

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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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