

State and border in Northern Chile¹

Estado y frontera en el norte de Chile

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Abstract

As a result of the ruling of the International Court of Justice in the dispute over the maritime boundary between Peru and Chile (January 2014) and the lawsuit filed against the latter by Bolivia, Chile's northern border has gained renewed visibility in both the media and the Chilean political agenda. Beyond this situation, the cross-border and regional integration dynamics and the consolidation of a new security agenda have led to the strategic positioning of this territory, historically marginalized and isolated in the midst of excessive centralization that has characterized Chile's state institutions. In that sense, the factors that account for the importance of this area at the regional and international levels, together with the agenda in terms of the Chilean government's public policy for this territory, are analyzed throughout the article.

Keywords: boundary, northern Chile, public policy, globalization, territory.

Resumen

A propósito del fallo de la Corte Internacional de Justicia en el diferendo por los límites marítimos entre Perú y Chile (enero de 2014) y de la demanda interpuesta contra este último país por parte de Bolivia, la frontera norte de Chile ha ganado renovada visibilidad en los medios de comunicación y en la agenda política chilena. Más allá de dicha coyuntura, las dinámicas transfronterizas y de integración regional y la consolidación de una nueva agenda de seguridad han llevado al posicionamiento estratégico de este territorio, históricamente aislado y marginado en medio del excesivo centralismo que ha caracterizado a la institucionalidad estatal chilena. A lo largo del artículo se analizan los factores que dan cuenta de la importancia de esta zona en el ámbito regional e internacional, así como la agenda en términos de política pública para este territorio por parte del Estado chileno.

Palabras clave: frontera, norte de Chile, política pública, globalización, territorio.

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Introduction

Since the 1990s, discussion of the concept of borders and their importance has received renewed attention in the social sciences (Andreas, 2003; Newman, 2003 and 2006; Tapia, 2012; Villafuerte, 2009). Tapia (2012) observes that discussion about borders within the theory of globalization can be classified into two interpretative approaches. On the one hand, some believe that globalization is a phenomenon that perforates borders and weakens the separating function traditionally attributed to them. On the other hand, there is a group that affirms that globalization does not necessarily mean the weakening of borders: "(...) what is observed is a phenomenon of *borderization*, that is, of closing of borders and stiffening of requirements for circulation of people" (Tapia, 2012, p. 179). Based on this perspective, globalization has led to a rediscovery of borders, where the peripheral has gained centrality. "These are not accessory spaces, but rather strategic areas that perform new functions, separating *good* from *bad*. The border marks the difference between the included and the rejected" (Villafuerte, 2009, p. 694).

In this sense, Peter Andreas (2003) observes that within the theory of globalization, there is discussion of the decline of borders, based on a vision of borders as bridges for commercial transactions more than as economic barriers or fortified military lines. However, although globalization may have undermined economic frontiers, it also brought with it new functions and emphases with respect to state control at territorial borders. Paradoxically, although globalization has stimulated free circulation of capital and goods—questioning state sovereignty in this area—the state's forms of territorial control have been maintained and have focused on preventing the flow not only of certain goods considered illicit but also of persons, all of which are considered a problem of security.

The persistence of geographic disputes between states, the continuity and emergence of new conflicts over territory, and states' efforts to control border zones in the face of new transnational threats show the importance of the territory, the space where the interrelation between global phenomena and realities and local practices occur. Border zones are a special space that offers a view of the nature of territorial policies and the dynamics of security in the twenty-first century.

In an article published in *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica*, Claudio Fuentes (2008) uses the adjective "hot", as a synonym for conflictive to refer to borders in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to Fuentes, because of the low number of interstate wars and civil wars, the Latin American/Caribbean region is considered one of the most peaceful regions in the world. However, unresolved territorial conflicts between states, lack of trust in state relations, the growth of transnational threats, and the weakness of the states in the region produce a scenario in which borders have acquired great importance as a space for potentiating the problems of security and for developing initiatives for cooperation that in turn, stimulate integration.

Based on what has been discussed above, this article will present an analysis of the factors of international and regional (South America) insertion at Chile's northern

border,² along with the functions and form of territorialization of the Chilean state. Some of the questions directing the reflection are the following: What is the importance of the territory of the northern frontier in the regional and international context from the perspective of the Chilean state? Have phenomena such as globalization and regional integration brought with them changes to the borders within public policy and foreign policy in Chile? What place does the territorial dimension occupy with respect to state action towards borders?

The emergence of new non-state actors and of cross-border processes driven by subnational governments or communities has motivated the development of various articles and reflections related to Chile's northern border. In this sense, there is a good body of analysis regarding cross-border dynamics and paradiplomacy, most focused on the study of the Strategic Alliance "Aymaras without borders" (Aranda, Ovando and Corder, 2010; Bello, 2012; González, 2009; González and Ovando, 2008; González, Rouviere and Ovando, 2008; Ovando and Álvarez, 2011). Besides, there are research regarding social phenomena that are common to borders but have gained visibility in recent decades such as immigration from Bolivia and Peru (Cano and Sofía, 2009; Tapia, 2012). Finally, there is considerable writing regarding borders that is inscribed in a more traditional perspective focused on relations with neighbors in the context of Chilean border tensions and foreign policy. Nevertheless, review of the literature on the subject shows a lesser development in the area of reflection on the changes in the agenda of the Chilean state in the context of globalization and the impact that it has had on the model of territorialization and functions in frontiers.

Accordingly, this study has two objectives. On the one hand, it aims to describe Chile's northern border and to analyze the factors of its regional and international presence in relation to state institutionality. On the other hand, through a case study, this study will seek to contribute to existing interpretations of borders and globalization based on empirical evidence that it will bring to this discussion. Thus, a theoretical frame is used that relies on contributions from various disciplines, noting changes in the forms of territorialization and state functions at borders given the transformations of capitalism, and likewise a review of official documents and specialized bibliography is performed that allows for identifying the trajectories and points of exchange in the relationship between state institutionality and the border territory of northern Chile.

The text affirms that from a *top-down* perspective, Chile's northern border area constitutes both an internal border and an international border. As an internal border, it is characterized by its marginality and historical exclusion with respect to national centers of power.³ However, as an international border, economic and social dynamics in the framework of globalization have generated an unexpected importance to this zone with respect to three variables: the commerce and export of basic goods, infrastructure, and security.

² The northern border of Chile is bounded by three countries: Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina, and includes a part of the territory of the regions of Arica and Parinacota XV, Tarapacá I, and Antofagasta II.

³ "It is important to note that the Chilean state has referred to these territories using the concept of the internal border, understood as that regarding which there is a cost to the Chilean state 'in achieving it institutionally.'" Interview with Loreto Correa Vera, Titular Professor, National Academy of Political and Strategic Studies. Santiago, Chile, September 11, 2014.

The article is organized as follows. In the first section, a theoretical review regarding borders, border region, and territory is presented. In the second section, there is a general characterization of the territory that constitutes Chile's northern border. In the third section, the variables that account for the importance and regional and international presence of this zone are addressed and analyzed. Finally, some conclusions are presented based on the preceding analysis.

Territory, state, and borders

The notion of a *border* has been used to denote factual, metaphorical, and/or imaginary realities constructed socially or through disciplines and is a polysemic concept that occurs with various definitions within the social sciences (Bartolomé, 2005; Tapia, 2012). Nevertheless, the traditional view regarding state borders goes back to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), based on which a view was established that conceived of borders as demarcations of national states and of the societies that reside in them (Tapia, 2012, p. 179). Gottman (1973, cited by Machado, Reyes and Rego, 2009, p. 99) observes that in political geography, an international border is considered a zone of indeterminate breadth whose fundamental characteristic is that it is crossed by a border that determines the limits of territorial sovereignty between two states. Following this classical definition, one finds that the study of borders has been associated with the lines that separate the sovereignty of states in the international system (Newman, 2003); this is a geopolitical vision of the border as an element of demarcation of a state's sovereignty, which has meant that in a large part of the literature, *territorial boundaries* and *borders* are treated as synonymous.

However, there is a difference between borders and border areas: the border is conceived as the constitution of physical and visible lines of separation between economic, political, and social spaces. Meanwhile, the border area is the region or area in relative proximity to the limit, where dynamics of exchanges and daily life are affected by the presence of the border itself (Newman, 2006). As Lía Machado (2000) notes, whereas borders are the work of the states that through juridical instruments mark the separation between sovereign political units and delimit the territory under state control, border areas are social constructions of the people and can expand beyond the juridical limit of the state, challenge the territorial law of each bordering state, and sometimes create a situation that is de facto potentially conflictive.

Culture, economic and social dynamics, and borders do not always coincide with state limits; borders are spaces of movement, interchange, and integration in various forms, whose territorial development occurs within a frame that goes beyond states' political-administrative divisions, integrating both subnational and non-state actors. Thus, borders are a socioterritorial product of the juridical and geopolitical discourses of the state, on the one hand, and of the action of border communities, on the other hand.

Traditionally, the study of borders has focused on a view of the border's limits, that is, a top-down view that has privileged state action within the analysis. From the point of view of international relations, borders have been approached principally in military and geopolitical terms. Given that the majority of interstate wars have been over the conquest of territory, geopolitical thinking has emphasized the centrality of competence and the acquisition of territory in the dynamics of world politics and the

military function of borders. In this sense, the survival of the state depends on combating military incursions by other states, a perspective that coincides with the realist theoretical tradition in international politics in which the security of the state is tightly linked to war. However, the decline in interstate wars and transformations in world politics have demonstrated the weakness of this focus for understanding the relationships among actors in the international system.

Thus, with respect to study of borders, a "bottom-up" has gradually emerged that addresses not only the experiences of individuals and populations but also how borders have an impact on daily practices and the identities of the persons that inhabit them (Grimson, 2000; Tapia, 2012). This is a view that since the end of the 1970s has been driven principally by anthropology and sociology (Grimson, 2000, 2003 y 2004; Wilson and Donnan, 1998), which supposes a critique of methodological nationalism and privileges a constructivist and multicultural vision in its discourses, deconstructing the geopolitical and military perspectives characteristic of the discourses of nation-states regarding borders.

However, this effort to deconstruct national identifications has taken place at the cost of an excessive emphasis on recognizing the "nonexistence" of borders for local actors, given that the administration of borders is woven into the contemporary definition of the nation-state and in spite of the loss of state sovereignty in fields such as the economy, the state continues to demand a central position in the arrangement of flows into and out of national borders. Harvey (1990) observes that the concepts of time and space are a social construction tightly linked to forms of production and social reproduction. Thus, capitalism's present dynamics have led to a rethinking of the model of territorialization of the state and its functions in borders.

In analyzing the dynamics of state control in border zones in Latin America, Grimson (2004) notes that

control over border populations seems to have become stronger, both in relation to the circulation of people and in relation to petty merchandise of the type known as "ant smuggling." Thus, in many cases, border populations perceive a greater – not a lesser – presence of the state. The state withdraws its function of protection, and reappears in its role of control and regulation. In other words, we could be seeing—rather than a generalized deterritorialization—the replacement of one model of territorialization by another (p. 11).

This new model of territorialization brings with it a historic change in the priorities of border control; to the degree that borders are increasingly porous due to the effects of globalization, states have built barriers against the flow of "undesirable" elements, against *illegality*. Thus,

the state has not withdrawn completely, but has changed its axis of intervention. If, in the previous phase it was obsessed with territorial preservation, the control of space, now its axis of action is linked to controlling flows, the movements of people and merchandise between countries, especially

for promoting “above-board” flows and controlling “under-the-counter” flows (Grimson, 2004, p. 12).

Aguiar (2010) uses the term *selective neoliberalism* to account for this dynamic; thus, while neoliberalism promotes an ideology of the free market and the reduction of state control, new barriers are simultaneously constructed. “Border zones move from having one type of instrumental value to another, in the sense that military and territorial hegemony is replaced, under neoliberalism, by the hegemony of the container and flows between transnationals” (Grimson, 2004, p. 18).

The northern border of Chile: between integration and isolation

Many of South America’s frontiers can be described as *marginal lands* with regard to the centers of national power since independence from colonial control:

During the colonial period, both Spain and Portugal were invested in establishing borders to assure the colonial division of their colonial possessions at a higher level than post-independence governments. The new independent states maintained the dominant pattern of settlement characterized by the concentration of the population in the region of the Cordillera of the Andes along the coast of the Pacific and the Atlantic in the western zone of South America. Most internal borders were marginal to the principal flows of settlement (Machado et al., 2009, p. 100-101).

That the formation and consolidation of the institutionality of the State followed a trajectory of expansion from the center to the periphery in most South American states left the frontiers on a secondary plane. Indeed, land area under sovereignty was larger than that under effective state control, with an imbalance among population, territory, development, and institutionality. Thus, in talking about South American borders, one alludes to a double process: they are both internal borders and international borders (Ramírez and Cepik, 2004, p. 450).

Chile’s northern border is bounded by three countries—Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina—and includes fringes of the territories of the regions of Arica and Parinacota XV, Tarapacá I, and Antofagasta II, also known as the Norte Grande due to the regional classification developed by the Corporation for Stimulating Production (CORFO) in 1950. Although one should not confuse the northern border region, as a specific territorial space, with Chile’s Norte Grande, the characterization of the latter is important for understanding the geographical, political, economic, and social context of the border. In this respect, it is important to mention that this is a large portion of Chile’s territory, with a land area of 185,148.2 km²; it is a region characterized by a desert climate and that contains only 6.3% of the country’s total population (INE, 2012), with Arica and Parinacota being the least populated region (1.29%).

The institutionality of the Chilean state, marked by a trajectory of expansions from the center to the periphery and the predominance of a centralist culture, has implied (among other things) the model of circumscribing development and state action to the Central Valley, leaving the border regions in the north and south of the country on a secondary plane. However, this situation is not exclusive to the Chilean state. Indeed,

the territories of the four countries that converge at the border are distant from national economic and politico-administrative centers and thus, their borders are both internal and international.

Since 1960, concern for the planning of the territory and the problems stemming from an excessive geographic concentration of both men and the means of production in the capital has been systematic in Chile (Szary, 1997). In this context, a process of regionalization was carried out in Chile in 1974, based on which the regions acquired the statutes of administrative entities. Navarrete and Higuera (2014) observe that this model became "the model for regionalization in a frame of neoliberal policies, where the motives for development were linked with politico-strategic reasons of national integrity and inclusion, and the provision of goods and services in an efficient and effective manner to the citizenry" (p. 184). Since then, and particularly since the restoration of democracy in 1990, some measures have been implemented to bring democracy to regional and local levels; these have been concentrated on processes of administrative and fiscal decentralization, whereas reforms in the area of political decentralization have been modest. However, more than decentralization, this has been a process of deconcentration and thus, the greatest weight in decisions, planning, and budgeting continues to reside at the central level.

Concern regarding unequal development of territory has also been constant in terms of security under the classic conception of state sovereignty. Indeed, in the discourse of the Chilean Army, the concept of internal borders is used to designate

terrestrial spaces under sovereignty not totally or effectively connected with the action of the central and/or regional government, where development of human and productive activities is made difficult by their distance from the geohistorical vital nucleus of the country; the absence of avenues of communication and economic influence, as well as the presence of foreign cultures and the daily collective perception of the citizens of each of these geographic spaces that they are constructing a different separate entity disconnected from the rest of the national population and which do not manage to enjoy general well-being due to adverse geographical factors (Garay, 2004, pp. 99-100).

In 1994, President Eduardo Frei stated, "My government is determined to make a complete occupation of the land, sea and air of our fatherland. We will consolidate and integrate the internal borders and we will make an effective occupation of our land" (Garay, 2004, p.100). That year, the Commission on Internal Borders was created, which was composed of the following officials: the Minister of Defense; the Undersecretaries of War, of Regional Development, of Public Works and of National Goods; the Director of Borders and Frontiers; the Commander of the Command of Army Engineers; the Director of the Academy of War of the Institution; the Director of the Military Geographical Institute; and the Director of Maritime Territory (Martínez, 2014).

In March 1995, the Commission turned in its report, in which it identified 31 zones of the country as internal borders, equivalent to 46.32% of national territory. The zones identified were classified based on three categories: non-critical internal borders,

intermediate internal borders, and critical internal borders, "the latter corresponding to those areas of national territory whose geographic, climate, accessibility, infrastructure and service characteristics make the development and integration of the localities difficult" (National Commission on Internal Borders to National Development, 1995, p. 12). In the northern zone of the country, the following internal borders were identified as critical: the communes of General Lagos, Putre, Pica, and Colchane in the I Region (the latter of which was identified as critical) and the communes of Ollagüe and San Pedro de Atacama in the II Region.

In the White Book of Defense (Ministry of Defense of Chile, 2010), internal borders are considered one of the principal geographic challenges.

The existence of zones with low population but high economic potential, principally at the extremes of our territory, constitutes a weakness factor that must be overcome. In this sense, the Chilean state has been concerned with implementing measures tending to favor the extreme zones, to stimulate their development, population, and integration with the rest of the country. For example, development plans prepared for the northern city of Arica and for the Southern Zone, as well as those relative to the policy of channeling internal population flows toward these areas. It is important to mention, further, the efforts made by the Undersecretary of Regional Development of the Ministry of the Interior, together with the Ministry of National Planning (MIDEPLAN) and the defense institutions in the analysis of specific proposals in the area of "internal borders" (p.59).

The response of the Chilean state to unequal regional development and integration in the national context was materialized in a set of public policies that focused on what were labeled extreme zones and isolated localities.⁴

Until the beginning of the 1990s, the quality of the extreme zone was due principally to its distance from the central zone of the country (extreme geographical location) and the border status of the areas in question. However, new studies noted the existence of territories that, although not located in extreme or border zones, were nonetheless equally isolated—by various factors—in relation to the rest of the communities in the country (Library of the National Congress [BCN], 2011, p. 1).

For example, in 1994 what is now the Interministerial Commission for the Development of Extreme and Special Zones (CIZEDE) was established as part of the Undersecretariat for Regional and Administrative Development and charged with promoting measures (legislation, programs, and projects) for the integration of extreme, isolated, and special zones. During the administration of President Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014), a distinction was established between "extreme zones"⁵ and

⁴ A review of the bibliography in this respect shows that various concepts have been used to identify those parts of the territory that are characterized by their geographical isolation, low and dispersed population, and precarious supply of public services, among other factors; some of those areas include the following: zones of colonization, extreme zones, internal borders, isolated territories, and special territories. In this respect, see BNC, 2011.

⁵ The Arica and Parinacota Regions in the north, the Aysén of General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic Regions in the south, and the Chiloé and Palena Provinces form the "extreme zones."

“isolated territories” so that for the former, policy was focused on the “Plan of Special Incentives for Extreme Zones,”⁶ whereas in the case of the “isolated territories,” the “National Policy for Development of Isolated Localities” was implemented.

The Arica and Parinacota region is one of the three regions considered “extreme zones”. In addition, prepared in 2008 by the Undersecretary of Regional and Administrative Development, three of the four communities in Arica and Parinacota were found to be in the first quartile of the most “isolated” communities in the country and three of the seven communities of Tarapacá are listed in the critical-isolation category. For the case of the Antofagasta Region, two of the nine communities are in the first quartile of the most isolated in the country, and one is in the second quartile.

In the economic sphere, since 1973, these regions have experienced an especially high impact from market forces. According to Szary (1997),

deregulation allowed by liberal legislation once more focuses the emphasis, as prior to the crisis of 1929, on exports with all the consequences that this model of growth implies for Chilean industrial infrastructure. This questioning of the productive structure of the country will lead to brutal reclassifications in the territories (...) We can say generally that the change of economic orientation leads to crisis for Chilean industrial regions in those that frequently have been distinguished as poles of development (p. 63).

This economic model has sustained a deindustrializing trend and pushed the regions to compete with international markets, profiting from their comparative advantages and generating considerable dependence on investor countries:

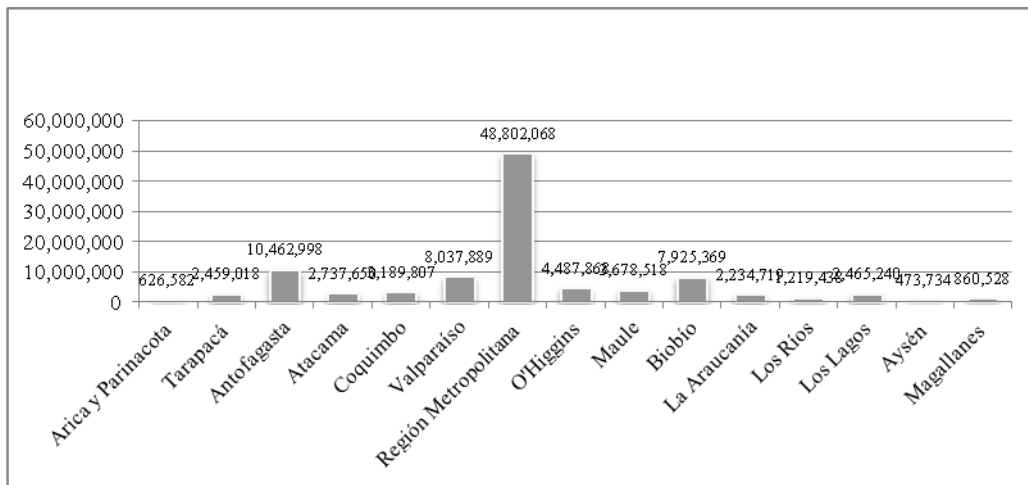
The originality of the conception of the Chilean regions certainly rests on the fact that they have been perceived as having a double movement of opening and inclusion into the “world system” rather than within a movement of integration into national territory (...) There is a certain radicalization of regional inequalities, a phenomenon that we can associate with the social differences caused by the new economic system (Szary, 1997, p. 68).

The regional gross domestic product (GDP) numbers for 2012 demonstrate the exacerbation of inequality among the regional economies and the Metropolitan Region (RM) (see figure 1). Of the regionalized GDP, 49% corresponds to the RM, followed by Antofagasta with 10.5%, mostly composed of mineral exploitation. The other two regions that make up the northern border,—the Arica and Parinacota Region and the Tarapacá Region—have a marginal position, particularly Arica and Parinacota, whose GDP represents 0.63% of the total.

⁶ See Law 20,655 of 2013.

Figure 1. GDP by regions in Chile (2012)

In millions of Chilean pesos



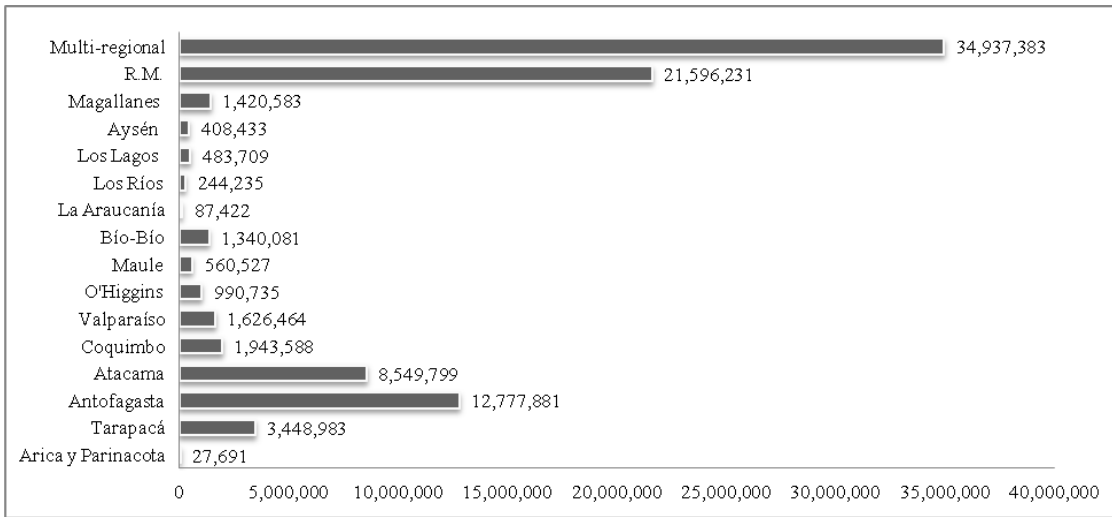
Source: Prepared by the author with data provided by the Central Bank.

In the area of foreign investment, data reveal that the greatest loser in the northern zone of the country is the Arica and Parinacota Region⁷, which has the lowest percentage in the north of the country and the next-to-last generally (see figure 2). The Antofagasta Region is one of the regions with the greatest percentage, surpassed only by multiregional investment and investment in the Metropolitan Region. In analyzing the data by sector, one finds that this high figure is because mining; more than 90% of investment in Antofagasta and Tarapacá is focused in this sector and in the case of Arica, it represents almost 50% (Commission on Foreign Investments, 2012).

A review of the bibliography not only on the subject and but also on numbers and indicators of various types show the historical isolation of the territory in the north of the country, not only in a geographical sense but also in the political, social, and economic senses of the word. This dynamic of isolation also involves the frontier of the north, which constitutes an internal border for the Chilean state.

⁷ This region was created in 2008, based on its separation from Tarapacá. It was created for "among other reasons, the special conditions of this territory and, thus, the impact of these on the community, such as its status of a double international border; distance from both regional and national centers of political decision-making; and having a population that is mainly of different cultural and ethnic origin with respect to the rest of the regional territory" (BCN, 2007, p. 5).

Figure 2. Foreign investment according to region (1974-2012)
In millions of dollars



Source: Prepared by the author, based on data provided by Committee on Foreign Investment. Provisional numbers for December 31, 2012.

The northern border and its presence in the regional and international context

As an internal border, northern Chile has been characterized not only by its marginality and exclusion, a fact that has been favored by the excessively centralized model of political organization, but also by an economic scheme that has stimulated the insertion of the regions into international markets to the detriment of national integration. However, as an international border, this same economic model and the social dynamics in the frame of globalization and regional integration have generated a previously unknown importance for this territory with regard to three variables: the commerce and export of raw materials, infrastructure, and security.

Economic-commercial relations

Since the restoration of democracy in 1990, the axes expressing the Chilean state's strategy of international economic insertion have been as follows:

1. Political consensus: the objective was the recovery of prestige and normalization of the national role in international forums. This was translated into a multilateral dynamism and bilateral consensus in regional and global areas: "participation in the United Nations and the candidacy and election of Chile as a Non-Permanent Member of the Security Council of the United Nations for the biennium 2003-04 allowed it to achieve this goal on the global level. At the same time, participation in organizations of the inter-American system (the Summit of the Americas and the OAS) were an effective proof of hemispheric commitment and finally, ongoing work of national diplomacy at regional and subregional authorities such as the Rio Group, South American summits, and

Mercosur accounted for the government's priorities in this plane" (Quezada, 2010, p. 126).

2. Economic-commercial integration: internationalization of the Chilean economy continued and became deeper, emphasizing the promotion of exports and linking commerce to foreign investment. The country's unilateral opening was complemented with an active bilateralism that led to free trade treaties and agreements for economic cooperation (Fuentes, 2009, p. 19).
3. Rapprochement and improvement in neighborly relations: since the 1990s, the Chilean government has understood that it needed better relations with its neighbors and could not continue with a strategy of isolationism. Rapprochement with neighbors was largely motivated by an interest in pursuing joint initiatives in areas such as commercial interchange, highway integration, and energy cooperation (Correa and García, 2012, p. 84).

The northern border includes the entire border with Peru and Bolivia and a portion of the border with Argentina. Commercial and economic relations with Peru have become more important. This relationship has been on an upward trend since the 2009 implementation of the Chile-Peru free-trade agreement. Chile took sixth place in the rankings for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Peru, representing 6% of Peru's total FDI. "In December 2013, the level of direct Chilean investment in that country reached 13,944 million USD [U.S. dollars] or 14.8% of total Chilean investment abroad" (General Direction of International Economic Relations of Chile [DIRECON], 2014, p. 1). The establishment of the Pacific Alliance in 2011⁸ created a new scenario that stimulated strengthened commercial relations between the two countries with respect to the Asia-Pacific region.

Table 1. Imports and exports with neighboring countries (2012)

In millions of dollars

		Bolivia	Peru	Argentina
Chile	Imports	250,300	2,027,020	5,273,139
	Exports	461,957	1,606,249	1,223,481

Source: ALADI.

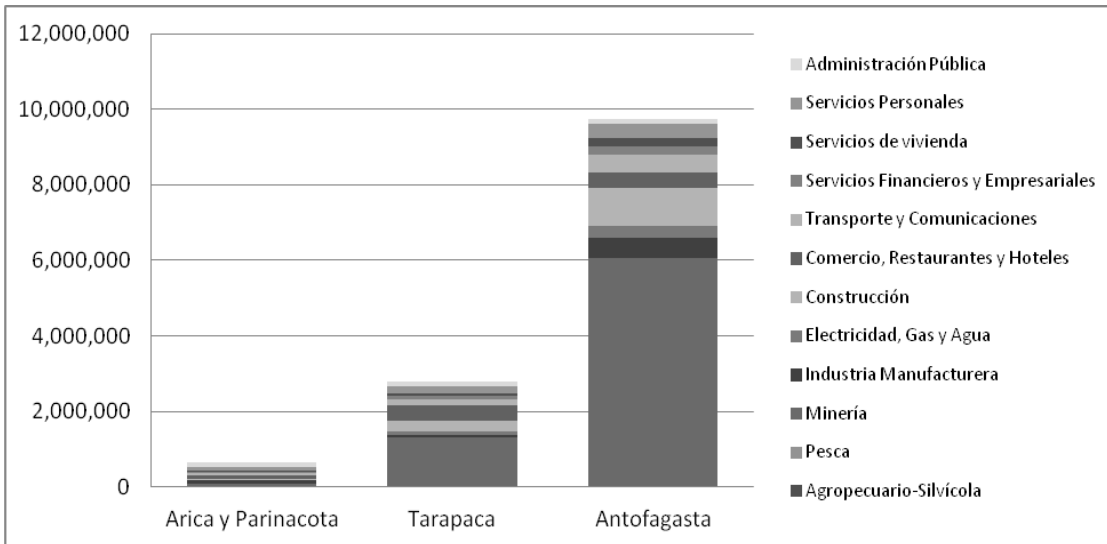
In the case of Bolivia, commercial relations are within the framework of the Accord on Economic Complementarity between Bolivia and Chile, ACE No. 22, which went into effect in 1993. The ACE establishes tariff preferences and releases of liens. Although Chile is an important destination for Bolivian exports and holds a notable place in the area of Bolivian imports, this importance is not reciprocal; Chile's neighbor holds a marginal position as a commercial partner.

⁸ The Pacific Alliance is a initiative for free trade and cooperation among Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico. The treaty calls for the elimination of tariffs on 92% of products following ratification; the other 8% of products are agricultural and a gradual process of elimination of tariffs will be established. The Alliance includes a market of at least 210 million people.

Finally, there is an important commercial dynamic between Chile and Argentina; according to the figures of the Latin American Association on Integration for 2012 (ALADI, 2013), Chile represents the second-most-important destination for Argentinian exports, with 6.26% of total exports; the same is not true for imports, for which Chile only represents 1.48% of the total. Meanwhile, Argentina constitutes the destination for 1.59% of Chilean exports and is the third country of origin for imports, with 7.46% of the total.

Conversely, mining is a key part for not only the regional economy but also the country overall, representing 12% of Chile’s GDP in 2012 (Banco Central de Chile, 2013). The shaping of an enclave economy in the northern territory of the country through the exploitation of saltpeter led to Chile’s incipient insertion in the world economy during the nineteenth century. Until now, mining has been the motor of Chile’s economy, especially in the regions of Tarapacá and Antofagasta—i.e., extraction of copper, sodium chloride, and sulfur. For the Arica and Parinacota Region, manufacturing and commerce, along with hotels and restaurants, are the two economic activities that have the greatest importance in the regional economy. In general, the economy of this zone is based on natural resources and is not very diversified (see figure 3). Industry is principally linked to fishery resources. The free zone of Iquique, in the Tarapacá Region, and the fact that the city of Arica is a free port, has generated dynamics of commerce and interchange of goods that are vital to the regional economy.

Figure 3. Gross domestic product by class of economic activity (2011)
In millions of Chilean Pesos



Source: Prepared by the author, based on data provided by Central Bank

Infrastructure and connectivity: the northern border and IIRSA

The importance of the economic-commercial integration of the Initiative for South American Regional Infrastructure (IIRSA) within the strategy for Chilean international insertion is linked to the development of infrastructure and connectivity, the second variable that has been proposed as relevant in the relationship between the Chilean state and the northern border. In the frame of IIRSA, northern Chile's territory is strategic, both because it integrates various axes of connectivity and because it permits passage toward other axes connecting with the rest of the region.

IIRSA is a mechanism for coordinating the countries in the region for the development and integration of physical cross-border infrastructure, with the objective of supplying a larger market to companies, increasing intraregional commerce, and improving South America's competitiveness with the rest of the world. The precariousness of physical infrastructure is considered to be one of the greatest problem areas for regional integration and economic development; it is thought that an increase of 10 percentage points in the cost of transport tends to a 20% reduction in commerce volumes and that in South America, transport costs are higher than the costs of tariffs (Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean [CEPAL], 2013).

The planning suggested by IIRSA is structured around the axes of integration and development, understood as "multinational fringes of territory concentrating natural spaces, human settlements, productive zones, and commercial flows" (IIRSA, s/f, paragraph 1). Chile is part of the following axes: MERCOSUR-Chile, Central Interoceanic, Capricorn, and South (Table 2).

Table 2. Axes of IIRSA that include Chile

Axis	Composition
MERCOSUR-Chile	Links the principal economic centers and the principal ports of this territory, including Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Brazil.
Central Interoceanic Axis	Crosses South America, connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific through nodes in five countries: Peru; Regions XV, I, and the Loa Province of the II Region of Chile; Bolivia; Paraguay; and Brazil.
Axis of Capricorn	Composed of four regions, including territory from Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, and the Chilean regions of Tarapacá, Antofagasta, and Atacama.
Southern Axis	Includes Chile and Argentina; in this case, the axis addresses Regions VIII, IX, XIV, and X of Chile.

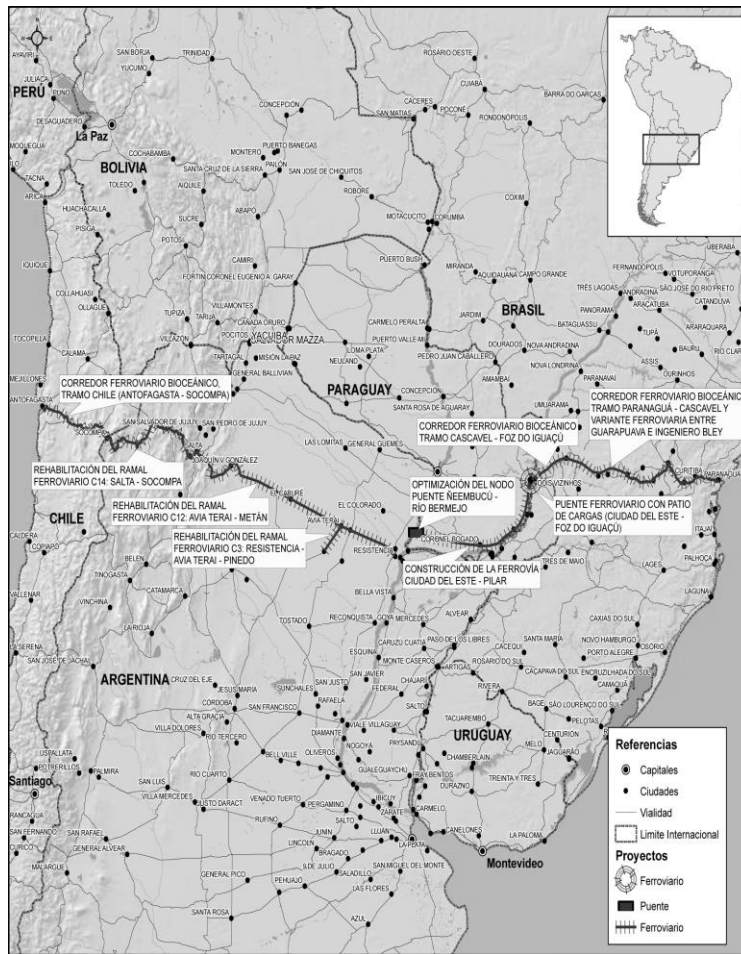
Source: Prepared with data from IIRSA, s/f.

Three of the axes of integration of which Chile is part include territories of its northern frontier, making Chile an important corridor for goods, services, and people. Nevertheless, the dynamic of cross-border interchange is not new in this area, given that in its condition as a border space it has been a place for constant migration, interaction, and interchange. What has changed is the rhythm of these flows and interchanges, along with its place in the economic project of both Chile and the South American region overall. Two of the API Agenda for Priority Projects⁹ involve Chile: the

⁹ The Agenda for Priority Projects of Integration (API) consists of a set of 31 projects structured around an investment sum estimated at 16,713,800 million USD, strategic in character, with a high impact on physical

bio-oceanic railway corridor of Paranaguá-Antofagasta and the binational Agua Negra tunnel. The first, located on the northern frontier, is part of the Axis of Capricorn. "It intends to provide a multilateral railway connection for cargo transport within the Axis of Capricorn between the included territories, on a route leading from the port of Antofagasta, in Chile, passing through northern Argentina and Paraguay, and continuing through Brazilian territory to the port of Paranaguá" (IIRSA, 2012, p. 66). Logistical costs would be reduced for transport throughout the corridor and there would be an incentive for commercial interchanges. This API is made up of nine individual projects—the portion in Chile corresponds to Antofagasta-Socompa (see figure 4).

Figure 4. Paranaguá-Antofagasta bio-oceanic railway corridor



Source: IIRSA, 2012.

integration and regional socioeconomic development. Its objective is to promote connectivity in the region based on the construction and efficient operation of infrastructure, observing criteria of sustainable social and economic development, and preserving the environment and balance of the ecosystems (IIRSA, 2012, p. 5).

The security agenda in northern Chile

The final aspect that will be considered in this analysis is security. The Declaration on Security in the Americas, approved in 2003 (Organization of American States [OAS], 2013), establishes a view of multidimensional security for the hemisphere that addresses both conventional and new threats. It notes the need to broaden traditional focuses, given the diverse nature of current threats to security, including environmental, health, social, economic, and political aspects, along with the broader security-related objectives, which consider not only the state but also individuals and communities. The threats, according to the Declaration (Parte II, m), are as follows:

- Traditional threats: Border conflicts, interstate wars, etc.
- New threats: Terrorism, transnational organized crime, the world drug problem, corruption, money laundering, the illegal arms trade, and the connections between them; the extreme poverty and social exclusion of broad sectors of the population; HIV/AIDS and other diseases; the deterioration of the environment; the treatment of people; attacks on cybersecurity; the possibility of damage in the event of an accident or incident during the maritime transport of potentially dangerous materials, including petroleum, radioactive material, and toxic waste; and the possibility of access to, possession, and use of weapons of mass destruction and their means of dissemination by terrorists.

An ample portion of what is defined as new threats to security involves illegal actors and transnational flows. “Illegal transnational flows of goods, information, and people—the clandestine side of globalization—has become a growing source of tension and conflict in world politics” (Andreas, 2004, p. 642), and are considered both a threat to international security and a challenge for the control and application of the law by the authorities. In the words of Andreas (2004),

as the global economy has become more integrated and interdependent, states have built barriers against “undesirable” exchange across borders. This is particularly evident in efforts to control illegal immigration, prohibited drugs, and illicit financial transactions (p. 643).

Chile’s northern border brings together the tensions and dynamics between the traditional agenda and the new security agenda. Thus, in 2011, when the Chilean government announced the implementation of a border security strategy called the “Northern Border Plan,” (Plan Frontera Norte, PFN), which had the objective of combating drug trafficking, smuggling, and other illicit flows in the regions of Arica and Parinacota, Tarapacá and Antofagasta, in the northern part of the country (Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Chile, 2013), the Bolivian government created the Directorship for Maritime Revindication to bring its claim for a sovereign connection to the Pacific Ocean before international tribunals, which became concrete in 2013 when Bolivia formally presented a complaint against Chile at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). This complaint was added to the complaint that had been lodged in 2008 by Peru against Chile with respect to the maritime border between the two countries, and with respect to which the ICJ would offer its opinion in January 2014. On April 29, 2013, the ICJ communicated its acceptance of the complaint regarding Bolivia’s demand for a sovereign connection to the Pacific Ocean next to Chile. Nevertheless, in

July 2014, the complaint was suspended after the Chilean government's presentation of a writ of preliminary objection to Court's jurisdiction with respect to its competency.¹⁰

We will not explore the details of these territorial and maritime disputes here; it is enough to note that this class of disagreement is closely linked to themes such as nationalism and sovereignty, feeding hypotheses of suspicion, conflict, and militarization. However, as noted by Sotomayor (2009), in this region it is unlikely that these problems would lead to war, and states use various methods and requests to resolve them in a peaceful way. In particular, beginning in the 1990s, countries in the region have increasingly chosen to go to the ICJ.

Problems typical of the traditional security agenda are mixed with the positioning of an agenda characterized by new threats, among them drug trafficking and smuggling. The PFN represents in a concrete way the implementation of actions by the Chilean state based on this new security agenda. The PFN was announced by the government in October 2011, and its first phase includes the regions of Arica and Parinacota, Tarapacá, and Antofagasta.

The PFN's principal goal is to avoid the entry and exit of drugs and contraband from the country through ports, uninhabited coastal regions, border complexes, and uninhabited areas. Thus, it is structured around the following axes: the strengthening of border complexes, control of uninhabited areas, the strengthening of state presence on the maritime border, cooperation with neighboring countries against organized crime, and improvement of the operative capacity of the *Carabineros* and the Investigative Police. The plan's perspective is based on a consideration of security based on irregular or new threats, seeking to avoid the passage of particular goods and persons through the borders.

The geographic dimensions and the regional context are the most important reasons for the development of the PFN. In discussing the importance of the Plan with a commission of deputies, Undersecretary of the Interior Rodrigo Ubilla made the following statement:

In northern Chile, 947 kilometers corresponds to the border with two countries (*Peru and Bolivia*), which produce 54% of the cocaine in the world; 400 kilometers of the border with Argentina, in the region of Antofagasta, connect with Brazil and Paraguay, the latter one of the largest producers of pressed marijuana (Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Chile, 2013, p. 14).

According to the UN's 2012 numbers, Peru is the largest producer of coca leaf, with 60,400 hectares, followed by Colombia, with 48,000. Meanwhile, in 2011, Bolivia had 27,200 hectares of coca (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [ONUDD]), 2013). The dynamics of the traffic in illegal drugs in Chilean territory are added to considerations of the regional context: the numbers show that Chile has become not

¹⁰ Missing from the ICJ exemption from jurisdiction solicited by Chile is the Bolivian presentation of its defense, which was due to be presented on November 14, 2014.

only a transit zone but also a consumption zone for illicit drugs (Chamber of Deputies of the Interior of the Republic of Chile, 2013).

Looking at numbers related to drug trafficking, an accounting of the seizures made between 2009 and 2012 shows an increase in seizures of cocaine paste, processed marijuana, and marijuana plants. There are two reasons for this increase: greater control by police and/or an increase in the flow of illicit drugs in the country (Table 3).

Table 3. Drug seizures by type, 2009-2013

Type of drug	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
C. of cocaine (kilos)	2,654.89	2,808.01	2,392.14	3,150.18	2,932.77
Cocaine paste	5,695.79	7,127.07	7,059.77	9,675.41	10,798.40
Processed marijuana (kilos)	13,928.46	8,144.62	14,565.59	14,550.82	23,305.53
Marijuana plants (units)	196,412	172,618	266,015	235,428	288,379
Drugs (units)	84,619	393,064	167,885	116,361	68,741
Heroin (kilos)	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Ministry of the Interior and Public Security (2014).

From a regional perspective, seizures of cocaine chlorhydrate are concentrated in the Metropolitan Region, Arica and Parinacota, and Tarapacá. The regions with the largest seizures of cocaine paste are the Metropolitan Region, Tarapacá, and Antofagasta, the latter of which is also one of the regions with the greatest seizures of processed marijuana. The regions of Arica and Parinacota and Tarapacá are also among those with the greatest seizure of drugs.

In this context, the PFN is used to attempt to prevent the entry of illicit drugs into Chilean territory through greater inter-institutional coordination, the use of technology, and cooperation with neighboring countries. For 2011-2014, the PFN supposes a total investment of 35,000 million Chilean pesos to strengthen the terrestrial and maritime borders of the three regions involved. Beginning in 2013, the Chilean government announced that the Plan would continue, and would include the Region of Atacama.

The international/domestic nature of problems such as drug trafficking and the need to undertake joint measures has led to a paradoxical situation in which on the one hand, the new security agenda generates incentives for rapprochement and cooperation, in spite of latent territorial disputes, whereas on the other hand, due to the negative and suspicious view of the other that characterizes Peru and Bolivia's relationship with Chile

and the asymmetries in terms of policies and institutional capacity,¹¹ there are now new spaces for disagreement among the three countries.

Conclusions

The dynamics of globalization and regional integration call into question the idea of borders as territorial limits and as state sovereignties that are rigid in nature; borders are increasingly porous, constituting a space in which various actors, phenomena, and social processes converge. However, this does not suppose the disappearance of borders or the withdrawal of state control in such territories. On the contrary, border administration continues to be one of the state's tasks, the territorial dimension retains its importance, and it is evident that there has been a change in the functions of state control and forms of territorialization. In this sense, a review of the literature on the subject shows what Aguiar (2010) calls *selective neoliberalism*, with the elimination of limits on the flows of goods, services, and financial capital at the same time that new barriers are erected to persons and goods considered to be illegal.

The territory corresponding to the northern border of Chile constitutes both an internal and an international border. As an internal border, historically it has been characterized by its isolation and marginality; "extreme zone" and "isolated locality" are adjectives used by the state to refer to it. Since the mid-twentieth century, the Chilean state implemented policies to stimulate the development and integration of this zone, none of which have been particularly successful. However, as an international border, social and economic dynamics in the context of globalization have created an unheard-of importance for this zone as pivotal for development and integration with respect to three variables: the commerce and export of raw materials, infrastructure, and security.

With respect to these variables, there has also been a change in the forms of the Chilean state's territorialization. Chile's northern territory has strategic importance because of its mineral resources and its geographic position: it constitutes a corridor that connects Chile with the rest of the South American regions and therefore from an economic and commercial perspective, it is a key zone. Nevertheless, acceleration of the flows and interchange of the legal economy has been accompanied by the appearance of new phenomena considered problematic from the security perspective and therefore, Chile's security policy state has moved from focusing on traditional threats (i.e., territorial disputes) to considering subjects such as drug trafficking or non-authorized immigration, bringing with it a change in how the state exercises its functions of control and repression.

¹¹ Asymmetries, whether economic or institutional, affect relationships between states and policies with respect to transnational threats. In certain cases, they generate incentives for the tolerance of illegal activities, whether by national states or local actors. In the institutional setting, differences in states' capacity for implementing security policies produce conflicts among states.

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