

Chilean Business Orientalism: The Role of Non-State Actors in the Frame of Asymmetric Bilateral Relations

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Abstract : The current research paper assesses how the narrative of Chilean businesspeople about China shapes a new Orientalism. Analyses on the role of non-state actors in foreign policy that have hitherto theorized about Orientalism as a narrative of hegemonic power. Hence, it has been instrumental to the efforts of imperialist powers to justify their *mission civilisatrice*. However, such conceptualization can seldom explain new complexities of international interactions at the height of globalization. Hence, we assessed the case of Chile, a small Latin American country, and its relationship with China, its largest trading partner. Through a discourse analysis of interviews with Chilean businesspeople engaged in the Chinese market, we could determine that Chile is building an Orientalist image of China. This *new business Orientalism* reinforces a relation of alterity based on commercial opportunities, traditional values, and natural dispositions. Hence, the perception of the Chinese *Other* amongst Chilean business people frames a new set of representations as part of the essentially commercial nature of current bilateral relations. It differs from previous frames, such as the racial bias frame of the early 20th century, or the anti-communist frame in reaction to Mao's leadership. As in every narrative of alterity, there is not only a construction of the *Other* but also a definition of the *Self*. Consequently, this analysis constitutes a relevant case of the role of non-state actors in asymmetrical bilateral relations, where the non-state actors of the minor power build and act upon an Orientalist frame, which is not representative of its national status in the relation. This study emerges as a contribution on the relation amongst non-state actors in asymmetrical relations, where the smaller power's business class acts on a negative prejudice of its interactions with its counterpart. The research builds upon the constructivist approach to international relations, linking the idea of *Nation Branding* with *Orientalism* in the case of Chile-China relations.

Keywords : new business Orientalism, small power, framing, Chile-China relations

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