Migratory crisis in northern Chile. Information frames of the regional press

Crisis migratoria en el norte de Chile. Encuadres informativos de la prensa regional

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Abstract

The article analyzes the migratory crisis that occurred in the Tarapacá Region in Chile during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the perspective of the informative frames that are used by the regional media. The study was developed from a qualitative research perspective, through a content analysis of the news on the displacement of the migrant population to the north of Chile, published by four Chilean regional newspapers during 2020. The results show that the main frame of the information related to the problem examined is that of attribution of responsibility, concluding that the role of national, regional and local government authorities becomes the main focus of attention of the news on the humanitarian and health effects of the crisis.

Keywords: COVID-19, humanitarian crisis, media, migration, Theory of Framing.

Resumen

El artículo analiza la crisis migratoria acontecida en la región de Tarapacá en Chile durante la pandemia de COVID-19, se tomó en consideración la perspectiva de los encuadres informativos que son utilizados por los medios de comunicación regional. El estudio se desarrolló desde una perspectiva cualitativa de investigación, mediante un análisis de contenido de las noticias sobre el desplazamiento de la población migrante hacia el norte de Chile, publicadas por cuatro diarios regionales chilenos durante 2020. Los resultados evidencian que el principal encuadre de las informaciones relacionadas con la problemática examinada es el de atribución de responsabilidad. Se concluye que el rol de las autoridades gubernamentales de carácter nacional, regional y local se transforma en el principal foco de atención de las noticias sobre los efectos humanitarios y sanitarios de la crisis.

Palabras clave: COVID-19, crisis humanitaria, medios de comunicación, migración, Teoría del Encuadre.

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Introduction

Since 2020, humanity has witnessed the devastating effects of COVID-19, which has caused millions of infections and deaths worldwide and forced the implementation of urgent government policies focused on mass vaccination, limitation of personal mobility, and economic aid, among others, as the main measures to deal with the terrible consequences of the pandemic. Unfortunately, the pandemic has strongly impacted the most vulnerable social groups, such as the elderly, the chronically ill, the homeless, and migrants.

Cabieses and collaborators (2020) analyze the factors associated with migration during the COVID-19 pandemic, pointing out that migrants "... experience structural vulnerability because of restrictions to their access to necessary health care [...] This is especially frequent in the case of international migrants in an irregular situation, refugees, and migrants living in poverty" (p. 30), which transforms them into one of the most disadvantaged groups affected by the coronavirus pandemic (Gaete Quezada, 2021; Irazuzta & Ibarra, 2021).

In addition, the phenomenon of migration to Chile has been growing since 2005, becoming a significant aspect of the national reality. According to the estimates of foreign population of the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2021), as of December 31, 2020, there were 1 462 103 foreign residents in some regions of the country, mostly concentrated in the metropolitan region (62% of the total). The Tarapacá region, according to the INE, is the region of the country with the fourth highest percentage of migrants in that period, equivalent to 4.7% of the total.

As established by the current Chilean political-administrative division, the Tarapacá Region is organized into two provinces (Iquique and Tamarugal) and seven communes (Iquique, Alto Hospicio, Pozo Almonte, Camiña, Colchane, Huara and Pica). According to Gonzalez Miranda (1999), the Tarapacá Region

> was occupied by the Chilean Army in November 1879, in the so-called Tarapacá campaign at the beginning of the Pacific War, and annexed to Chilean territory in 1883 after the treaty with the Republic of Peru known as the Treaty of Ancón. (p. 56)

In 2020 there was a migration crisis in the Tarapacá region, a border territory in the northern part of Chile, initially caused by the closing of borders decreed by the Chilean state to stem the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. However, it developed in parallel to the last period of the parliamentary discussion on the new migratory legislation approved towards the end of that year, which transformed the region into a media and political epicenter of interest due to the growing migration to the country.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to answer the following question: What were the journalistic frames of the print media of the Tarapacá region in Chile on the migration crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic? Thus, this study aims to analyze the migration crisis in the Tarapacá region in Chile from the perspective of its framing in the regional print media. This is done through a qualitative content analysis to identify the approaches used in the news published during 2020 for an intentional non-probabilistic sample of regional newspapers, using the generic frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000)as analytical categories.

The first part presents a brief theoretical framework of migration in Chile and Framing Theory as the main topics analyzed in the article, followed by the presentation of the main methodological aspects of the study that analyzes 119 news items on the migration crisis in northern Chile, published in 2020 by newspapers in the Tarapacá region. Subsequently, the results on identifying generic approaches are presented by extracting relevant incidents from the news texts related to the problem studied and validating them through the triangulation technique with the literature described in the article's theoretical framework. It is concluded that the main frames used by the regional newspapers included in the sample were the attribution of responsibility and conflict, especially with respect to the role of government authorities.

Theoretical framework

Since 2005, migration to Chile has presented distinctive characteristics and is one of the fastest-growing migration flows in the southern cone (Aninat & Vergara, 2019; Azócar, 2016; Bernales et al., 2017; Cociña Cholaky, 2020; Dammert & Erlandsen, 2020; Gissi-Barbieri & Polo Alvis, 2020; Hidalgo Dattwyler et al., 2021; Joiko & Vásquez, 2016; Liberona Concha, 2015; Stang Alva et al., 2020; Stefoni & Brito, 2019; Stefoni & Stang, 2017; Zepeda Vega & González Campos, 2019).

The migration flow to Chile is typically female, with high levels of schooling and active working age (Azócar, 2016; Chepo et al., 2019; Fernández Labbé et al., 2020; Joiko & Vásquez, 2016; Silva Segovia et al., 2018; Stefoni & Stang, 2017; Valdebenito & Lube Guizardi, 2015; Zepeda Vega & González Campos, 2019).

Research on migration in Chile has been a prolific field over the last two decades (Stefoni & Stang, 2017), with topics of interest such as:

- Cross-border migration (Navarrete Yáñez, 2017; Tapia Landino & Ramos Rodríguez, 2013; Valdebenito & Lube Guizardi, 2015).

- Outdating of migration regulations (Aninat & Vergara, 2019; Azócar, 2016; Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Gissi-Barbieri & Polo Alvis, 2020; Joiko & Vásquez, 2016; Navarrete Yáñez, 2017; Oyarzún Serrano et al., 2021; Stefoni & Brito, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2021).

- Labor market and economic impact (Azócar, 2016; Fernández Labbé et al., 2020; Silva Segovia et al., 2018).

- Discrimination and racism toward migrants (Cociña Cholaky, 2020; Fernández Labbé et al., 2020; Stefoni & Stang, 2017).

- Focusing on specific Latin American migrant groups: Bolivians (Leiva Gómez & Ross Orellana, 2016; Liberona Concha, 2015), Peruvians (Valdebenito & Lube Guizardi, 2015), Haitians (Stang Alva et al., 2020) and Colombians (Fernández Labbé et al., 2020; Gissi-Barbieri & Polo Alvis, 2020; Silva Segovia et al., 2018; Zapata Martínez, 2021).

One of the relevant topics for research on migration in Chile is the incorporation of the migrant population into the national education system (Jiménez Vargas et al., 2017; Joiko & Vásquez, 2016). Likewise, there are some studies that describe migrants' access to the Chilean health system, especially from the perspective of their social vul-

nerability (Bernales et al., 2017; Cabieses et al., 2020; Chepo et al., 2019; Zepeda Vega & González Campos, 2019).

Another topic related to the social reality of migrants in Chile is their integration into precarious camps in different Chilean cities, especially in the north of the country, which are developed on the basis of self-construction (González Pizarro & González Tello, 2020; López-Morales et al., 2018; Palma & Pérez, 2020).

The territorial settlement variable is another characteristic of the phenomenon of Chilean migration, which is mostly concentrated in the metropolitan region and the Norte Grande regions of the country (Aedo, 2017; Azócar, 2016; Bernales et al., 2017; Joiko & Vásquez, 2016; López-Morales et al., 2018; Silva Segovia et al., 2018).

According to some studies, territories such as the regions of Tarapacá or Arica and Parinacota are common locations of migration flow in Chile due to their status as border territories (Hidalgo Dattwyler et al., 2021; Leiva Gómez & Ross Orellana, 2016; Liberona Concha, 2015; Tapia Landino & Ramos Rodríguez, 2013; Ovando et al., 2020; Valdebenito & Lube Guizardi, 2015; Vicuña & Rojas, 2015).

Likewise, in the generation of knowledge related to migration in Chile, there are studies developed with a qualitative approach using discussion groups and focus groups (Fernández Labbé et al., 2020; Tapia Landino & Ramos Rodríguez, 2013) or discourse analysis (Liberona Concha, 2015) as research techniques.

Furthermore, migration is an important topic for media coverage worldwide (Fernández & Corral, 2016; Ramos Rojas & Martínez Mendoza, 2021; Ynciarte, 2021), a situation that also occurs in Chile because of its influence on different political aspects such as presidential elections (Dammert & Erlandsen, 2020) or government policies on said issue (Stefoni & Brito, 2019).

However, Dammert and Erlandsen (2020) observe that the Chilean media's view of migration follows the international trend, which focuses on conflict and the criminalization of migrants:

> a political discourse focused on punitive populism, on the unnecessary generalization of stigmatizing images and on the consolidation of a metaphor that links migration with actions that endanger the community, mainly criminality. (p. 47)

Thus, greater relevance is given to the superficial chronicling of the threat to the national community, to the detriment of a deeper analysis of implications and projections of the phenomenon of migration in Chile (Ramos Rojas & Martínez Mendoza, 2021; Stefoni & Brito, 2019).

Stefoni and Brito (2019) even state that there is an overlapping political and media discourse on migration in Chile, which thus installs a hegemonic perspective that criminalizes migrants in Chilean society.

On the other hand, Framing Theory (FT) emerged in the late 1970s from the contribution of different fields of the social sciences, where the studies on framing developed by Bateson in social psychology in 1954 and later by Goffman in sociology in 1974 are of particular relevance (Aruguete, 2011; Ballesteros Herencia, 2015; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017; Muñiz, 2020; Piñeiro-Naval & Mangana, 2018, 2019; Ramos Rojas & Martínez Mendoza, 2021; Ynciarte, 2021).

However, the literature on FT recognizes that the contributions of Robert Entman (1993) became a fundamental basis for the development of studies on communicative frames (Muñiz, 2020; Piñeiro-Naval & Mangana, 2018). According to Entman (1993),

it is noteworthy how journalists frame the information they deliver to society by selecting some aspects of the social reality that promote specific points of view or perspectives on the reported facts and disregard other aspects considered less important within this issue.

Therefore, FT contributes a theoretical corpus widely used in the field of communication but also develops an interesting methodological foundation for numerous investigations on the impact and relevance of the media in different social issues (Gaete Quezada, 2021; Muñiz, 2020: Piñeiro-Naval & Mangana, 2018).

Hence, FT has evolved toward the identification of two major typologies of news framing: *1*) generic or deductive framing applicable to different topics, contexts, and time periods; *2*) specific or inductive framing for specific issues that allow for deeper and more detailed analysis, but are less susceptible of extrapolation toward other topics, contexts or epochs (Aruguete, 2011; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017; Muñiz, 2011; Piñeiro-Naval & Mangana, 2018, 2019).

One of the generic typologies of news frames frequently considered by FT studies has been developed by Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000), which identifies five types of frames of media representations: *1*) attribution of responsibility; *2*) human interest; *3*) conflict; *4*) morality; and, *5*) economic consequences (Aruguete, 2011; Ballesteros Herencia, 2015; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Gronemeyer, 2017; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017; Muñiz, 2011, 2020).

Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg's (2000) typology has been used to analyze the media coverage of migration as a significant news event in different Ibero-American countries (Fernández & Corral, 2016; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Muñiz, 2011; Ynciarte, 2021). For example, Ynciarte's (2021) study on the media framing of Venezuelan migration in Colombian and Ecuadorian newspapers concludes that the news associated with this migration flow mainly focuses on criminalization and the conflict generated with the local society as the main news frames.

In the case of Chile, there are some studies on journalistic frames related to migration, such as the studies of the presidential political discourse on migration carried out by Stefoni and Brito (2019). They identified an overlap between the media frames and the government's agenda of the time regarding migration in Chile. Also, there is a study by Dammert and Erlandsen (2020), who describe the preeminence of reporting over information in the approaches that emphasize the criminality attributed to migration in the media; or a study conducted by Gaete Quezada (2021) on the repatriation of migrants during the pandemic.

These studies reveal conflict and criminalization as common perspectives for the media frames included in the different samples of each research, coinciding with the conclusions of the research by Ynciarte (2021) for the case of Venezuelan migration in Colombia and Ecuador, or with the results found in the study by Gronemeyer and Porath (2017) for Chile.

Methodology

This work is developed from a qualitative research perspective by analyzing the phenomenon of migration in the Tarapacá region in Chile as a case study. In this research, the journalistic frameworks for the migration crisis which took place during the pandemic of COVID-19 are examined with the use of FT to identify the approaches in the news published by the regional print media.

According to Muñiz (2011), using a deductive model of FT implies identifying the previously defined frames as analytical variables of the content analysis of the news. In the case of the present study, this model is based on the method of Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000) to verify the presence of such media frames in the news included in the research.

The study considers qualitative content analysis as a data collection technique and follows the stages of the procedure proposed by Piñuel Raigada (2002), briefly described below:

1) Selection of analyzed documents

The study includes the following digital newspapers from the Tarapacá region: *El Longino* (EL), *El Sol de Iquique* (ESI), *Tarapacá Online* (TO) and *El Reportero de Iquique* (ERI). The selection of newspapers was made for convenience (Muñiz, 2011), considering three criteria for inclusion in the sample: *a*) newspapers in the Tarapacá region; *b*) having an online or digital version; *c*) free access to the full version of the news published.

Previous studies on migration news in Chile usually include the main Chilean newspapers of national circulation, especially *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, which belong to the hegemonic economic groups in the field of communications in Chile (Dammert & Erlandsen, 2020; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017). On the other hand, Liberona Concha (2015) analyzes migration from the perspective of the regional press, similarly to this research, privileging territorial proximity and the greater capacity to follow up on news about the regional or local social reality offered by such media.

2) Selection of analysis categories

The five frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000) are considered as analytical categories. The questions proposed in their taxonomy for the examination of each generic frame are used as reactive items to read the news included in the sample. Subsequently, the literature presented in the article is triangulated with the stories selected from each news item as critical incidents.

3) Selection of units of analysis

The unit of analysis of the study is each news item on migration obtained from the search engines on the websites of each regional newspaper included in the sample. Subsequently, the results were filtered by date of publication. There were 119 news items published from January to December 2020 on the migration crisis in the Tarapacá region. Editorials, letters to the editor or other types of sections available in each newspaper were excluded.

4) Selection of the counting system

The procedure for analyzing the information is qualitative. In the first stage, a file was created in MS Excel for each news item included in the study that identifies: *1*) title of the news item, *2*) date of publication, *3*) name of the newspaper that publishes it, *4*) identification of the predominant news frame, and *5*) web link to the news item.

In the second stage, each news item included in the study was coded to identify portions of text with significance in themselves according to the reactive items of each

frame of Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg's typology (2000). The paragraph was considered the unit of registration of the qualitative content analysis carried out in each news item.

Results

Assignment of responsibility

Does the information suggest that any level of government has responsibility for the issue or problem? One of the levels of government included in the news items examined is the provincial governments, as the administrative body responsible for applying the legal provisions for foreigners at the time of the study:

> The governor of Tamarugal, Jussef Araya Leiva, said, "as a government, we are taking the necessary precautions in the current pandemic to prevent further spread of the virus. In addition, we are mindful of the safety of those who live in Huara and that there is no disorder or disturbances for any type of problem that may arise". (*Gobernación del Tamarugal entregó kits sanitarios a migrantes en Huara*, 2020)

> The governor of Tamarugal emphasized that "it is extremely important to address this issue from a health and humanitarian point of view. It is even riskier for the resident community if we do not have a single place for them in Huara. COVID-19 is not under control, and we must remain alert, so we are working with various institutions, such as the Army, Health Department, PDI, the Carabineros and the municipality, so that we can work together as a preventive measure for the province since we again have migrants staying overnight in different streets of the commune. (*Gobernador del Tamarugal solicitó nuevamente Estadio de Huara para albergar a migrantes*, 2020)

It is important to note that with the legal changes introduced in 2021 in Chile by law 21.325 on Migration and Aliens Act, the state institutions responsible for migration issues will change significantly (Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Vásquez et al., 2021). However, at the time of this study, the provincial governments fulfill this role, which is why there are more references to this governmental body in the news.

The perspective of inter-institutional collaboration to address health and migration issues is also highlighted in some news stories:

> The Carabineros de la Tenencia Huara are providing cooperation to more than 400 Bolivian nationals in a camp in the commune of Huara waiting to enter their country since March 26 [...] In coordination with the Municipality of Huara and the Army, a joint effort has been made to try to solve their initial needs to some extent, providing them with tents so they can sleep and toilets, garbage containers and two cups of drinking water. (*Carabineros presta colaboración a bolivianos en campamento de Huara*, 2020)

> The government has always been willing to help these people as a humanitarian gesture, but we need to work together. For this reason, a few weeks ago, we requested the municipality of Huara to have a place to receive them. We received a response on October 21 and immediately coordinated with various institutions, the Chilean Army, Carabineros, PDI, Seremi Health, etc., so that while these people are in the commune of Huara, they have the necessary conditions. (*Gobernador del Tamarugal y la situación de migrantes en Huara,* 2020)

The efforts of Chilean state institutions reflect the complexity and multidimensionality of the migration crisis that occurred in the northern region during the pandemic, which encompasses humanitarian, health, legal, and social issues involved in this issue.

Another situation covered by the local press is the repatriation" of Bolivian citizens, and the role played by the Altiplano authorities:

> The Bolivian Minister of Defense, Fernando López, announced the repatriation plan for the Bolivian citizens. A reception and quarantine center will be built in Pisiga Bolivar for 6 days to carry out medical examinations, then they will remain there for 14 days, and after that, they will be able to return to their localities. "We know that for everyone, the situation of our compatriots on the border is of great concern, as it is also for the government. I wish to inform you that we are fitting out reception and quarantine centers in Pisiga to receive our compatriots coming from Chile" (*Bolivia anuncia que habilitará centros de acogida para repatriar a sus conciudadanos provenientes de Chile,* 2020)

> Governor Jofré recalled that today there is a new repatriation procedure, which was sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and which is the only way to return and enter by land to that country. (*Tras cumplir con la cuarentena, 44 bolivianos fueron repatriados, 2020*)

Also, the news about the repatriation of Bolivian citizens describes the role played by the provincial governor's office in coordinating the different bodies responsible:

> Currently, there are about 80 people who are living in private homes, and as a government, we will aid the Bolivian consul in this repatriation with all the necessary administrative procedures because no one can leave if they do not have everything up to date; otherwise, a problem would arise in Colchane. Finally, Governor Álvaro Jofré Cáceres reiterated that the institutional effort to house more than two thousand people had been the largest humanitarian operation ever carried out in the Tarapacá region. (*Hoy partió grupo de 34 personas a Bolivia tras cumplir cuarentena en albergue,* 2020)

> Forty-four Bolivian citizens, who completed the quarantine period in sanitary residences, traveled this Friday to Colchane to be reunited with their families, informed the governor Álvaro Jofré, who, together with the Seremi of Transport, Carlos Navarrete, the Carabineros and the PDI, verified that the return operation was carried out in optimal conditions. The governor said that with the return of the 44 people, "as a government, we have repatriated 2 646 Bolivian citizens to be reunited with their families". (*Tras cumplir con la cuarentena 44 bolivianos fueron repatriados,* 2020)

In addition, concerning irregular migration in the region, the local media describe the position of President Sebastián Piñera's government:

> The government has been clear that we are not in favor of irregular migration. That is why the foreigners who have arrived in the region are self-reporting in order to opt for a sanitary and humanitarian solution. This is the response we have given because we do not want to put the regional community and the migrants themselves at risk amid the pandemic we are experiencing. (*Gobierno anuncia mayor control de fronteras ante aumento de migrantes ilegales al país,* 2020)

> It is important to emphasize that as a government, we are fully addressing this situation from a humanitarian and sanitary point of view. For us as a government, migration through clandestine channels is absolutely reprehensible, as it is a crime, but we must have a contingency plan for the pandemic situation we are experiencing globally and clearly provincially and regionally. (*Gobernador del Tamarugal solicitó nuevamente Estadio Municipal de Huara para migrantes,* 2020)

According to the literature, the Chilean governmental capacity to face the requirements emanating from the migration flow will not only be determined by the subnational state institutions responsible for this issue according to the current regulations (Ovando et al., 2020), but will also depend on the discourse and political stance that each government develops toward migration (Cociña Cholaky, 2020; Dammert & Erlandsen, 2020; Stefoni & Brito, 2019).

Does the information suggest that any level of government has the ability to solve the problem? Border security emerges as a significant aspect in the news about the migration crisis in the Tarapacá region, assigning the national government an important responsibility:

> Clearly what we should see is what we can do to have better monitoring of the border, to be able to anticipate what happens at the border, how we are going to proceed with those people who are already inside Chile, what is the procedure that the Carabineros or the military forces have to adopt with respect to those people, what the PDI is going to do, what the Public Ministry is going to do, how we are going to proceed as a government, both the intendancies and the governorates. (*Migración: Galli visita el norte del país prometiendo "reforzar controles en las fronteras",* 2020)

> The local authority leader points to the government's responsibility in border care regarding the entry of foreign citizens through unauthorized crossings. This phenomenon—he suggests—has directly influenced the stagnation of the capital of Tarapacá in phase 2—"transition"—of the *Paso a paso* ("Step by step") plan, in which it has been engaged for a month. (*Iquique: alcalde pide reunión con ministro Delgado para abordar inmigración irregular en pandemia,* 2020)

The cross-border perspective of migration to Chile is relevant for national specialists (Hidalgo Dattwyler et al., 2021; Navarrete Yáñez, 2017; Tapia Landino & Ramos Rodríguez, 2013; Valdebenito & Lube Guizardi, 2015). However, such a massive migration flow was unprecedented in the country. In addition, security is important for the case in question, where borderization and police order are highly relevant (Aedo, 2017; Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Ovando et al., 2020).

Does the information suggest solutions to the issue or problem addressed? The published news items identify the new migration law as an important alternative to provide a solution to the migration crisis that has occurred since the outbreak of the pandemic:

> It creates a new institutional framework, for which a Migration Policy Council is established, whose task will be to permanently evaluate and propose improvements to migration policy in order to make it clear and transparent and thus address issues of education, health, housing, and labor. The reform also envisages the creation of a National Migration Service, which will have the appropriate structure and capacity to implement this new migration policy, not only as a manager of procedures but as a real channel to relate with migrants and disseminate and promote their rights and obligations. (*Presidente Piñera reiteró compromiso con migración legal y ordenada al visitar el complejo fronterizo Chacalluta,* 2020)

The outdated nature of Chilean migration regulations has been an important topic for several existing studies in the literature on the impact and projections for migration in the country (Aninat & Vergara, 2019; Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Oyarzún Serrano et al., 2021; Stefoni & Brito, 2019; Torres Matus, 2019). However, for specialists such as Vásquez et al. (2021), the new Chilean migration law is described as a "changing of the locks", which does not adequately guarantee the rights of migrants and proposes a tightening of migration control measures (Díaz Tolosa, 2020).

In addition, consular diplomatic collaboration was a key aspect in efficiently dealing with the magnitude of the migration flow at its most complex moment, especially in the repatriation process:

> We have sent more than 150 people by air through Santiago. He added that, at the same time, a significant group of his compatriots has been sent by land, more than 300 people who (Tuesday at noon) were repatriated yesterday through the Santa Rosa-Chacalluta Complex to enter the neighboring country. The transfer processes are carried out jointly [with] the Peruvian Consulates in Iquique and Arica, but the Consulate in Antofagasta is also joining in. (*Vía Tacna 300 peruanos regresaron ayer a su país desde Iquique,* 2020)

The attribution of responsibility is also an approach identified in other studies on media and migration in Chile (Gaete Quezada, 2021; Gronemeyer, 2017) or in Ibero-American countries (Fernández & Corral, 2016; Muñiz, 2011). For example, the study by Muñiz (2011) for the case of Mexico, although applying a quantitative approach to analyze the Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000) frames, coincides in identifying the frame of attribution of responsibility as dominant in the analysis of the news of the case studied.

In the present study, the proximity of the local press to provincial governments, municipalities, and regional legislative representatives transforms these governmental bodies into relevant actors for the information published on the current migration crisis (Gaete Quezada, 2021; Liberona Concha, 2015; Ovando et al., 2020).

Conflict

Does the information reflect disagreement between political parties, individuals, groups, institutions or countries? One of the focuses of news about the conflict during the migration crisis in northern Chile was the use of educational and sports facilities as shelters for migrants arriving in the area:

> A march and a blockade of route A 5 at the point of access to the town of Huara was carried out this Saturday by the Huara inhabitants. The action sought to publicize citizen discontent with the announcement that the Tamarugal government will again use the stadium of the town as a shelter for foreigners who enter the country irregularly. (*Vecinas y vecinos de Huara bloquean ruta en protesta por habilitación de albergue para migrantes,* 2020)

> The mayor of Iquique, Mauricio Soria Macchiavello, announced that he will not facilitate the educational establishments as migrant shelters again, whose number has increased in the last few days. The communal leader called on the health authorities to implement camps to receive foreign citizens but said that he will not provide municipal schools and that they will have to requisition them under the rules of the state of emergency. (*Alcalde Soria adelantó que no seguirá facilitando colegios municipalizados como albergues de migrantes,* 2020)

Another area of conflict during the pandemic was the last phase of the approval process of the new *Migration Law* in Chile, especially the guidelines formulated for the project:

> The deputy for Tarapacá said that "these guidelines are wrong and perverse. They encourage irregular entry into the country. We do not want people who risk their lives going through unauthorized and clandestine channels to arrive in our country thinking that they are going to have a better life and end up living in very bad conditions. Our objective is to watch over those millions of Chileans who today do not have a job and so that they can find one so that they can recover after the health and socioeconomic crisis we are experiencing". (*Parlamentarios de Chile Vamos emplazan a senadores de oposición a rechazar indicaciones a ley de migración: "Son perversas y erradas",* 2020)

> [Senator] Ebensperguer accused the opposition deputies of wanting uncontrolled migration. They want migrants to have the right to all the country's social benefits as soon as they enter, without having residency. They want them to have the right to social housing, for example. They want to restrict the grounds for prohibition of entry and expulsion. (*Senadora Ebensperger calificó como irresponsabilidad que parlamentarios recurrieran al Tribunal Constitucional por Ley de Migraciones,* 2020)

The political tensions described in the news reviewed above expose the divergent views existing in Chile on migration analyzed by various specialists (Cociña Cholaky, 2020; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017; Torres Matus, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2021). According to the related literature, such a situation transcends political authorities and the media to become an object of controversy within Chilean society (Aninat & Vergara, 2019; Cociña Cholaky, 2020; Stefoni & Brito, 2019).

Does any political party, individual, institution or country criticize or complain about any other political party, individual, institution or country? Various Chilean political authorities criticized the Bolivian government for preventing their compatriots from returning to their country at the beginning of the pandemic:

> Paiva described as "stubbornness" the Bolivian government's refusal to repatriate the affected Bolivians, among whom are pregnant women, the elderly, and children. "In my capacity as head of the National Defense of the Tarapacá region, I can only criticize the Bolivian authorities' stubbornness and indolence because they are not allowing their fellow citizens to return to their country". (*Jefe militar de Tarapacá criticó duramente a autoridades bolivianas por varados en la frontera,* 2020)

Thus, part of the regional journalistic coverage describes the diplomatic tensions caused, especially during the repatriation processes of Bolivian citizens at the beginning of the pandemic (Gaete Quezada, 2021), which emphasizes the political incapacity and excessive consular bureaucracy evidenced by the massive migration flows.

Another focus of conflict reported by the local press is related to the irregular entry of migrants through unauthorized border crossings and the reactions of different local and national actors in this regard:

> The Medical Association of Iquique [*Colegio Médico*] reacted with concern to the entry of several buses carrying foreign citizens to the Tarapacá region through unauthorized crossings. This Saturday, three buses with 160 Venezuelans arrived, for whom the Liceo A-7 was to have been enabled to fulfill their quarantine and regularize the required documents. However, the situation put Colmed on alert, whose leaders warned that this could have serious sanitary consequences. (*Colegio Médico alerta por ingreso irregular de inmigrantes en el norte: riesgo de rebrotes y prolongación del confinamiento,* 2020)

> This problem has been reported for years, and no government has taken charge. There is a lack of effective control at the border. Irregular migration does not occur through inaccessible channels outside the authorities' control; it does so near the Border Complex. We have reported that the few Carabineros and PDI personnel on the ground allow this access, in addition to the lack of support from the Chilean Army in these matters. I ask the president to allocate resources to make border control effective, to view this phenomenon in its complexity not only as something local but as something that affects the health of the region, the country, and the human rights of migrants. (*Un emigrante irregular dio positivo a examen de Covid-19 en Colchane,* 2020)

The control of irregular migration to Chile has become a priority not only for the current national government but also for regional and local authorities, positions that came into significant conflict during the approval of the new migration law in Chile (Aedo, 2017; Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Oyarzún Serrano et al., 2021; Vásquez et al., 2021).

Does the information refer to two or more positions on an issue? Among the areas of conflict identified by Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000) are reports about opposing positions on migration:

In Insulza's opinion, "if we say, 'here's a chance to look for a job in Chile', I think this is really dangerous; it is bringing people back again. We have already gone through this with the special visas, the democratic responsibility visa, [with] all that, all we do is to increase migration". (*Senador Insulza (PS) y rechazo a visa laboral a migrantes: "No podemos seguir convocando gente que venga a Chile a buscar trabajo",* 2020)

The UNAP researcher recalled that there are studies indicating that the percentage of migrants involved in crimes is minimal and that they also have higher education levels than Chileans. In addition, they are of active working age, which means less demand for public and health services. They also generate consumption and slow down inflation. Migration is a contribution in Chile; it is not true that they come to steal work from Chileans. There is no way to confirm its (veracity) in the studies (*Académico del INTE Pablo Mardones: "La migración es un aporte en Chile, no es verdad que vienen a robarle el trabajo a los chilenos",* 2020)

Both narratives expose contrasting perspectives on the labor market and economic impact of the current migration flow to Chile (Azócar, 2016; Fernández Labbé et al., 2020; Silva Segovia et al., 2018) and reinforce the need to carry out in-depth scientific studies that provide more compelling evidence to analyze more objectively the impact of this social reality.

Thus, the perspective of conflict in the analysis of the journalistic framing of the regional newspapers included in the study sample coincides with the results observed by similar research both for the Chilean case (Dammert & Erlandsen, 2020; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017) and for other recent Latin American cases (Ynciarte, 2021).

Human interest

Does the information use adjectives or personal descriptions that generate feelings of grievance, empathy, sympathy or compassion? At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was possible to observe that migrants and tourists who were affected by the economic causes of the pandemic were trying to return to their countries of origin:

Foreigners ask for help to return to Peru due to the complications caused by the coronavirus pandemic. "We need help" and "Vizcarra, remember your people in Chile" are phrases written on some of their signs. A similar situation occurred in Antofagasta, where dozens of Bolivian immigrants spent the night with their suitcases in front of the city hall, waiting to be transferred to their country. "We have no money, we have no residency in Chile, we are practically living on the street". (*Ahora inmigrantes acampan afuera del consultado de Perú en Providencia y piden ayuda para regresar a su país,* 2020)

More than 600 Bolivians have camped outside the Bolivian Consulate General in Santiago, compared to about 500 the day before, after losing their jobs and in some cases their homes during the COVID-19 health emergency. Among

> the people requesting help from their government are pregnant women, the elderly, and children. With tents and suitcases, the migrants settled in the square outside the diplomatic headquarters in Santa María Avenue, Providencia district, waiting for some form of repatriation. (*Suben a más de 600 los bolivianos acampando en las afueras de su consulado en Santiago*, 2020)

The deterioration of the economic situation, added to their irregular migratory status, imposed a complex situation on Latin American citizens residing in Chile, whose solution was to return immediately to their countries of origin. However, this was difficult due to the border closures in force at that time (Gaete Quezada, 2021; Irazuzta & Ibarra, 2021), but it reaffirmed the importance of family ties and support networks that prevail in the migratory processes worldwide (Zapata Martinez, 2021).

Does the information emphasize that individuals and groups are affected by the issue? The news published by the local media also referred to the migration flow generated during the second semester of 2020, entering Chile illegally through the borders of the Tarapacá region:

> Its purpose is to formulate, together with the children's network, effective measures to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents experiencing migration processes alone or in the company of their families, who are exposed to multiple risks and demand attention for their specific needs and situations (*Juzgado de Familia de Iquique capacitó a Carabineros de Colchane sobre infancia y adolescencia migrante y refugiada*, 2020)

The massive nature of the migration flow in northern Chile, from 2020 to date, has made a significant difference compared to the selective migration, mainly for work purposes, recorded in recent decades. It exposes the fragility of Chilean public institutions needed to manage the magnitude of this migratory episode in its humanitarian, health, and social aspects (Cociña Cholaky, 2020; Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Torres Matus, 2019).

Nevertheless, probably one of the most negative effects of the migration flow in the northern part of Chile is related to human trafficking:

> Upon noticing the police presence, the people tried to return to Bolivia, but some were apprehended. They stated that they had contacted a person in the town of Pisiga Bolivar who offered to take them to Chile through an unauthorized crossing point after receiving money. The person who contacted them was in the group, so he was arrested for migrant smuggling. He indicated that he coordinated with a Chilean woman who was in charge of transferring the migrants to the town of Iquique. (*Detienen a dos personas por tráfico de migrantes a territorio nacional*, 2020)

The smuggling of migrants is one of the manifestations of the migration flow to Chile analyzed in this study (Barros Sánchez, 2018; Ovando et al., 2020). It gained media notoriety during the pandemic due to the magnitude of the flow of people who simultaneously entered the country through the borders of the Tarapacá region. This allowed the government to endorse a migration policy based on restriction and expulsion, which oscillates between prioritizing state sovereignty and the assimilation of migrants from a human rights perspective (Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Irazuzta & Ibarra, 2021; López Reyes et al., 2019; Oyarzún Serrano et al., 2021; Torres Matus, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2021).

Finally, it is important to note that no news items were found that focused on the perspectives on morality and the economic consequences of the migration crisis in the Tarapacá region, according to the typology of generic frames developed by Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000).

Conclusions

The migration crisis in the north of Chile during 2020 presents three main axes that summarize the news events described in the study. At the beginning of the pandemic, in the context of the humanitarian drama of migrants and tourists stranded in Chile waiting to be repatriated to their countries—due to the closing of borders implemented by Latin American governments (Gaete Quezada, 2021), which in the case of northern Chile mainly affected Peruvian and Bolivian citizens—, the good practices and consular relations between the countries involved acquired great significance.

This news environment reflects the fragile and unstable situation of many migrants in Chile, which demonstrates the need to strengthen the system of diplomatic relations with bordering countries to address the processes of forced repatriation in a coordinated manner. Both administrative and social assimilation aspects must be addressed (Díaz Tolosa, 2020; López Reyes et al., 2019, Torres Matus, 2019), especially in situations like that caused by health crises such as the one experienced since 2020.

Then, in mid-2020 and as the impact of the health crisis progressed, a humanitarian crisis arose in northern Chile due to a significant increase in irregular migration into the country, especially in the towns of Colchane and Huara. This forced state institutions in the Tarapacá Region to implement a series of health and humanitarian measures to contain its impact on the increase in COVID-19 infections.

The news related to this area shows the need to strengthen the coordination and collaboration of Chilean state institutions in order to face more efficiently and rapidly the administrative, sanitary, and humanitarian challenges arising from new episodes of massive migration in the future (Díaz Tolosa, 2020), similarly to what was stated by Ynciarte (2021) for the case of Venezuelan migration to Colombia and Ecuador. In addition, the country's new immigration law should play a fundamental role in strengthening these institutional capacities, as well as ensuring respect for the human rights of migrants (Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Vásquez et al., 2021).

In the context summarized above, people in a migrant situation continue to suffer severe impacts from the different economic, social, or environmental crises that have occurred worldwide. The consequences of the pandemic have also strongly affected them, not only in terms of their health but also with the loss of their jobs, homes, and even the difficulty of returning to their own countries due to the closing of borders (Gaete Quezada, 2021).

The case studied shows that the media included in the sample gave ample coverage to the role played by different territorial state institutions, such as provincial governors, municipalities, or the Secretaría Regional Ministerial de Salud (Regional Ministerial Secretariat of Health). The responsibility for solving the consequences of the pandemic for migrants was attributed to them, especially from the health and humanitarian perspective, but also from the bureaucratic standpoint of the processes

of repatriation and irregular border entry (Díaz Tolosa, 2020; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Vásquez et al., 2021).

This was strongly conditioned by the restrictions and expulsions of the migration policy promoted by President Piñera during his second term, especially given the increase in the irregular migration flow in the second half of 2020. This was exacerbated during the parliamentary discussion of the last passage of the new immigration law, which minimizes the importance of humanitarian aspects and assimilation of migrants into Chilean society as legal priorities (Díaz Tolosa, 2020; López Reyes et al., 2019; Vásquez et al., 2021).

As for the limitations of the study, following the classification developed by Muñiz (2020), the current research is limited to the identification of the types of frames in the news included in the sample from a qualitative perspective, considering the generic frames proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg Valkenburg (2000) as analytical categories. Neither the construction of the frames nor their effects on the audiences are addressed in this study.

Regarding the projections of the study, the methodological approach offers elements susceptible of extrapolation for examining other Latin American migratory contexts, which can be described as case studies from a qualitative perspective. This can be achieved by considering generic frames such as those used in the current inquiry in applying the content analysis technique through a qualitative analytical procedure similar to the one applied in this research.

Another feasible aspect to implement in future studies is the methodological decision to include in the non-probabilistic purposive sample regional or local newspapers to analyze the communicative frames from a qualitative perspective (Gaete Quezada, 2021; Liberona Concha, 2015). These can broaden the sampling of research on media frames that are usually concentrated in newspapers with national coverage or belonging to hegemonic economic groups of the communications sector in each country (Dammert & Erlandsen, 2020; Gaete Quezada, 2021; Gronemeyer, 2017; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017; Muñiz, 2011; Stefoni & Brito, 2019; Ynciarte, 2021).

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