

Discourse, opinion and episteme. Immigrants and COVID-19 in the Chilean press

Discurso, opinión y episteme. Los inmigrantes y la COVID-19 en la prensa chilena

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Abstract

In the current democratic societies, the media, known as “the fourth power” and that are generally in charge of the local elites, have achieved a crucial role in the naturalization of discourses in the community having the capacity to even influence the public opinion in political, social, religious and economic areas, among others. Being the problem of study the influence that the expression of a certain type of discourse has over its receivers, the goal of this article is to reflect about the link between the discourse, the public opinion and the press epistemology regarding the immigration in Chile during COVID-19 times. The results from the examination of eleven newspapers employing a Critical Discourse Analysis approach inform us that, on the one side, the actors such as authorities are nominalized, whereas the foreigners are assimilated in a group or invisibilized altogether. On the other hand, the themes that emerge from the data analysis are poverty, vulnerability and discrimination. This study aims at problematizing the discourses that come from the press from a critical perspective in order to contribute to the dialogical construction of the other from an objective point of view away from preconceived and stigmatized views spread by the media.

Keywords

Discourse, episteme, press media, migration, COVID-19, discrimination.

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Resumen

En las sociedades democráticas actuales, los medios de prensa, conocidos como “el cuarto poder” y que generalmente están a cargo de las elites locales, han adquirido un rol fundamental en la naturalización de discursos en la comunidad ejerciendo la fuerza de incluso influenciar a la opinión pública en temas políticos, sociales, religiosos y económicos, entre otros. Siendo el problema de estudio la influencia que la emisión de cierto tipo de discurso tiene sobre el receptor de este, el objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar acerca del vínculo existente entre el discurso, la opinión pública y epistemología de la prensa escrita en torno a la migración en tiempos de COVID-19 en Chile. Los resultados de la observación de once diarios por medio del Análisis Crítico del Discurso arrojan que, por un lado, los actores tales como autoridades son nominalizados, mientras que los extranjeros son asimilados a un grupo o invisibilizados completamente. Por otro lado, los temas que emergen del análisis son la pobreza, la vulnerabilidad y la discriminación. Este estudio apunta a problematizar los discursos que provienen de los medios escritos desde una perspectiva crítica y a contribuir a una construcción dialógica del otro de forma objetiva alejada de visiones preconcebidas y estigmatizadoras difundidas por los medios de comunicación.

Palabras clave

Discurso, episteme, medios de prensa, migración, COVID-19, discriminación.

Introduction

The study of public discourse has occupied numerous authors. Due to the characteristics of the object, interest in it has been manifest in the social sciences and literature linked to the field of linguistics and sociology. From this perspective, their interest goes both through its role in social representations and its incidence on the plane of power. Considering this last point, the emission of discourses in public spheres encompasses a series of problems related to culture, identity, and national and international politics.

In relation to the object, Jakobson (1986) initially defines it as a linguistic expression. However, the author makes the concept more complex by arguing that discourse is, above all, a collective reality, because individual discourse is always generated with an exchange. From this perspective, there cannot be a sender without a receiver, an argument valid even for

“inner discourse” —not emitted — since dialogue is at the base even of inner discourse.

With similarities and differences, Chomsky (1981) defines the object as a “mirror of the mind”, a product of human intelligence, created in each individual through operations that are beyond the reach of the will or consciousness. From this perspective, the author establishes a link between individual consciousness and linguistic expression, in such a way that the study of language can be instrumented to achieve a certain understanding regarding the specific characteristics of human intelligence.

On the contrary, for Bourdieu (1990), discourse cannot be defined only as the linguistic expression of an individual, nor in individual linguistic competence, but as an expression that is within a context. For Bourdieu, a sender does not generate a discourse on thin air, but rather emits a message whose addressee is a set of senders and receivers who receive and value the discourse of the first speaker.

An alternative perspective is seen in Giddens (2003). For the theorist, discourse constitutes a type of practice, where a series of social formulas are implemented to generate intersubjective communication. In this field and from the concept of “discursive consciousness”, Giddens approaches linguistic expression as a type of act motivated by human consciousness. This awareness is the result of both the intelligent human agent and the symbolic structures that subjects internalize as participating actors in society.

Despite the heuristic value provided by these theoretical perspectives, a conceptual void is observed when reflecting on the link of discourse, with problems linked to media opinion, different types of nationalism, and immigrant populations in times of pandemic. In this field, a work that takes charge of establishing the conceptual links between the idea of discourse, with nomenclatures such as public opinion and worldview in times of pandemic, is missing. It is from this gap that this work starts. Our interest is to reflect on the theoretical marriage between discourse, public opinion, and epistemology in the Chilean written press, considering the publication of content on foreign migration to the country in times of COVID-19. On this basis, our guiding question is: what are the main discursive, opinionated, and epistemic topics present in these media regarding the immigrant population in Chile? It is hypothesized that these topics are discriminatory, nationalistic, and civilizing. In this sense, the opinion of the media reflects a way of knowing, based on the cultural valuation of the West, discriminating against any com-

munity that carries representations and practices that are distant from this symbolic scheme.

The work will use a series of illustrative cases from the written press, where the media opinions towards migrant populations in the current context of pandemic will be discussed. The cases are approached in order to contribute elements to the theoretical reflection on the nexus between medial discourse and epistemology around a different other. On this basis, the contents of the article consider a first section, where the theoretical marriage between discourse and the media is addressed. The text continues with a section that gives theoretical treatment to the notions of public opinion and episteme. The article ends with the initial analysis of a series of opinions in the written press about immigrants in Chile.

Discourse and media

After the introduction that informs us of the link between linguistics, discourse, and the media, we turn to Critical Discourse Analysis, which is the most appropriate approach for this article. This is a broad and complex discipline as explained by Wodak and Meyer (2001), composed of different theories, methodologies, and data collection tools that define it as “a critical academic perspective, a theory, and method of analyzing the way in which the individuals and institutions use language” (Richardson, 2007, pp. 1-2). Being the object of study for this discipline the link of the use of language with social power (Mohammedwesam, 2017, p. 1).

Richardson (2007) has a clear vision of this discipline in relation to the analysis of the written media. The author argues that:

Critical discourse analysis offers interpretations [and explanations] of the meanings of the texts (...); placing what is written or said in the context in which it occurs, rather than just summarizing patterns or regularities in texts; and argue that textual meaning is constructed through an interaction between the producer, the text, and the consumer rather than simply being read from the page by readers in exactly the same way. (p. 15)

The discourse in the media reflects the interests and ideological positions of the ruling elite (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1989, 2001, 2003; Van Dijk, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). In this line, Androutsopoulos (2010, p. 183), maintains

that “linguistic ideologies are not neutral or objective, but rather serve the interests of specific individuals or groups, that is, they are always formulating from a particular social perspective and they have particular references and objectives”. Thus, the way in which the actors who participate in events narrated by the media are represented depends on the ideologies associated with the corresponding written medium (Chiluwa, 2011, p. 197) arguing that the representations of the actors or group to which they belong in the media they are associated with specific ideologies. The fact that newspapers are associated with certain ideologies, it is hoped that through the news opinions contained by these media are legitimized. This is how these discourses disseminated by the press naturalize discourses that ultimately have an influence on the formation of public opinion in the community that consumes them, with the political objective of distracting the population’s attention from a certain social problem (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 145). That is why in this section we will reveal how the selected media use discursive strategies to construct reality and represent immigrants as one of the social actors impacted by the health crisis in Chile during the pandemic period and we will expose the responsibility that media have in the formation of public opinion about these immigrants.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in Chile, the press has reported on the difficulties foreigners have faced in the country and the risks to which illegal immigrants who have entered Chile through unauthorized means have been exposed. This has been interwoven through the use of discourses issued by national authorities that, by employing persuasive discursive strategies, have drawn a reality that shapes public opinion about foreigners in Chile in times of COVID-19. To reveal the discriminatory messages implicit in the text, we will focus on the actors who participate in them and the actions with which they are associated and, thus, show the discursive construction of hostility towards the immigrant in Chile during the pandemic. The national press is full of news related to the arrival of immigrants to Chile. The comments issued in these spaces are divided in favor and against the immigrant. However, a negative view about them persists. Among those comments, the positions of different political, academic, religious, and cultural authorities also appear, regarding the event. These actors, on the one hand, represent the vision that comes from the group to which they belong. On the other hand, the discourses of these actors are emphasized by means of the nominalization, invisibility, or assimilation of the actors through the use of discursive strategies (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2007) with the aim of contributing to the editorial line of the news-

paper in question. Consequently, the readers of this news are influenced by the discursive construction of immigrants emitted by the local media, which are the ones that emit the speech in question. This predisposes the community, “the linguistic market”, towards the foreigner, naturalizing conducts in favor or against the foreigner, that is, the “linguistic habitus” that is manifested through the linguistic expression that is the speech.

In accordance with the above, the power exercised by the media in shaping public opinion should not be underestimated. These being a tool that can naturalize the objectives of the elite. The tool that the elite seeks to control through the management of the media is discourse, that which is consumed by society and which according to Johnstone (2002, p. 9) “shapes the world and discourse is shaped by the world”. So crucial is this selection of discourse that Foucault (1981, pp. 52-53) indicates that “discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination but is the thing for which there is struggle, discourse is the power that must be harnessed”. That is why the language selected by the media to refer to the conditions of immigrants in Chile is crucial for the construction of reality and the influence that construction has on society.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001) give an example of the power of discourse. According to them, there is a new type of discourse that they call “Liberal Newspeak” echoing Orwell (1949). This new lexicon is used to naturalize reality in society, for example, COVID-19 and its discursive normalization worldwide. Chomsky (DiEM25, 2020) reports how the war speech has been associated with the COVID-19 speech. For example, the former Chilean Health Minister, Jaime Mañalich (2020), who spoke of “the war against COVID-19”, “doctors fight daily with the corona”, among other discourses related to the pandemic. This type of lexicon was decolonized from its original context, war, and recolonized into a new one, health (Fairclough, 1996, 2002; Massey, 2013). The frequent use of Mañalich’s discourse associated with the presence of immigrants and disseminated by the media can influence the public opinion receiving these news and affect foreigners.

The influence that the written press exerts on the community receiving these discourses is in contrast to the free press position that is the work of the media (Ejupi et al., 2014). This is how Груевски (2004) and Gruevski (2004) warn that at present the decision-making made by residents and congressmen depends heavily on the obtained information. The press had a supervisory role, informing the reader of reality, thus becoming the fourth

estate. However, according to Ramón (Силјановска, 2007, p. 96), former editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, “the media have been for a long period of time a source of citizenship, known as the fourth estate, a power that has become opposed to government decisions which could have had a damaging effect on the people. The fourth estate no longer has its power”, especially when the media is used to influence public opinion on social and political issues such as immigration. Consequently, the role of the media in strengthening public opinion and creating free thought is influenced by the large amount of news circulating on social media that is taking on the role that previously belonged to the press. As a result, the reader is being persuaded who is making uninformed decisions that may be crucial for the community. For example, the Russian intervention in the 2016 presidential elections of the United States of America (Mayer, 2018).

Opinion and episteme behind media discourses

The concept of “public opinion” has been studied by numerous theoretical approaches. In this field, Habermas (2009) addresses the idea from its historical origin, placing the nomenclature in the European nineteenth century with the development of the written press. For him, the notion is understood as “bourgeois advertising”. In this sense, public opinion constitutes the act of publishing the common reasoning of a community that is distinguished from others by having access to property and instruction. Due to its symbolic characteristics, it constitutes a “social sphere”, different from the economic fabric and formal power relations.

Vasilachis’s (2013) proposal goes further: for this author, the press participates directly in the way of constructing the subjects. In this sense, the media are made up of a series of categories that end up articulating the social representations of individuals. This aspect is relevant since it allows us to understand the opinion of the press from the field of human representations, considering different levels of abstraction.

Human representations have an important intellectual component. In this last field, the press guides its action from the foundations of knowledge linked to university education, the professional culture of journalism and communications. The act of communicating is linked to a series of intellectual procedures learned at the university, an epistemic space that Löwy (1979) defined as a

“qualitative universe of values”. For the author, this symbolic environment is distinguished from others by presenting qualitative values to interpret society.

However, academic symbolic environments present similarities and differences with other cultural contexts. In this field, Foucault (1972) contributes elements to the analysis with his concept of “episteme”, an idea that aims to identify different ways of knowing in human communities, in such a way that academic activity can be understood as a form of knowledge such as any other. This episteme has consequences in human acts, as can be seen in the field of oral or written discourses.

Along a similar course, we find the work of Gellner (1998). Focusing the analysis on intellectuality and its behaviors, he argues that epistemology and the political context are truly independent variables of intellectual practices. In this field, Gellner argues that the starting point of intellectual work passes through epistemology. However, this also has consequences on the political behavior of intellectual professionals, since the subjects generate practices according to the way they think and the contingency they face. In this way, an epistemological stance has consequences in daily action and in politics, a fact that can be observed in acted and spoken behavior. The writing practice would not be the exception.

Around this article, the context that serves for reflection is the Latin American migration to the country in the presence of COVID-19. The object of this work is focused on the media discourses of the Chilean written press about immigrants at a time when the world is going through a health contingency linked to COVID-19. For this reflection to gain in heuristics, we selected eleven national digital newspapers around the problem. These are the newspapers: *La Cuarta*, *La Nación*, *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, *SoyChile*, *TeleSur*, *El Siglo*, *Pauta*, *Crónica Digital*, *Pauta* and *AA*, press that, due to their characteristics, are presented as articulators of social representations at a national scale and as symbolic constructors of subjects, as proposed by Vasilachis (2013). The following lines will deal with this subject.

Analysis of the press from the discursive and epistemic features of media opinion

According to the National Institute of Statistics (2020), the migrant population in Chile is around 1,500,000 mostly from Latin America. Of these,

only 20% have a qualified job while 10.8% are classified as poor. This population is at risk during the pandemic, with the Chilean media reporting on the current health crisis that the country is going through. These outlets are colored by ideologies of the elites that are behind them, transferring these ideologies to the community through discourse in order to later naturalize positions on a certain social issue. For example, immigration in Chile.

The written media that are part of this study are examined from the beginning of the pandemic in Chile in March 2020 until the first week of October 2020. From this observation issues such as unemployment, health, poverty, stigmatization, and lack of support networks arise. While the words with a negative connotation that have been used to refer to immigration in Chile are: crime, risk, illegal, “coyote”, clandestine, denounced, chaotic, expel, trafficking, criminal, denounce, and dismantle.

However, not all the discourse associated with the subject of study is negative. Many actors have appeared in defense of foreigners coming from the political, academic, and religious universe. For example, the former president, Michelle Bachelet, expresses her concern about the migration crisis, arguing that immigrants are greatly affected by COVID-19 and that it is our responsibility to help them (La Cuarta, May 2). Another actor who produces pro-immigrant discourses comes from academia. José Manuel Cárdenas, academic from the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Talca, in light of the results delivered by a survey conducted by CENEM-UTALCA reports that 47% of immigrants fear contracting COVID-19 (Chronicle Digital, 20 August 2020).

The Jesuit priest Felipe Berrios, from the religious sphere, who lives in “La Chimba” Antofagastina, populated by immigrants, denounces the vulnerability to which foreigners are exposed, which is manifested in the lack of support networks. The media highlights that immigrants are without their families, unemployed, and without money (EMOL, 2020, August 19). People with these characteristics are those that Berrios defines as “the new poor” (El Mercurio de Calama, September 4, 2020a). The vulnerability in which they find themselves forces them to ask for money in the streets since they do not have the resources to be able to return to their countries (El Mercurio de Calama, September 4, 2020b). Meanwhile, “the new poor” live in overcrowding, on the streets, and in poverty where the chances of getting infected are greater (Pauta. cl, June 5, 2020; EFE Agency, May 8).

On the other hand, Javiera Cerda, from the Jesuit Migrant Service of Arica, recognizes the largest increase in illegal immigration in Chile through unauthorized passages during the entire last decade, where 50% occurred between 2018 and 2019. Cerda (La Tercera, October 2) reports that the Venezuelan immigrant has increased exponentially after the operation of the Democratic Responsibility Visa. The increase was from nine Venezuelans in 2017 per pass to 3,000 in 2019 and this is increasing (EMOL, 2020, October 9).

On the contrary, the social actors who have opposed immigration in Chile come mainly from the political world. The former interior minister, Andrés Chadwick, who, faced with the entry of illegal immigrants into the country, argues that we must protect national boundaries (La Cuarta, July 22, 2020). Something similar expressed the president of the republic, Sebastián Piñera, saying that: air, sea, and land borders must be reinforced to prevent the entry of the pandemic into the country (El Siglo, April 2020). Faced with the same issue, Minister of the Interior Pérez (La Nación, 2020, September 29; Schuller, 2020) indicated that 506 out of 762 are illegal immigrants in health residences.

While, from the International Police Department of Iquique, as of September, the investigative police have reported the entry by unauthorized passage of 1,493 immigrants, 615 of them are Venezuelans (La Nación, 2020). The minister added that immigrants are accepted by Chileans as long as they enter in a regulated and orderly manner, following the requirements to integrate into Chile. The irregularity in entering the country has caused difficulties in regions and communes, for Chileans and for immigrants themselves, and indicated that at the moment we have closed the borders, but when the situation is regularized the problem may be greater. That is why it is pertinent for the State to introduce an Immigration Law to combat this irregularity (La Nación, 2020, September 28).

Foreign minister Allamand (La Nación, 2020a, 2020b), adds that it is expected during the week to have a law that regulates the action at the borders and the entry of illegal immigrants and, thus, avoid disagreements with the opposition and discourage growing illegal immigration and adds that the illegal entry of immigrants is a crime and the law will be implemented to expel these immigrants from Chile. Finally, the mayor of Tarapacá, Miguel Quezada (2020), explained that public officials face a difficult situation in the sanitary residences of Iquique that house mostly Venezuelans who entered illegally from the non-authorized passages between Chile-Bolivia and

concludes arguing that the government is not in favor of illegal immigration in which it is the foreigners themselves who self-report to gain access to sanitary residences. This can put citizens of the region and immigrants themselves at risk (La Nación, 2020). Finally, another actor comes from the Health Department, Rossana Díaz, who indicates that in Iquique, until a week ago, there were around 600 foreigners in the authorized health residences. They had previously self-reported after arriving in Chile according to the protocol, entering the country through an unauthorized passage. Finally, the mayor reports that in Antofagasta there are 378 immigrants in similar circumstance (I am Chile, October 7, 2020).

The news related to immigrants in Chile in times of pandemic are divided into two. The first group contains the news of migrants who are already in Chile. The second group is made up of immigrants who have arrived in the country during the pandemic. From the first group, the newspapers report the lack of employment they face. Those jobs, in some cases, were informal and precarious, however, they allowed them to survive (La Tercera, March 26, 2020). In terms of health, due to the work they did, they are not entitled to health benefits, leaving them even more vulnerable (El Mercurio de Calama September 4-a). According to TeleSur (2020), the reality of foreigners in Chile is difficult since they are exposed to COVID-19, especially because being in irregularity, they cannot access the national health system. In relation to stigmatization, La Tercera (May 8, 2020) reports that some believe that those who bring COVID-19 to Chile are immigrants and that it is the country's job to ensure the well-being of Chileans in the first place in the face of an economic crisis. These discourses are racist and, according to van Dijk (1993, p. 21), it is "a form of domination" and omitting who is issuing them is a discursive strategy called suppression (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 38). On the other hand, some immigrants devastated by the current crisis, seek repatriation from their embassies, AA (2020) reports that hundreds of Bolivians, Peruvians, Colombians, and Venezuelans are waiting to return to their countries of origin, escaping the vulnerability caused by COVID-19. In this situation, they accuse discrimination, racism, and physical abuse (El Mercurio de Calama, September 4-b; La Cuarta April 22, 2020; El Siglo, April 2020).

About the last group of immigrants, local newspapers have reported using the following headlines that tell about the large influx of immigrants between January and August, most of whom are Venezuelans (La Nación, 2020) and the news continues arguing that they were the most numerous wave that has

entered throughout the year (La Nación, 2020). These types of notes negatively predispose the community to Venezuelans living in the country.

Another headline informs the reader about the illegal entry of immigrants and their trafficking through analogy (van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 99) in an alarmist fashion, emphasizing the increase from 53% to 91%, but at the same time, it highlights that they have completed secondary and tertiary education (La Tercera 2 October 2020) and adds that the Prosecutor's Office reported an increase in this type of infraction and the OS-9 of the Carabineers examined the operation of the "coyotes" and foreigners who crossed the border illegally, most of them being Venezuelans (La Tercera 2 October 2020). To give objectivity to the note, the authority strategy that comes in this case from the police is used, informing that OS-9 has detained haulers defined as "coyotes" between 2019 and 2020, this being a new form of criminal organization that operates in Tacna-Peru and is made up of Venezuelans who earn money from their own countrymen. According to the police, the cost of the service is diverse but is around \$ 100 and \$ 300 to ensure the successful passage to Chile (Rivera & Ojeda, 2020).

On the contrary, Soy Chile (October 7, 2020) uses discourses in favor of Venezuelan immigrants emphasizing their pilgrimage through five countries in South America to reach Chile and reports that the Venezuelan, Rafael Pérez, wife, and children walked for three days through the coast to get to Antofagasta (I'm Chile October 7, 2020). Rafael Pérez (Soy Chile, October 7, 2020) reports that, upon arrival in Chile, the group of around 25 foreigners reported themselves to the police and were later transferred to health residences to complete the quarantine. Staying in the health residence allowed them to rest from the trip.

An initial examination of these discourses in favor and against immigration in the country, allows us to observe that foreigners are classified as "them" and the Chileans as "us". According to van Dijk (1992, p. 245), it is a discursive strategy used to classify and divide those who belong to a group from those who do not, the latter being segregated by the community.

Another discursive strategy used by the media is the construction of the actors and roles that are used in the discourses issued by the government or academic authorities (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2007). This strategy is called nominalization and authority of the expert respectively (van Leeuwen, 1996; van Leeuwen, 2007). The objective of this strategy is to highlight the people who issue the comments aligned to the objectives of the elite, that is, tho-

se who enjoy status, privileges, income, and access to good jobs (van Dijk, 1993), those who control these communication media. In contrast, stigmatized migrants are not named, but are classified in a group such as nationality. This discursive strategy is known as assimilation (van Leeuwen, 1996). Thus, assimilated people lose identity and go on to constitute a whole that is demonized according to what the media report. In the examined media, we can observe that several local authorities were nominalized, while only one immigrant was named by them.

In the analysis focused on the public opinion of these media, it is observed how the written press articulates representations around the migrant from the field of opinion leaders, whether political, academic, or religious. Along with this, newspapers symbolically construct immigrant populations as collectivities from their textual practices. These scriptural acts contribute to the “*sarmientino* paradigm”, a world view linked to the dichotomy between civilization and barbarism, as argued by Santa Cruz (1988), Jiménez, and González (2019) in the analysis of the Chilean press. In this way, there is a cultural model behind the journalistic texts that report on this symbolic scheme operating in the communicative acts of these newspapers. This episteme classifies migrant communities as diminished humanity, a product of both their material precariousness and their pathological potential as a result of the global health contingency that comes “from outside” the country. In this way, a civilizational approach is observed where the “us” (Chile) is advantageously positioned against the “other” from abroad.

To conclude, the objective of this section was to examine the discursive construction of immigrants in Chile in times of pandemic made by the press. After a brief analysis, we have observed that they are placed in a disadvantaged and poor position, being stigmatized and made visible as a whole belonging to a group through the discursive strategy of assimilation. While the class in power is nominalized, on the one hand, they issue stigmatizing discourses against immigrants, while, on the other hand, the nominalized actor is categorized as an expert authority who invites us to respect the rights of the other. Finally, the frequent characteristic of the discourses is the division made between “us”, the Chileans, and “them”, the others, the illegal and clandestine immigrants with whom negative discourses are associated and who might bring the pandemic to the country, according to reports La Tercera (May 8, 2020).

Final thoughts

This work reflected on the nexus between discourse, public opinion, and the episteme of the discourse issued by the Chilean press about immigration to the country in times of pandemic. The problem of the essay focused on the discursive, opinionated, and epistemic topics present in these media, proposing that they presented discriminatory and nationalist dimensions. The opinion of the press was understood as a textual practice, dependent on an epistemology and a political contingency, a communicative act characterized by the cultural appreciation of the West and discriminatory of other lifestyles.

Considering the theoretical discussion present in the article, plus the initial analysis of the media discourses presented in the last section of the text, we formulate some final reflections. The first has to do with the discourses themselves and their main characteristics around the “other”. In this field, a distinction is observed between an “us” and a “them”, a phenomenon explained by van Dijk (1992, p. 245) as a discursive strategy used to classify and divide those who belong to a group of those who no, the latter being segregated by the community.

A second reflection goes through the discursive strategy used by the national media for the construction of actors and roles. At this level, the dichotomy observed in the procedures used is evident, “nominalizing” the national authorities, compared to the collective labeling of foreign populations settled in Chile from the classification of “immigrants”. These strategies would contribute to a vision of the world linked to the “*Sarmientino* paradigm”, a model that establishes an antinomy between the West as a civilization, in the face of the barbarism represented by non-Western cultures. From this episteme, the written press implements a series of textual practices that articulate the representations of opinion leaders from politics, academia, and the Catholic universes. Along with this, we can observe how these communicative acts enable the symbolic construction of the subjects from the very issuance of the publicized opinion, a fact that can be seen in the case of the migrants themselves.

The main scope of this work is linked to empirical research. A study of the media discourses on immigration in Chile must go through the analysis of the different dimensions of public opinion present in the sections of the written press. A similar mention can be made in the field of cultural mo-

dels behind textual practices. In this sense, the inquiry into news headlines, editorial pages, news, and opinion articles must be approached with the methodological rigor that discourse analysis prescribes. Future works will have to take over this task.

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