felt that appearing in the media may be harmful" (February 12 1998). The following paragraph show how the topic is depicted in headlines: "Call for action against illegal immigrants...20 thousand undocumented workers in the region..." (7 September 2000); "development, globalization and illegal immigration" (Redacción, October 13 2000). According to the study by Vergara and Rodríguez (2005), I Tarapacá Region is characterized by a higher presence of illegal immigrants than the rest of the country. This is because as a border region, Tarapacá enjoys the advantages of being close to both the crossing border and the geographical characteristics of the border area.

Stigma is also reinforced by statements that relate immigrants to both urban deterioration and unlawful acts such as drug trafficking: "Drugs and immigrants are destroying the old Iquique" (January 28 1994). When reading this news, we see

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<sup>4</sup> Permanent residence permits granted to Bolivian subjects in 2013: 3,510; national total: 25,989. Temporary Residence Permits granted to Bolivian subjects in 2013: 26,861; national total: 132,138 (Department of Immigration and Migration [Departamento de Extranjería y Migraciones], 2014).

that immigrants are not mentioned; only the following statements appear: "The provincial governor noted that... there has been a considerable increase in violent and criminal acts in the city." Political speeches are significant references, which is why we emphasize a public servant's comments about the "invasion" of foreigners: "Some invasions are beneficial since they have to do with tourist flows while others are undesirable since they are related to the permanence of illegal immigrants who generate problems in the employment area" (4 March 1998). A similar approach has been adopted by Senator Lago Cosgrove, who requested the president's direct intervention:

There are 20 thousand undocumented immigrants in the region. It is a thorn in the side of dozens of fellow countrymen who are seeking employment. This is in addition to the serious problems generated by the great presence of undocumented immigrants in health, education and above all housing, along with the real invasion of locations in the interior of the province such as Matilla and Pica" ("Call for action against," 7 September 2000).

The image of Bolivian people as criminals is the most prominent in the press: "Bolivian immigrants sow terror on the border. A number of offenses have been recorded... Mayor of Colchane requested creating police headquarters in the village of Cariquima. The army will be requested to take charge of the border, the police force is overwhelmed" (June 25 2007).

### ***Social services, a sensitive field***

Over the years, a larger number of immigrants receiving public services has been observed. This growth generates inter-ethnic conflicts, which have already been studied in Chile (Pavez, 2012; Liberona, 2012). This situation reinforces social boundaries by blaming the "other" for "our" lack of resources, as is the case in other immigration societies (Wieviorka, 1993), particularly with respect to health. The following headline relates to this issue: "Losses in health due to foreigners" (July 7 2006). Here, the director of Health Services explains the cost of attending to foreigners without health care who cannot pay for services provided by emergency units (15 thousand pesos per person, equivalent to 26 dollars) and maternity services (minimum of 150 thousand pesos, the equivalent to 260 dollars) in the Dr. John Noe of Arica Hospital. Moreover, she said that: "We do not get extra resources for being a cross-border city and for caring for foreign patients. These are only our own resources, which take away from other types of care at the hospital."

These statements promote prejudice toward foreigners and xenophobia. For this reason, it is unsurprising that a survey has found that "Children are biased against foreigners" (November 24 2004). A UNICEF study on children and adolescent prejudices concluded, "the greatest prejudice that children feel is against foreigners and 46% of them think that one or more nationalities are inferior to Chileans." It is not strange that extremely xenophobic groups express themselves in this way: "Neo-Nazis threaten foreigners... The consulate of Peru under attack... Posters said: "No legals, no illegals. No immigrants" (July 27 2006).

### ***The work of the church and the shift of paradigm***

A parallel trend that oscillates between solidarity toward and victimization of immigrants is also observed. The first trend is almost entirely focused on the actions of the church, primarily through the bishopric of Iquique's Migration Services Pastoral Care, which in 1997 was known as the Emigrant Workers Pastoral Center. They defend "immigrant rights" and request that authorities be sensitized to this reality: "Sometimes they are treated as second-class citizens... we must help

them defend their dignity" (Abysmal emigration... September 30 1997). Since 1999, they have begun not only to celebrate the day of the migrant annually but also to perform various activities of solidarity: "Migrants' day celebrated with ecumenical act. Representatives of the catholic and evangelical church prayed for foreigners. Jesus was one of the first migrants in the world" (6 September 1999); "Each migrant is my brother... Iquique owes its formation and its progress, its present and its future to people who came from other countries and other cities in Chile. Slowly all these "foreigners" become Iquique citizens" (7 September 1999); in a San Francisco church, "the reality of immigrants is studied" (November 21 1999); "Eucharist for migrants... With high participation by foreign nationals and immigrant descendants residing in Iquique... dressed in typical costumes and carrying flags... they celebrated with songs and children dancing" (2 September 2002); "Migrants Day," during which the new slogan for pastoral care is presented: "To humanize globalization in solidarity with migrants" (5 September 2003); "The church is prepared to receive migrants," in the case of the "possible migration of Bolivian citizens in the event that the situation in the neighboring country becomes unsustainable," said the bishop of Arica (10 June 2005); and "foreign children held a celebration of Christmas... in the Cristo Emaús chapel. Approximately 200 children from Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador..." (December 19 2005).

A paradigm shift is reflected in several news stories from 2005 because migration became a topic in Chile. An analysis of the press shows that different political sectors (ruling, extra-parliamentary and civil society) show openness to immigration. This is the case with the announcement made by the Minister of Education in his visit to Bolivia: "Education for children of immigrants... even when their parents have not regularized their situation... Our aim is to open new opportunities for cooperation between Bolivia and Chile" (September 25 2005). The approach of "the Arica communists" also shows acceptance of labor immigration, proposing a legal formula:

Foreigners must have an employment contract. Compliance with workers' social law in border countries not only benefits immigrant communities but also benefits Chilean workers. To do so, legislation must force employers to create a contract of employment for immigrants that only requires filling a temporary work visa and providing a document of identification from his or her country of origin (Immigrants must have contract, June 11 2006).

A new border-control office was created "to monitor the rights of migrants in Arica" (December 19 2006). This branch of the Ibero-American Control Observatory on Migrant Rights in Arica warns that "We want to raise awareness among officials about the fact that our country needs to adopt clear policies on the subject, otherwise public services will collapse." Similarly, testimonies of exploitation and discrimination against foreigners bordering on victimization have been reported: "The harsh experience of working in Iquique" (October 4 2007). In other accounts, immigrants are often victimized to the point that sex trade is strongly associated with human trafficking: "Foreigners are the target of sexual exploitation... Iquique is included in the national ranking of cities with the highest presence of this "modern-day slavery." Peruvian, Bolivian, Ecuadorian and Colombian female immigrants are part of the sexual offer in Iquique... These are true, organized gangs derived from the trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Chile," says the director of Sernam [National Service for Women] (November 20 2007).

### ***La Estrella de Iquique is in favor***

The enigmatic positioning of the newspaper, which in a 2001 editorial expressed its support for immigration, is worthy of attention: "City of migrants... Our Iquique needs many hands to emerge from its current economic depression" (September 3 2001). Similarly, two 2004 editorials denounce discrimination against immigrants, which would affect the region's economic development, by appealing to the "political authority to lessen any discrimination that may affect Peruvian and Bolivian immigrants and not to wait for the trade agreements, which in the Latin American context, are more form than substance" (Discrimination to immigrants, December 28 2004);

Immigrants are discriminated against... by impeding the entry and residence of foreign nationals through visas or employment, education and health restrictions. The commercial opening of Chile... would be much more dynamic if the exchange of goods, services and productive factors, were perfected and liberated, in addition to migration, particularly from neighboring nations (Discrimination against immigrants, December 27, 2004).

In 2006 and 2007, the approach changed slightly, raising the issue of immigration as the country's new, inevitable reality. This issue was presented as a positive development that questions the current immigration legislation. These texts explain, "globalization continues to gain ground... Chile has not had an immigration policy intended to incorporate the spirit of entrepreneurship and labor associated with those who decide to emigrate" (Immigration and border permeability, May 20 2006).

1.6% of the total population in Chile is immigrant. This is beneficial for Chile: immigrants increase the supply of labor in activities that are faced with a disturbing shortage of workforce, as is the case with fruit cultivation and other farm work. Moreover, as a consequence of living in our country, they contribute to the growth of domestic consumption. Additionally, they induce new wage balances and encourage certain sectors of national workers to get qualifications to apply for more profitable jobs. Chile must set an immigration policy that supports immigrant worker admission into the country, demanding at the same time that they be registered and legally incorporated into the labor market (Immigration to Chile, 7 March 2007).

In brief, we can observe, first, the persistence of the national/foreigner dichotomy established by the legislation and reinforced by state institutions, especially with respect to news about the detention of undocumented Bolivian immigrants at the border. Nonetheless, this dichotomy also appears when room is given to a sector of organized workers that complains to the authorities for not doing anything about the increased number of "illegal" workers that take the jobs of the "domestic workforce." These trends in how facts are presented have a great influence on public opinion that immigration involves partnering with illegality, which can lead to the stigmatization of and discrimination against this population. Consequently, sectors of society act in solidarity with immigrants, including the church and various political sectors. The press then uses these expressions of support and solidarity to victimize immigrants. However, we also emphasize that the studied newspaper assumes a favorable position toward immigration in its editorials. This media treatment configures immigrants as an ethnic minority group (which includes Bolivian workers) within Chilean society. This group ethnicity is gradually being built both by withdrawal into groups or associations run by fellow immigrants (ethnic enclaves) and by making appearances in public spaces that demonstrate the

group's traditions (commemorations, dances and costumes), which the host society observes from afar.

### ***Links between border policy and immigration policy***

When the news referring to border policy and migration is correlated, it can be observed that the institutional position is that which enforces immigration laws at the border, subjected to internal security policy to protect the international border from unauthorized crossings. Human mobility has been therefore extremely monitored over the 17 years of press analyzed under the justification of not only ensuring citizen safety in the border area but also preventing illegal business activities such as smuggling, theft and drug trafficking. The press reports this monitoring as follows: "60 illegal immigrants detained at the border... Police force massive operation... aimed at detecting undocumented immigrants as well as smuggling, drug trafficking and trafficking of stolen vehicles" (February 2, 2005). For this reason, there are countless news stories that "celebrate" the arrest of Bolivian citizens who entered the country through unauthorized border crossings. In this manner, Bolivians are placed at the prosecutor's disposal, to be punished and in some cases, deported. Following are extracts from relevant news stories: "536 foreigners deported... for illegal stay in the I Tarapaca Region and 368 sanctioned... Mayor publicly acknowledged research carried out by the police" (September 16 1994); "Tight control of illegal immigrants... In Arica, close to 5500 foreigners received migratory sanctions such as deportations and denied entry to the country for a year" (October 12 2000). We see that the authorities both support these measures and recognize the work of the police: "We must prevent entry of illegal immigrants... says National Chief of Foreign Affairs... work has been done with great effectiveness, coordinating efforts among various institutions..." (May 8 2003). It can also be seen that special strategies for the detention of undocumented immigrants in the city of Arica have been staged; those strategies do not distinguish between those whose visas expired and those who entered illegally:

30 Bolivian immigrants detained... police operation in the industrial district of Arica. They had no documentation, therefore it is estimated that their entry into the country had been illegal. The operation "Task force" is framed within a special strategy designed by the police force to address the allegations with respect to the presence of illegal immigrants in the city (February 9 2005).

### ***The association between drug trafficking and illegal immigrants***

An analysis of policies specifically aimed at controlling drug trafficking shows that there is a direct association between the movement of people and this illicit activity, according to the media, especially in the first decade studied. The President of the Chamber of Commerce expresses this association as follows: "Unfortunately we are neighbors of two drug-producing countries—Peru and Bolivia—which have access to our region through illegal crossings, inaccessible by common people and even by the police forces, due to the height" (Economic development attracts crime, 28 January 1994). In an interview about the Ujina border checkpoint, undocumented immigrants were placed on the same level of those involved in drug trafficking: "Officials perform a series of actions, but the main one is to detect undocumented immigrants and trafficking of illicit substances" (June 15 1996). However, in early 2000, the prefect police inspector denied this association, assuring the public that most immigrants have the required documentation: "Police have control over foreigners... There is no lack of control because the great majority of immigrants have regularized their situation. The link between the increase of foreign citizens and drug trafficking has been ruled out" (June 15 2001).

### ***The need for a new law***

With respect to immigration legislation, certain news stories refer to the flaws and obsolescence of the Aliens Act (which dates back to 1975 and is currently in force). Similarly, the Migration Service's Pastoral Care advocates for the need for a new law that welcomes immigrants—we assume that the group's statement related to the 2001 introduction of a congressional bill that ultimately did not pass: "Eucharist for migrants... In a few months the new migration law will be enacted in the country... that would humanize the current one, written in a totally different context, defending and allowing us to truly behave as a gentle and hospitable country" (September 2 2002). Conversely, legal transgressions by employers who hire illegal immigrants are denounced: "Workers Union (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores—CUT) allegations with respect to a large number of illegal immigrants working in the country... The Aliens Act has many gaps and there are no attempts to improve it" (*Undocumented immigrants harm Chileans*, March 3 1998). It is also important to remember our previous point: Editorials from 2006 and 2007 that appeared in *La Estrella de Iquique* refer to an urgent need to adapt the immigration law to reality. The need to incorporate the figure of the economic migrant into the new migration policy is obvious because to do so would enable foreign workers to enter the country for employment reasons and to work in a dignified manner without becoming burdens on the State but instead contributing to development.

Some governmental actors make the case for an immigration policy specific to the region. Thus, the governor of Iquique argues that the "foreign policy of the provincial government must be based in the border region" (Bilateral agreement proposed, March 4 1998). In addition, it is noted that the provincial government does not process visas, blaming entities in Santiago for the low number of migratory regularizations and the excessive length of the process: "Tarapacá attracts foreigners... Only a small number is accepted to reside in the country... Visas are not processed in the region, they are only received, organized and shipped to Santiago... All of the paperwork takes approximately 6 months" (February 12 1998). Some other authorities have proposed new initiatives: "*Seremi de Trabajo* proposed signing a bilateral agreement... To solve the problem of migrants..." (Proposed Convention," March 4 1998). These accounts announce the need for a change in immigration policy or at least the need to solve the immediate conflicts posed by the presence of a significant number of undocumented immigrants in the region. This occurred immediately before the process of regularizing exceptional migration, known as the *amnesty* or more popularly, the "perdonazo."

It is necessary to explain the distinction made in the Chilean legislation between "irregular" and "illegal" immigrants or immigrants "without documents." The former are immigrants who came to Chile in accordance with the law and who have exceeded their authorized stay or who would have changed their situations without regularizing their new status. The latter are immigrants that entered the country without official documentation, either with forged documents or through an unauthorized border crossing. Chilean legislation provides procedures that would facilitate both the regularization of "irregular" immigrants and procedures to detain and deport "illegal" immigrants. This distinction in the law generates complications in practice because these two statuses are not easily distinguished. Irregularity is treated as administrative illegality, but "the line between "regular" and "irregular" is not obvious, and at any moment one may fail to be regular," as Nathalie Ferré has stated (1997, pp. 36-37). For this reason, naming this process the "perdonazo" contributes to the stigmatization of immigrants, relegating them to the category of "pardoned criminals," as implied in press statements.



### ***"The perdonazo"***

The migration regularization process generated a large amount of news from its beginning until the delivery of visas for permanent residence the following year: "Expectation caused by benefit to foreigners... Bolivian Consul praised the policy to regularize the situation of foreign workers... Chief of Staff of Government notes: This initiative will end with problems that arise in the field of labor" (September 22 1998); "Immigrants support amnesty" (September 22 1998); "greater rigor at the border... The Chief of Staff of the Interior described it as a perdonazo for foreigners... The control of aliens at the border and in the cities will be more rigorous" (October 2 1998); "Foreigners regularize their situation... 2,000 people applied for residency" (November 3 1998); "Permanent residency for foreigners... Foreigners who participated in the process may collect applications for permanent residence" (July 9 1999); "Successful visa regulation... 3577 people obtained residence (692 were Bolivian citizens)" (January 15 1999).

This series of news stories enables us to discern the illusion generated by the process. First, permanent residence is not for everyone. Second, what happens when the yearly visas expire? Third, will immigrants be able to comply with legal requirements outside the framework of the process of regularization? These questions remain unanswered, but there are signs that allow us to present a hypothesis, given that the problem persists nine years later: "Problems with immigrants... According to Mons Nina, a Bolivian trucker, government policies between Chile and Bolivia promote greater amounts of undocumented immigrants... acquiring a work visa is too expensive (\$300) ..." (October 18 2007). Nonetheless, in 2008, a second process of regularization of immigrants was implemented. This leads us to believe that instead of solving problems, these measures promote migration to Chile, constantly producing undocumented immigrants.

### ***A treaty to eliminate passports between Chile and Bolivia***

Another measure that attracted a great deal of media coverage was one that authorized entry to Bolivian citizens on the presentation of a driver's license. This process began in 2001, when the private sector presented the following request: "to facilitate access to Bolivian immigrants... Regional Council and members of the board of directors of the Association of Users of ZOFRI in CORE session request to authorize entry without passport" (February 7 2001). Other individuals claim to have promoted the initiative: "easier access will be granted to Bolivian immigrants... Senator Orpis expressed his satisfaction to the chancery for its support of allowing Bolivian immigrants to enter Arica without passports" (January 24 2004). The Senator claimed to have submitted the proposal to the assistant secretary in 2002. However, we can confirm a rapprochement between Chile and Bolivia's bilateral relations in recent years, especially after the 1997 creation of the Border Committee.<sup>5</sup>

In 2004, negotiations and revisions of the initiative on the part of both countries began, but it was not until second half of 2005 that the initiative was finally consolidated. "Soon Bolivian driver's license will be accepted" (August 10, 2004); "Driver's licenses are expected to be validated this year" (July 28 2004). In 2005, many news stories on this topic appeared, feeding a sense of expectancy; sometimes reporting the progress made and other times blaming Bolivian authorities for unexpected setbacks. Finally, after working on the agreement for two months without greater difficulties, the following perception arose: "Slow

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<sup>5</sup> According to the website of the National State Borders and Boundaries Department, it was created in March 1997 (DIFROL).

response to enter Bolivia with a driver's license... Transit remains at normal levels" (August 5, 2005). That notwithstanding, authorities of both countries decided to implement the measure: "Chile and Bolivia eliminated passports... Authorities from Arica praised this measure of integration. Mayor Valcarce said that people need not fear that this measure will allow undocumented immigrants to remain here because control will be much easier" (October 1 2005). Again, these measures allow us to connect border and immigration policies. Allowing Bolivian citizens to enter the country with a driver's license will promote Bolivian migration into Chile. Nonetheless, this ease of access can also promote a hostile environment about who deserves to enter and who does not: tourists are welcome, migrant workers are not.

## Conclusions

The press analysis allowed us to describe the dimensions of ethnic conflicts; among them, border crossing, labor market and public services stand out because, thanks to the image presented by the press, immigrants and illegality, undocumented migration, drug trafficking, and criminals are associated, leading to stigmatization of the immigration population and promoting ethnicization processes. This analysis also identified moments and places of complicity, solidarity and understanding of the phenomenon of migration. These incidents involved not only the church but also newspaper editorials that present a paradigmatic reflection in favor of immigration and the opinions of various sectors that call for a new era for immigration in Chile. Finally, when analyzing the link between border policies and immigration policies during the studied period, we discovered that the two categories of policies reinforce each other, contributing to the stigmatization of the migrant subject. In this sense, we can say that social boundaries result from geopolitical boundaries. Nonetheless, just as the latter can be crossed in spite of a rigid legal framework, the former are also permeable despite the stigma placed upon the minority group.

This research also demonstrates that symbolic boundaries, which are established by power relations between groups, are not ready to open, despite an understanding that the opening of geopolitical boundaries is beneficial for the border region, which is composed of territories of both countries. This is clear to many local actors who are clamoring for an immigration policy specific to the region. Barth states, "categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on a lack of mobility, contact or information, yet that does not mean the destruction of borders" (1976, p. 2). In this regard, we believe that like the social boundaries between ethnic groups, the permeability of geopolitical boundaries does not mean the loss of cultural differences, which may persist in spite of interethnic contact and interdependence. However, if social boundaries are rigid, processes of ethnicization will alter social cohesion in the border region.

In this article, we have analyzed press statements about the facts and what the press takes from political speeches. Reading those who are given room on the editorial page, we cannot say that this is what happens. However, we reiterate that the press constructs reality and that the approach to Bolivian immigrants presented here is both contradictory and ambiguous; moreover, it has become part of the sociocultural heritage of Tarapacá's citizens. Therefore, we conclude that the coverage of *La Estrella de Iquique* has contributed to forging social frontiers.

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