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## ABSTRACT

In recent decades, South American migration within and towards Latin America has grown substantially. In Chile, per official data over 1,6 million foreign nationals were residing in the country in 2023, almost equally divided between genders and mainly located in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile, with Venezuelans predominating. The present study consists of a qualitative analysis of policy narratives based on interviews to migration-related policymakers, representatives of international organizations and migrant collectivity spokesmen in Chile. It aims at analysing their convergent or divergent understandings of the progress of present migration policies and associated state capacities. Three main framings are identified. The first could be defined as technocratic, centered on producing evidence and implementing the objectives of general or specific policies. The second takes into account migrants' subjective experience and shows the concrete problems they face daily. The last emphasises the contemporary humanitarian crisis migrants are experiencing and the discriminatory reactions of the host country. It entails a radical change in national security. These visions do not necessarily exclude each other; they are sometimes interconnected and complementary.

**Keywords:** migration policies; framings; social discrimination; social integration; human rights; state capacities; frames; policymaking; migrant resilience; humanitarian crisis; intercultural adaptation.

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## ABSTRACT

*In recent decades, South American migration within and towards Latin America has grown substantially. In Chile, per official data over 1,6 million foreign nationals were residing in the country in 2023, almost equally divided between genders and mainly located in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile, with Venezuelans predominating. The present study consists of a qualitative analysis of policy narratives based on interviews to migration-related policymakers, representatives of international organizations and migrant collectivity spokesmen in Chile. It aims at analysing their convergent or divergent understandings of the progress of present migration policies and associated state capacities. Three main framings are identified. The first could be defined as technocratic, centered on producing evidence and implementing the objectives of general or specific policies. The second takes into account migrants' subjective experience and shows the concrete problems they face daily. The last emphasises the contemporary humanitarian crisis migrants are experiencing and the discriminatory reactions of the host country. It entails a radical change in national security. These visions do not necessarily exclude each other; they are sometimes interconnected and complementary. However, the predominance of one or other framing shows the extent of migrants' social integration in any society. Maybe, some of these patterns are useful to analyse migration policy in other Latinamerican countries.*

**Keywords:** migration policies; framings; social discrimination; social integration; human rights; state capacities; frames; policymaking; migrant

resilience; humanitarian crisis; intercultural adaptation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, increases in inequalities and poverty between and within countries, climate change and globalisation processes have resulted in the growth of international migration flows and in recent decades, migration within and towards Latin America has also grown (Dides, 2024). In the case of Chile, according to the National Institute of Statistics, as of December of 2023 the number of foreign-national residents was 1,625,074. In terms of demographic characteristics, men slightly outnumbered women and the majority (57.8%) were residing in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile (INE, 2023). This reflects an abrupt growth of international migration to Chile, mainly during the last five years, with Venezuelans making up the majority of the arrivals.

This new reality presents a big challenge for the host country and requires the transformation of state structures, infrastructures and public services for the integration of migrants who belong to different cultures, religions, races and genders. State capacity to design and implement public policies associated to the socioeconomic

situation, inclusion and promotion of the well-being of migrants is a key factor in the integration during resettlement, as well as the accommodation of intercultural values and behaviour among their hosts (Navarrete, 2017; Stefoni, 2011).

However, the state and the other institutions studied are far from being monolithic in cultural terms, with members holding different type of beliefs, perceptions and understandings of migration processes and of migrants as persons. It is important to understand how they formulate their visions and behave meshing or not officially approved protocols with their own views. The main objective of the study is to analyse the relationship between state capacities, the behaviour of bureaucracies and of civic epistemologies underlying both aspects.

## II. ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The conceptual construction of interpretative framings follows an already widely accepted definition developed by Entman (1993, p.52): 'To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described'. Framings emphasise certain aspects of reality while others remain relegated or hidden; attributes, judgements and decisions are selected and suggested within a story to promote a specific interpretation. Speaking theoretically, a framing can be understood as an interrelation between four elements that can be operationalised: a specific definition of a topic, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation (the type of judgements, risks and benefits involved) and a way to remedy a situation. Separate qualitative elements of frames can be analysed in terms of persistent patterns: 'When some elements group together systematically in a specific way, they form a pattern that can be identified across several texts in a sample. We call these patterns frames' (Matthes & Kohrin, 2008, p.263).

Framings are built upon and manifest latent 'civic epistemologies' defined as underlying 'tacit forms of civic knowledge, that reflect culturally specific

meanings put into practice within the public arena' (Jasanoff, 2004, p.4). The dynamic coproduction between knowledge and power negotiations–politics and/or public policies – through agenda setting and the dissemination and application of results contributes to the shaping of these epistemologies. In this study, knowledge manifested within the making of discourse/narratives and social representations (Jasanoff, 2006) will be referred to solely as a background for the analysis of the meanings, representations and actions that reflect different social agents' interpretative framings of understanding.

The present study focuses on the following interconnected questions:

- In which ways are understandings of migration policies, designed according to the state's capacities, expressed in the narratives of socially influential leaders?
- Which are the main convergences, divergences and variations in leaders' interpretative framings of specific topics?
- How do these framings affect the conditions of migrants' resettlement?

The exploration of these questions has the aims of: (a) defining the understandings of migration in the prevailing social discourses of leading social actors, (b) reflecting upon the benefits and opportunities that migration brings to the country, (c) showing patterns of social discrimination towards migrants, and (d) illustrating some of the measures officially designed to promote migrant integration, including the relationships fostered by different institutions with migrant collectives and vice versa.

## III. METHOD

The present research forms part of a wider international project, 'Human Mobility, Global Challenges and Resilience in an Age of Social Stress' (PHOENIX), coordinated by Professor Susan Rottmann. In Chile, the team's work is directed by the hypothesis that: the patterns and levels of resilience and mental health of migrant populations depend upon the social support

received and the state response to their demands. This process, in turn, is affected by different aspects of the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of migrants' settlement. In this study we only present an analysis of national leaders' thinking on migration and the associated public policies, a topic relevant to one of the variables of the general research hypothesis: 'state response to migrants' demands'. The indicators of this variable include: main policies, specific actions and migrants collective participation in relation mainly to health, mental health, employment, civic rights and so on.

The present research took the form of a case study that involved a qualitative analysis of ten in-depth interviews with a limited number of subjects who were considered to hold representative views of the policies of the present government. Between 2023 and 2024, six semi-structured online interviews one to two hours in length were carried out with leading public policy makers, two with members of international organisations and two with migrant associations' representatives working on migration (Appendix 1). The interviewees all responded to a series of common questions and additional questions related to their areas of expertise. The study does not pretend to draw general conclusions, but to show trends in policy visions.

State officials interviewed were selected in each Ministry because they were the only coordinators of migration policy related to different areas (see Appendix I). The representatives of international organizations were in charge of key migration areas (IOM, UNHCR-Chile) and the spoke people from collectives organizations represented either the main association of the Venezuelan population or the main coordination of migrants collectives. In this sense, their views were key in migration policy design.

To maintain confidentiality, the extracts of the narratives were anonymised, because many of the interviewees occupied high-level positions. The majority of interviewees were professionals trained in the social sciences, including political science, and had completed post-graduate work. They were equally divided by gender and their

average age was 47 years old. Except in the case of one person who self-declared as white and another who self-declared as mixed race (both were not of Chilean origin) – the interviewees did not identify with any race. Eight reported being atheists and two stated they were practising Catholics.

The main interpretative frameworks present in the interviewees' narratives were identified based on the qualitative analysis of their visions. The narratives were analysed for content, meaning and emotional connotation. Emotional responses can be viewed 'as a form of social action that creates effects in the world and can be read in a culturally informed way' (Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990, p. 12). In the interview extracts, segments that were delivered with higher-positive or negative-emotional charge, as reflected by speaking volume and gestures, appear in a bold font. The narratives were also analysed in order to detect the underlying social values and ideological assumptions, what Mulkay (1993, p. 723-724) calls the 'discourse regularities that are constructed according to pre-existing sociocultural beliefs, and reveal an interrelated set of background premises'. Finally, convergences, divergences and variations between different actors' visions were identified.

The first step in this type of discourse analysis is to transcribe the interviewees' answers, classify them in relation to each topic studied, and quantify them for prevalence. Then, the narratives are contrasted with keywords that appear recurrently and were emphasised as current concerns by the interviewees. Keywords included the following: discrimination, human rights, focalised policies, faults within policies, adequacy of actions implemented, as well as state capacities. The presence or absence and level of use of these keywords were tracked in order to group together similar types of narratives for each topic, following an inductive analysis (Goia *et al.*, 2013). The main framing patterns were thus established. In the following sections, the highlights of the interviewees' visions are presented.

## IV. ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Definition of the Migrant Person

In general, interviewees agreed that an international migrant is a person who settles in a country different to that in which they were born with the intention of becoming a permanent resident: "In the case of a migrant it involves a decision of personal mobility" (PM1M), revealing a framing that understands migrants from a formal and abstract definition. It considers them as subjects who decide to migrate voluntarily. It does not take into account the socioeconomic conditions and violence that hinder their survival or diminish substantively their quality of life in their country of origin and thus, drives them to migrate or 'flee'. In the technocratic framing there are remnants of the authoritative period and a tendency towards quantification. In the most recent wave of migration, the presence of children and adolescents has great importance and the dominant story emphasised the infringement on a basic right, that of having a specific nationality:

There are special situations. They are called 'separated children'; there are also unaccompanied children who arrive alone, alone, alone. The 'separated children' arrive in Chile being in charge of an adult, but that adult is not the person who has parental authority. We also find cases of 'stateless children'. They are born while parents are constantly migrating between countries; for example, they are born to Venezuelan parents but in Colombia and Colombia does not regard them as nationals. The children enter Chile through unauthorized corridors, and they are stateless, they do not have a nationality. So these are very complex situations to handle (PM1M).

It is to be observed that stateless children were only recognized in Chile during the government of President Michelle Bachelet (2014-2018).

It seems that the technocratic framing, which defines the migrant person as a subject who of their own volition 'decides' to migrate, is not useful for understanding the migrant situation of children who appear as people whose rights have

been infringed upon. This is similar to the argument presented by Volkan (2019), for whom the experience of such children can be read as a form of exile.

Also, differences were established between a migrant and a refugee, with the following characteristics being attributed to the latter:

A refugee is a person that is obliged to flee his/her country of origin and has crossed an international frontier looking for international protection in a host country, because in the country where he lived, of which he was a citizen, he could not have access to the most basic human rights and, for this reason, was obliged to flee (as established in the International Convention of 1951: The Statute of Refugee Persons) (PM3W).

The other main difference articulated between refugees and migrants is that the former have a right to demand not to be sent back to their country of origin. The convention mentioned above establishes five situations that justify applying for refugee status: a person's rights are infringed upon due to race, nationality, religion, political opinions or belonging to a specific social group. In the Cartagena Declaration for Latin America the right to apply for refugee status are also extended to 'people that escape a severe situation of infringement to their human rights, generalized violence, external or internal armed conflict and severe disturbances to the public order' (PM3W). Both definitions have been incorporated into Chilean legal norms (Law 20.430) and apply to both irregular and regular migrants.

Compared to other Latin American countries, in Chile asylum requests are rarely approved. For example, in September 2023, of the 8,333 requests for refugee status made by Venezuelan nationals, only 33 were approved;<sup>1</sup> this represents a dire situation because 'those not approved are

<sup>1</sup> Few Haitians have requested refugee status (144) and none have been approved (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (SJM), 2023). Perhaps the lack of requests is due to Haitians' being unaware of this possibility.

subjected to registration according to the current Migration Law, but they can also be expelled from the country if their entrance has been illegal' (PM3W). This critical narrative reflects a real concern for the discrimination refugees suffer. But distinctions between the conditions of exit from the country of origin that merit the request of either migrant or refugee status are clearer by law than in the everyday experience of people who 'choose' to migrate, as Espinar (2010) argues.

#### *4.2 Benefits and Opportunities of Migration*

The benefits and opportunities for the Chilean society and for migrants are also matters of high concern among the interviewees. Several of them reported on the beneficial impact of migration upon local demographic indicators and on the urgency to reverse the ongoing aging process of the Chilean population: 'There is firstly a demographic benefit, as we know societies are aging. Chile is one of the countries that has higher rates of population aging, together with others, but it is among the top five' (PM4M).

A second benefit interviewees mentioned is the contribution migrants could make to gross domestic product (GDP), if existing internal barriers for their regularisation were relaxed. Upon becoming regular, migrants can pay internal taxes and access public services more systematically. This description blend together technical and social aspects, stemming from an underlying economic and marketing assumption within the civic epistemologies held. This narrative gives the impression that an emphasis on the economic argument may be useful to promote more favourable visions about migration within Chilean society.

Interviewees estimated that there were between approximately 200,000 and 350,000 migrants in an irregular situation in the country (an estimated 85% of whom were Venezuelans), who had no access to the formal labour market (PM4M). However, this is not based necessarily upon accurate evidence, as this type of data is still incomplete in Chile.

Interviewees discussed migrants' contribution to their families in their countries of origin through

periodic financial remittances, especially those of women, 'often at the cost of their own bodies' (PM2W). For the female interviewee quoted here, remittances tended to negatively impact the health and subjectivity of female migrants, because the money 'surplus' often meant extra work and hence an increase in exhaustion or else a reduction in their own quality of life.

The creation of new markets, based upon migrants' specialised skills, was frequently discussed as another benefit migrants bring to Chile. For example, the local gastronomic, beauty and personal care markets have expanded. However, interviewees pointed out that there are important delays regarding the validation of foreign university degrees, held by an estimated 400,000 professionals, 'who could obtain perhaps better jobs in their professions' (PM1M), an unjust situation. However, they did not discuss in depth the implications that being forbidden to work in their professions may have emotionally and materially upon migrants and how it often leads migrants to accept low-qualified jobs and poor working conditions in order to survive.

Some of the interviewees argued that migration could bring productive cultural changes to Chilean society: 'It depends upon ourselves. Chileans have accepted a greater social diversity; this is a positive phenomenon. If we do not see this, we are also not looking at the whole picture. If we see it, let us reinforce and validate it. Kids are very open to sexual diversity, as well as very open to have a Colombian friend' (PM5M).

This argument criticises the social denial of migration and highlights the advantages of diversity and multiculturalism from a vision that supports the human rights of migrant persons. It points out that cultural integration emerges more easily within 'everyday spaces of encounter'. One question that follows is then: How can these spaces of encounter be publicly promoted beyond those already existing at schools? In this sense, it becomes most relevant to root policies spaces of everyday life.

#### 4.3 On Migrants' Discrimination

The majority of interviewees were very worried about and criticised the extreme discrimination migrants suffered from the host society. According to the Jesuit Service for Migrants (SJM, 2024), in recent years increasing conflicts have been observed between Chilean nationals and international migrants. Ceballos (2024), based on data from the 2024 survey by Amnesty International, reports that 74% of survey participants reported having a bad image of the foreigners who had arrived in the last five years, a considerable increase compared to the results of previous studies (SJM, 2021).

The Chilean media has had a negative influence on the management of foreigners as it has insistently focused upon associating migration to criminality. The integration of migrants often faces obstacles related to the social hatred and rejection promoted intentionally by the media within public opinion. This perspective has led to the establishment of more-restrictive measures governing the entry of migrants into Chile, the regularisation of migrants within the country and the protection of the rights of previously settled foreigners (Caro & Quirral, 2023; Dammert & Erlandse, 2020). An abstract image of 'the migrant' (associated to delinquency) has been constructed that does not correspond to the reality of everyday relationships.

One of the causes of this recent massive rejection of migrants is attributed by some interviewees to the rapid expansion of international migration, unthinkable in previous years in Chile: 'An estimated one million new people arriving in five years, led to the collapse of the service systems' (PM1M). Interviewees blamed for this either the state's planning incapacity or simply the laissez-faire attitude held by the previous government. This has contributed to the negative response to migrants by Chilean nationals, who have found themselves in the following situation:

The arrival of migrants threatens the small improvement in the socioeconomic conditions that some families had had in recent years. One should not consider Chileans solely as racists, but also have in mind the complexity

involved in the arrival of a million new persons in five years in a country in which unemployment rates had been stably maintained at around 7.5%, but where infrastructure capacity is deficient relating housing facilities, as well as educational and health services. This situation has generated high social tension (PM1M).

Though this narrative extract is quite realistic, one can also observe glimpses of an underlying justification of the social rejection of migrants based upon a technocratic frame and an ideological civic epistemology. Instead, one could ask: Why did governments not prepare adequately for letting migrants into Chile or set feasible quotas for their numbers? The 'explosion' of migration seems to have been unexpected.

Another interviewee referred to the socioeconomic changes that the country has undergone since the period of the highest migration flows until the present, factors that have influenced negatively the social image of migrants:

In the Chilean case, we should incorporate into this analysis the fact that we nowadays face a lot of social instability, because there is an incapacity in the political system to process what is happening. We are far from that. We are not economically stable to follow a path towards growth. And in terms of the environment, not even worth mentioning! (PM5M).

The gap between the stability migrants thought Chile would offer them and the actual present characteristics of the country was emphasised. This perspective involves an important political critique that shows that institutions are not capable of reading and understanding the present socio-political dynamics in Chile, including the social cohesion negatively affected by migration waves.

A more critical and humanitarian-oriented definition of the current moment in Chile can be observed in the following extract: 'Whoever does not understand that international migrations form a key part our new reality, and that one has

to understand the need for developing the capacity to continuously process this flow, has not understood anything' (PM5M). This interviewee added, as a potential partial solution to migrants' exclusion, the possibility of passing an antidiscrimination law, which is already under discussion in Congress, and is of a wider scope than the Zamudio Law from June 2012.<sup>2</sup> Then, migratory flows in Chile are an undeniable part of Chilean reality. However, local institutions seem somewhat unaware of this phenomenon which tends to overwhelm their capacities of integrating migrants.

Discrimination against international migrants is a constant topic that cuts across general social views at different historical periods focusing on different aspects. But its main cause derives from the state's difficulties in designing and implementing policies to manage migration flows, whether the wider public is aware of this aspect or not.

This has changed at different periods. At first, they used to say 'migrants leave us without work'. Afterwards, the population claimed, 'they leave us without quotas in consulting rooms', as well as within schools and kindergartens. Then, the critique of migrants involved the housing deficit and lately, security. We do not know what [basis for discrimination] will follow (PM1M).

In relation to the present moment, an interviewee commented, 'Migrant rejection is now "super strong" due to the association that has been socially established between migration and crime. We know that this rejection harms mental health. All the previous anxieties that migrants bring are activated and mental health issues are magnified and grow in complexity' (PM6W).

This was almost the only narrative in which a direct relationship was established between social myths on migration and their negative repercussions on migrants' mental health. It

<sup>2</sup> Its main aim is to establish a legal mechanism to reestablish people's rights in cases of discrimination (Law 20.609 from 2012).

shows how the hostility experienced in the host country makes the sociocultural integration and maintenance of psychophysical balance of those who migrate more difficult, as discussed by Volkman (2019).

Unfortunately, some of the infringement upon migrants' rights, especially within the health system and towards black women, has been provoked by public officials' discriminatory behaviour: for example,

Nurses in many public services had many difficulties in giving vaccines to black/brown female migrants. They simply did not know how to find their veins, because they could not see them. The nurse starts to challenge the Haitian lady she is trying to treat, who in turn does not understand that she is being told off. The nurse maltreats her, pulls her around, shouts at her and it all ends very badly. Then, what should have been in principle a dignified health treatment, officially approved, turns into a severe infringement upon rights (PM7M).

This is a clear example of the gap existing between the guidelines proposed and the way in which the health treatment of migrant people takes place. Often health-related tasks are performed by public employees who act out during treatment their own civic epistemologies based upon discriminatory representations of migrant people. These employees are far from understanding migrants as subjects of rights.

The interviewee quoted above explained that they felt this type of situation reflected the failures of MINSAL. The ministry has not trained nurses in the techniques required to perform their jobs properly. There is the need for institutional changes at the national level, for example, in the curricula of university courses. This statement, though having an internal coherence, is based on the assumption that training can deeply transform behaviour and in fact, this discriminatory attitude also forms part of a certain robustly held interpretative framing. The vision being expressed deals with maltreatment as an act of 'supposed ignorance', rather than of one embedded in the coproduction between neocolonialism and power

abuse, widely discussed by many academic authors (e.g. Agamben, 2010; Crenshaw, 2006). The underlying assumption in this last view reflects 'a supposed superiority of the White hosts over the Black migrants' (Tijoux, 2016).

Often interviewees are aware that in some institutions there is triple and quadruple infringement upon rights, exacerbated by all type of stereotypes about migrants, most especially of black/brown women: 'If one wants to find a place where human rights are infringed in Chile one goes to police stations, patrols and prisons. In police stations, guys pick the women who are involved in sexual commerce and they take them away, and if they are afro descendants they treat them even with more cruelty' (MP5M). This is the most radical critique presented in the interviewees' narratives on the power abuse by key public authorities.

#### *4.4 Public Integration Actions for Migrants*

There was a certain polarisation between two types of the visions expressed by the interviewees. Some emphasised the development of universal policies and norms for the population, as disseminated by the United Nations. Others, without denying the international reach of this positioning, described the importance of implementing policies focused specifically on migrants.

Those who favoured the first position argued that focalised policies induced a greater fragmentation and asymmetry between those benefitted and other citizens. An interviewee comments on the lack of policies addressing the mental health of migrants as follows: 'There are none [mental health policies oriented to migrants] and this is an explicit decision, because it is something we know that eventually backfires for the specific populations; it is something counter-intuitive. People tend to think that if there is something for a specific group, it is as if one favoured only that group designing a hyper specialized service' (PM6W).

There are contradictions between technocratic visions that express the sole need to work following universal criteria on policy-making and

those with a greater social awareness of multiculturalism and diversity. This polarisation may reveal that sometimes interviewees were dealing with a false dichotomy. The debate here is similar to that on other forms of affirmative action often implemented in many countries, such as on the validity of assigning specific quotas to university-level students by race, differential capacities or gender (Htun, 2003; Crenshaw, 2006) or on efforts in France to implement intercultural devices related to the mental health of migrants (Moro, 2004).

Those interviewees who held the second position repeatedly detailed their ongoing initiatives to collect national level information on migration with the aim of developing the better focalisation of public actions. One interviewee stated, 'We are beginning to design labour profiles with a focus on women to be able then to do what is most adequate with respect to their employment and educational trajectories, so that we can use this perspective to match supply and demand within the labour market' (PA8W).

Even then, race was not mentioned as a relevant variable to design those profiles. However, an interviewee added that it was 'institutional work that has to behave as non-racist, non-classist and consider the gender dimension' (PM2W). This proposition intends the transversalisation of an intersectional perspective within state agencies and with that, recognises the subjectivity of 'situated knowledges' (Haraway, 1998), also among different types of migrants (Lara & Stang, 2021).

There exists one interesting policy initiative that is aimed at speeding up the entry of migrants into the labour market. The Programme 'Chile Values' at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security recently decided to create what has been called 'the project for the certification of competences'. It entails the verification, through direct observation and testing, the pre-existing knowledge of migrants, even if it has been informally acquired. One interviewee described the rationale for the programme: 'Your father knew how to weld, but you never attended a technical school that could teach you the

technique, but you learnt- it- by- doing' and so 'you show me that you know how to do that' (PM8W).

The programme is directed at the testing and acknowledgment of the real knowledge of a certain technique that the migrant has previously acquired on his own or with the informal help of others rather than at the certification of formal training – or an apprenticeship. This innovative measure still has a certain techno-deterministic character. It does not explicitly explain how participants will be recruited nor indicate whether migrant collectives were involved in the design and/or implementation.

One interviewee shared the wish that the present government will have mapped thoroughly the extent of migrations and their characteristics at the national level (PM5M) by the end of its term. The urgent need to have this updated and full evidence on migration patterns available was mentioned widely in order design or adjust policies to real needs.

Interviewees were in agreement on the importance of the work carried out at the municipal level, to put into practice specific migration policies at the local level. One local-level initiative that was frequently mentioned as very successful and that been recognised internationally was the training of 'pairs of cultural and psychosocial facilitators'. This policy was designed with the purpose of mediating, not only linguistically (as in the case of Haitians), but also culturally, between migrants and public service officials. This was a public activity guided by a socially aware framework and informed by an underlying civic epistemology that placed migrants' health needs at the forefront. Launched in 2021, the strategy employs sanitary and psychosocial monitors in the Northern and Centre Regions of the country—from Arica to Valparaíso—and recently the Metropolitan Region as well. The pairs function in seven regions; until 15 June 2023 they were funded by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and since then by MINSAL:

Then, these psychosocial pairs evaluated psychosocial needs and made referrals. They carried with them pamphlets and said to migrant people, 'You have the right to health treatment' . . . (PM7M).

This was considered by many interviewees to be the best nationally implemented public activity, being practical and aligned with migrants' needs. It requires dedicated and systematic work in the territories that entails having face-to-face relationships with migrants. It also contributes to removing some of the barriers migrants face in accessing public services.

Other face-to-face activities mentioned in the interviews involved the presence of ministerial representatives at the territorial level, for example, at the transition shelters in the frontier zones, within primary health treatment facilities and in the 44 foster homes established for females around the country (PM2W). The IV National Plan on Gender Equity has already been designed and it includes statistical indicators on gender developed in close communication with female migrants. This information is to be included into the gender violence programmes and accordingly represents a vision with high social awareness.

The majority of the interviewees emphasised the state's inescapable obligation to offer quality training to service officials and to personnel at police stations. For example, one of the participants noted that 'Unfortunately, there is a form of communicating about migration that scares a lot of the irregular migrants. It makes people desist from accessing all the programmes the Chilean state offers' (PM2W).

Public officials' ignorance of the conditions under which migrants live was emphasised and an example of this was provided. There was a medical doctor who demanded that a female migrant patient come clean and neat to his office for consultation. However, this woman lived in a camp without water. One of the interviewees explained that there should be within each of the state agencies a gender specialist, just as there were currently indigenous population specialists. In other words, this interviewee was advocating

that an effort be made to include a sort of transversalisation of a gender perspective into state management, in order to develop policies on topics that otherwise would be invisible.

#### *4.5 Relationships with Migrant Collectives*

In general, the institutions to which these interviewees are affiliated did not interact directly with migrant collectives, instead going through NGOs selected through public tenders. Moreover, for migrant collective representatives it is very hard to communicate on a regular basis with officials in state agencies. There are some exceptions of representatives who are in frequent contact with migrant collectives, usually public officials who made a point of developing direct relationships over time. Only one representative interviewed at one ministry described the face-to-face relationship they had established with the coordinators of migrant collectives. This person emphasised the importance of being touch with the collectives as frequently as possible to develop and implement a range of programmes, policies and actions, most especially regarding employment and gender violence (PM2W).

The organisations that group together migrant collectives and are primarily dedicated to struggle in favour of migrant regularisation explained that nowadays it has become extremely necessary to 'de-construct the myths on criminalization that has progressively developed in relation to migration, and that has oriented the political behaviour of right wing followers and lately – in the last 4 to 5 months–also often of those belonging to the left wing, i.e. stigmatization' (RC1H). A major reason for the social dissemination of this mythical vision of migrants is possibly the growth in foreign drug trafficking gangs operating in Chile, mostly associated to Venezuelan and Colombian organised crime. This criminal conduct, restricted to a few, has eventually become extended into a wider interpretative framing that judges all migrants in negative terms (Cociña, 2022).

Migrant collectives tend to advocate for migrants' rights at state agencies and disseminate information in the media to counteract those

negative narratives on migrants (MCR2W and MCR1M): 'At this moment, we are dealing with cases of women and especially those with children, that are in a precarious economic situation, and we take these cases and put them in contact with different state institutions or with international organizations that can provide financial assistance for mental health and for child care' (MCR2W).

Many collectives undertake concrete actions, such as periodic public conversations, mainly directed to transmitting information on legal regularisations and often work jointly with private entities that support migrants, like the Jesuit Service for Migrants (SJM). They also sometimes establish formal agreements with international organisations for the creation of decent jobs. Those type of actions are all carried out on a voluntary basis. They would probably have a greater impact if they received consistent technical and financial support from public and private institutions, as is the case in other countries (Van Ewijk & Nijenhuis, 2016; Però, 2008).

#### *4.6 Main Challenges at Present*

There was a consensus among the interviewees about the need to solve the deficiencies in and excessive times for migrant regularisation. In other countries, such as Peru and Ecuador, these issues are already being tackled (Aron, 2019; Arroyo et al, 2022). The interviewees felt that the main barrier to making the regularisation process more efficient was a lack of political will: 'Regularization times have been going down, but, for example, for Venezuelans it takes on average one year and two months to get a definite residence permit' (MCR2W).

Another interviewee explained,

Without regularization, migrants become second class citizens, i.e. they are excluded from the formal labour market and society as a whole. They can become victims of even more abuses – such as those of money lenders – face extra gender violence and also stop accessing public services for fear of

deportation. New vulnerabilities are generated and old ones increase (PM4M).

It is from this perspective that the even-more-precarious situation of irregular migrants is addressed. The approach integrates two important arguments, one that is humanitarian oriented with one that is socially conscious. It also seems to indirectly refer to the possibility of facilitating cohesion within Chilean society between hosts and foreigners.

Some socially aware interviewees suggested, for example, that the present process of migrants' enrolment (biometric typing of irregular migrants as established by the new migration law of 2021), could have been designed together with an actual regularisation process that would lead to obtaining permanent residency. Instead, it has followed a path where national security is the overriding concern.

A theme that permeated all interviews was that of ensuring migrants could exercise their rights in practice, especially those that have already been approved within official protocols. The main concern interviewees expressed was about the problems that hindered efficient coordination between the agencies in charge of different sectors. One interviewee stated,

If there is already a catalogue for the access to services, to benefits that exist by law for a group of the population, I have to guarantee that this reaches the people addressed within this policy . . . [and] provide officials with the tools to manage this to deal with a population that arrives with creole as their only language. Thus, there is a lack of mechanisms that allow this type of access. Secondly, there are flaws in how to make that information reach the migrant population in ways that they can understand it (PM7M).

This narrative extract refers to the design and implementation of measures that guarantee migrants' practical possibilities of exercising their rights. For example, at MINSAL a health policy for international migrants has been in place since 2017; however, 'that policy was created but never implemented through concrete actions; a plan of

action was designed but never concretized' (PM7M).

Another example is that of the RUN – unique national roll – a number stipulated by law to be handed out to each migrant so that they have access to all the public services to which they are entitled, even before they have become regular:

What happens is that if I go to Fonasa (National Health Fund) or to a health consulting room, I have one number. If I go to another institution, I have another number and so on. At least, if I had a RUN, I would have only one number and it would be useful forever. But the challenge is there. Not all ministries are distributing this number, even when it has been established by law. Thus, a migrant person can have up to four numbers that different state agencies provide them (PM7M).

The above extract reveals important problems within horizontal inter-sectoral coordination for the implementation of policy. Contradictions and even oppositions between intentions, laws and policies versus everyday practice are thus manifested in the majority of the humanitarian-oriented interventions.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The present study found three main framings of migration policy among the interviewees that are based on their underlying civic epistemologies—tacit forms of knowing—and orient agents' actions in the social realm. The first is a technodeterministic or technocratic vision concerned with analysing empirical evidence and the implementation of the objectives of general and specific policies. The second is more linked to a social awareness of the concrete everyday problems of migrants—it is a socially conscious framing. Finally, there is a humanitarian-oriented framing that emphasises the crisis that the Venezuelan migrants, are experiencing and the discriminatory reactions of some sectors of the population towards them. The last proposes solutions oriented to substantive reforms of the state and demands a move away from the current approach oriented mainly towards national

security that informs many of the present public actions.

These three visions, though distinct, are not mutually exclusive, given the predominance of unresolved power conflicts. Power dynamics refer to two type of issues: (a) the affiliation of interviewees to different parties, mainly the right wing- in favour of national security and securitisation- and the present social democratic government tending to consider, though in a restrictive manner, migrants' needs and rights, especially relating to health, family reunification and education. Although the first are not represented in the sample, some interviewees share aspects of the view on national security of the right political wing and tend to have a technocratic vision; while the second can either be socially-conscious or humanitarian oriented though the weight of the latter perspective has been gradually diminishing during the last two years; (b) there is quite a difference in the interests defended by interviewees in different positions. While some technocrats are found among public bureaucracies; international organizations' representatives are socially-conscious and, especially the IOM- following international standards- and the migrant collectives defend a humanitarian vision that emphasizes strongly migrants' rights. Unfortunately, lately the far right's political interests are prevailing and the new government of a social democratic character – which also includes some sectors of the left wing- has had to introduce mechanisms on securitisation, like deportations- which are a central part of the right wing parties' political agendas. These negotiations between positions shape the ambiguities and arbitrariness – already pointed out- of some aspects of the new migration policy. The formal media –in the hands of the right wing parties- has contributed substantively to these changes in agenda setting with its discriminatory influence on the subject of migration and the migrants as persons.

Sometimes these visions intersect, with a higher priority assigned, according to the moment, to one or other aspect the topic, power relations and the institution that puts them into practice, e.g. central

Ministries versus municipalities. The intersections between the three framings tend to converge in some aspects regarding social policy, but the humanitarian oriented view highly diverges from the other two positions in relation to national security, migrants' discrimination and dealing with migrants as potential criminals and delinquents. The further away the municipality level administrative apparatus is geographically located from the Capital, the less the nationally approved protocols for migrant integration are well known and put into practice by local officials. All kinds of hybrid approaches' intersection of framings tend to disorient migrants regarding, for example, information on their rights during the regularization processes and their access to public services. As a whole, this lack of a clear direction is extremely harmful for migrant social integration, as the three framings influence decision-making on migration and migration policy and present contradictions and conflicts between them.

The operationalisation of framings proposed by Entman (1993) was applied to gain a deeper understanding. These frames include the following elements: a specific definition of a topic, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation and a proposal of solutions.

The techno-deterministic frame is characterised by the definition of a topic based upon certain 'objective' data. It attributes causality to migrant subjects capable of managing their own migration process. This reading implies that migration is considered as based almost exclusively upon rationality and will and, in terms of values, does not fully acknowledge the conditions that force people to migrate. This type of policy probably does not take into account important subjective and cultural elements. It is based on an 'abstract' vision of migrant people and seems to consider the resettlement process as a series of stages, procedures and obstacles that migrants go through so as to achieve integration.

The second or socially conscious frame is more open to the recognition of the subjective and cultural dimension of migrants and of the hosts' internalised cultural aspects. A more complex

migrant subject is considered, one who carries a specific biography and culture and is adapting to a new sociocultural context. This subject shows mobility. Migrants are both open to new possibilities and being forced to leave behind material and symbolic belongings. What seems to be valued morally here is human existence and the potential suffering associated to the migratory experience. Consequently, emerging policy solutions should involve more-specific practices that require the understanding of migration experiences fully in the context of a humanitarian crisis. The migrant is conceived as an 'embodied subject' and the framing recognises the psychological, social and cultural implications of resettlement processes that need different follow-up strategies.

At the centre of the third framing is the concept of human rights considered as the main lens through which to understand the migration processes. The judgements on the social, economic and political conditions that hinder the exercise of rights and the possibility of people's experiencing themselves as subjects of rights are at stake. Causality refers not precisely to a person's will to migrate. Instead, migration is seen as 'the last alternative'; the underlying assumption involves an unrestricted respect for the rights of any person. Consequently, policy solutions are to be oriented first towards restoring rights and second towards designing and applying logics in public policies that allow for the exercise of these rights.

This framing integrates both images that are attributed to migrants: an abstract and universal perspective together with that of an embodied subject of rights exposed to the multiple difficulties of the migratory process. Resettlement processes should aim at developing the state's capacities to restore migrants' infringed rights and promote their full integration into the host society.

The three framings arise from, as well as shape policies. The challenge is that once one frame predominates the rest can be made invisible or totally neglected. For example, the technocratic frame has as its main advantage the collection of evidence on migration trends, though this data

can appear as neutral and hence, clash with the socially-conscious position which would imply gathering more inclusive data, for example, relating the racial composition of migrant nationalities. Effective actions in this last sense could target more directly the specific cultural and labour needs of populations such as Haitian migrants, versus other. Regarding this aspect, the humanitarian –based policies go far beyond the protection of migrants that appear in the other two frame-related policies. They would mainly promote regular and active participation of civic organizations and migrant collectives at the institutional level, plan policies designed and based upon migrants' collective association at the national and international levels and generate equity treatment between migrants and hosts at every socioeconomic and political level.

The Chilean population experienced an enormous social trauma during the long years of the authoritarian civic-military dictatorship. Subsequent democratic governments have made scarce interventions towards the national repair of the negative social effects of authoritarian rule and have left that form of government's influence upon 'the construction of democratic civic ways of knowing or civic epistemologies' largely unchallenged. Migrants, who tend to bring their own traumatic stories, are thus having to integrate socially and culturally into a country that has had a traumatic history of its own.

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*Appendix 1:* Characterization of interviewees by gender, position and institution

Policy makers/ Migrant collective representatives*	Position	Institution
PM1M	Adviser on Migration	Ministry of Social Development and Family
PM2W	Coordinator of Gender Transversality	Ministry of Women and Gender Equality
PM3W	Protection Official – Coordinator of Protection and Solutions within National Units	The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

PM4M	Adviser; Ex member of IOM Staff – Articulator of South American responses to the Venezuelan crisis	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
PM5M	Sub-secretary of Human Rights	Undersecretary of Human Rights, Ministry of Justice
PM6W	Head of the Department of Mental Health – System's Regulator	Undersecretary of Public Health, Ministry of Health (MINSAL)
PM7M	Adviser to the Department of Indigenous Populations' Health and Interculturality: Technical line on migration	Undersecretary of Public Health, Ministry of Health (MINSAL)
PM8W	Head of the Department of Fundamental Rights on decent work and labour migrations	Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MINTRAB)
MCR1M	Vice-President/Spokesman	National Coordinator of Migrants in Chile
MCR2W	President of the Directing Board and Legal Representative of the Organization	Venezuelan Association in Chile (ASOVEN)

Source: *The research*

*Note: Abbreviations used during the narrative extracts correspond to: Policy Maker Man: PMM; Policy Maker Woman: PMW; Migrant Collective Representative Man: MCRM; Migrant Collective Representative Woman: MCRW.*