

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

Pablo Ampuero, Claudia Labarca

**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.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THIS research portends an exploratory study on the main discourses construed by Chilean businesspeople towards their Chinese counterparts. It introduces the concept of Chilean business Orientalism as a reflection emanated from the analysis of the framing of China through interviews with

Chilean businesspeople engaged with the Asian market. A preliminary examination of the interviews revealed a clear manifestation of Orientalist narratives towards China that configured the character of bilateral trade. However, these narratives do not play the same role as in Edward Said's examination of the issue, as the objective relation of power is inverted. Hence, this reflection puts forward a new understanding on the application of the concept of Orientalism in the arena of commercial engagements between asymmetric actors, where the Oriental-Other holds a more prominent position in the international system. In this regard, the idea of business Orientalism represents a dialectical inversion of the traditional understanding of the concept introduced by Edward Said. In this case, Orientalism is signified as the reification of the Other's culture -which percolates into the social, political, and economic realms- which relativizes its position in the objective relation of power, and ultimately, becomes instrumental for a horizontal business exchange. In other words, Orientalism becomes a tool for the smaller country, since its acceptance trivializes the Other, encouraging a more horizontal relationship for commercial exchanges.

The relevance of this study is given by its innovative approach to the narrative of Orientalism. As it will be discussed, the concept is no longer a narrative of power that consolidates the domination of big countries. From the opposite, it could also be re-signified to empower smaller countries facing the challenges of a new 'Asian age' [1]. The evidence provided by the interviews shows that there is a meaningful and consistent conceptualization of China, the Chinese, and 'Chinese-ness' in the framing of an Orientalist alterity expressed in three major categories: commercial opportunities, traditional values, and natural dispositions. Whilst the first represents the interest around China as a global economic actor, the last two concepts portend the limits of China's modernity, i.e. a set of cultural dynamics and world views, and the weight of history or even race, which determines its past, present, and future. Hence, the objective relation of power, where China poses as the bigger power facing a less influential Latin American country is inverted by the Orientalist discourse, allowing for a more horizontal exchange between both sides.

This article is divided into six sections. The following part justifies and introduces the case study of Chile as a relevant example for the theory of business Orientalism. The second section presents the development of the theory of Orientalism and its application to China. Then it delves into the

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Support and funding for this study was provided by the FONDECYT project no. 11140393, "Communication Strategies between non-State Actors as a Factor of Trust in International Relations: The Case of the People's Republic of China and Chile".

methodological details of the study, followed by the results. Finally, it offers the discussion of the results and a closing remark.

## II. CASE STUDY

The complexity of analyzing Orientalist discourses from Latin America is rendered by its novelty. This is a preliminary approach to the study of new dimensions of the theory of Orientalism, thus its assessment must be both theoretically and methodologically rigorous. On this regard, the epistemological discussion has been built upon the case study of Chile, aiming for the construct of a preliminary theory of business Orientalism [2].

Since the 1990's, the Chilean state has established its strategy for international insertion. The plan was based on the country's economic diplomacy through engagement with different multilateral, regional, and bilateral mechanisms of cooperation. Special emphasis was placed on the establishment of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Consequently, Chile has signed 22 commercial agreements with 60 countries, guaranteeing its access to 62% of the world's population. This phenomenon has been central to the sustainability of Chile's economic development and its soft power in the world system. These efforts have been backed by strategies of public diplomacy, focused on the communication with foreign audiences and the projection of a country image. Most initiatives in this regard have been assumed by the State, through specialized institutions such as ProChile, the Committee for Foreign Investments, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As of late, the Image of Chile Foundation has implemented marketing tools towards the promotion of the country's brand. Overall, these efforts aim to promote Chile's competitiveness in international markets. However, the new international public sphere considers a multiplicity of actors, such as private companies, non-government organizations, civil organizations, etc. Consequently, the dimension of non-State actors is not reduced to the action of States. The former, with equal or more power, can intervene or influence the international agenda of the latter. This perspective of analysis becomes highly relevant in the case of bilateral relations between Chile and China. In 2006, Chile became the first country to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the People's Republic of China (PRC). This treaty increased the expectations amongst local economic and political elites since it would allow for the diversification of Chilean exports and it would attract further Chinese investments. However, despite the bump on trade, over 80% of Chilean exports were limited to minerals, consolidating the regional tendency towards the re-primarization of the productive model [3]. Additionally, the FTA no longer represents a unique competitive advantage, since several agreements and mechanism have been established between China and countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ultimately, the FTA did not translate into a meaningful expansion of Chinese investments in Chile, as it constitutes less than 1% of all foreign investments in the country.

In summary, the case study of Orientalist discourse amongst

Chilean businesspeople represents the main contact zone of the bilateral relations. What the hitherto narrative of Sino-Chilean relations demonstrate is that the commercial dimension prevails over the international agenda of the Chilean state. Consequently, the representation of China as an economic entity permeates over official and unofficial discourses of alterity, the latter being the focus of this case study.

## III. ORIENTALISM AND THE REPRESENTATIONS OF CHINA

Representations of the Self and the Other respond to the relative position within the international power structure. As such, the image of China in Western and Latin American discourses has been construed through Orientalist imaginaries. According to Edward Said, Orientalism is a historical, epistemological, and discursive process of Otherness traditionally produced by imperialist nations. It portends a relation of power, which strategically depends on a flexible *positional superiority*. Such narrative situates the West within a set of possible relations with the Orient without ever losing its relative control [4].

In his own words:

*"Orientalism [...] refers to several overlapping domains: first, the changing historical and cultural relationship between Europe and Asia, a relationship with a 4000-year-old history; second, the scientific discipline in the west according to which, beginning in the early nineteenth century, one specialized in the study of various Oriental cultures and traditions; and, third, the ideological suppositions, images and fantasies about a currently important and politically urgent region of the world called the Orient. The relatively common denominator between these three aspects of Orientalism in the line separating Occident from Orient and this, I have argued, is less a fact of nature than it is a fact of human production, which I have called imaginative geography. This is, however, neither to say that the division between Orient and Occident is unchanging nor is it to say that it is simply fictional" [5].*

Accordingly, the epistemology of Orientalism emerges from projected and received identities. Hence, the ontology of the other is no more than the construction of an *alienated-Self*, where the characteristics assigned to the alter-subject are mere inversions and distortions of those attributed to the Self. In other words, the *Self* is just the *Other* of the *Other* [6]. These representations rely on a given burden of stereotypes in the lines of traditional values, in the sense of reified cultural aspects; natural dispositions, meaning the racial and historical determinations that impede the Other's ascent to modernity; and, commercial opportunities, understood as the exaltation of economic variables to assess the challenges and opportunities within and without the Chinese polity [5], [7].

From here follows that the current frame of China among big Western powers that have been centered around the ideas of competition and mutual distrust; in other words, China's global emergence is signified as a threat against the "Western-Christian-democratic-universalist identity" [6], to the extent of

questioning the current order of things. However, this process is the direct consequence of China's adoption of modern Western instruments of economic modernization. On this sense, the narrative of Otherness has morphed into a discourse of what Daniel Vukovich [7] has called "becoming-sameness." That is, the narrative of the Other becomes one of partial modernity, where economic engagements and urbanization represent the key to its access to Western progress, but it is determined to be held back by its inherent cultural, historical, or even racial characteristics.

The reconfiguration of the world system into what has been called as 'the Asian Age' constitutes a complex trajectory of change [1]. It not only portends a rearrangement of capital flows or a rebalancing of power, but most importantly, it establishes new epistemological configurations. Hence, the epistemology of Orientalism reaches new complexities that cannot be encapsulated by any discipline, but rather must be explored by multidisciplinary approaches. Consequently, it is plausible to make a case for China's rise in the global economy through the lens of Orientalism. This implies the application of the ontological and political dimension of Orientalism to the observable practice of commercial engagements, thus unveiling the discursive mechanisms of power behind these exchanges.

In general, China's engagement with the capitalist world-system has provoked antinomic responses. The discourse of commercial opportunities due to the country's massive population has been somewhat contrasted by Western narratives of China as a threat to the current global order. This paradox is strengthened by the fears of the construction of a new international order to China's liking [8], or to the possibility of authoritarian diffusion in times of an anti-democratic reverse wave [9]. In any case, the underlying logic situates China in a determined relation of power, which signifies the self-understood/represented identities in the politics of alterity [10]. Under these circumstances, the framing of China in the West has been crossed by the idea of a dormant threat. Marco Polo's account of the Heavenly Kingdom remained as the foundation of European imaginaries about China and Chinese-ness. His work portrayed the luxury, refinement, exoticism, and mystery, yet admiration and attractiveness of its reality [11]. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when China was established as an object of academic study, the first sinologists could not renounce to "unconsciously assume the epistemological categories that drive the colonial discussion of the age in which they live in" [11]. On this regard, Martínez-Robles [11] shows that after the Second World War the whole of Chinese history was interpreted on the basis of Western aggressions as a necessary phenomenon for the activation of Chinese history. However, influential historians of the interwar period like Granet, Latourette, and Fairbank presented China as a discrete civilization without any pretension to assume Western modernity [12].

According to Hernandez [13],

"both Chinese and Westerners find themselves at the crossroads between two seemingly opposite positions, a powerful aversion and a solid attraction towards the

other."

The awakening of China during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century raised the fears amongst Western audiences. During the colonial era, racist frames created the image of the "yellow peril" as a threat to Western civilization due to the massive introduction of coolies in the United States, Europe, and their territories [12]. With the foundation of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, "Red China" was seen as erratic, unpredictable, and with "totalist" intentions [14]. The rise of post-Mao China as a relevant actor in a globalized world has increased the fears of an appropriation of modernity on the sense of 're-globalization' against the previous order [15].

Chilean and Latin American representations about China have followed a similar pattern. The massive introduction of Chinese labor in countries like Peru and Cuba triggered xenophobic reactions amongst young countries amidst their process of nation building [16]. The reaction was particularly strong in the local working class, who saw in the Chinese immigrants a threat to their own wellbeing [17]. Following the victory of the Communist Party of China in 1949, both sides engaged in people-to-people diplomacy, as a way to circumvent the United States restrictions in its sphere of influence. These interactions were made through leftist parties -many of them would form Maoist factions after the Sino-Soviet split. Countries like Chile saw the split as an opening to establish diplomatic relations with China, especially because the Asian nation was gaining influence in the Non-Aligned Movement [18]. The substantial pragmatism that has characterized China in the post-Maoist era was widely accepted amongst the regional political and economic elite, up to the point of continuing diplomatic and economic ties even with anti-communist dictatorships [19]. Finally, the narrative of China in Latin America has been overwhelmingly centered on considerations for economic challenges and opportunities, cooperation without intervention, and to a certain extent, as a counterpart to the United States' hegemony [18], [20]. For the specific case of Chile, the narrative of the 'firsts' -first Latin American country to recognize the PRC, its market status, its access to the WTO, and in signing an FTA- has been epitomized as the basis for mutual trust and long-term economic cooperation [21].

In summary, representations of China in the West and Latin America have focused on lethargic power structures, reproducing dynamics of colonialism and neo-colonialism where a major power exercises its epistemological influence upon a minor one. Moreover, there are no systematic studies centered around the representations from Chile. The closest attempt has been the compilation about Orientalism in Latin America made by Erik Camayd-Freixas [22], but it limits its scope to the politics of alterity within nation-States. Hence, the relevance of the present study consists of its assessment of the international dimension of Orientalism, questioning the traditional power structure beneath the concept.

Finally, in an effort to overcome the conventions of formal diplomatic discourse, this study has focused on the narrative of Chilean businesspeople. These subjects represent the frontline of day-to-day interactions between both sides, thus

providing a less wary discourse.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

Since the research objective is targeted to understand the main frames that are present in the discourse of Chilean businesspeople towards China, we have chosen to use a qualitative research design, based on the interpretivist stance in which “is absolutely necessary to analyze social actions from the actor’s standpoint” [23].

TABLE I  
SAMPLING CRITERIA

Classification	Attribution	Value
Degree of interaction with the counterpart	Years of commercial exchange	Number of years
	Trading volume	Traded units per year/FOB
Systematization of Communicational relations	Existence of a plan or strategy for the Chinese market (implicit or explicit)	Existence or nor of a communication’s plan towards the Chinese market (implicit or explicit)
	Existence of visible communicational products (e.g. websites)	Existence or not of visible communicational products (e.g. website)
	Proportion amongst national exports	Percentage of national exports to China
Relevance of the industrial sector in the organization	Participation in the formation of Country Image	Participates or not in activities with organisms or trade organization related to the building of a country image (ProChile, Country Image Foundation)

As stated in the introduction, the analysis is based on the theoretical and methodological perspective of framing theory. According to George Lakoff [24] “frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world (...) (Therefore) They are part of what cognitive scientists call the ‘cognitive unconscious’ -structures in our brains that we cannot consciously access, but know by their consequences: the way we reason and what counts as common sense.” This entangles the idea that frames allow interpreting the world and act consequently [25]. As frames are known through language and words are defined as “relative to conceptual frames” [24], this paper assesses the research questions through the interview methodology in order to find out the main existing frames behind the discourses developed by the actors and their perspectives: in this case Chilean businesspeople. As explained by Kvale [26], interviews are a kind of conversation useful to obtain a viewpoint with regards to a specific topic [27]. Additionally, interviews allow the necessary flexibility to obtain the respondent's narratives [28] in an appropriate context [29].

This paper is based on 14 interviews developed during 2015. It considers face-to-face interviews (with those executives living in Chile) and Skype interviews (with those businesspeople living in China) using a semi-structured questionnaire based on previous detected relevant topics [30]. All interviews were taped and transcribed in order to code. The sample was chosen based on a list of Chilean exporters to China provided by the Chilean Trade Bureau (ProChile).

Interviews were coded based on emergent categories, using open codification and then axial codification [31]. The analysis was made using an Excel datasheet.

In order to find out the best respondents, we chose the interview according to two techniques: purposeful sampling [23] based on which Patton [32] has called criterion sample, in which subjects are chosen insofar as they are adequate to pursue the research objectives [29]. Snowball technique [23] was also used to do the sampling, following the criteria shown in Table I.

#### V. RESULTS

The following results are based on 14 interviews conducted with Chilean businesspeople between June and October 2015. For the most part, interviewees are General Managers or Export Managers of Chilean export companies operating in four industries: agriculture, forestry, winery and aquaculture sectors, which are expanding areas amongst Chilean exports to China [33]. The transcribed interviews were analyzed in paragraphs, considering only those that were actually describing the relationship and perceptions present on the respondents.

##### A. Open Codification

The 14 interviews were codified following an open codification. From this codification 191 entries were analyzed and 9 categories emerged: Business behavior (76 entries), local strategy (38 entries), business trust (19); consumer behavior (18), relationship barriers (15); China as a market (7); global strategy (6), state role (6) Chinese-ness predominance (4) and two blank categories.

TABLE II  
RESULTS OF OPEN CODIFICATION

Category	Number of entries
Business behavior	76
Local strategy	38
Business trust	19
Consumer behavior	18
Relationship barriers	15
China as a market	7
Global strategy	6
State role	6
Chinese-ness predominance	4
Blank	2

The first category refers to a description of the Chilean perception regarding their counterpart’s business behavior. Most of the entries denote an idea that Chinese business behavior is different from the Chilean. The idea behind most of the perceptions is a dialectical relationship. While Chileans are “professional,” Chinese are driven by cultural factors such as the (over)-importance of human behavior, as in the following example:

*“It is very personal. Human relationships are very important, the way you relate to them... In that sense, you have to understand how the market behaves. It is key to understand their culture and respect it (...). Sometimes*

they (Chinese) do not like you because you did not realize the importance of human relationships, so it is important to have that point very clear (...). For them, respect is very important (...) you have to understand you are dealing with people with a certain background... so you have to know the background to know where are you standing" (Respondent 10).

Chinese behavior may be described as having a negative connotation:

"(My perception) is that at any time while we are having business with a Chinese (company) another company may come and offer a better deal, they will probably change providers" (Respondent 8).

Even more, some respondents characterize it as directly negative business behavior, which is not acceptable in other markets, but acceptable to the extent that it offer benefits to the commercial relation:

"Here is easier (to do business), you can do everything without considering the legal boundaries. You can avoid some payments... Additionally, there is an impressive flexibility to attend to your demands. The Chinese can adapt very quickly to new demands in a very short time, not like us in Chile" (Respondent 11).

Local strategy refers to the strategies developed by the Chilean businesspeople to engage with Chinese market using a local approach, this means adapting to this market. The third one, business trust, refers to the importance of trusting behavior and the difficulties that are encountered to gain Chinese trust. This point is important insofar as the respondents highlight that because of the mutual differences, trust, although important, is difficult to create, as in the following example:

"The Chinese do not trust at the beginning (of the relationship) within a business relation. It is not easy to get here and get set up" (Respondent 1).

Consumer behavior refers to the idea of what Chileans have of the Chinese consumer in general. Most of them tend to frame China as a changing society, which is learning (in which learning means to become-same with the West) how to consume Chilean or Western products. Additionally, Chileans think they are also learning to understand this consumer. As in the following quote that shows how a fruit manager has understood Chinese consumer behavior in this particular market:

"(some Chileans think) they are Chinese that can eat everything! But that is not true. They do not eat anything! They are very picky, and that is all right, we are all picky at this point. Nobody is going to pay for bad, ugly fruit (And they think): 'But they are Chinese, there are thousands of them, and so we can sell our fruit'. And I am telling you that is not going to happen. This is our weakness, (to underestimate Chinese consumers). Forget about it! They have a culture far more developed than ours and I assure you that they are far more demanding" (Respondent 11).

As for *relationship barriers*, it refers to the obstacles (cultural, structural) that Chileans need to overcome in order

to succeed. Mostly it is related to the language and cultural barriers.

*China as a market* is a narrative that emerges from the idea that despite barriers described in the previous paragraph, China becomes a market worthy of attention and effort:

"I think China is a market that –at least for our industry- has a tremendous potential, especially if we do the things right because the Chinese are very concerned about food safety" (Respondent 2).

The *State's role* implies that there is still an important role of the State perceived in the decision-making process. Finally, the label *Chinese predominance* highlights cultural traits that are predominant in the interaction.

### B. Theoretical Codification

After the open codification was complete, we made a theoretical codification grouping the results in four categories. Three of them were developed based on previous literature on Orientalism, i.e. natural dispositions (84 entries), traditional values (52) and commercial opportunities (31 entries): we discovered a fourth category, structural traits, with 22 entries (two entries were left as blank /other categories).

TABLE III  
RESULTS OF THEORETICAL CODIFICATION

Category	Number of entries
Natural dispositions	84
Traditional values	52
Commercial opportunities	31
Structural traits	22

*Natural dispositions* refer to the understanding of Chinese behavior as a result of historical events and cultural traits. This can be a negative perception, as in the following quotes:

"Networks are an important subject since they relate to trust. We have always thought (as Chileans) that the Chinese are a little naughty ... (regarding this topic). I do not know whether is true or not..." (Respondent 4).

"In general, Chinese are timberos (they like to bet and take risks), they always like to beat down the price, so they buy one month from one seller and the other (from another seller)" (Respondent 6).

However, not all the perceptions are negative; some natural dispositions are considered an advantage:

"The Chinese are very direct, they negotiate very well, they are good negotiators by nature" (Respondent 5).

A second category is *traditional values*, which explains how traditional Chinese culture (or sometimes, oriental culture as a whole) is perceived as an important factor for the Chinese partner, and thus, a trigger for business success.

"Yes, with oriental people there is a trusting, committed and responsible relationship" (Respondent 7).

"We show Chinese that we care about their culture, and even if we do not understand Chinese culture, we hire someone from China who can help us" (Respondent 4).

*Commercial opportunities* as a category portend the economic possibilities attributed to China. Respondents

picture an emergent middle class, willing to try new products and able to afford them, as explained by this respondent:

*"I believe that Chinese development today –based on a growing middle-class- make possible that they start demanding new kinds of products"* (Respondent 3).

Sometimes, they go further and make judgments regarding the reasons behind this new consumerism:

*"Our Company wants to target rich the Chinese; they want to buy wine to show-off, as a demonstration of their social status, with their friends"* (Respondent 8).

Finally, we have discovered a fourth category (not present in the traditional literature on Orientalism) labeled *structural traits*. This considers all the structures -cultural, behavioral, and political, amongst others- that pervade commercial interaction but cannot be overcome or avoided, but rather they need to be naturalized. These structures trigger adaptation since they are perceived as deeply rooted in Chinese thought and behavior. For example, when it comes to Chinese government interference, the perception is that there is still an important role played by the state that somehow still permeates into the business sphere, e.g.:

*"The Chinese government plays a fundamental role and you have to understand that. It is a centralized – mixed economy"* (Respondent 3).

We also analyzed the relationship between the two sets of codifications (theoretical and open codification). As general remarks, there is an assumption that the idea of business behavior is a byproduct of natural dispositions, as well as of traditional values. However, natural dispositions (which have a more permanent character) are considered by this set of respondents as acting somehow as a barrier, while cultural values may seem either easy to apprehend or they are changing within Chinese society. Table IV shows the relationships between both codifications.

Finally, we wanted to add subcategories with a major level of abstraction than the descriptive codes we previously assessed, but still within the framework of Orientalism. Some proposed categories were *Culture*, *Identity relationship* (referring to those discourses that aim to overcome cultural differences and instead create a common identity); *Culture Alterity relationship* (that groups all those discourses that highlights cultural differences, and therefore, considers the counterpart as an Other in the traditional Orientalist sense; *Historical determinism* (that groups all those entries related to the relationship between Chinese history and behavior as an explanatory variable); and finally, *Reversed power relation*, which alters the traditional understanding of Orientalism as we will discuss later.

As for the first category, examples vary from comparing Chinese with Chileans and trying to find mutual commonalities, situating them as becoming global or describing a horizontal relationship that places both parts together. On the contrary, alterity means to identify the counterpart as different (and sometimes with a discourse of underlying condescendence) and highlights the Chinese-ness of the Other as in the following quote:

*"The Chinese consumer does not have much education*

*regarding the salmon, and thus, is looking only for two things: color (hopefully very red) and price (hopefully the cheapest option)"* (Respondent 3).

Furthermore, there is an evaluation of the Other, with regards to the degree of modernity:

*"The Chinese are a very cold minded. It is not a person that is thinking about the environment or Child labor (...) basically they are only considering price"* (Respondent 5).

In the category *Reversed power relation*, there is a discourse in which China, as a market, has the power and control. For example:

*"China is a big market and our volume is not enough to be a permanent provider for a retail chain"* (Respondent 2).

TABLE IV  
ORIENTALIST CATEGORIES VS. OPEN CODIFICATION

Categories	Number of entries
<b>Natural dispositions</b>	<b>84</b>
Relationship barriers	10
Consumer Behavior	11
Business Behavior	35
Business trust	10
Global strategy	2
Local strategy	14
Chinese predominance	2
<b>Commercial Opportunity</b>	<b>31</b>
China as a market	5
Consumer Behavior	2
Business Behavior	12
Business trust	1
Global strategy	2
Local strategy	9
<b>Structural traits</b>	<b>22</b>
Relationship barriers	2
China as a market	2
Consumer behavior	1
Business behavior	6
Business trust	2
Global strategy	1
Local strategy	2
State role	6
<b>Traditional Values</b>	<b>52</b>
Relationship barriers	3
Consumer behavior	3
Business behavior	23
Business trust	5
Global strategy	1
Local strategy	13
Chinese predominance	2
(blank)	2
<b>(blank)</b>	<b>2</b>
Consumer behavior	1
Business trust	1
(blank)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>

Finally, and as for historical determinism, there are only

two entries and is related to behavioral explanations justified in an

Table V offers an overview of this analysis.

TABLE V  
ORIENTALIST CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

Orientalist categories	Number of entries
<b>Natural dispositions</b>	<b>81</b>
Culture, Identity relationship	3
Culture Alterity relationship	71
Historical determinism	2
Reversed power relation	5
<b>Commercial Opportunities</b>	<b>31</b>
Culture, Identity relationship	7
Culture Alterity relationship	7
Reversed power relation	16
(blank)	1
<b>Structural Traits</b>	<b>22</b>
Culture Alterity relationship	20
Reversed power relation	2
<b>Traditional Values</b>	<b>52</b>
Culture, Identity relationship	3
Culture Alterity relationship	47
Reversed power relation	1
(blank)	1
<b>Other categories)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>

The next section will discuss these results in accordance with the theoretical stance and will propose a new conceptualization.

## VI. DISCUSSION

According to our observations, there is an explicit stance of *positional superiority* amongst Chilean businesspeople in their engagements with the Chinese market. Hence, the representation of China seems to wander amongst three categories: economy, culture, and historical/racial determinism.

Firstly, highlighting commercial opportunities with China portends a horizontal power relation, where both sides participate in an essentially global and modern activity. It seems to bundle the whole spectrum of Chinese reality, as it were the spearhead of China's ascendance to modernity. However, this lapse of modernity is set back by the heavy burden of attributed traditions and natural dispositions.

Secondly, the idea of traditional values is used as an instrument of representation and explanation of a reified concept of "Chinese culture." Therefore, the observance of "Chinese culture" seems to establish the difference between those *inside* and *outside* of the relationship. In other words, the acknowledgement and level of adaptation to China's traditions and social conventions ultimately determines the success of the enterprise. Hence, symbolisms such as business-card protocols, eating and drinking, characteristics of social interactions, "Confucian values," etc., appear as not only a caveat of China's becoming-sameness but also as a unique monolithic condition, exceptional even for its regional context.

Finally, the complex concept of natural dispositions responds to a positivist understanding of Chinese history, racism, and geographic determinism. The resulting representation does not allow China absolute ascendancy into modernity, as the agency of its people is concealed, or at least determined, by the external (natural) factors, such as the acts of great rulers, wars and revolutions, poverty, phenotype, etc. In many senses, this narrative is the byproduct of the Spivakian *sanctioned ignorance*, in the sense of being part of official historical and sociocultural narratives.

These three categories operating under the traditional understanding of Orientalism suppose a discourse of *positional superiority*, where the reification of the Other implies the leverage of the Self. However, our findings showed a fourth dimension that pushes the concept of Orientalism into further complexity.

The category of structural traits consolidates the reification of the Other insofar as that Other acknowledges and exploits such representation in its benefit. In this regard, Chilean businesspeople recognize the necessity of adaptation to the local cultural, linguistic, economic, and political conditions, as much as the Chinese consider themselves as exceptional on these same realms. Furthermore, the underlying logic of adaptation supposes the inversion of power relations. Consequently, despite the reification of the Other through representations that stifle its ascension to modernity, the case for smaller powers -e.g. Chile- facing an Oriental Other is that the relationship cannot be reified in its entirety. Hence, the asymmetric reality of the bilateral relation is not conquered by the discourse, but rather renders the latter as an instrument to augment the projected image of the smaller power.

The application of this analytical framework to the discussion on economic engagements between Latin America and China offers a novel understanding on the reconfiguration of the epistemology of *positional superiority*. In this regard, if we assume that the construction of an Orientalist narrative amongst Western countries has responded to instrumental narratives determined by the aims and objectives of a State in a given historical moment, then the (re)construction of a discourse about China in the world system shall be more representative of its creators than of the alter-subject, which in the case of Chile, is highly signified by its business ties with China. Hence, the proposition of Chilean business Orientalism underscores the complex power dynamics that operate in the relationship between smaller countries and a major Oriental Other. Our concept reveals new dimensions of the traditional understanding of Orientalism, which cannot represent only a unidirectional projection of positional superiority. In fact, it has become a constitutive element of these nations that exploit the reification of their culture as a commodity.

Secondly, business Orientalism refocuses the relationship away from the imperialist agenda. The latest stages of globalization have altered the traditional vertical engagements within the international system for others more decentralized. In this regard, the novel understanding of Orientalism combines the reified conceptualization of the Other and its becoming-sameness. In other words, business Orientalism is

not necessarily a narrative of conquest, but rather an instrument to promote more horizontal ties, particularly with emerging countries.

## VII. CONCLUSION

In summary, the discourse of Orientalism applied to commercial relations acts as the negation of the Other's absolute modernity due to its cultural restraints, but also, as the confirmation of its becoming-sameness, where the smaller power upholds the 'know-how' of international trade. This phenomenon operates in the case of Sino-Chilean relations, where the asymmetric condition is very explicit but hardly represents a case of neo-colonialism. On the opposite, it highlights the relevance of Chile for China's emergence in the global economy -as it were a constitutive part of the process-, at the same time as it reifies the Other in an instrumental effort to achieve horizontality.

This case study illustrates the increasing complexity of the analysis of Orientalism amidst current ontological developments. It opens ground for future research seeking to apply the theory of new business Orientalism into other case studies, and also to study the impact of business Orientalist representations in the States' diplomacy. The challenge now is not to question the representation of the Other, but go beyond and beneath the naturalization and resignification of such representations.

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