https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2608186

Articles

Colchane: laboratory of migration and borders governmentality

Colchane: laboratorio de gubernamentalidad migratoria y de frontera

Paola Díaz[a*] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3606-516X
Carolina Stefoni[b] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6949-2312
Mayra Maya Sánchez[c] https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5531-0937

[a] Universidad de Tarapacá, Departamento de Antropología, Arica, Chile, e-mail: pdiaza@academicos.uta.cl
[b] Universidad de Tarapacá, Departamento de Ciencias Sociales, Iquique. Chile, e-mail: cstefoni@gmail.com
[c] Independent researcher, Santiago, Chile, e-mail: m.mayasnc@gmail.com

Abstract

This article analyzes the transformation of Colchane, a border town located in Chile on the border with Bolivia, into a laboratory of migratory governmentality between 2020 and 2025. Using a multi-sited ethnographic approach, semi-structured interviews with key actors and participant observation across three phases of fieldwork, the study examines the control regimes implemented by the Chilean state in collaboration with international organizations and NGOs. Three successive reconfigurations of the border space are identified: a space of health immunization, a space of humanitarian control and a militarized border, accompanied by migrant subjectivities—victim, beneficiary and detainee—that coexist with practices of freedom. The article contributes theoretically by linking studies of migration and border regimes with Foucauldian governmentality, bringing to light micro-practices of control and subjectivation that macrostructural analyses often overlook. Although the study of a single border node limits generalizability, it is argued that Colchane condenses and anticipates broader regional dynamics of control over forced mobility in South America.

Keywords: migration and border regime, governmentality, Chile-Bolivia border, Colchane.

Received on October 19, 2025.
Accepted on May 22, 2026.
Published on June 30, 2026.

* Corresponding author: Paola Díaz.
E-mail: pdiaza@academicos.uta.cl

ORIGINAL ARTICLE LANGUAGE: SPANISH.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la transformación de Colchane, localidad fronteriza ubicada en Chile en el límite con Bolivia, en un laboratorio de gubernamentalidad migratoria entre 2020 y 2025. Mediante un enfoque etnográfico multisituado, entrevistas semiestructuradas a actores clave y observación participante en tres etapas de trabajo de campo, se examinan los regímenes de control implementados por el

CITATION: Díaz, P., Stefoni, C. & Maya Sánchez, M. (2026). Colchane: laboratory of migration and borders governmentality. *Estudios Fronterizos*, *27*, Article e186. https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2608186

Estado chileno junto a organismos internacionales y ONG. Se identifican tres reconfiguraciones sucesivas del espacio fronterizo: espacio de inmunización sanitaria, espacio de control humanitario y frontera militarizada, acompañadas de subjetividades migrantes —víctima, beneficiario y detenido— que coexisten con prácticas de libertad. El artículo contribuye teóricamente al unir los estudios de regímenes de migración y fronteras con la gubernamentalidad foucaultiana, visibilizando microprácticas de control y subjetivación que los análisis macroestructurales suelen omitir. Aunque el estudio de un único nodo fronterizo limita la generalización, se sostiene que Colchane condensa y anticipa dinámicas regionales más amplias de control de la movilidad forzada en Sudamérica.

Palabras clave: régimen de migración y fronteras, gubernamentalidad, frontera Chile-Bolivia, Colchane.

Introduction

Colchane is "an artificial town", as described by two professors who have worked in this area between Chile and Bolivia for more than 30 years and who live alongside Aymara communities scattered across the Altiplano. This area spans two nation-states but constitutes a single sociocultural and ecological space (Díaz & Stefoni, 2023).

This town was founded in 1970 and was originally named Los Cóndores until 1979, when, under the Chilean civil-military dictatorship (1973-1989), it was renamed Colchane. A border checkpoint staffed by military, police and customs personnel was established there.

The settlement has a fluctuating population consisting of staff from the health clinic, the police station (Carabineros), military personnel, investigative police (who in Chile also enforce immigration laws) and border complex staff. The local population moves back and forth between Chile and Bolivia; many leave their homes empty for months and return in accordance with the agricultural cycle. Including both temporary and permanent residents, the population has never exceeded 790 people (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, n. d.).

In Colchane and surrounding areas, there has always been a lot of activity: the Aymara border community is constantly on the move, with people coming and going between the towns of Colchane in Chile and Pisiga Bolívar in Bolivia. In Chile, "school is better", says the mother of a Bolivian Aymara boy who attends school in Colchane, but in Bolivia, "things are cheaper", she adds. In Chile, goods—mainly from China—can be purchased in the duty-free zone of the coastal city of Iquique, four hours from Colchane, and resold in Bolivia, sometimes without passing through customs. However, in Pisiga Bolívar, there is a greater supply of food, gas and medicinal herbs than on the Chilean side (C. Stefoni, 2022, field notes). The only main road, which was paved in the 2000s, is almost always congested with cargo trucks lining up and waiting to cross the border complex with goods to and from Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, connecting South America with Asia through the duty-free zone (Stefoni et al., 2021; Tapia Ladino & Quinteros Rojas, 2023).

In this border region, the movement of people and goods—whether legal or illegal, formal or informal—was a dynamic that had not attracted political or media attention until recently. Although the first measures to secure the border were taken in 2018, in 2020 Colchane became the focus of public attention due to international

migration—primarily Venezuelans—entering Chile through the area surrounding the town amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

This article takes the pandemic as its starting point, but it is not the article's primary focus. The effects of the pandemic on migration and border issues have been well documented for this border area (Liberona Concha et al., 2024; Stefoni et al., 2023; Tapia Ladino & Quinteros Rojas, 2023). Here, the pandemic is viewed as a turning point from which a longer-term trend toward the securitization of borders and migration (Ramos & Tapia Ladino, 2024) has accelerated and taken root, leading toward the militarization of the border area.

Attention is focused on Colchane because in less than five years—between 2020 and 2025—it emerged as a "hyper-border space" (Guizardi et al., 2015), where global dynamics of borderization materialize and converge, both in the national context and within the broader Latin American region. Thus, this "artificial" town serves, in analytical terms, as a laboratory for the governmentality of "undesired" international migration (Agier, 2008).

This paper aims to examine the reconfiguration of forms of control—or governmentality—over unwanted mobility along the Chile-Bolivia border, using the case of Colchane on the Chilean side, to understand how this border area has become a laboratory of migration governmentality that condenses and anticipates broader regional dynamics of control over forced mobility in South America. To this end, the article integrates the framework of migration and border regimes with studies of governmentality, thereby enabling an analysis of the technologies of power deployed, the migrant subjectivities produced, and the tensions arising from the progressive securitization of the border—between militarization and humanitarianism—which are redefining the contemporary border experience in the region.

For this purpose, the study will examine a series of border management mechanisms—such as specific, localized technologies—that took shape in Colchane, where traditional border activity began to intersect with what Domenech and Dias (2020) refer to as migration and border regimes in South America.

This research is based on fieldwork conducted in three distinct phases and research contexts: in 2020-2021, through semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations conducted in Colchane with government officials involved in managing this border; in 2022, through ethnographic participant observation at the Initial Reception Center, established by the government in collaboration with UNHCR; and between 2023 and 2025, through field visits and semi-structured interviews with key informants who live or work in Colchane.

The first part of this paper contextualizes the case of Colchane within the framework of global reconfigurations of migration and border control and their specific South American characteristics. It then briefly presents the conceptual framework. The concept of the migration and border regime (MBR) is introduced to identify institutional actors and practices of control by characterizing the MBR of which Colchane is a part. This perspective on MBRs is integrated with concepts drawn from studies on governmentality, which enable an analysis of technologies of power and subject positions within the specific control mechanisms in which the fieldwork is conducted.

The text then pauses to address methodological considerations, explaining the conditions under which the interviews and ethnographic observation were conducted.

In the fourth section, the analysis focuses on what are identified as three successive—yet intertwined—reconfigurations of the Colchane border space: a space of immunization, a space of humanitarian control and a space of militarized border. The paper concludes with a brief genealogy of the transformations in the forms of governmentality of migration and the border experienced in Colchane. Furthermore, it highlights how this case study might engage in dialogue with other cases in the region, as well as the study's limitations and future directions.

Changes to migration and border control policies

In the early decades of the 21st century, global migration patterns have been marked by a structural tension: on the one hand, an intensification, diversification and increased visibility of human mobility; on the other, a sustained expansion of control policies implemented throughout the 20th century. Latin America has not been immune to this global trend (Rivera Sánchez et al., 2023). Although it has historically been a region of migration reception, departure and transit, over the past 25 years it has experienced a reorganization of its migration flows under the combined weight of political crises, economic collapses (such as in Haiti and Venezuela), extreme violence (particularly in Colombia and Mexico) and a geopolitical reconfiguration of border control focused on security.

The global order following September 11, 2001, contributed decisively to this transformation. The consolidation of a security-based paradigm surrounding migration led to the strengthening of international geopolitical borders, the externalization of migration controls and the legitimization of discourses that associate the mobility of impoverished and racialized groups with threats to social order, cultural identity, sovereignty and national security. In this context, borders—far from diminishing—are multiplying, being externalized, decentralized and redefined as mobile mechanisms of selection and exclusion (Alscher, 2005; Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; De Genova, 2017; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Ramos & Tapia Ladino, 2024; Salter, 2006). There is thus a strong trend toward the re-borderization of nation-states, a resurgence of nationalist rhetoric, new legislative frameworks, the deployment of armed forces in border areas and investment in surveillance—all aimed at creating political technologies of deterrence, containment and expulsion, which are sometimes accompanied by humanitarian practices and discourses.

In Latin America, while the United States remains the most popular destination for migrants, intraregional migration has gained momentum in recent years, particularly from crisis-stricken countries such as Venezuela, Haiti and Colombia, toward countries like Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Peru. For many, mobility has become a survival strategy in the face of extreme poverty, the dismantling of social, civil and human rights, unemployment and the expansion of extractive projects that displace entire populations from their territories (Rivera Sánchez et al., 2023). Although these movements often qualify as forced mobility (Freitez, 2019)—as people are fleeing violence, poverty and rights violations—the international protection system fails to provide a robust response capable of safeguarding these individuals (Brumat et al., 2018).

Regulatory frameworks in some Latin American countries have undergone significant reforms following the democratization processes of the 1990s and later, driven

by progressive governments. Although these legal advances are enshrined in human rights legislation (as in Argentina and Ecuador), they have coexisted with institutional practices that perpetuate exclusion, repression and discrimination (Domenech, 2020). This tension between human rights discourse, humanitarianism and policies to control unwanted mobility has been analyzed as part of a "human-faced" migration governance model, in which protection-oriented approaches are combined with punitive and selective measures (Basualdo, 2021; Domenech, 2013; Rivera Sánchez et al., 2023).

In countries such as Chile, border security policies have been tightened since the pandemic began, especially in the northern part of the country, which has historically been porous and characterized by cross-border activity. The state has resorted to dual narratives that oscillate between compassion toward certain migrants categorized as vulnerable and the criminalization of those labeled as a threat, thereby reinforcing a perception of danger associated with specific nationalities or racialized groups (Dufraix Tapia et al., 2020; Ramos & Tapia Ladino, 2024; Stang & Stefoni, 2016; Stefoni et al., 2023). Consequently, the increased presence of border security, particularly since the onset of the pandemic, has transformed this border space and the relations it establishes with those who cross it daily.

The following section presents the conceptual framework for analyzing the specific case of Colchane, which—while retaining its local distinctiveness—fits within the global and regional context outlined here.

Managing unwanted mobility

Migration and border regimes: actors and control policies

Colchane has been politically constructed as a focal point of a "migration crisis" through the actions of various actors, primarily the state, but also international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as the dominant national media, which portray this area as a border in crisis that needs to be controlled.

Studies on migration and border regimes in South America (Alscher, 2005; Basualdo et al., 2019; Domenech, 2017; Naranjo Giraldo, 2014; Rivera Sánchez et al., 2023) are critical to analyzing this management and control process. In these studies, the concept of the migration and border regime is used in two ways. On the one hand, it is highlighted as an abstract concept referring to the logic of managing human movement, where a regime is not a fixed structure but a dynamic assemblage, constantly contested by migrant and pro-migrant struggles, and structured around tense relations between state actors, international organizations and people on the move (Domenech, 2021). On the other hand, it serves as a descriptive tool, in which the migration and border regime is used to identify and characterize different dominant patterns in migration and border control across various regions of Latin America (in South America, Central America and Mexico and the Caribbean), reflecting a global logic of migration control that is becoming internationalized and manifesting itself in regional variations.

This characterization underscores the emergence of a South American framework for migration and border control (Domenech, 2025), which involves regional mechanisms (such as the South American Conference on Migration, the Mercosur Residence Agreement, the Quito Group, etceter), as well as interstate collaboration and the participation of international organizations involved in control and humanitarian aid (IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF).

The regionalization of the global migration control regime in South America is evident in restrictive and repressive measures that had been in place for a long time but gained greater impact and coordination following the Venezuelan exodus of 2017. In the case of Chile, three elements are cited as marking this trend—first, the visa requirement for certain nationalities. Prior to 2018, most Latin American nationalities did not require an entry visa; however, in 2012, Chile established a visa requirement for Dominican nationals and then, starting in 2018, for Venezuelans and Haitians (Dufraix Tapia et al., 2020). These restrictions led to increased use of unauthorized crossings along high-altitude routes, such as Colchane on the Chile-Bolivia border. It was here that the first deaths were recorded due to hypothermia, altitude-related illnesses, or accidents during the crossing (Stefoni & Díaz, 2025).

A second factor is the implementation of repressive measures such as border turnbacks and deportations. In Chile, starting in 2019—particularly for Venezuelan nationals—there has been an increase in so-called "border turnbacks". These are people who, upon arriving at a border checkpoint, are denied entry, either because they cannot prove they have sufficient financial resources or because officials refuse them entry. Ramos and Tapia Ladino note that: "during 2019, border rejections tripled, rising from 10 667 to more than 34 000" (Ramos & Tapia Ladino, 2024, p. 13).

Deportations are another control mechanism that has been on the rise. The same authors note that administrative deportation orders—issued for irregular entry—have increased, primarily affecting Venezuelan nationals (2012-2021). Nonetheless, the increase in deportation orders does not translate into actual deportations due to the financial cost this entails for the government; consequently, this population finds itself in a situation of greater precariousness and faces greater difficulties in social integration.

A third factor is the denial of asylum, which primarily affects Haitian, Dominican, Cuban and Venezuelan nationals (Liberona Concha & López San Francisco, 2018). According to the findings of Cociña-Cholaky and Liberona, "In Chile, from 2010 to 2023, out of 30 598 asylum applications, 957 were granted, meaning that the approval rate was 3%" (Cociña-Cholaky & Liberona, 2025, p. 93).

This restrictive and repressive migration and border regime is intertwined with what Fassin (2010) has called "humanitarian government"—that is, a form of government (in the broad sense of the term) based on moral categories, which can be summarized by the figure of the "good victim" deserving of exceptional protection, as an act of compassion rather than as a policy granting access to rights. It is a control regime with a "human face" that, on the one hand, causes harm and, on the other, selectively remedies it—where humanitarian interventions do not repair the damage caused by restrictive policies but rather frequently accompany or legitimize them (Basualdo, 2021; Domenech, 2013).

In Chile, the humanitarian nature of migration policy has never been more evident than during the so-called "migration crisis"—geographically and symbolically centered in Colchane—with the arrival of thousands of people per day between 2020 and

2021, leaving the town overwhelmed, with children and infants left out in the open, cold and hungry. This marks the first on-the-ground intervention in Chile, with direct humanitarian aid from international organizations such as the IOM and UNHCR.

As demonstrated in the case of Chile, in Colchane, the MBR (involving state actors and international humanitarian organizations) combines security-oriented state control with a humane approach that alleviates suffering but does not guarantee rights.

Concepts from the field of governmentality studies will now be introduced, which are useful for analyzing technologies of power and subject positions that emerge within state and humanitarian mechanisms of migration and border control. These serve as entry points into the field and the analysis.

Governmentality of undesired mobility: practices of control and freedom

Both studies on migration and border regimes and studies on Foucauldian governmentality (Dean, 2010) claim to be critical of power, control and forms of governance (Walters & Tazzioli, 2023). It is important to clarify what is meant by "critical", not as an exercise in scholarship, but because this is inherent to the notion of governmentality used in the empirical analysis of the Colchane case.

This is not about criticizing every form of control, management or governance as inherently negative simply because it involves them. Studies in political anthropology have long shown that every human association is constituted through the organization of power in order to exist and endure (Gledhill, 2000). Studies of governmentality are used to trace the genealogies of different ways of governing behavior—beyond, before or outside of already institutionalized forms. This does not mean abandoning the study of state-based configurations of government, but rather decentering the state, in at least three ways.

In a first sense, this implies viewing the state as one form of governance, but not the only one. Governance structures that operate at the nation-state level as well as at the regional, interstate or global levels are increasingly observed, as with the MBRS, which involve interstate, supranational and international actors and instruments. There is also non-state control of migration and borders—humanitarian, commercial and criminal—that can be coordinated through state action.

In a second sense, decentering the state involves paying special attention to forms of resistance and micro-resistance against state and non-state control of behavior, carried out not by citizens with full rights, but by those whom Chatterjee et al. (2011) refer to as "political society": subaltern subjects excluded from full citizenship, such as undocumented migrants.

A third way to decenter the state—which is the focus of this article—is to trace the genealogy of its progressive constitution as a form of governance, rather than treating it as a reified institution once and for all crystallized and external to subjectivities. Thus, the analysis of governmentality—generally "as a conduct of conducts" and specifically as a form of government exercised over a subject defined as a *population*, that is, collectives constituted by technologies of power involving large abstract numbers such as statistics or censuses (Dean, 2010)—makes it possible to think in terms of processes: how was it possible for Colchane to become a laboratory of governmentality?

In this context, the focus on migration and border regimes provides a framework for situating the case study within the context of international and regional policies and actors and for observing what Foucault calls "problematization": that is, from a process-oriented perspective, determining how unwanted migration has been problematized: through certain categories and associations of categories (victim, beneficiary, offender, etcetera); through ideas of immunization, security and national sovereignty; and through assumptions of overflow, danger and threat. This has given rise to a "logic" of migration governance, one that is not without fissures and contradictions.

For the study of Colchane and the migration and border control mechanisms that have operated there, it seems particularly important to draw on the concepts of governmentality studies and *technologies of power*—understood as situated and specific practices and micropractices—which, for this study, translate into the everyday governance practices applied to the migrant population. According to Lorenzini (2023), biopower and the politics derived from its exercise (biopolitics) simultaneously encompass both the disciplinary power exercised over individuals and their bodies (through surveillance, discipline and the normalization of behavior) and the power over a population that is (attempted to be) controlled based on quantitative and globalized knowledge of birth rates, mortality and longevity—as well as, of particular interest here, the knowledge of and control over movement as a form of biopolitics applied to the population.

This does not mean that everything is power and, therefore, submission. This is what the notion of subjectivity points to. Technologies of power generate subject positions or processes of subjectivation. Subjectivity is the point of clash, struggle and articulation between power and freedom—between the exercise of power over individuals and collectives and their resulting resistance. Therefore, if power is exercised where practices of freedom also exist, the creation of subjects (subjectivities) through technologies of power is linked to practices of resistance, counter-behaviors, evasion, circumvention and so on. The clearest example of these practices of freedom is that of Venezuelan migrants who, despite the restrictions of the MBR, cross the continent's geopolitical borders on foot and "without permission". This paper will show that, even in lockdown spaces—such as the migrant control facilities set up in Colchane—practices of freedom can be observed.

Fieldwork in Colchane

Fieldwork in Colchane was conducted in three phases and across three distinct research contexts, all of which focused on this border area. The authors visited Colchane at various times between 2020 and 2025, allowing them to document changes in this border area.

The first project was a study on migration routes, led by Carolina Stefoni, whose objective was to understand the migration routes and trajectories of Venezuelans in South America. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 Venezuelans who had crossed into Colchane through unauthorized border crossings and who were, at the time of the interview, in Iquique and Santiago; 18 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders (members of migrant collectives, civil society organizations, local government officials and officials from international organizations); and participant observation was carried out in both locations. Fieldwork was conducted between November

and December 2020 (online interviews) and in July 2021 (in-person observations and interviews), when pandemic-related mobility restrictions were eased.

The second phase was part of the research project led by Paola Díaz, which examined the life trajectories of migrants arriving in Chile through unauthorized border crossings in the far north of the country. Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in the Tarapacá region between 2022 and 2023, including semi-structured interviews with 20 key informants in Iquique (members of migrant collectives, civil society organizations, local government officials and representatives of international organizations) and eight ethnographic interviews conducted during two field trips with migrants in Alto Hospicio. In Colchane, ethnographic research was conducted within the framework implemented by the government in 2021, between September and November 2022.

She entered the field to participate as a researcher/volunteer under an agreement with the Jesuit Migrant Service-Chile, which at the time was running a humanitarian aid project in the area. This involved working in Colchane, performing the same tasks as her colleagues from various NGOs: providing basic immigration information, distributing humanitarian aid and referring people to Jesuit Migrant Service-Iquique for social and legal assistance. This was combined with her work as a researcher, which involved conducting ethnographic observation and interviews with professionals and officials working at the facility (4), at the border complex (2), and with key informants in Colchane (3). Four of the interviews conducted in Colchane were used for this paper.

For the semi-structured interviews with key informants, the inclusion criterion was that participants work directly in Colchane or in the border area at four levels: migrant groups, national NGOs, regional government agencies and international organizations. For the interviews with migrants, the selection criterion was being an adult and having entered through unauthorized border crossings since 2020. The interviews were conducted using the snowball sampling technique.

Between 2023 and 2025, the authors conducted three follow-up visits to Colchane as part of a study on border governance. During these visits, they interviewed three people who lived or worked in the town (two professionals from immigration control agencies and a professor). All interviews were transcribed, edited (for clarity) and participants gave informed consent using forms validated by the institutions sponsoring the respective projects (Universidad Alberto Hurtado and the Universidad de Tarapacá). The names of all interviewees were replaced with pseudonyms. Bringing together this empirical research provided a complementary perspective on the transformations of the border.

Redefining the border space-Colchane

A border area of (imaginary) national immunization

Among the incalculable consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was the worldwide closure of borders. Chile closed its borders on March 18, 2020. The Colchane border crossing reopened two years later, in May 2022. As part of an ongoing research project, online interviews with key stakeholders began in November 2020 to understand what was happening in Colchane. After eight months of the pandemic, it was noted that the number of migrants entering through unauthorized crossings along the northern

border had increased. Although before the pandemic, migrants—mostly from Cuba, Haiti and Colombia—had been entering through this crossing, and there were daily crossings by the Aymara population living on both sides of the border, within a few months the massive influx of Venezuelan migrants made its presence felt at this Altiplano crossing.

The account of an official at an international organization speaks volumes about the impact this situation had. Surprise is mixed with a certain difficulty in grasping the magnitude of what was happening.

> So what we've noticed is that ever since irregular crossings began at Colchane… let's say everything has gotten worse, not only did the number of people entering across that border increase, but the circumstances under which they were entering—with children, with pets […] so the conditions under which people were entering became increasingly dire; many showed signs of malnutrition, and the children, of course, suffered from various health issues due to the sun, and so on […] so not only were more people entering, but they were entering in worse condition. Knowing the area, [I know that] there is nothing there; there is no capacity to respond. (Interview with international organization 1, November 2020)

Since the only way for migrants to enter the country was through an unauthorized crossing, they crossed on foot through the wetlands, in groups and guided by smugglers, under extreme conditions caused by the high altitude, the cold at night and the intense sun during the day. The increase in these irregular entries prompted a response from the police (Carabineros) and the Investigative Police (PDI, Spanish acronym for *Policía de Investigaciones*), who stepped up patrols, leading to a sharp rise in the number of arrests and the subsequent transfer of detainees to the Colchane substation (which was upgraded to a full police station in 2025).

They remained there during the day and sometimes overnight while they were required to file a self-report with the PDI, have their information recorded, receive vaccinations and obtain certificates from the Agricultural and Livestock Service (SAG, Spanish acronym for *Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero*)—if they had pets—and undergo checkups for minors to determine whether their rights had been violated. This initial process formed the basis of the protocol for what would come to be known as "initial reception" and represents a form of control over people's bodies by detaining them in a defined space, moving them at specific times and via specific modes of transportation, or restricting them to traceable locations such as shelters or foster homes.

Most arrived exhausted, many in a state of shock, hungry and in some cases suffering from hypothermia and without any resources. At the police substation, it was the Carabineros officers themselves who first shared their food rations with women and children. Later, social organizations and international agencies provided an emergency kit containing some food items, such as cereal bars, milk for the children and a bowl of coffee or soup. Once these procedures were completed, a bus transported them to Iquique, where they were taken to health facilities or shelters as part of a coordinated effort among the government, social organizations and international agencies.

Colchane quickly became a place of arrival and waiting before continuing the journey. In some cases, agreements with the smugglers included transportation to Iquique or to the final destination further south in the country. In others, they were left at this border town and had to arrange their own transportation. The transient population

in Colchane, therefore, grew steadily. They had to stay on the street, in the town's only plaza, and in some cases even broke into empty houses to stay inside. On September 30, 2021, the Minister of the Interior of the then-ruling (right-wing) government announced the first measures to address the situation in Colchane: an increase in border checkpoints, the setup of tents at the police substation to support the Carabineros' logistical efforts and the deployment of satellite-equipped trucks to monitor the area.

In Iquique, the situation was no simpler. The mobility restrictions imposed by the pandemic forced many people to stay in the city. Lacking financial resources, they began to camp out in public squares, on the streets, and on the beach, creating significant tension among citizens who were voicing concerns about public health and safety. In September 2021, an anti-immigrant march was organized that culminated in the burning of migrant families' belongings, including a baby stroller. These images were broadcast worldwide (Tapia Ladino & Quinteros Rojas, 2023).

Following these events, the government announced the establishment of an initial reception facility in Colchane, implemented in collaboration with UN agencies (UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF) and managed by a private event production company. In October 2021, the temporary facility was set up on a site adjacent to the border complex. Within that facility, the production company was responsible for distributing tents to arriving individuals and delivering food through coordinators and monitors who worked in shifts (Liberona Concha et al., 2024). The various authorities present at the checkpoint set up a registry of people passing through and a screening process similar to the one implemented at the Colchane police substation. Once they had completed the screening process, people were required to wait to be transported by bus to a health facility in Iquique for the duration of the public health emergency, or simply to Iquique once the restrictions were lifted, or to the transit center set up in Lobitos, on the outskirts of Iquique.

Before long, the Colchane facility became the epicenter of the government's efforts in this border area, in collaboration with public services, international organizations and humanitarian groups such as Hogar de Cristo and the Jesuit Migrant Service.

This overview shows how the issue of the border and migration came to be framed as a "crisis"—something that had not previously been framed in those terms. The need to come to the aid of people in situations of extreme social vulnerability became intertwined with measures that, in their early stages, were aimed at better controlling the border.

The framing of the issue in terms of a migration crisis, borders, lack of control and overflow takes hold at the national level, depending on how events in Colchane are portrayed, thereby transforming it into a critical border area. In the context of a global rollout of mobility control measures due to the pandemic and lockdown strategies, the previously observed security-oriented trend is reinforced (Ramos & Tapia Ladino, 2024; Dufraix Tapia et al., 2020; Tapia Ladino & Quinteros Rojas, 2023).

In terms of governmentality, the pandemic provided the perfect setting for creating—through the mechanisms for migrants (the Colchane police substation, the initial reception center and its screening processes), as technologies of power—the figure of the "contaminating migrant"—who walks along the highways and must be confined, tested and dressed in white to show the country that the virus is leaving with them and that the border, the territory and public health are under control. As an example of

this strategy, recall the images of four extralegal deportations of migrants carried out during the pandemic. This was a highly publicized display of immunity and security measures in which those being deported were shown wearing white jumpsuits and face masks. Nevertheless, the count conducted by the IOM and UNHCR (Interview with International Organization 2, 2021) revealed that only one-third of the migration flow entering Chile through unauthorized border crossings passed through the checkpoint set up in Colchane and could, in fact, be controlled. Therefore, the "immunization" against the virus and migration was more imaginary than real.

Humanitarian control zone

Paola Díaz arrived in Colchane on September 12, 2022. She spent three months working as a Jesuit Migrant Service volunteer and researcher at what the townspeople called "the shelter," alternating between seven-day shifts at the facility and seven days in the city, in daily contact with government enforcement agents and humanitarian organizations operating there. It was a temporary camp officially known as the "Transitional Facility". Until mid-September 2022, it was managed by a production company. The Presidential Delegation of Tarapacá and UNHCR then took over management directly under the Boric administration (2021-2025), and it was renamed the Colchane Initial Reception Center. It was used to receive people who arrived of their own accord after crossing through unauthorized border crossings or who were intercepted by police officers or military personnel. It can be said that this new version of the facility—with a clear emphasis on control but also on humanitarian considerations—operated between September 2022 and January 2023, when the *Critical Infrastructure Act* went into effect and, as will be explained later, militarized this border area.

Under the new administration, the area where the operation was based quickly changed in appearance. The tents were taken down, and refugee housing units (RHUs) were installed: infrastructure specifically designed by UNHCR for displaced populations. Young professionals were hired as operational staff for the facility. As a result, the facility's internal management became more professional, and a more humanitarian approach was adopted: visits from international organizations and human rights training sessions became frequent, and humanitarian terminology began to become commonplace among the young professionals working there.

As one expert on this method says:

> […] the production company was the government's first response to this migration crisis […] there was nothing related to social or humanitarian issues. Furthermore, it was also a public health approach due to the pandemic […] previously, the priority wasn't humanitarian aid. So, under those terms, the contractor had a contract through September 18 (2022), and after that, the government had to take over: either continue with the same initial response or change it and adopt a much more humanitarian approach—such as providing temporary shelters (RHUs) for sleeping instead of the tents that were used before. They started sleeping in beds instead of on mats, and they had a dining hall instead of eating on mats on the floor, because that's what was done before. So, of course, under this new response that began on September 19, the approach is more humanitarian. (Professional Interview 1, September 2022)

As this professional points out, the humanitarian approach was also reflected in the language of "welcoming migrants", used by the Carabineros and health professionals at the checkpoint. Although framed in humanitarian terms, the checkpoint's function was to control the flow of migrants: people entering did so voluntarily and could leave whenever they wanted. However, movement within the checkpoint area was mandatory. As one professional who worked at that facility notes:

> […] From the moment they enter the camp, the process is as follows: first, the Carabineros; then the Carabineros send an official notice to the PDI; next, the PDI forwards this notice to the Health Department so that the Health Department can conduct the testing. This health screening is being performed only on individuals who have not completed their vaccination series. […]. Once the Ministry of Health finishes its process and notifies the PDI that it is complete, the PDI begins taking fingerprints and photographs to file the self-report and issue the foreign national offender card […] these are the mandatory steps—without exception—that every person entering through an unauthorized crossing must complete. And after the PDI, they go to the SAG. (Professional Interview 2, September 2022)

This process, as mentioned above, deploys technologies of power: it involves identity checks (by the PDI); parentage verification before the Family Court (by the Carabineros); vaccination checks by the health team; and checks of personal belongings by SAG agents. Alongside this, and at the end of this process, humanitarian organizations stepped in to distribute humanitarian aid kits (warm clothing, hygiene items, food, etcetera), but not without first selecting and prioritizing the most vulnerable individuals: children, adolescents and women, followed by families, leaving young men traveling alone last.

This type of humanitarian monitoring is also carried out by international organizations such as UNHCR, which used binoculars to observe people crossing the border to estimate the number of border crossings, or the IOM, which conducted surveys (such as the Displacement Monitoring Matrix) to characterize the population within the operation, as well as the organizations responsible for implementing humanitarian projects, which were required to count their beneficiaries. In this way, different "populations" of interest to humanitarian monitoring were identified: those crossing the border, those entering the operation and the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid.

Within the facility, the system described compelled temporary residents to regulate their behavior, follow the prescribed steps and observe waiting times. In addition, they signed an informed consent form stipulating a ban on smoking and drinking alcohol. Therefore, the expected type of subjectivity was that of patient individuals, awaiting assistance and harboring a sense of awareness or guilt for having committed an offense: crossing a restricted area. In fact, many women with children tended to repeat the same phrase to the program's staff: "I did the wrong thing", they would say. Nevertheless, this was not the only observable subject position within this program.

As one young man from a group of four men who passed through that facility recounted: "We've already been through here and stayed down there (Lobitos) for more than six months; that way, we don't have to pay rent and they give us food. We've entered and left [Chile] several times" (Interview with residents of the facility, November 2022). In this case, these young men move between several South American countries via "smuggling routes" with relative ease, and the checkpoint does not seem to make them submissive or fearful, nor does it instill in them a desire or prospect of regularizing their status—unlike what the women and families with children expressed. If these young people did not evade immigration control by passing through that checkpoint, it was not because they were intercepted at the border but because "[…] we wanted to rest and take the bus down to Iquique" (Interview with residents of the facility, November 2022).

This position is neither submissive nor rebellious, but rather strategic. As undocumented migrants who are not a priority for the humanitarian government, they take advantage of humanitarian aid however and whenever they can to continue their journeys. However, their survival depends much more on life on the streets and on the road.

Another category of recipients who did not fit the expected profile of humanitarian aid recipients was that of the "migrant with rights": humanitarian aid was not viewed—by some residents, particularly Venezuelans between the ages of 20 and 25—as an expression of compassion, but rather as a right that could be demanded, which often surprised the professionals working within the system who framed their actions in terms of humanitarian aid.

Thus, while the technologies of power exercised by the control bodies within the system described above contribute to the formation of subjectivities corresponding to the "recipient of humanitarian aid", avenues of escape also emerge. Nevertheless, this was not a violation of the MBR but rather a use of the apparatus to achieve more bearable living conditions (shelter, food), despite being labeled an "offending foreigner".

The figure of the recipient of humanitarian aid resembles another that emerged during this period: that of the "migrant victim" of the natural environment (climate and surroundings) and of trafficking networks, especially when the press reports deaths in the Colchane area (Prieto & Becker, 2023). A contrast to this figure is that of the *coyote*, or people smuggler, a migrant cast as the perpetrator. These two figures quickly merge into a single one: that of the "migrant-criminal". Alongside this narrative, the dominant framing of this border area by political authorities (of a center-left government) and the mainstream press (owned by right-wing interests) is primarily in terms of security. The state's response, as will be seen in the next section, is militarization.

Militarized border area

While returning from Colchane in a Sprinter van on September 6, 2024, about 15 minutes after leaving the town, we were stopped by a military truck. As soon as the driver stopped the vehicle, the door opened and a soldier with a rifle in hand leaned out, ordering—in a rather unfriendly manner—that all occupants get out carrying

only their identification documents. When they got off, they were lined up and their documents were checked. There was a very nervous couple standing nearby with a boy of about seven years old. When it was the young couple's turn, the soldier—having visually identified them as foreigners—asked them for the self-report form issued by the PDI at the border, which, until recently, served as a sort of safe-conduct pass allowing travel through the area without fear of deportation.

Both explained to him that they had entered the country without documents and had been unable to report their situation at the border. The police themselves had told them they could do so in Iquique, and that would be the first thing they would do once they arrived in the city—but they asked him to please let them through. For those few minutes, the soldier held the young couple's entire immigration case in his hands.

The soldier's exercise of power and the Venezuelan couple's plea clearly illustrate the asymmetry that exists in social relations among the Latin American migrant population, governments and "host societies". The soldier finally let them through, but not before making it clear to them that this was not their country and that they had to do as they were told. Back in the vehicle, Carolina Stefoni spoke with them and tried to give them all the information they needed about what to do, where to go, and whom to turn to in Iquique. They said they had been traveling in a larger group of about 10 people. However, the rest had decided to follow the *coyote* through the wetlands to avoid detection by the police—a route of more than nine kilometers at an elevation of nearly 4 000 meters above sea level. Three years earlier, the smugglers' route was only three kilometers long. However, the military deployment in this area had forced them to take longer and more dangerous routes, creating a bottleneck that compelled undocumented migrants to cross international geopolitical borders via increasingly dangerous and deadly routes.

The woman explained that they decided to enter through the border crossing rather than via the trails through the wetlands because her husband had a knee problem and her son was very young. In her view, crossing there—even without documents—was a more legitimate way to enter than the option of going through the wetlands (C. Stefoni, field notes, 2024).

As noted, Chile's northern international geopolitical border began to attract intense governmental and media attention, particularly following the onset of the pandemic in 2020. The government—at the time a right-wing administration, with Sebastián Piñera serving as president from 2018 to 2022—argued that the situation was out of control.

Between 2019 and 2022, the government enacted a decree-law and declared a state of emergency, which allowed the military to assist with immigration and border control efforts. Nevertheless, in 2023, with the passage of the so-called *Critical Infrastructure Act*—which remains in effect today (2026)—the armed forces not only cooperate with civilian authorities and the police but also control the territory up to 10 kilometers from the border. Thus, they can check documents, search for migrants, arrest them and hand them over to border police and collaborate with the National Migration Service on immigration control tasks.

The framing of the issue as a migration crisis—which began under the Piñera administration but continued into the Boric administration (2022-2026)—sought to send a message of sovereign power: the Frontera Segura program (2019), the Colchane Plan (2021), and the aforementioned *Critical Infrastructure* served as a prelude to the

amendments introduced by *Law 21.655* (February 2024) to the existing regulatory framework established by *Migration Law No. 21.325* (2021) and *Refugee Law No. 20.430* (2010). The amendments introduced by *Law 21.655* in 2024 were aimed at tightening the requirements for asylum applications and establishing mechanisms to facilitate the immediate deportation process.

One of the approved amendments transformed the border into an object of control. Whereas it was previously conceived as a delimited space generally referred to as the "border strip", these reconfigurations created a "border area" that extends 10 km from the border line into Chilean territory and incorporates the Bolivian state into migration control practices. This externalization of the border (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015) was made possible in Chile by two specific measures: the amendment introduced by *Law 21.655*, which changed the wording of the article regarding repatriation, and the signing of a "Migration Cooperation Agreement" between Chile and Bolivia in December 2024, implemented through a protocol in March 2025, for the repatriation of non-Bolivian citizens to Bolivia from Chile.

Starting in 2023, the coexistence of approaches that framed the crisis as both a security and a humanitarian issue gradually ended, and a primarily security-oriented approach centered on national defense prevailed. Funding for humanitarian intervention projects began to decline, and finally, between 2024 and 2025, the authorities closed the initial reception center in Colchane and the transit center in Lobito, Iquique. As a key informant from the Colchane facility noted in 2023: "we started basically managing the health issue, then we were able to implement a humanitarian approach, and now it seems as though we are at the service of the military" (Professional Interview 3, May 2023).

Professionals with a humanitarian focus have not worked there since mid-2024. Between 2024 and 2025, the camp was run solely by staff members with no training in human rights or migrants' rights. When the Colchane facility was dismantled, the RHUs were removed, and in 2025 the space was transformed into the Center for Irregular Migration (CMI, Spanish acronym for *Centro de Migración Irregular*), managed exclusively by the Investigative Police. It is a detention center where migrants are essentially sorted into those who will be deported to Bolivia and those who will be allowed to enter Chile. At this center, there is a single humanitarian project (ongoing in 2025) managed by the international organization World Vision, focused on families with children.

The internal flow has changed: when migrants are intercepted at the border by the military, they are taken to the CMI; only children and pregnant women are taken to the town's health clinic to have their injuries assessed, while the rest go directly to the center. Immediately afterward, a report is filed at the Army office and handed over to the Carabineros. The Carabineros record their information. Afterward, the individuals are sent to the PDI, where it is determined whether they will be allowed to enter Chile or deported to Bolivia. If they enter Chile, they go through the SAG checkpoint.

According to those interviewed, the number of people crossing through Colchane decreased in 2025, and many migrants are seeking to leave Chile rather than enter it. Furthermore, they indicate that the number of people arriving at this center is much lower than the number recorded by humanitarian aid organizations in Pisiga Bolívar, which suggests—even without specific figures—two things: that the flow has decreased and that those seeking to cross are doing so through even more remote areas, with the dangers that this entails (Expert Interview 4, July 2025).

With the establishment of the CMI and the *Critical Infrastructure Act*, migrants intercepted at the border no longer have the option—as they did during the humanitarian control phase—to choose whether or not to enter a facility and undergo its internal procedures. Now, every migrant intercepted is detained at this Center, giving rise to the category of "detained migrant".

The 2025 agreement between Chile and Bolivia marked a milestone in the legal framework for migration control along the country's northern border, as it authorized, for the first time, the return of foreign nationals—both Bolivian citizens and nationals of third countries—to Bolivian territory via Colchane. Consequently, statistical data on returns via this corridor are only available from that date onward. The significance of this institutional change is reflected in a key figure: of the total 5 057 land-based deportations recorded nationwide between March 2025 and January 2026, 4 027 were carried out by Colchane, representing more than 79% of the total (Servicio Nacional de Migraciones, 2026). Thus, in less than a year, Colchane has established itself as the country's primary deportation hub, supplanting the border crossings with Peru, which until then had accounted for the majority of these operations.

Although humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, continue to send observers to Colchane, the landscape of actors is essentially limited to two that can exercise technologies of power: the armed forces and the Investigative Police. At the time of this text's publication, little is known about the relationship between this power and the construction of subjectivities. While during the humanitarian control phase only one-third of people passed through that checkpoint, today there are no data on the matter, and the information available from within this space is restricted to the officials operating at the CMI. What can be assumed is that, as has been the case with militarized forms of control—such as at the United States-Mexico border—it does not prevent crossings, but may reduce them; at the same time, however, it can make them more deadly and humiliating, given that people who are turned away attempt to cross multiple times.

Conclusions

Based on fieldwork conducted between 2020 and 2025 in Colchane, this article has reconstructed a genealogy of border governmentality during a brief but particularly intense period of reconfiguration of the migration and border regime in northern Chile, within a context of continuity and deepening of a regime that had been slowly taking shape throughout the 20th century. Over the course of five years, this border underwent three distinct phases: a public health containment mechanism during the pandemic, supported primarily by a network of local, regional and national actors; a humanitarian control mechanism involving the direct participation of international

organizations such as the IOM and UNHCR; and, finally, a militarized border linked to the Center for Irregular Migration and to deportation mechanisms supported by intergovernmental agreements.

This sequence shows how different technologies of power aimed at controlling unwanted mobility are tested, consolidated and transformed within the same space. At each of these stages, specific representations of the migrant subject emerge and overlap: the "contaminating migrant" who threatens public health and justifies confinement, quarantine or extralegal expulsion; the "beneficiary migrant" of humanitarian aid, expected to be patient, obedient and moral within the framework of humanitarian governance; and, in the most recent phase, the "detained migrant", whose trajectory is subject to military and police capture and to administrative selection between admission and deportation. These subject positions do not, however, exhaust the documented practices of freedom—ranging from strategic uses of reception mechanisms to forms of rights advocacy—that transcend the expectations of submission inherent in the design of control circuits.

Thus, the case of Colchane demonstrates how the governmentality of migration simultaneously articulates the biopolitics of the population, the discipline of bodies and the production of migrant subjectivities, in constant tension with practices of freedom.

Theoretically, the study helps to link the approach focused on migration regimes and borders with studies of governmentality by showing how a specific node within the South American space of control is transformed into a laboratory where different combinations of securitization, humanitarianism and militarization are tested in a very short timeframe. The ethnographic work conducted in and around the Colchane control mechanisms provides insight into the micro-practices of governance and subjectivation that are often overlooked in broader analyses of migration policies and regional security. In doing so, the article suggests the need to continue investigating how technologies of control (counting, classification and selection, among others) reconfigure the border as an extended and mobile space that far exceeds the geopolitical line, extending into the interior of the territory and toward neighboring countries.

As a case study, this research is confined to a specific location and time period, which limits the possibility of generalizing the findings to all South American borders. Nevertheless, Colchane's central role within the regional MBR, the combined presence of state and international actors and the rapid pace of change make it a prime vantage point for future comparisons. It is considered particularly worthwhile to conduct networked studies on other critical points of migration control across the continent—from the Darien corridors in Panama to the southernmost border crossings—that allow for a comparison of continuities and divergences in the forms of governmentality of unwanted mobility and in the experiences of those who traverse these routes.

Acknowledgments

Strengthening Research Groups at the University of Tarapacá, Project Code 6746-23.

To the National Agency for Research and Development (ANID, Spanish acronym for Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo) for the funding provided to the following projects: ANID-Fondecyt Initiation Grant 11230541 "The value of life at the borders. Undocumented migration in Northern Chile"; ANID-Fondecyt Regular 1201130

"Routes and trajectories of Venezuelan migrants throughout South America"; Millennium Research Unit on Urban Insecurity and Cohesion (Numic) NCS2025_047.

References

Agier, M. (2008). *Gérer les indésirables: des camps de réfugiés au gouvernement humanitaire*. Flammarion.

Alscher, S. (2005, November). *Knocking at the doors of "fortress Europe": migration and border control in Southern Spain and Eastern Poland* (Working Paper 126). University of California. http://www.stefan-alscher.de/resources/wrkg126.pdf

Basualdo, L. (2021). Humanitarismo. In C. Jiménez Zunino & V. Trpin (Coords.), *Pensar las migraciones contemporáneas. Categorías críticas para su abordaje* (pp. 159-168). TeseoPress.

Basualdo, L., Domenech, E. & Pérez, E. (2019). Territorios de la movilidad en disputa: cartografías críticas para el análisis de las migraciones y las fronteras en el espacio sudamericano [Dossier]. *REMHU: Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*, *27*(57), 43-60. https://remhu.csem.org.br/index.php/remhu/article/view/1263

Brumat, L., Acosta, D. & Vera-Espinoza, M. (2018). Gobernanza migratoria en América del Sur: ¿hacia una nueva oleada restrictiva? In L. Bizzozero Revelez & W. Fernández Luzuriaga (Eds.), *Anuario política internacional & política exterior 2017-2018. "One belt, one road". Alcances y repercusiones de la propuesta china en un entorno de proteccionismos y retracción de Occidente* (pp. 205-211). Universidad de la República / PEI / Ediciones Cruz del Sur.

Casas-Cortes, M., Cobarrubias, S. & Pickles, J. (2015). Riding routes and itinerant borders: autonomy of migration and border externalization. *Antipode*, *47*(4), 894-914. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12148

Chatterjee, P., Chaves, M. & Hoyos, J. F. (2011). Delhi lecture: la política de los gobernados. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, *47*(2), 199-231. https://doi.org/10.22380/2539472X.964

Cociña-Cholaky, M. & Liberona Concha, N. (2025). El estatuto de refugiado erigido como frontera humanitaria en Chile. *Colombia Internacional*, (121), 87-117. https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint121.2025.04

De Genova, N. (Ed.). (2017). *The borders of "Europe". Autonomy of migration, tactics of bordering*. Duke University Press.

Dean, M. (2010). *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Díaz, P. & Stefoni, C. (2023). Colchane: laboratorio de la gubernamentalidad de migraciones internacionales en Chile. In P. Díaz & C. Stefoni (Eds.), *Colchane. Más allá de la crisis* (pp. 20-33). Universidad de Tarapacá. https://www.academia.edu/112993002/Colchane_M%C3%A1s_all%C3%A1_de_la_crisis_Editoras_D%C3%ADaz_Paola_y_Stefoni_Carolina

Domenech, E. (2013). "Las migraciones son como el agua": hacia la instauración de políticas de "control con rostro humano". La gobernabilidad migratoria en la Argentina. *Polis, Revista Latinoamericana*, *12*(35), 119-142. https://polis.ulagos.cl/es/article/view/1414

Domenech, E. (2017, June). Las políticas de migración en Sudamérica: elementos para el análisis crítico del control migratorio y fronterizo. *Terceiro Milênio: Revista Crítica de Sociologia e Política*, *8*(1), 19-48. https://www.revistaterceiromilenio.uenf.br/index.php/rtm/article/view/2

Domenech, E. (2020). La "política de la hostilidad" en Argentina: detención, expulsión y rechazo en frontera. *Estudios Fronterizos*, *21*, Article e057. https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2015057

Domenech, E. (2021). Régimen de migración y fronteras. In I. Ceja, S. Álvarez Velasco & U. B. Berg (Coords.), *Migración* (pp. 69-78). Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana / Clacso. https://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/173384?show=full

Domenech, E. (2025). *Fronteras en disputa. Migración y crisis*. Editorial Universidad de Guadalajara. https://doi.org/10.32870/9786075816937

Domenech, E. & Dias, G. (2020). Regimes de fronteira e "ilegalidade" migrante na América Latina e no Caribe. *Sociologias*, *22*(55), 40-73. https://seer.ufrgs.br/index.php/sociologias/article/view/15174522-108928

Dufraix Tapia, R., Ramos Rodríguez, R. & Quinteros Rojas, D. (2020). "Ordenar la casa": securitización y producción de irregularidad en el norte de Chile. *Sociologias*, *22*(55), 172-196. https://seer.ufrgs.br/sociologias/article/view/15174522-105689

Fassin, D. (2010). *La raison humanitaire: Une histoire morale du temps présent*. Gallimard / Seuil.

Freitez, A. (2019). Crisis humanitaria y migración forzada desde Venezuela. In L. Gandini, F. Lozano Ascencio & V. Prieto (Coords.), *Crisis y migración de población venezolana. Entre la desprotección y la seguridad jurídica en Latinoamérica* (pp. 33-58). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. https://www.sdi.unam.mx/docs/libros/SUDIMER-CyMdPV.pdf

Gledhill, J. (2000). *El poder y sus disfraces*. Edicions Bellaterra.

Guizardi, M. L., Valdebenito, F., López, E. & Nasal, E. (2015). Condensaciones en el espacio hiperfronterizo: apropiaciones migrantes en la frontera norte de Chile. In M. Guizardi (Ed.), *Las fronteras del transnacionalismo. Límite y desbordes de la experiencia migrante en el centro y norte de Chile* (pp. 24-60). Universidad de Tarapacá / Ocho Libros. https://www.comecso.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Las_Fronteras_del_Transnacionalismo._Lim-1.pdf

Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas. (n. d.). *Censo 2024. Resultados*. https://censo2024.ine.gob.cl

Liberona Concha, N. P. & López San Francisco, E. (2018). Crisis del sistema humanitario en Chile: refugiadas colombianas deslegitimadas en la frontera norte. *Estudios Atacameños*, (60), 193-212. https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-10432018005001502

Liberona Concha, N., Ramos Rodríguez, R., Piñones Rivera, C. & Corona Ramírez, M. (2024). En tránsito por el norte de Chile: desplazamiento forzado de población venezolana bajo el control fronterizo y sanitario durante la pandemia por COVID-19 (2020–2021). *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, *29*(2), 147-158. https://doi.org/10.1111/jlca.12718

Lorenzini, D. (2023). Foucault, governmentality, and the techniques of the self. In W. Walters & M. Tazzioli (Eds.), *Handbook on governmentality* (pp. 22-37). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Mezzadra, S. & Neilson, B. (2013). *Border as method, or, the multiplication of labor*. Duke University Press.

Naranjo Giraldo, G. E. (2014). Desterritorialización de fronteras y externalización de políticas migratorias. Flujos migratorios irregulares y control de las fronteras exteriores en la frontera España-Marruecos. *Estudios Políticos*, (45), 13-32. https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.espo.20194

Prieto, M. & Becker, I. (2023). Bofedales y movilidad: de humedales andinos a trampas socionaturales. En P. Díaz & C. Stefoni (Eds.), *Colchane. Más allá de la crisis* (pp. 60-76). Universidad de Tarapacá.

Ramos, R. & Tapia Ladino, M. (2024). Entre humanitarismo y seguridad: la reorganización del control fronterizo en Chile (2010-2022). *Estudios Fronterizos*, *25*, Article e154. https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2418154

Rivera Sánchez, L., Herrera, G. & Domenech, E. (Coords.). (2023). *Movilidades, control fronterizo y luchas migrantes* (Colección Miradas latinoamericanas). Clacso / Siglo xxi Editores. https://www.clacso.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Movilidades-control-fronterizo.pdf

Salter, M. B. (2006). The global visa regime and the political technologies of the international self: borders, bodies, biopolitics. *Alternatives*, *31*(2), 167-189. https://doi.org/10.1177/030437540603100203

Servicio Nacional de Migraciones. (2026). *Informe de gestión 2022-2026. Servicio Nacional de Migraciones*. Gobierno de Chile. https://serviciomigraciones.cl/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Informe-Final-Gestion-2022-2026-Servicio-Nacional-de-Migraciones.pdf

Stang, F. & Stefoni, C. (2016). La microfísica de las fronteras: Criminalización, racialización y expulsabilidad de los migrantes colombianos en Antofagasta, Chile. *Astrolabio*, (17), 42-80. https://doi.org/10.55441/1668.7515.n17.15781

Stefoni, C. & Díaz, P. (2025). Seguridad en las fronteras/violencias de las fronteras [Dossier]. *The LASA Magazine Forum*, *56*(3). https://forum.lasaweb.org/articles/56-3/seguridad-en-las-fronteras-violencia-de-las-fronteras/

Stefoni, C., Jaramillo, M., Bravo, A. & Macaya-Aguirre, G. (2023). Colchane. La construcción de una crisis humanitaria en la zona fronteriza del norte de Chile. *Estudios Fronterizos*, *24*, Article e113. https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2302113

Stefoni, C., Mardones, P. & Valdebenito, F. (2021). Dinámicas de integración comercial "por arriba" y "por abajo" entre las zonas francas de Ciudad del Este (Paraguay) e Iquique (Chile). *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, *1*(75), 15-29. https://doi.org/10.7440/res75.2021.03

Tapia Ladino, M. & Quinteros Rojas, D. (2023). Colchane e Iquique en tiempos de pandemia: del margen a la centralidad de la crisis humanitaria venezolana (2020-2022). *Si Somos Americanos*, *23*, 1-30. https://doi.org/10.4067/s0719-09482023000100203

Walters, W. & Tazzioli, M. (2023). Introduction to the Handbook on governmentality. In W. Walters & M. Tazzioli (Eds.), *Handbook on governmentality* (pp 1-21). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Paola Díaz
Chilean-French. Ph.D. in Sociology from the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris. Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the Universidad de Tarapacá, Chile. Research lines: migration and borders, violence at and along international borders, enforced disappearances in Latin America, groups searching for the disappeared in Mexico, collective action, and public issues. Recent publication: Díaz, P. (2025). Assembling stories of disappearance in, against and beyond necropolitical assemblages. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, *44*(2), 87-99. https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.13621

Carolina Stefoni
Chilean. Ph.D. in sociology from Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile. Full professor at the Universidad de Tarapacá, director of the Ph.D. program in Social Sciences at the same university, and research associate at the Centro de Estudios de Conflicto y Cohesión Social (Coes). Research lines: human mobility, migration, and borders in Latin America; gender and migration; coexistence and discrimination. Recent publication: Guizardi, M. L., Stefoni, C., Araya, I., Magalhães, L. & López, E. (2025). Los "lugares escondidos" de la violencia. Experiencias familiares de migrantes bolivianas aymara en la triple-frontera andina. *Revista Dados*, *68*(1), Article e2022135. https://doi.org/10.1590/dados.2025.68.1.341

Mayra Maya Sánchez
Chilean. Holds a diploma in anthropology and audiovisual production from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Independent researcher. Research lines: image and border dynamics. Recent publication: Díaz, P., Maya, M. & Stefoni, C. (2024). Hilvanando contrastes fronterizos. In Alvites Baiadera, A. & García, H. E. (Coords.), *(Trans)fronteriza*, (no. 22, pp. 46-51). https://www.clacso.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/V2_TransFronterizas_N22.pdf