Articles

Traditional and emerging dimensions of border security in the far north of Chile

Dimensiones tradicionales y emergentes de la seguridad fronteriza del extremo norte de Chile

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Abstract

This article investigates the assumptions by which the border security agenda in the extreme north of Chile is constructed and some of its foreseeable consequences. These assumptions focus on the validity of traditional threats and their overlap with elements of renewed security, classified as transnational threats. Based on multiple interviews and discussions with academics and decision makers in 2019, it is determined that interpretations that consider border relations as a security field prevail, although they begin to consider speeches referring to cooperatives cross-border dynamics in an incipient way.

Keywords: border security, geopolitics, securitization, far north of Chile, border.

Resumen

Este artículo indaga en los supuestos por los cuales es construida la agenda de seguridad fronteriza en el extremo norte de Chile y en algunas de sus consecuencias previsibles. Estos supuestos se centran en la vigencia de amenazas tradicionales y en su superposición con elementos de seguridad renovada, catalogados como amenazas transnacionales. Con base en una serie de entrevistas y discusiones con académicos y tomadores de decisiones realizadas en 2019, se determina que prevalecen interpretaciones que consideran las relaciones fronterizas como un campo propio de la seguridad, aunque de manera incipiente se comienzan a considerar discursos referidos a dinámicas cooperativas transfronterizas.

Palabras claves: seguridad fronteriza, geopolítica, securitización, extremo norte de Chile, frontera.

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Introduction

On the border of the extreme north of Chile, diverse social, political, cultural, and economic phenomena coexist, among others, that are associated with the local and cross-border, historical, and contemporary dynamics of those who inhabit these spaces (González, 2006). However, beyond these interactions, the agenda of the Chilean State toward that region has traditionally focused on the area of security (Troncoso, 2017; García Pinzón, 2015a, 2015b). Currently, these initiatives combine traditional and renewed elements associated, in the first case, with nineteenth-century inter-state conflicts, and, in the second, with the emergence of various transnational threats such as drug trafficking and smuggling.

Although the Chilean specialized literature has extensively confirmed these traditional and emerging phenomena (Ghisolfo Araya, 1989; Santis, 1998; Garay, 2005; Griffiths, 2009), in the security agenda, it has paid less attention to analyzing where its ideational foundations come from. Consequently, from a critical perspective, this article aims to investigate the assumptions by which the border security agenda is constructed in the extreme north of Chile while seeking to explore the consequences of the application of specific policies inspired by these premises.

To this end, the article analyzes how both traditional and emerging threats have contributed. On the one hand, there is the hypothesis that the traditional threats have been formed around a dominant—and still present—historical vision of classical geopolitics (Ghisolfo Araya,1989; Podestá, 2004; Carvajal, 2007), which is expressed through categories associated with the national interest, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. On the other hand, there is the conjecture that the so-called emerging transnational threats such as drug trafficking, smuggling, and human trafficking, among others, which are present in the extreme north of the country (Griffiths, 2009; Troncoso, 2017), have been promoted by securitizing discourses coming from the central power of the State and the armed forces, who observe these territories as empty spaces that do not have effective government control.

Among the main consequences of the predominance of a security agenda inspired by the assumptions mentioned above, there is a certain divergence from other views focused on the possibilities of endogenous development of the border areas, which are nevertheless beginning to be considered in academic discussions. These are inspired by categories such as the self-determination of indigenous peoples, cultural borders, and mobility, among others, which emphasize the local communities that inhabit the borders and are affected by security policies.

In order to investigate the assumptions above, this work concentrated on a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews and the development of discussion workshops, from which a series of categories were derived, such as extreme zones, internal borders, drug trafficking, contraband, hot borders, gray zones, cultural borders, self-determination, and communities, among others. From these instances of dialogue, this article analyzes trends, sometimes in conflict, that emerge from a series of discourses. This methodological approach, called category articulation (Weldes, 2009), consists of the process by which meaning, from cultural materials and linguistic resources, is created and fixed through the establishment of chains of connotation between detected discursive elements, which are associated or linked (Dalby, 1990). This process implies the combination of linguistic resources to produce contingent and contextually specific

representations of the world (Vitelli, 2011). This last element makes it possible to investigate the ideational assumptions of geopolitical precepts and the construction of threats to the northern border, through the analysis of different discourses that intervene in the creation of geopolitical strategies toward this territory, and how these are linked to give rise to this scenario of securitization. Following Dalby (1990), the analysis focuses on the links between political discourse and defense policy issues and how policymakers perceive the threats that affect the achievement of the objectives of the State.

This contribution focuses first on addressing some of the main theories that explain the emergence of security threats. Next, it addresses, from this same debate, the definition of threats in border areas, particularly in the extreme north of Chile. Subsequently, it details and analyzes the results of the interviews and workshops in which key actors from Chilean academia linked to security studies participated. Finally, these interviews are compared with the discussion resulting from the theoretical framework presented.

Theoretical Aspects

The Problem of Security from Classical Premises: Some Realist and Geopolitical Variants

Authors such as Van der Pijl (2016) have pointed out that the discipline of international relations is a securitized field, where the problem of multiple threats to security has been present since its origins. Realist assumptions, centered on the conflict inherent in human nature, have existed from thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes or Nicolas Machiavelli, through the predominance of the realist paradigm in international relations during the first part of the twentieth century (Morgenthau, 2005), to the assumptions of defensive and offensive neo-realism that have predominated since the 1970s (Walt, 1985; Mearsheimer, 2014).

In synthesis, the realist variants are defined by the power that a State possesses or is in a position to acquire, along with highlighting its ability to circumvent anarchy through balance or other strategies. Meanwhile, the threats to the State are understood from a vulnerable position in power relations or the structure of equilibrium (Walt, 1985). In one of its aspects—the balance of threats—while States may be concerned about their security, this is not in relation to the predominance of a power, but in relation to the predominance of threats to their security (Walt, 1985).

According to this variant of neo-realism, what would take precedence in the international system would be a balance of threats, achieved by bringing the weakest political units closer to their respective centers of power, and where State behavior is a response to threats coming from other States. The latter result from a combination of factors (Walt, 1985), where geographic proximity is key, but not exclusive. In practical terms, these are countries that, for example, share historical borders and border rivalries.

Interstate threats are also a central concern of classical geopolitics (Nogué & Font, 2001). For this perspective, territorial positioning is what determines the geopolitical characteristics that a country possesses (Cabrera, 2019). Its premises are based on the territorial expansion of States at the expense of other adjacent political units. The above highlights the border as a problematic space subject to multiple threats, given the territorial contiguity with other State entities that pursue similar purposes (Buzeta, 1978).

For the realists, from a material perspective, the territory is considered a determining element in the acquisition of power. Therefore, the relationship between realism and geopolitics, even though they have a different purpose, combines precepts to achieve similar objectives (Cabrera, 2019). Indeed, if realism focuses on the acquisition of power as a way to protect political units within the framework of international anarchy, geopolitics examines how the spatial locations of countries, regions, and resources influence foreign policy decisions (Cabrera, 2019).

Critical Geopolitics and the Social Construction of Threats

While the current trend has been to consider the broad perspective of security (Buzan et al., 1998), classical paradigms such as geopolitics persist, especially in terms of political practices in relation to State borders (Carvajal, 2007). Indeed, the classical geopolitical argument, associated with interstate conflict and military threat, has been repeatedly used as a securitizing discourse (more on this in the following section).

Critical geopolitics, on the other hand, generates explanations for the different territorial discourses and their representations (Cairo, 1993; Ó Tuathail & Dalby, 1998), in order to know and examine the underlying elements that are found, especially in the official discourse on a territorial space (Agnew, 2006). From this critical perspective, the interweaving between security and geopolitics is found within an imaginary plane of state agents and related intellectuals, who assume strategies to address perceived threats (Cabrera, 2017).

The above means that statesmen, analysts, and intellectuals who are close to State agencies, as the bearers of an official discourse, access a particular reality that occurs at the borders without mediating or omitting their particular representations or meanings. Specifically, they consider *per se* that every border is unsafe since it is perceived as a space adjacent to international chaos or a problematic space without State control (Benedetti, 2018). In this way, the borders of the State are conceived as an objective and immutable reality, as a reified or separate entity from the particular practices and discourses that produce and maintain them.

In this sense, the discourses configure a knowledge that is instrumental to the doctrinal interests of the State, promoting, for example, ideas about the configuration of space and national culture as a homogeneous whole, which makes it possible to have greater control over areas considered problematic, such as borders. This control, overlapped with the problem of security, translates into legitimizing the deployment of material and symbolic forces to social and political processes perceived intersubjectively as threats.

Consequently, from these critical approaches to traditional geopolitics (Gómez de Ágreda, 2010; Figallo, 2003), it is questioned whether the problems inherent to

borders should be addressed as an objective and static reality, from the assumption that threats to States are "self-evident". This distinction means that the assumptions are deduced by the mere geographical position in which the borders are located—which is a determining cause of their condition of vulnerability—and by underestimating evidence from a particular case study (Weldes, 2009). Within this criticism arises the idea of the anthropomorphized State or one with agency capacity, since it is not properly defined who declares and defines the threat to security, except the State itself, understood as a univocal authority that corresponds to the nation, with a homogeneous identity and a single set of interests (Weldes, 2009).

In summary, from these critical perspectives, the threats faced by States are questions of interpretation, not general threats as traditional geopolitics professes. Moreover, in its broad definition, the classical variant omits, among other aspects, the social processes that occur within societies, like regional societies near the border. These processes can be mediated institutionally, internationally, and even informally.

Indeed, when Ó Tuathail (1996) problematizes the "semantic field" of geopolitics—pointing out that critical geopolitics is not opposed to classical geopolitics—he explains that, in short, he is not proposing to found anything new but rather to "criticize" the rigor of an official discourse or narrative, which is usually a tool of power in itself. Nevertheless, it is possible to extend this criticism. In the first place, in this case, by unraveling or deconstructing (Ó Tuathail, 1996) the northern border as a complex problem, which can be viewed as informal, transnational, and multilateral, and not only as an official subjective representation. It is possible to explore, in broader terms, whether the extent to which the global dynamics present in this territory as a whole affect the conception of the public policies of the Chilean State. How could one go about unraveling the above? By delving into some of the contextual changes that have taken place in the territory and that have influenced the Chilean State to modify its positions in recent years. For example, through the signing of multilateral commitments on the protection of human rights of native groups present on the border[1] and their scope (Álvarez et al., 2020). Another consideration arises from taking into account other forms of power that compete or coexist with the Chilean State on the border. These points will be addressed later.

Securitization of the Agenda

Another relevant aspect in the field of security deals with the political and academic instrumentalization of specific issues that do not necessarily constitute objective threats or traditional security problems, such as inter-state conflicts.

From perspectives such as the Copenhagen School (Buzan, 1993; Waever, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998), it is argued, on the one hand, that security, in general, goes beyond

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[1] Reference to the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, to which the State of Chile has adhered since 2008. The indigenous communities invoke Convention 169, part VII, which states:

Governments should take appropriate measures, including through international agreements, to facilitate contacts and cooperation between indigenous and tribal peoples across borders, including activities in the economic, social, cultural, spiritual, and environmental fields.

the military aspects or traditional inter-state conflicts and also incorporates the social, political, economic, and environmental dimensions. On the other hand, the concepts of security and threat can also be used as political discourse, responding to specific actors and interests, which can identify certain issues and transform them into security issues, that is, to be "securitized" (Waever, 1995).

Considering that securitization means that various elements—political and social— not necessarily military or objective—military power—are liable to become a threat, it is necessary to investigate the factors that explain this phenomenon. The threat in this sense is not the product of objective evaluations but rather responds to historical structures and processes, where the elites or relevant actors identify certain problems as security problems, which respond to different discourses and meanings, and which ultimately determine the political agenda in this area (Waever, 1995; McDonald, 2008; Tickner, 2008; Verdes-Montenegro, 2015, 2016). Furthermore, taking into account the wide range of elements that can be identified as security matters, the context in which they are developed is also relevant, depending on whether a particular threat may be more or less felt by a particular sector of the population (Buzan, 1993; Buzan et al., 1998).

This perspective, like any critical theory, investigates the ambiguous and intersubjective nature of the concept of security, focusing mainly on the processes that transform a given phenomenon into a security problem. The above implicates those expressing the securitizing discourse, and whatever and whoever is part of the securitizing process (Orozco, 2006; Pérez de Armiño, 2007, 2013; Verdes-Montenegro, 2015). In this case, the border regions are the objects of preferential State attention, represented as spaces disconnected from the political center, and because of which it is argued that interventions are needed to provide protection to the local population and to ensure the integrity of the threatened territory.

Border Security in the Extreme North of Chile
Seem from Different Theoretical Approaches

The problem of security on the border has become vital in contemporary international relations. After the events of September 11, which marked both the interest and the turning point in the debate in this field (Van der Pijl, 2016), the discipline began to focus on the threats to the State from these complex areas. This has opened up the debate as to who should define and prevent the emerging problems present in the border areas, in which a State-centered view prevails.

Among other aspects of this phenomenon, there has also been a renewed interest in the perception of threats present at borders, due to the increase in "new threats" that are transnational or cross-border (Griffiths, 2009). Furthermore, the fact that most of the work on the triple frontier paradigm of South America—between Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina—has focused on its growing cross-border crime (Bello, 2013; Riquelme-Rivera et al., 2019) has had an impact on the treatment of the rest, filling the semantic field and the possibilities of an academic approach to these complex spaces. It should be noted that this study brings together three countries on the northern border: Chile, Peru, and Bolivia (Troncoso, 2017) (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 1. Map of the northern triple border of Chile before the Pacific War

Source: Amilhat Szary, 2016, p. 66.

In the case of the Southern Cone borders, and in particular in Chile, it also expresses the overlap between the dilemma of traditional threats, derived from territorial issues such as pending border disputes (Fuentes, 2008; Troncoso, 2017; García Pinzón, 2015a, 2015b), and the new ones, derived from issues such as the increase in smuggling and drug trafficking, among other negative flows present in these geographical areas called gray areas, empty spaces, or sparsely populated areas (Griffiths, 2009, 2017; Carvajal, 2007).

Figure 2. Definitive map of the northern triple border of Chile after the 1929 Treaty

This conjecture is plausible given that, in a sector of Chilean academia more allied to State agencies, the classic geopolitical discourse persists. Their argument states that "the relationship between empty spaces and a weak or regressive demographic structure, such as that presented by Chile, is susceptible to conflict" (Carvajal, 2007, p. 64). In practice, this is manifested, on the one hand, in the persistence of perceived threats based on border rivalries or their instrumentalization (Fuentes, 2008; Leyton,

2005; Correa, 2016; Troncoso, 2017). On the other hand, this influence can be interpreted from the perspective of securitizing practices (Waever, 1995; Tickner, 2008; Orozco, 2006, 2008), based on the new threats formulated by Latin American governments, which sometimes resort to them as a way of preserving power in the face of repeated governance crises in the region (Tickner, 2008), despite the change in the post-Cold War context and interstate conflict.

In these cases, border disputes continue to be an occasion for the reaffirmation of the "solidity" of States, consecrating sovereignty, and authority (Cairo & Lois, 2014). Moreover, in the face of the weaknesses of the governments of the region and repeated neighborhood disputes, "references to national unity seem to be substantiated by borders" (Cairo & Lois, 2014, p. 61). The same applies to the claims against Chile at the International Court of Justice by Peru (2011) and Bolivia (2013), where the authorities, in both cases, repeatedly appealed to national unity in the face of incidents arising in the context of these disputes.

Although within the discipline it was insistently stated that the arrival of globalization and that the growing interdependence of societies would lead to an increase in the penetration and porosity of borders (Ohmae, 1993), other perspectives have warned about the accentuation of border closure and containment policies in different regions, given the scenario of the proliferation of new threats (Garduño, 2003; Shamir, 2005). This puts a strain on the interests of the State and on academic approaches, which are manifested in government statements, as previously pointed out.

Intertwined Categories Relating to the Debate on Security on the Northern Border

The northern border of Chile stands out for the historical and cultural component that distinguishes it from the rest of the country, mainly because it is a space where historical and current cross-border connections predominate, led by local authorities and border communities (Castro, 2005; González, 2006, Ovando & Álvarez, 2011), together with the presence of the ancestral Aymara culture that inhabits and circulates in its border strip daily[2] (Garcés & Moraga, 2016; Álvarez et al., 2020) and for its late annexation to the Chilean territory after the War of the Pacific or the Saltpeter War from the Treaty of Ancón in 1883.

The border strip with Bolivia was be settled with the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1904, and later, in 1929, the Chilean-Peruvian border was established with the distribution of the captured provinces of Arica and Tacna (González, 2008). Despite these treaties, Chile has maintained border disputes with both countries, with the one with Peru and Bolivia being resolved through the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ICJ).

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[2] For example, within the informal economy based on the cross-border market present in this territory (between the regions of Chile and Bolivia), it contributes to the formation of new Aymara elites that integrate with global markets, through the use of local patterns and strategies, both long-standing and contemporary (Garcés & Moraga, 2016). It also makes it possible to address the production of actors and processes that configure border spaces, which account for the mobility within illicit economies, such as the trade in automobiles that enter Bolivia illegally through unauthorized crossings (Tassi et al., 2013, p. 4).

On the other hand, the north of Chile is characterized by being a peripheral territory, located 2 000 kilometers from the capital of the country, which, among other factors, makes it possible to consider this space as a disjointed territory or one disconnected from the central State, and where internal borders predominate. These areas are described as spaces of low population density, with limited State presence, and high geopolitical fragility, territories that coincide with the extreme regions (Correa, 2013).

However, in heuristic terms, three legitimate authorities operate in this territory according to their respective actors: *a*) the States involved; *b*) the sub-national agents, regional government, municipalities, and other social actors; and *c*) the indigenous Aymara population (Cornago, 2016). However, given the particularity of the border region, it is the first that imposes its legitimacy on the others, whose discourse is expressed around the problematic nature of the border space, added to the new dynamics of border transgressions that are understood as new security threats.

Having carried out this brief diagnosis of the border situation in the north of Chile, it is time to address some categories that account for the debate on the northern border, based on tracing, interpreting, and intertwining (Dalby, 1990) the geopolitical meaning that can be inferred from the content of a series of interviews and debates carried out in a workshop that brought together specialists and decision-makers.[3]

Regarding the possible consequences of a favorable ruling for Bolivia at the International Court of Justice in The Hague,[4] a scholar from the National Academy of Political and Strategic Studies (Academia Nacional de Estudios Políticos y Estratégicos, ANEPE),[5] an agency of the Ministry of National Defense of Chile, expresses concern if this judicial decision is favorable to the neighboring country. In this regard, he details the aspects of a new policy regarding the borders, which intertwines both traditional and new threats present on the northern border:

> The Hague's ruling is imminent (...) And it turns out that this ruling could eventually urge or force negotiations that involve sitting down. It could, hopefully not… we could present a hypothesis that has a certain credibility. I suppose that is possible if there is the issue of an enclave to solve. What happens beyond the issue of sovereignty? What happens with this issue that we are discussing [drug trafficking] if it is granted a certain tolerance in an enclave? And what happens to our security precisely because of what we are discussing? In other words, the decision of The Hague not only has a component of territorial sovereignty that could be questioned in Chile or could be affected in some way, even if it is functional at the level of the enclave

[3] This is the workshop called "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held on June 27, 2018, at the premises of the ANEPE , an agency of the Ministry of National Defense of Chile. Academics from different Chilean universities, policy institutes, and agencies of the Chilean State participated. The participation of the academics will be cited omitting their identity.

[4] Bolivia sued Chile at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Its argument was based on the rights and expectations that have been generated by the various negotiations undertaken between the two countries to provide an outlet to the sea for Bolivia, which is landlocked. In the case of Chile, the lawsuits filed against it by Bolivia and Peru at the International Court of Justice in The Hague are clear examples. The first alleges the violation of rights and expectations in the face of agreements to restore its maritime quality, the second in the absence of a clear delimitation of its shared maritime border with Chile.

[5] Taken from the participation of the scholar in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held in Santiago, Chile (27/06/2018).

> or shared territory, but behind it, there is another problem that is even more serious, that is, an eventual arrangement, of some kind, with Bolivia, although without affecting the sovereignty or cutting off the country, can also affect it very much, which is why we are discussing it here (...), that is why I wanted to contribute now, since, in some sense, the issue of security and the issue of drug trafficking can become very complicated in the face of an eventual negotiation with Bolivia.

Another aspect of the problems of the northern border strip refers to the use of the category of empty space and its concatenation with drug trafficking. It refers to the effective occupation of the empty spaces that proliferate on the northern border and that, following the narrative of the new threats, are filled by other actors (negative flows). In this regard, a researcher from ANEPE[6] highlights the limited presence of the State in those spaces and its consequences: "The problem of drugs and organized crime is also associated when these spaces are left empty in areas such as northern Chile". In the same instance, on the role of public policies with regard to empty borders or those lacking significant levels of population, she categorically stated that "There are situations caused precisely by the lack of State or the lack of services, which is what leads to drugs being found in families, or which leads to cartels replacing the State in the sense of providing services of different types (to these families)".

On a third dimension of analysis, the same scholar refers to the negative influence of geographical factors on the Chilean border—in classical geopolitical terms—and how this precept is linked to the discussion of emerging threats, particularly drug trafficking:

> Regarding the situation in the north and drug trafficking, of course, we have as our neighbors (...) two of the largest producers of cocaine in America, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and we have the latter two (...) I wonder what role Chile will play today in the geopolitics of drugs, not as a transit country but as a destination country. And it is beginning to play a more active role, and that may also eventually worsen the problem. I am giving it as a probability, not as a certainty (...) criminal organizations I say it very carefully, I repeat, it is not my aim to criminalize migration here.[7]

Another element mentioned at the beginning of this work, which is relevant to the trend for securitizing the border, refers to the fact that, when diagnosing the threats present on the northern border of Chile, there is a tendency to equate the realities described by the categories of internal borders and gray areas affected by drug trafficking or the so-called lawless areas. The above follows the discussion that predominated in South American academia regarding the emblematic triple border of Paraguay. In this regard, a professor of geopolitics said the following in an interview:

> When the notion of the triple frontier was recently re-articulated—due to Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay—the connotation of the phrase was always negative; it was always that it was a place for the spread of terrorism, drug

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[6] Taken from the participation of the researcher in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held in Santiago, Chile (06/27/2018).

[7] Taken from the participation of the researcher in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held in Santiago, Chile (06/27/2018).

> trafficking, illegal trade, of money laundering (...), look what was said about the possible presence of traffic of radioactive elements. All of that was talked about, and I believe that it was talked about without much basis in reality (personal communication with a professor of the Universidad de Santiago, held on May 15, 2018, in Santiago, Chile).

The analysis continues with the description of the need to reflect the triple frontier from a developmental approach of geopolitics, as opposed to the securitizing approach (following the emblematic frontier of Paraguay), to which South American academia adhered uncritically. From the concatenation of categories, it may be observed that what predominates is the so-called catastrophist thesis of the triple frontier:

> In other words, the idea of a triple frontier today has more to do with business opportunities, such as improving the circular flow of different possibilities and views. I also believe there was a responsibility, in inverted commas, because it was an unnoticed responsibility of the academic sector, which at some point followed a series of, what I call catastrophist theses, that the triple frontiers were necessarily going to be a kind of blossoming of national sovereignty. Because of that, there were lawless areas because, of course, at one point, the model of the lawless area was precisely Paraguay (personal communication with a professor of the Universidad de Santiago, held on May 15, 2018, in Santiago, Chile).[8]

The interviewee delves into a critical discussion regarding this topic, which concerns whether theoretical geopolitical approaches to the border are reflected in Chilean geopolitical strategies toward the northern border. There would be two competing approaches, that of opportunities, and that of threats:

> At present, I don't know if there is development geopolitics linked to this. I believe it has not developed into geopolitics, but I would say that national geopolitics, and others too, are much more receptive to the opportunity approach than the threat approach, which at one time was the dominant one. In other words, when one spoke of the triple frontier, one imagined fake watches, counterfeit CDs, the transfer of money to Hezbollah, all things that still exist, but which today are measured more realistically (personal communication with a professor of the Universidad de Santiago, held on May 15, 2018, in Santiago, Chile).

Continuing with the argument above, the one referring to securitizing the border through the analogy of the emblematic triple border of Paraguay, the ANEPE workshop points out, concerning the threat of drug trafficking in Latin America and particularly in the case of Chile, the effect of the development of an economy based on legal markets on the northern border of Chile, this time referring to the case of Mexico:

> We talked about the subject of Mexico, and he always told me: you Chileans should worry because you are in a complex area, and we believe that for

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[8] The Paraguayan model is described as follows by the interviewee: "Paraguay was an area that simply [...] an idea that the State by not being regulated [...] being the most corrupt State in South America, something that today I do not know if it is so, because Bolivia, Haiti, Paraguay, dispute the title, but they caused a certain rivalry".

you, the issue is going to get bigger, it is going to become more complex. Therefore, I think that this awareness of the problem is a contribution that we can make to how serious it can become (...). And well, you were talking about an economy, which is at the root of the problem. As long as there is an economy that sustains this and that encourages the distribution of drugs, this will continue, it will not decrease (personal communication with a professor of the Universidad de Santiago, held on May 15, 2018, in Santiago, Chile).

Finally, a relevant topic for this work, which contributes to the discussion on the geopolitical dilemmas that are visible at the borders and their academic approaches, is the debate about no longer perceiving the State as a univocal authority, with a homogeneous identity, and a single set of State interests toward the border. The above means going beyond the use of the category of the anthropomorphized State as if it were a chimera. A key informant of the ANEPE appeals to critical geopolitics[9] by referring to the plurality of international views and processes present on the northern border, which radiate toward the neighboring countries. The same informant highlights the Aymara culture as an inhabitant of the border which expands its view of the border based on its local demands inspired by the self-determination of peoples:[10]

So it is not surprising that today they say, "Well, the State has abandoned us, so let's create our own organization, we want self-determination" and the explanation comes precisely from the writings of Preciado and Cairo (...) and which are very interesting, because one begins to observe that this phenomenon occurs, not as it usually does, from the State downwards, toward the person. Here it originates from the person, and goes upwards, from the person it goes to the families, then to the communities, and it spreads, and with the word, there is a geopolitical word that is (...) radiating that power and that influence, and that also happens in the culture very strongly. Three elements are really important that one should observe, but from the community, from here we don't get anything, one should go to the community and see what happens, how the different communities have similar or divergent views, how on the other side of the border the same thing happens, what happens with the Aymaras and the exchanges that take place?[11]

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[9] On the contributions of critical geopolitics, the same informant points out:

Geopolitics is taking shape, the thing is that it has been happening for a long time, and what is happening is that we, in Chile at least, as far as my knowledge goes, are still stuck in a classical outlook (...), and this is where geopolitics makes an appearance. What is interesting in critical geopolitics is that it looks precisely at a series of organizations and communities that are involved in a certain area, and that develop economically, carry out economic exchanges, and exercise power. Indeed, they exercise power in their areas, and there are geopolitical effects, because that cord expands from their communities.

[10] The original Aymara groups inhabit the north of Chile, the south of Peru, and the center-west of Bolivia. They mainly work in agriculture and border trade. The Aymara communities of the border region and their rural municipalities have had and still have a view of space and an identity resulting from their changing spatial paths, in which the cross-border component from and to Peru and Bolivia is crucial (Álvarez et al., 2020).

[11] Taken from the participation of the scholar in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held in Santiago, Chile (27/06/2018).

This view of the scholar from ANEPE highlights the social processes that occur within regional societies near the border and the various actors who discuss the particular content of State interests, whether they are officials representing the foreign ministries, civil society, or border residents, among other actors. In short, it breaks down the State by scale, a key effort to address the complexity of borders while not losing the centrality of the State, given the emerging threats on the border:

> Today, things have changed because of the globalizing effect, etc. (…) and they have changed because people have also taken center stage, therefore, the phenomena that occur in the northern macro-zone, in which we must not forget that we have two triple borders, one that is rather hot, and another that is not so hot. However, one usually sees it so far away from here [unintelligible words], so this phenomenon is really important. And what I was saying, it is very important to begin to explain what is really happening in the communities, that is, in my opinion, extremely important that the State's view has to be complementary to them, in order to win them over, so that they don't want to leave us tomorrow by using their self-determination, and decide to start living apart.[12]

However, this outlook defines more broadly different dimensions of the border, revealing who declares and defines the security threat and the various competing interests on the border, especially when considering the Aymara presence in this territory. In this regard, there are two final considerations from the workshop mentioned above. The first was mentioned by a scholar from ANEPE concerning those who define the border as imaginary, following the idea of situated knowledge:

> And I speak from history, which is a different view than this one. Within this concept, the border is movable (…), we have to talk about political borders, economic borders, cultural borders; hence, my question is the following: can we make a model, from the Metropolitan Region, to fix the problems of the North of Chile, or it is better to conclude that the borders must be defined (I am talking about cultural borders, for example, borders or border crossings) by those who live there, those who know the situation; because otherwise, how are we going to change the habits of the Aymaras who have, for example, in the north, from Pisiga to Choque, and from Pisiga to Bolívar, that natural crossing?[13]

Furthermore, the professor of the Institute of International Studies of the Universidad de Chile points out the last item referring to the role that the local communities play in these new debates where the discourses on the new threats, the effective sovereignty, and the self-determination of peoples are linked. These elements account for the complexities of the contemporary borders and particularly of this frontier under study:

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[12] Taken from the participation of the scholar in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held in Santiago, Chile (06/27/2018).

[13] Taken from the participation of the scholar in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held in Santiago, Chile (06/27/2018).

Let us suppose that the local communities consider that this step is within their customs (...), that is to say, it is illegal, meaning it would be necessary to make a whole plan, or an exercise to make these areas compatible, because that is the way, because they are interested in exercising power, so that (power) pertains to that space. This is worrisome because we have seen in the far North certain movements that point in the direction of the self-determination of peoples, or that would point toward the self-determination of peoples. So how can one maintain effective sovereignty over the border? In my opinion, with a response from the State that has to do with an empowered authority. In this sense, the law to strengthen regionalization seems to be a rather poor response, in my opinion. That would be my contribution, that is, to look at the border as an exercise of power that is territorial integrity, tension, government.[14]

Conclusions

In the Norte Grande border of Chile, diverse phenomena associated with traditional and emerging threats coexist. This is the case of the problem of smuggling and drug trafficking, elements that are part of the routine or habitual border agenda. These elements have been partially associated with border disputes, to the point that those interviewed saw the judicial verdict on this as a potential threat.

Specifically, in the area analyzed, linked to border security, a tendency toward a securitizing approach in the discourse regarding this area of the country can be seen, with the agenda of the "traditional threats" overlapping with the agenda linked to the so-called "emerging threats". This connection can be inferred from the concatenation of categories that are derived from the transcriptions of interviews and workshops. These interviews and workshops reflect the securitizing approach of the debate on borders. The above makes it possible to infer how the construction of threats to the northern border and geopolitical strategies toward this territory are carried out but adds the new component of ancestral demands based on the self-determination of the peoples who inhabit this border. This crossing of discourses is one of the novel elements of this research.

On the one hand, regarding traditional threats, it is possible to observe the revitalization of nineteenth-century controversies linked to territorial issues in the border area, which are reflected in the relationship between Chile and Bolivia. In this case, there is a tendency to speak about securitization on the northern border agenda from a perspective of possible post-settlement scenarios. Although, in part, the local dynamics and practices—para-diplomatic and ethnocultural—of the region are ignored, omitted, or contradicted, some discourses collected in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande" give a forthright account of the political scope of this new consideration.

On the other hand, concerning the emerging threats associated with the increase in smuggling and drug trafficking, the discourses collected aim to confront the non-military and transnational risks that would affect the security of the country from their

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[14] Taken from the participation of the scholar in the workshop "The evolution of Chilean geopolitics in light of the border problems of Norte Grande", held in Santiago, Chile (06/27/2018).

introduction from the northern border, which is considered—from the center of political power—as a vulnerable space without effective control.

Complementary to this last point, another item that places the matter of securitization both in the public agenda and in the academic debate is related to the fact that, given the proliferation of academic works on the new threats brought about by September 11, the reality described by internal borders and gray areas is beginning to be equated. This response from different academic centers overestimated the contribution of the discussion of the new threats and underestimated the possibilities of a geopolitical development of extreme or border regions, focused more on the possibilities of cooperation between regions of different countries that share territory. Nevertheless, the interviews reviewed reveal a new concern for the role of the communities that inhabit the border strip in northern Chile, mainly based on the debate on self-determination of peoples, which overlaps with the debate on the effective presence of the State on the border.

Acknowledgments

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