

THE DIVERSIONARY USE OF MEDIA WITHIN THE LAND DISPUTE BETWEEN  
CHILE AND BOLIVIA

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## ABSTRACT

The land dispute between Bolivia and Chile has been an ongoing conflict that dates back to British decolonization. The War of the Pacific, which ended in 1904 and allowed Chilean sovereignty over land that was formerly Bolivia's remains the root of the problem, as it rendered Bolivia a landlocked nation. In 2013 Bolivia filed a case with the International Court of Justice demanding negotiations of access to the Pacific Ocean. Within this land dispute, I analyzed the use of Twitter as a method of diversionary politics, which has been largely speculated over the years, that when presidential approval ratings are low in Bolivia, the land dispute is reignited as a method to divert attention away from other domestic conflicts, and increase public approval, also known as the "rally-round-the-flag" effect. By conducting a content analysis of Twitter, I was able to conclude that during certain periods of time, the Bolivian politicians do use the dispute as a method to increase public approval, and that the Chileans remain largely ambivalent and unconcerned with land dispute.

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## ***CHAPTER 1: Introduction***

Do politicians utilize diversionary tactics to improve their approval rating, especially concerning foreign policy without the threat of war? Looking at the Chile and Bolivia land dispute concerning the Antofagasta region, I will analyze how or if the territory dispute has been utilized as a political tool among elites, and if media coverage, specifically the use of Twitter, about the dispute has a correlation to presidential approval.

Over the last century, Chile and Bolivia have gone through periods of strained diplomatic relations. Almost always, Bolivia has cut diplomatic ties with Chile over issues regarding the Antofagasta region of Chile, which was at one time part of Bolivia. The loss of access to the Pacific Ocean has been detrimental to the Bolivian economy, even with fairly lenient trade sanctions imposed by Chile.

On October 1, 2018 the International Court of Justice ruled that Chile does not have an obligation to negotiate access to the sea with Bolivia. This ruling ended a court case between the two countries that lasted over 5 years, and a territorial dispute that has been going on for over a century. Although the court's decision will be upheld globally, the Bolivian government has promised its people that they will never stop fighting for their sea.

My research question is: Do Bolivian and Chilean elites use the land dispute as a political tool? Other questions that I will answer are: over the last decade, how often is the land dispute discussed? Is there any correlation to prove that the dispute is utilized as a “rally tool” to boost public approval. To answer these questions, I will be analyzing the Twitter accounts of various Chilean and Bolivian elites and media sources.

Twitter offers the most up-to-date information of any other media communication tools. In contrast to watching the nightly news on television or reading about current events in the morning newspaper, Twitter allows information to be shared continuously throughout the day almost simultaneously as the events occur. Twitter also allows for direct communication with your followers. It is a way to navigate away from the third-party interviews and put your own voice and opinion out into the world. This is especially useful for politicians and “social media influencers” to communicate directly with their people, which has garnered a lot of attention in recent years, especially during election time periods. The newness of Twitter, however, limits the research to the time frame for which each user has been an active participant in the social networking site.

To analyze the extent to which Bolivian and Chilean elites have utilized diversionary tactics in the modern era, I am using Twitter not only because it offers a unique method of direct communication, but it is also a direct reflection of the communication styles of prevailing governments. Each user is analyzed based on the frequency of tweets about the land dispute in comparison to their total volume of tweets and the frequency of mentioning other international interests.

The land dispute between Chile and Bolivia bids the perfect environment for analysis of the diversionary use of media within the realm of Twitter due to its saliency throughout the last decade and beyond.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Diversionsary Politics*

Many scholars believe that throughout the course of history of modern Bolivia, elites have utilized the land dispute as a political tool to boost approval ratings, and rally the country around a common theme, especially when other domestic issues arise. Is there any truth to these statements- do Bolivian or Chilean elites use the land dispute as a political tool?

The political tactic that politicians often use to divert attention away from one diplomatic issue to another is called “diversionary behavior.” Jack S. Levy and Lily I. Vakili define diversionary behavior as: “military and diplomatic actions undertaken for the purposes of enhancing one’s internal political support... one can make a further analytic distinction between two alternative mechanisms... one involves the acquisition through military action of tangible resources which can be used to alleviate internal problems... the other involves the rallying of the population around the patriotic symbols of the nation” (Levy and Vakili 1992). Levy’s diversionary theory of war states that domestic problems incentivize leaders to employ “aggressive foreign behavior” to boost their popularity, and “thus increase [their] chances of remaining in power” (Levy 1989). Or, more simply stated- diversionary behavior includes “*military and diplomatic actions undertaken for the purposes of enhancing one’s internal political support*” (Levy and Vakili 1992).

In relation to the diversionary use of force theory, John Mueller developed a theory known as the “Rally-Round-the-Flag effect,” which “predicts short term boosts in a President’s popularity whenever there occurs an international crisis or a similar event” (Mueller 1970). There are two main schools of thought which can explain the rally effect: *patriotism* and *opinion leadership*. The *patriotism* explanation for the rally-round-the-flag effect states that during time periods of foreign policy crisis, the citizens will support the president as a form of patriotism, especially if the dispute threatens economic, political, and strategic interests (Baker and Oneal 2001), which stems from the “social identity theory,” in that it is inherent nature to maintain a positive view of the “group” you belong to (Lambert, Schott, Scherer 2011). The *opinion leadership* explanation for the rally-round-the-flag effect states that because the media is so influential in the formation of public opinions (or presidential approval) and the fact that the president has sole access to the information regarding the international crisis, the media is forced to publish accounts from the presidential viewpoint, thus lacking open criticism of the president, which in turn causes a surge in approval ratings as the only information available is in support of the president (Baker and Oneal 2001).

The most effective “rally-round-the-flag effect” that has been recorded in the United States was sparked by the attacks of 9/11, which caused President George Bush to declare the War on Terrorism. “Bush’s approval rating soared in the Gallup Poll from 51% on September 10 to 86% on September 15” (Hetherington and Nelson 2003). Both the *patriotism* school of thought and the *opinion leadership* school of thought explain why the rally effect was so drastic in this example. *Patriotism* reasoning states that in times of international crisis, “the average man’s reaction will include a feeling of

patriotism in supporting presidential actions.” The *patriotism* explanation is only valid in 2% of the cases, when “the president leads the nation into a full-scale war” which as demonstrated by the 9/11 incident causes a sizable rally effect around the president (Murray 2017). The “opinion leadership” explanation states that “when a crisis happens suddenly, the president has a monopoly on information... this creates an unusually uncritical mix of news about presidential performance, and sends a signal to the public that the president is doing his job well” (Murray 2017).

The most recent scholars of the “rally-round-the-flag” phenomenon have concluded that the patriotism explanation and the opinion-leadership explanation are not mutually exclusive. “The patriotic response of the public actually helps to explain why opposition leaders, and even the media, refrain from criticism- they fear the public blowback that might result from criticisms of the president,” however this is only during times of full-scale war (Murray 2017).

Are the risks of a war worth the temporary increase in popularity? Effectively, “manageable conflicts short of war result in small, fleeting, unreliable rallies, while larger-scale conflicts will provoke an initial rally but are uncontrollable and potentially damaging in the long term, then there is little incentive for the president to create crisis for political gain.” The diversionary use of force theory also requires that leaders need a “crisis trigger,” or a “plausible international opportunity to intentionally cause a diversionary conflict or risk appearing politically motivated, which would only worsen their political fortunes” (Murray 2017).

On one hand, the diversionary theory of war explains why leader’s decide to engage in “aggressive foreign behavior” which is contingent on internal domestic issues.

On the other hand, the “rally-round-the-flag” phenomenon states that during time periods of international crisis, the president will receive a surge of public approval. Together, these two theories can be used to explain the incentives leaders have to engage in foreign conflict as a “crisis trigger” by means of diverting attention away from domestic issues, and in turn boost their popularity in the form of a “rally-round-the-flag” effect.

While the majority of research regarding the “rally-round-the-flag effect” analyzes the United States, the same conclusions can be mirrored and interpreted in the Latin American counterpart. One example from the Latin American perspective is the case of the Falklands/Malvinas war between Argentina and Britain. In this case, many scholars argue that the Argentine junta forcibly seized the Malvinas as a response to internal public opposition which was caused by an economic crisis and human rights issues. They “seized the Malvinas in order to increase the domestic political support for their faltering military regime” (Levy and Vakili 1992). Britain responded with military force “in part because of expected domestic political benefits,” however it can also be speculated that “if Britain had not responded militarily, or if she had failed to recover the Falklands by force, the Argentine military junta would have remained in power for a considerable period” (Levy and Vakili 1992).

The case study by Levy and Vakili concluded that the decision to invade the Malvinas was primarily motivated by domestic issues, and would have probably been successful had Britain not responded militarily as was anticipated. They also point-out that the conflict-cohesion literature with which the diversionary behaviors theory is based in, implies that “the external targets likely to be most useful in rallying the in-group around its political leadership are those which are perceived to threaten the in-group as a

whole” (Levy and Vakili 1992). This applies to the Chile-Bolivia case in that if the land dispute is being utilized as a diversionary tool, it would be most successful as a rally-tool from the Bolivian perspective due to the fact that Bolivians, as a whole, are unified in their disdain against Chile for rendering them landlocked, as exemplified by a survey originally published by *La Razón* in which 74% of Bolivians said they had little to no trust in Chile (SAP Mercurio 2006). Levy and Vakili also “hypothesize that states which are weak relative to society are more likely to engage in scapegoating (diversionary politics) than are states which are strong relative to society”. This will become evident later in the discussion, but could also be a reasoning as to why Bolivian politicians are more likely to engage in diversionary methods in comparison to Chilean politicians.

Because many Bolivian historians and politicians have accused Evo (without much formal analysis) of using the land dispute as a political tool to boost his popularity rating, I am going to analyze the most recent case within the Chile and Bolivia land dispute to determine if and to what extent it has been utilized as a political tool. The “rally-round-the-flag” effect and the diversionary use of language can be combined to further analyze Twitter and the diversionary use of *media* explicitly regarding the land dispute. Specifically trying to answer the questions: Does Evo utilize the dispute as a diversionary tool to temporarily boost his approval rating? Does media coverage in Chile also correlate to public opinion of the government?

## *Hypothesis*

I hypothesize that Bolivian politicians have utilized the land dispute against Chile as a diversionary tool, while on the other hand, Chile has largely remained unconcerned with Bolivian relations.

Aside from my personal experiences within both countries, there are two main rationales for the hypothesis I proposed: one, the claims of many scholars that Evo Morales utilizes the land dispute as a campaign tool, and two, how each country represents themselves in the media.

For example, Patricio Navia, a Professor of Political Science at Universidad Diego Portales in Chile and Liberal Studies Professor at NYU, said “Morales prefers to use [the land dispute] as a campaign tool because every time he finds himself in problems, he can point to Chile’s denial of claims for sovereign access as the reason for Bolivia’s underdevelopment” (Garrison 2018). Morales also has a very active media presence in which he discusses the land dispute almost regularly. On the other hand, Chile has addressed the issue, but often only in response to an antagonization by Bolivia. One example of this is, after Morales tweeted “Antofagasta fue, es y será territorio Boliviano,” (Antofagasta was, is, and will be Bolivian territory); Chilean president Piñera responded “El president de Bolivia se equivoca una vez más, puesto que de acuerdo al tratado de 1904... Antofagasta ha sido, es y va a seguir siendo chilena. Quiero también asegurar a mis compatriotas que este presidente va a defender con firmeza y con voluntad nuestra soberanía nuestro territorio, nuestro mar, y nuestra integridad territorial de acuerdo al derecho internacional y a los tratados vigentes.” (The president of Bolivia is wrong again, according to the treaty of 1904... Antofagasta has been, is, and will

continue to be Chilean. I want to ensure to my compadres that this president will defend with firmness and volition our sovereignty, our territory, our sea, and our territorial integrity according to international law and current treaties) (Villa 2018). At first glance, the media coverage from each country has their own respective strategy, which is why I chose to analyze Twitter by means of determining how each country has addressed the land dispute and if it is used as a political tool.

## **CHAPTER 3: PUTTING THE BOLIVIA-CHILE DISPUTE IN CONTEXT**

### *Historical Background*

Chile and Bolivia have had an ongoing land dispute since gaining independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century, because boundaries within the Atacama Desert were never clearly identified due to the uninhabitable nature of the landscape, and the inconsistencies of Spanish maps which varied as to whether the territory was Bolivian or Chilean (St John 1994).

In 1866, more than forty years after independence, the border between Chile and Bolivia was defined as the 24<sup>th</sup> parallel under the “Treaty of Mutual Benefits.” Under this treaty, the land between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> parallel became an equal rights zone for both countries (St John 1994).

In 1874, a new treaty between Bolivia and Chile was agreed upon, granting the zone between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> parallels to Bolivia, but afforded low taxation for Chile. In 1879, after Bolivia and Peru secretly allied against Chile, and after Bolivia attempted to raise taxes in the low taxation zone, Chilean forces occupied the Bolivian port city of Antofagasta. Bolivia then enlisted the help of Peru, and declared war against Chile. In February 1879, Chile occupied Antofagasta, and later declared war against both Bolivia and Peru. The Battle of Calama marks the first battle of the War of the Pacific. It occurred on March 23, 1879 when Bolivian forces attempted to defend the city of Calama against Chilean invasion, but failed following only a few hours of combat. This battle

exemplifies the dedication with which Bolivians fought (and will continue to fight) for *their* sea (Markham 1882).

“Within two months of the beginning of the conflict, the entire Bolivian littoral territories has been seized by Chile,” and four years later Chile officially claimed the northern region of Tarapacá under the 1883 Treaty of Ancón with Perú (Klein 140). In 1884, Bolivia finally surrendered the region of Antofagasta to Chile, and both countries signed the Treaty of Valparaiso (Gangopadhyay 2014). This treaty was ratified in 1904 forming the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, which officially ended the war and recognized Chilean possession of the coast, who in return, promised to build a railroad from La Paz to Arica to facilitate the flow of exports and imports from the sea port to the Bolivian capital. The railroad was built in 1913, but was forced to close in 2005, Chile has since rehabilitated their section, and held a ceremony in 2013 to prove it is in working condition (Long 2013). The 1904 Treaty of Peace and Friendship which followed what is known as the “War of the Pacific”, has stood as the principal document between Chile and Bolivia that outlines Chilean rights to the land that formerly belonged to Bolivia.

The next major dispute between Chile and Bolivia came between the years of 1952 and 1975 when diplomatic relations were severed due to use of the Lauca River. The Lauca River begins in Chile and empties into a Bolivian lake. The river provides water to many small towns in Bolivia, but when Chile attempted to divert some of the waters for irrigation purposes, Bolivia “protested Chilean policy... and asked the Organization of American States to impose sanctions on Chile” (St John 1994). Sanctions

were not imposed, and because Chile and Bolivia could not come to a peaceful agreement, diplomatic ties were severed until 1975.

In 1975, diplomatic ties were reestablished. Bolivia, once again, requested access to the Pacific Ocean. Chile proposed a “land-sea corridor north of Arica along the Peruvian border extending to the 200 nautical mile limit for equivalent territorial compensation in the Bolivian Altiplano” (St John 1994). Bolivia declined, however, Peru responded with a proposition of a “zone of joint Bolivia-Chile-Peru sovereignty between the Peruvian border and the city of Arica” (St John 1994). Chile declined this idea, causing Bolivia to sever diplomatic relations again in 1978, which remained largely unstable due to governmental transitions within the region.

The most recent land dispute between Bolivia and Chile came in 2003, when Bolivia planned to construct a pipeline to the ocean to transport gas. Bolivians rioted due to the possibility of providing Chile with Cheap gas. “The topic of [access to the sea] is a very simple issue in Bolivia. There is a lot of xenophobia and patriotic chauvinism. The military in the government always used the topic of the ocean to calm down social protests. People knew [the gas exportation deal] was something done by companies. But the fact that it was through Chile... woke up the fury of the people” (Arze 2014). The people rioted, causing over 80 deaths in September and October 2003, and demanded the more expensive option of exporting gas through Peru. While the riot can be seen as a nationalistic uprising, it can also represent the “injustice of... being poor in a resource-rich land,” and the struggle of being so heavily reliant on other countries for exportation as a source of income (Spronk and Webber 2007).

During the Gas War of 2003, Evo Morales broke out into the public eye. Through his role as a union leader of the *cocaleros* (coca growers) and a founding member of the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) political party which represented the left-indigenous sector of the population, Evo became heavily involved in the protests in El Alto, and eventually began to work closely with the president at the time, Carlos Mesa. Evo came to be the voice of the MAS and “entered into an unofficial alliance with the executive, [Mesa], that lasted from October 2003 until March 2005, ensuring the political survival of the president” (Webber 2010).

In March 2005, Evo and the MAS separated from Mesa and began huge protests around the country, primarily over the nationalization of “hydrocarbons” which erupted into the second Gas War of 2005. From March 2005 until June 2005, Carlos Mesa took a predominately anti-Evo and anti-Indigenous stance, even naming Morales 27 times in one speech “in attempts to discredit him as a political leader” (Webber 2010). What began as political alliance between Mesa and MAS eventually turned into a toxic struggle between race and class.

After Mesa’s resignation on June 5, 2005, Evo Morales and the MAS who represented “anticapitalist and indigenous-liberationist objectives” of the overwhelming “indigenous proletarian and peasant majority,” won the presidential election with 54% of the popular vote (Webber 2010). “He also delivered on the agenda that came out of the Gas Wars. On his 100<sup>th</sup> day in office, he nationalized Bolivia’s oil and gas reserves, sending the military to secure the fields, and giving foreign companies six months to comply with the new mandate or leave” (Barbassa 2019). The topic of the gas war, and indirectly the sea dispute with Chile, propelled Evo to popularity helping him win the

presidential election of 2005, and “the election of Evo Morales in 2005 inaugurated a new policy of conciliation on the maritime issue” (Laetitia 2013).

This type of long-term territory dispute is rather common in Latin America, largely as a result of “British decolonization in mainland Latin America, [which] is a persistent source of territorial disputes” (Domínguez 2003). The Bolivia-Chile dispute, however, is unique in the fact that after the peace treaty was signed ending the War of the Pacific, the dispute remained, although nonviolent, still a salient issue especially among Bolivians. The border dispute most resembling the dispute between Bolivia and Chile is the conflict between Ecuador and Peru which erupted in war in 1995 over a small strip of disputed territory. The key difference is that after both countries signed a treaty, the dispute was largely forgotten. “On October 30, 2014, Ecuadorian Ambassador to Peru José Sandoval noted that the countries were in their ‘best moment’ of bilateral relations” (Bons 2015).

Another example of a tense, yet nonviolent dispute is the “Beagle Conflict” between Chile and Argentina. The dispute stemmed from discrepancies regarding boundary lines in the Beagle Channel that dated back to decolonization. Although it came close to war, a compromise aided by the Papacy prevented any violent outbursts. Both countries were content with the results of the compromise, and while some mistrust still remains between the nations, “the treaty now provides a base for confidence-building measures that was not there before” (Garrett 1985), allowing both Chile and Argentina to move forward.

In summary, the land dispute between Bolivia and Chile has been problematic since the War of the Pacific. This type of long-standing, largely nonviolent dispute is

common in Latin America due to long-term effects of British decolonization, however, the Chile-Bolivia case is unique in that it still remains a prominent issue 115 years after the peace treaty was signed.

### ***The Political Environment in Bolivia***

Evo Morales has been the president of Bolivia since 2006, when he was elected with an overall majority of 54%, as the first indigenous president. As discussed earlier, he represents the political party MAS, *Movimiento al Socialismo*, or the *Movement towards Socialism*. During this time period, Bolivia operated under an electoral system known as “parliamentarized presidentialism”. In this system, Bolivian presidents (unless they could muster an absolute majority of the popular vote, as only Evo Morales did in December 2005) were elected through multiparty legislative coalitions” (Centellas 2009). Meaning that the National Congress selected a president “from among the top two runners-up” (Centellas 2009).

In 2009, Bolivia approved a new constitution that was drafted under the government of Evo Morales. While the governmental structure of a “presidential system with a bicameral legislature” remained the same, the new constitution provided many other structural changes. For example, the structure of the electoral system was changed. Unlike before, the governmental representatives are elected directly by the people, and if no candidate received 50% of the popular vote, there is a second round of votes between the top two candidates, however the President can be elected if he wins “the first round with 40% of the vote [and] provided that they have at least a ten point lead over the nearest rival” (Alpert, Centellas, Singer 2010). With this amendment also came term

limits, allowing the president to be consecutively re-elected one time, however the election in December 2009 essentially started with a clean slate. This means that although it was technically Evo's second term as president, under the 2009 Constitution it would be considered his first term, and thus he was available for re-election in 2015.

A key addition to the new constitution is chapter four, "Reivindicación Marítima" (Maritime Recognition). Article 267 states:

El Estado boliviano declara su derecho irrenunciable e imprescriptible sobre el territorio que le dé acceso al océano Pacífico y su espacio marítimo. La solución efectiva al diferendo marítimo a través de medios pacíficos y el ejercicio pleno de la soberanía sobre dicho territorio constituyen objetivos permanentes e irrenunciables del Estado Boliviano.

*(The state of Bolivia declares its indispensable and irreversible right over the territories that give it access to the Pacific Ocean and its maritime space. The effective solution to the maritime problem is to be carried out by peaceful means and the exercise of sovereignty over said territory, constitutes permanent objectives and indispensable ones of the Bolivian State.)*

It is clear that Evo Morales is not only utilizing the issue of the sea as a campaign tool, but he even included it in his new constitution so as to make it a more prominent issue.

"Bolivia is a paradigmatic example of the role of geography in the construction of a collective identity... The maritime claim, the quest to regain a coastline, structures Bolivians' national imagination and provides a basis for nation-building" (Laetitia 2013).

Through the addition of this section, Evo and the government of Bolivia are appealing to the rhetoric of the people and the national identity of what it means to be “Bolivian.”

Evo was elected President in the election of 2009 that followed the release of the Constitution, and he was reelected again in 2014. In 2016, Bolivia held a referendum to vote whether or not to amend the constitution to allow Morales to run for a fourth presidential term. Despite the country voting against Morales, he is now attempting to defy the referendum and run again for presidency in 2019. Morales appealed to the judges that he appointed to reverse the results of the referendum citing that it is a “fundamental human right” to be able to run for election. His judges reversed the referendum, and Morales will be allowed to run again in 2019, contradicting the laws of the constitution that he himself put into place (Toro 2019).

In order to understand the key differences between Evo Morales as the president of Bolivia and his Chilean counterparts, it is essential to understand the type of leader that Evo is. Evo symbolizes what it means to be a contemporary populist leader in Latin America. While populism is extremely hard to define, it can be understood as “a set of ideas about how politics should function... [It] is a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people” (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013). Evo has introduced policies that promote inclusion of the poor, a stronger educational system, and even improvement of old-age pensions and disability, all the while, (possibly unintentionally) excluding certain social groups, such as the wealthy in Santa Cruz (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013). “Radical democracy is the type of political order that best represents

the aspiration of contemporary populist leaders in Latin America” (de la Torre 2010). We see this type of ‘radical democracy’ in the new constitution of 2009 which promoted new and direct methods of political participation. The final populist phenomenon that Evo exemplifies is called “symbolic dimension,” meaning that the populist leaders create a boundary between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ - the characteristics of ‘the elite’ are excluded from the symbolic definitions of ‘the people’. Evo embodies this through his dress and actions which mirrors that of “ordinary people,” and by “developing an anti-elitist discourse” (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013).

In summary, Evo Morales, the representation of a contemporary “Latin American populist”, has sculpted Bolivian politics since he entered the scene in the early 2000s. He has reigned as President of *The Plurinational State of Bolivia* for 14 years, and with the upcoming election he will try extend his sovereignty for 5 more years.

### ***The Political Environment in Chile***

The current political environment in Chile is a direct consequence of the long-time reign of the conservative dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet who was voted out of office only 29 years ago, and was replaced by the center-left coalition that reestablished democracy (Forero 2009). Pinochet implemented the current constitution in 1980, which has since been amended. The most famous amendment is the implementation of the binomial system in the Senate. “Under the system, each coalition can present two candidates for the two Senate and two lower-chamber seats apportioned to each chamber’s electoral districts. Only if the leading coalition ticket outpolls the second-place coalition by a margin of more than 2-to-1 does the winning coalition gain both seats”

(ThisisChile, Government and state of Chile). The binomial system is unique to Chile, as it is designed to promote bipartisanship, and it “increases incentives for coalition formation and maintenance” (Siavelis 1997).

The country operates as a “democratic state with a presidential republican system.” The president, however, is limited to only one, four-year term. The president can be re-elected, but the constitution does not allow consecutive terms. Michelle Bachelet who represents the Socialist Party of Chile, was President from 2006-2010 and again in 2014-2018. Although her ideals are more aligned with the leftist ideals of Bolivia, she agreed to open dialog with Bolivia, yet she never wavered from the Chilean viewpoint that the Treaty of 1904 was impossible to change, and that the sea did not belong to Bolivia (Laetitia 2013).

On the opposite side of the political spectrum is the current Chilean President, Sebastian Piñera who represents the right-wing “Chile Vamos” coalition. When he was first elected in 2010, Piñera was the first elected conservative president since the dictatorship of Pinochet. He is one of the wealthiest business men in Chile, and as such, he promised to “turn his business acumen to the country’s economic growth” (BBC News, Profile: Chile’s President Sebastian Piñera). Not only does Piñera characterize opposing political viewpoints of the leftist ideals of both Bachelet and Evo, he also embodies the exact opposite personality and leadership characteristics of Evo.

### *Comparing the State Powers*

Both Bolivia and Chile run democratic-republic structured governments. Although some of the details may differ, this is the general structure of the governments within modern day Latin America. (White 1999).

Chile is a much stronger country in basic terms of international and domestic power. Chile has consistently had a higher GDP, larger population, lower poverty rates, higher human development index (which is a measure of how developed the country is), and greater military expenditure. In 2017, Chile's GDP was \$277.076 billion (USD), their population was 18,054,726, the poverty ratio was 8.6% of the population at or below the poverty line, human development index of .843, and military expenditure in of \$5,135,493,827 (USD) or 1.91% of GDP. Bolivia's GDP was \$37.509 billion (USD), their population was 11,051,600, the poverty ratio was 39.5% of the population at or below the poverty line, human development index of .693, and military expenditure of \$656,750,459 (USD) or 1.76% of GDP. Chile not only has more "man-power" in terms of population, but they also have a significantly higher GDP which means they have more purchasing power than Bolivia. Chile can "afford" to ignore the demands from Bolivia because their economy is not being damaged by the loss of the Litoral, as Bolivia's is. In terms of military expenditure, Chile spends almost eight times the amount of Bolivia, implying that Bolivia does not have the resources to even consider a war against Chile (Worldbank).

### *The Importance of the “Mar”*

“Since the War of the Pacific... governments, social movements, and political groups have all relied on this sense of collective injury to build resource nationalist frames. The lack of seacoast is reinforced in the social imagery every year on the Day of the Sea” (Kohl and Farthing 2012). The Day of the Sea is celebrated annually on March 23, which commemorates the first battle of the War of the Pacific, and honors the war hero Eduardo Abaroa who was courageously killed in this battle as he refused to backdown against the Chilean forces.

The holiday not only commemorates the loss of the sea, but it is also serves as a reminder to the public they cannot and will not stop fighting for their sea. Some of the celebrations include: offering flowers to the statue of Eduardo Abaroa, the raising of flags, lighting the votive flames, a song to Abaroa, a moment of silence accompanied by a 21 gun salute, singing of the “Anthem of the Sea,” (which lists cities that Bolivia hopes to regain), a message from the president, and finally a military march towards the ocean. (Alanoca 2018). The purpose of the parades and speeches is to remind the public that “It is the duty of all Bolivians to claim the right to the sea” (Kohl and Farthing 2012). The Day of the Sea celebrations are celebrated in every major city in Bolivia, as it is a national issue that effects every Bolivian.

In 2014, the Bolivian government published *El Libro del Mar* (The Book of the Sea). The book discusses the history of the loss of the Littoral, the Chilean attempts at negotiating sovereign access to the sea, Bolivia’s claim in the international court, and the consequences of being landlocked. The government distributed the book and made it a

required read in all primary and secondary schools (Bolivia pone el *Libro del Mar* como lectura obligatoria en colegios).

*El Libro del Mar* outlines the history of the dispute, but most importantly it gives several arguments as to why Bolivia is suffering as a consequence of being landlocked. Bolivia lost access to several profitable natural resources including: guano, saltpeter, silver, copper (which is the backbone of the Chilean economy), lithium, and other maritime resources. There is also an excessive cost imposed by extra transportation to and from the Chilean and Peruvian ports, not to mention extra fees for inspection, services, and storing. Along with other economic limitations placed on Bolivia such as income level, limitations on foreign investments, and limitations on continuous development. The book states that “Most landlocked states are among the poorest countries of their regions... In 2010, for instance, Coastal States had an average GDP per capita of 66% higher compared to Landlocked States” (El Libro del Mar, 89). It also claims that “landlocked states receive a minuscule percentage of foreign investment.” And finally, Bolivia’s human development index has been increasing due to social improvements, but the lack of access to the sea has limited its economic growth, and therefore hindered its HDI from reaching its full potential.

Bolivia even maintains a navy with the mission of “Employing navy power for security and defense, administration and protection for the maritime interests, river, lakes, and the marine merchant” (Miranda 2018). Many scholars view the Bolivian Navy as a symbol for never giving up their quest for access of the sea.

### *Obligation to Negotiate Access to the Pacific Ocean (Bolivia v. Chile)*

There were many internal and external factors that culminated in Bolivia's official institute of proceedings against Chile in 2013. One of the first external influences was in 2008 when Peru filed against Chile in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding their maritime borders in the Pacific. "Bolivia interpreted this as a threat because the decision of the court could legally reinforce its loss of the sea," this led Evo to initially contact the Hague as a reminder that Bolivia must be considered in any agreement between Peru and Chile (Laetitia 2013). With this, it is important to understand that "Bolivia's international identity is directly linked to its national identity, and that nationalism is reactivated in accordance with political contexts" (Laetitia 2013).

In 2010, Evo faced his largest political crisis which resulted in mass demonstrations all over the country, and it forced the government to reinstate state subsidies of gasoline, (a common theme in the history of Bolivia). Also in 2010, one of the largest national trade unions in Bolivia launched a massive strike against the government as a form of demand for the increase in minimum wage.

The combination of Peru putting pressure on Bolivia from the outside and the internal turmoil that had forced earlier presidents in similar situations to resign, Evo was forced to refocus the attention of his people and ease the political tension. "The campaign to recover the coastline was undoubtedly the most fertile means for winning back the popular support... It put Bolivia's national interest back at the center of political debate by focusing on the shared desire to reclaim access to the sea" (Laetitia 2013). As a strategic response to the political crisis that arose during 2010, Evo responded on March 23, 2011 at the *Dia del Mar* celebrations when he announced his intent to "appeal to

international organizations and tribunals to regain its maritime sovereignty” (Laetitia 2013). In April 2011, Evo created the Strategic Unit for Maritime Demands (*Dirección Estratégica de Rein vindicación Marítima*- DIREMAR), who’s primary goal was to “coordinate actions to achieve access to the sea for Bolivia in national and international forums” (Kohl and Farthing 2012).

Two years later, on April 23, 2013 Evo Morales made a statement to NPR’s South American correspondent, Lourdes Garcia-Navarro stating that “Bolivia has never shut itself off from dialogue with Chile. Chile, on the other hand, has been contrary and obstructive,” and another Bolivian official said “Bolivia’s hand has been forced, and it has no choice by to take its case to the international court” (Garcia-Navarro 2013).

Finally, on April 24, 2013, Bolivia officially filed a case with the International Court of Justice under the terms that “Chile [has the] obligation to negotiate in good faith and effectively with Bolivia in order to reach an agreement granting Bolivia a fully sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean” (International Court of Justice, Press Release, 04/24/2013). The case took over five years to deliberate, but on October 1, 2018 the Hague voted that Chile does not have the obligation to negotiate access to the sea with Bolivia (Redacción, BBC News Mundo, 10/01/2018).

Bolivia filed with the ICJ in 2013 with three contentions against Chile, “(1) Chile has an obligation to negotiate an agreement granting Bolivia sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean; (2) Chile breached that obligation, and therefore (3) Chile must perform this obligation promptly, and in good faith” (Kleiman 2016). Although Chile tried to argue that the ICJ does not have the jurisdiction over the Antofagasta dispute due to the fact that the 1904 Peace Treaty was the governing body of this dispute, the ICJ objected

this notion on the preface that “the subject matter of the dispute was whether Chile is obligated to negotiate Bolivia’s access to the Pacific, and in the case there is an obligation, whether it is breached” (Kleiman 2016). The implications of the court ruling in favor of either country expands far beyond the scope of just this dispute, it can have effects on international precedents and the strength of the ICJ.

Although the discussion of whether or not Chile has the obligation to negotiate with Bolivia has technically ended with the court’s decision, I believe Bolivian politicians will continue to use the land dispute as a political strategy. Additionally, the implications of this ruling will reach far beyond the scope of Chile and Bolivia. “One problem that could arise from this holding is that it could devalue the words and actions of governmental authorities” (Kleiman 2016). The economic implications are not detrimental for either country because the agreements that are already in place will remain, but it could mitigate further economic development in Bolivia as they claim to be significantly hindered by their lack of littoral.

As this lengthy land dispute reached another critical deciding point, it is important to analyze how Chile and Bolivia have utilized the Antofagasta region as a method of gaining public approval or diverting attention away from a different issue. While Chile does not necessarily utilize the dispute as a political tool, it has often responded to accusations by the Bolivian government causing the dispute to be a topic of conversation. On the other hand, while Bolivia might have a legitimate economic concern for engaging in the land dispute, (just as any other state who engages in diversionary politics has legitimate concerns), it does not diminish the fact that the dispute is also utilized as a political tactic to garner public approval.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### *Why Twitter*

Twitter is a social media, micro-blog, that allows its users to “tweet,” or post, thoughts, opinions, jokes, pictures, videos, links, polls, and more as long as it is within the 280-character limit. It has been frequently employed as a method of efficient and effect communication over the past decade, and it has continued to grow in popularity. I chose to analyze the Twitter feeds of both politicians and newspapers for various reasons. Twitter is a direct reflection of one’s thoughts and opinions, and is much less formal than a scheduled press-conference. Politicians often use Twitter to inform their followers of current events, and express their thoughts and opinions. Along with informing their followers about current events, Newspapers also utilize twitter as a form of publicity to encourage followers to access their articles through a direct link and short description.

The growth of the internet and social networking sites have grown to be influential both in communication and in perception. Yonghwan Kim writes that “Social network sites (e.g. Facebook and MySpace) have been used by campaign managers and ordinary citizens both as sources of information and as tools to broaden their campaign and viewpoints” (Kim 2011). Since 2011, MySpace is no longer relevant, but has been replaced by others such as Instagram and Twitter. Social networking sites are not only useful in providing information, but also as a means of expressing opinions and receiving opposing viewpoints. “Twitter is both a social network and a broadcast medium. It is

certainly used by news organizations, politicians, celebrities, and corporations to broadcast messages, but it is also used by normal people engaging in activities” (Steinert, 89). Specifically, in political science it has been used to research conflict dynamics and public opinion (72). I used twitter to analyze the conflict dynamics regarding the land dispute between Chile and Bolivia and compare it to the public opinion of presidential approval.

As a contemporary Latin American Populist, Evo is more prone to using various outlets in order to communicate with his people. “Populists use multiple channels of political communication to transmit their messages and connect with their publics. In contemporary societies, where all politics is mediatized at some level, it is inevitable that populist figures will use the media... [some] focus on forms of direct (e.g., grassroots, community engagement) political communication, through which populists connect, construct, and reconstruct their publics” (Block and Negrine 2017). The Twitter platform allows for direct communication and “personal” connection between Evo and his followers. On a fundamental level, Evo as a populist uses Twitter as a method of mass and direct interaction to maintain his “closeness” with his people.

### ***Scraping the Tweets***

According to the *Techopedia*, web scraping “is a term for various methods used to collect information from across the internet... [it] is essentially a form of data mining”. So, in order to get the data from Twitter, I had to “scrape” the Tweets to make them useable data.

It is important to note that Twitter has an API limit of only allowing downloadable access to the most recent 3,200 tweets per user. To get around this limitation, I used Twitter's "advanced search" function to search for tweets from a specific user and by restricting the time frame, I was able to access older tweets. I then scraped the old tweets with a Google Chrome plug-in, DataMiner, which allowed me to use a public recipe to scrape and then convert the tweets into an Excel file.

I conducted a content analysis of Twitter feeds from Chilean and Bolivian newspapers, and major political figures from both countries. From Chile, I utilized the twitter feeds of Michele Bachelet and Sebastian Piñera, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs since 2014 (because prior ministers do not have Twitter accounts). Heraldo Muñoz (2014-2018) and Roberto Ampuero (current), along with the official Twitter account of the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also used accounts from popular newspapers including *La Tercera* and *El Mercurio*, which are two of the largest national newspapers in Chile. Due to Twitter's API limitations, I chose *El Mercurio* as my primary Chilean media source to scrape beyond the allotted 3,200 tweets. I downloaded *El Mercurio's* tweets dating back to January 2017 through January 2019.

From Bolivia, I analyzed the twitter feeds of Evo Morales and Carlos Mesa, along with the Chancellors of Bolivia since 2017: Fernando Huanacuni Mamani, Diego Pary Rodriguez, and the official account of Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also looked at Bolivian newspapers including Pagina Siete, La Razón, and El Deber. Pagina Siete is a local newspaper from La Paz which primarily focuses on politics and economics from an independent perspective. La Razón is also published in La Paz, but it tends to be pro-government, while El Deber is a regionalist newspaper published in Santa Cruz. Due to

the large volume of tweets from the newspaper accounts, I chose to manually scrape tweets dating from January 2017 until January 2019 for *Pagina Siete*.

For Evo Morales, I downloaded all of his tweets, dating back to April 2016, when he created his account, through January 31, 2019. I also scraped all of Carlos Mesa's tweets from 2014 through 2019, along with all of the tweets from the Chilean and Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs accounts. For the rest of the accounts, the allotted 3,200 tweets per user were sufficient.

### ***Codification***

After scraping the tweets, I cleaned and filtered the data. I then coded all of the tweets based on relevance of discussion about the land dispute. The words I utilized to filter and then ultimately code were: el mar (sear), Bolivia, Chile, la haya (the Hague), Evo Morales, fallo (Verdict), Litoral (how Bolivian's refer to the territory that was ceded by Chile), Piñera, Bacchelete, Antofagasta, Pacífico (Pacific), oceano (ocean), tratado (treaty), conflicto marítimo (maritime conflict), salida (exit), la CIJ (the International Court of Justice), soberanía (sovereignty), la corte (the court), and frontera (border). After filtering the tweets, I read all of the tweets to ensure significance, and coded the significant tweets as 1.

Some examples of tweets that I coded as significant because they discuss the land dispute are as follows:

From @evoespueblo (Evo Morales) on October 20, 2018: “Como hoy, hace 114 años, Chile impuso por la fuerza de las armas el Tratado de 1904, después de invadir en 1879 el puerto boliviano de Antofagasta. La CIJ falló que ese tratado no resolvió la cuestión de

nuestro acceso soberano al mar y que debe resolverse a través del diálogo.” (114 years ago today, Chile imposed the Treaty of 1904 by the force of arms, after they invaded the Bolivian port of Antofagasta in 1879. The ICJ ruled that this treaty did not resolve the question of our sovereign Access to the sea and that it should be resolved through dialogue.) And, on March 23, 2017: “Hoy #Bolivia recuerda 138 años de la primera resistencia a la agresión e invasión de #Chile a nuestro territorio.

#MarParaBolivia” (Today, Bolivia remembers 138 years since the first resistance to the aggression and invasion of Chile to our territory #SeaForBolivia).

From @sebastianpinera (Sebastian Piñera) on October 2, 2018: “Celebramos en Antofagasta histórico y justo triunfo de Chile en La Haya. Agradezco a ex Pdtes su valioso consejo y experiencia. Todos defendimos nuestra soberanía con compromiso y unidad. Esperamos q Bolivia acate fallo y respete Tratado 1904 para abrir las puertas del diálogo.” (We celebrate in Antofagasta a historical and just triumph of Chile in the Hague. I thank former presidents for their valuable advice and experience. We defended our sovereignty with commitment and unity. We hope that Bolivia accepts failure and respects the Treaty of 1904 to open the doors of dialogue). And, on May 10, 2017 “Pte Morales: los límites entre Chile y Bolivia quedaron fijados en Tratado 1904. Chile defenderá siempre su soberanía y no debe nada a Bolivia” (President Morales: the boundaries between Chile and Bolivia were fixed in the Treaty of 1904. Chile will always defend its sovereignty and owes nothing to Bolivia).

An example of an irrelevant tweet is by @mbachelet (Michelle Bachelet): “En Chile, usamos 3.400 millones de bolsas plásticas al año. Muchas terminan contaminando el mar. Cuidar el medio ambiente es tarea de todos.” (In Chile, we use 3.4 million plastic bags a

*year. Many end up polluting the sea. Caring for the environment is everybody's job)*- this tweet would have been initially filtered by the term “sea,” but after reading, it is evident that it does not relate to the land dispute with Bolivia, and therefore it is irrelevant.

All of the tweets were also coded based on month of the “Day of the Sea.” If the tweet was published in the month of March, it was coded 1. Any other month was coded 0. The month of the “Day of the Sea” is useful in analyzing the time frames in which the dispute is most frequently mentioned.

To normalize the data, for each month, the number of relevant tweets were divided by the total number of tweets for that month to get the percentage of relevant tweets per month. The percent of relevant tweets per month per user is completely independent of the “Day of the Sea” variable.

### ***Methodology***

The next step was to compare the Twitter data with presidential approval over time. The presidential popularity data for Chile and Bolivia comes from aggregate monthly polling data from the Executive Approval Project's Database. The twitter data and the popularity ratings were reorganized into panel data format, so that each user's percent of relevant tweets per month had corresponding popularity data for both Chile and Bolivia during that month.

Two types of linear regressions were run to determine if the percent of relevant tweets is correlated to the presidential approval rating, and therefore can lead to a conclusion as to whether or not the land dispute is utilized as a political tool to boost public approval ratings.

First, a bivariate linear regression was run correlating the percent of relevant tweets to the presidential approval rating. For these manipulations, the dependent variable was the percent of relevant tweets, and the independent variable was the presidential approval rating. For example, I am trying to determine if public approval is down at a certain time period, does a politician increase tweets about the land dispute as an attempt to divert attention away from his internal “failures” and therefore, improve his rating. This was done for the Twitter accounts for both countries. The Chilean accounts were correlated to both the Chilean approval rating, and then the Bolivian approval rating to determine if either had an effect on the frequency of tweets about the land dispute; the same was done for the Bolivian accounts.

Next, another bivariate linear regression was run to correlate the percent of relevant tweets to the month of the “Day of the Sea.” In this case, the independent variable was the month of March, in order to determine if the frequency of tweets regarding the land dispute had any correlation to the month in which Bolivian’s celebrated the history of their sea. This was done for both countries to determine if a Bolivian holiday has any effect on Chilean coverage of the dispute, meaning that it is effects more than just Bolivia itself.

Finally, a multivariate linear regression for Bolivia was run to determine if the approval rating of the Bolivian president during the month of the “Day of the Sea” had any effect on the frequency of tweets about the land dispute. The percent of relevant tweets was still the dependent variable, but now the two independent variables were the presidential approval rating and the month of the “Day of the Sea.” With this correlation,

I was trying to determine if Evo's approval rating, conditioned specifically during the month of March, had any correlation to the amount of tweets regarding the dispute.

All of the linear regressions were performed using *Stata* software (statistical software for data science), which were run using the *xtregar* command. The *xtregar* command "fits cross-section time-series regression models when the disturbance term is first-order autoregressive" (stata.com), which is also known as an AR(1) error. Meaning that all of the linear regressions were performed with the AR(1) correction, which weighs each variable so that the "error term" which is the time series bias, does not correlate over time.

What this means is that, the AR1 correction adjusts for the bias in a time series that yesterday's actions are correlated, via time, to today's actions. The correction removes the autocorrelation for one month back, so that over time, the correlations are unique and are not subject to the time series bias. For instance, if November is the month being tested, all of the correlations with October are removed to produce unique observations for the month of November that were not affected by the time series bias. All linear regressions have the assumption of independent errors, meaning that there should be no autocorrelation in the data. This is especially important for a time series, because if the data is not corrected (i.e. by the AR(1) correction), the consecutive errors will become dependent on each other and skew the data based on the lack of independence.

## CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

### *A side-by-side Comparison*

Overall, the Bolivian elites tweeted about the land dispute more frequently than the Chilean elites. On average, all of the Chilean accounts only tweeted about the land dispute 2% of the time between March 2009 and December 2018. Comparatively, on average, 7% of the tweets from the Bolivian accounts between September 2012 and January 2019 were regarding the land dispute. Therefore, during this period, the Bolivian accounts tweeted about the land dispute, on average about 350% more than the Chileans. I found this by taking the overall average of the percentage of relevant tweets from the Chilean accounts and from the Bolivian accounts.

Both the Chilean and Bolivian presidential approval ratings go through a series of peaks and troughs which coincides with the cyclical approval model which states that, “post-election honeymoon highs gradually deteriorate before recovering slightly at the end of the term” (Carlin, Hartlyn, Hellwig, Love, Martínez-Gallardo and Singer 2018, 1). *Figure 1* compares the Bolivian and Chilean presidential approval ratings, and it also marks relevant election time periods to show the cyclical model. Chilean approval rating peaked at 77 and went as low as 21 creating a range of 56 percentage points with the average rating at 35, and a standard deviation of 11.5. Bolivian approval rating peaked at 71 and it bottomed-out at 29, which created a range of 41 percentage points with an average of 49 and standard deviation of 10.3.

The Chilean approval rating varies more widely from the mean than does Bolivia's, which can be explained by the swings that election time periods create in Chile. In 2010, 2014, and 2018 Chile elected a new president. Each presidency is marked by "honeymoon highs" at the beginning of the term, followed by a gradual decline over the next four years, and then a slight increase as the president ends his term and reminds the citizens of what he/she has done for the country throughout his reign by fulfilling his campaign promises.

Evo's approval rating is also marked by these "honeymoon highs," when he was reelected in 2009 and 2014. They are not as drastic of upswings and downswings as we see in Chile because it is not a new presidential candidate, instead Evo is campaigning for reelection.

Noting the highs and lows and the differences between countries helps us to better understand the dynamic in each country. Overall, it seems Bolivia is generally more satisfied with their leadership possibly due to the stability that Evo created under the *Movimiento al Socialismo*. On the other hand, it seems that Chile is more critical of their government, possibly because they are still recovering from the mistrust that the dictatorship caused less than thirty years ago. Additionally, looking at the approval ratings over time for each country gives a basis for how much change is to be expected. For example, Evo's lowest approval ratings occurred in November 2016, after he lost the referendum to run for his fourth consecutive term. In March of the following year is when we see the largest amounts of tweets dedicated to the land dispute.

Figure 1:

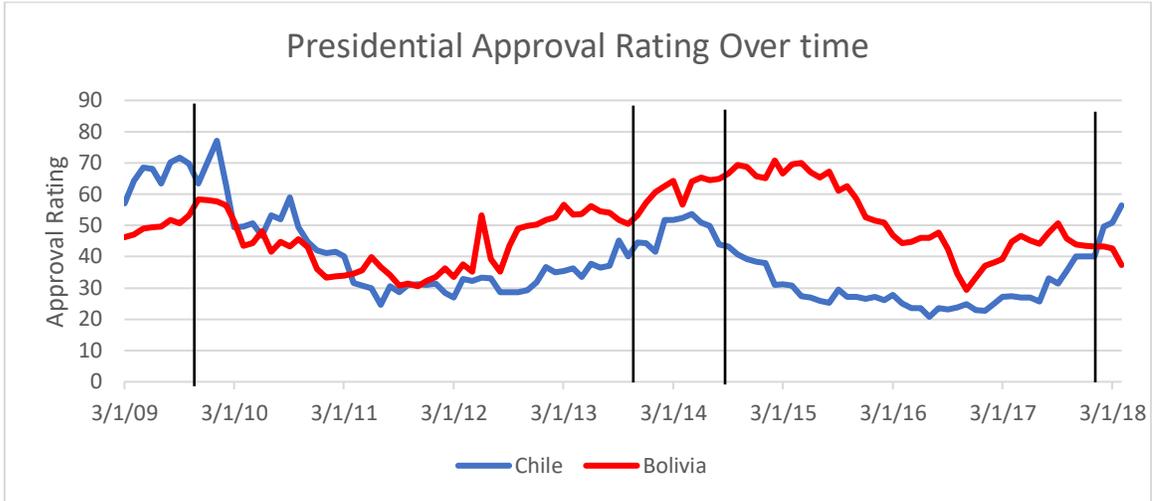


Figure 2:

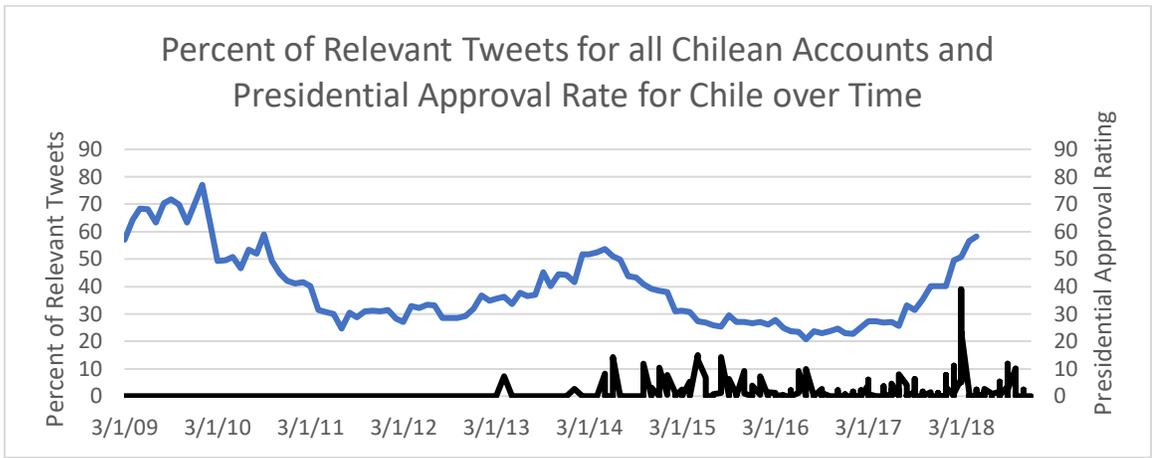
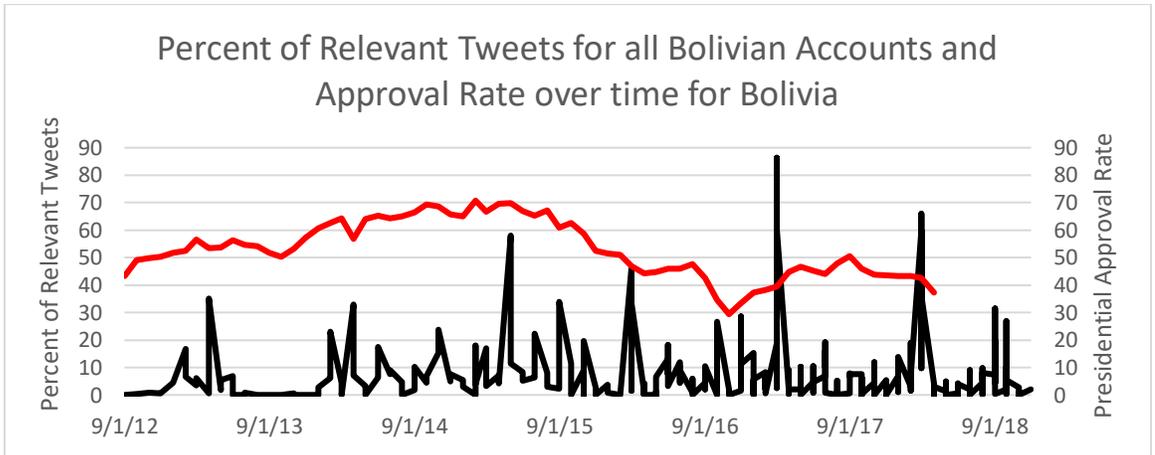


Figure 3:



*Figure 2* focuses on Chile, and despite the cycle of high and low rates of approval which coincide with Presidential elections, there seems to be almost no correlation between the frequency of tweets about the land dispute and the presidential approval rating. It is applicable to notice that the peaks of relevant tweets occurred a certain time frames, whether it was an important date for the court case, the Bolivian “Day of the Sea”, and the Chilean “Navy Day.”

A similar analysis can be given for *Figure 3* for Bolivia. It appears that minor increases in approval rating may coincide with an increase of tweets about the land dispute, but what is more relevant to notice is that the percentage of tweets peak, again, around specific dates, either for the court case and the Bolivian “Day of the Sea.”

### *The Bolivian Perspective*

*Figure 4* explicitly shows the time periods (in red) that coincided with press releases from the International Court of Justice. In April 2013, Bolivia officially filed against Chile, which caused the amount of tweets about the land dispute to almost double from the month before. The next major increase in tweets is in May 2015 when the Courts held public hearings “on the Preliminary Objection raised by the Republic of Chile,” and the amount of tweets tripled that of the two preceding months.

The largest amount of tweets that Bolivians have dedicated to discussing the land dispute was in March 2017. This date did not directly coincide with an ICJ press release, however, it was an important date for Bolivia within the trial because it is when Bolivia submitted a written reply to Chile in the court. The delivery of the letter to the court in the Hague became part of the celebration of “Día del Mar,” the Bolivians in La Paz held

an indigenous ceremony in front of the government palace, and as this ceremony was going on, there was a screen which projected the delivering by Bolivian delegates of their reply to the court. This special ceremony coincided shortly after Evo's lowest approval ratings, and his lowest approval ratings in the month of March. The trend in previous years was for Evo's approval ratings to temporarily increase in March, and then drop back down in April. In 2017, however, Evo was trying to recover from his lowest ever approval ratings, and he utilized the "Day of the Sea" celebrations to highlight a crucial moment of the court case. The following months showed a steady incline in Evo's approval ratings.

In March of 2018, the court again conducted public hearings, and Bolivians began to tweet considerably more about the land dispute. At this point, Evo's approval ratings had begun to drop back down again, so the key moments of the court case during the month of the "Day of the Sea" culminated in an influx of tweets about the land dispute. In September 2018, the ICJ said they will deliver their judgement on October 1, 2018, therefore the dispute is mentioned in tweets from the Bolivians about 30% of the time during September and October, but then drastically drops off in November when Chile won the court case.

Figure 4: (red dots represent tweets during important case dates of the court case)

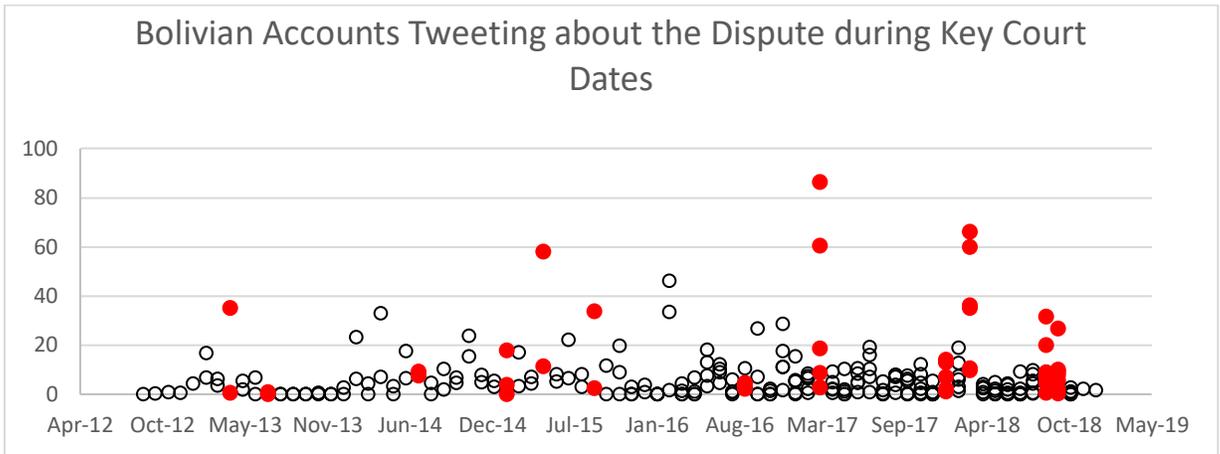
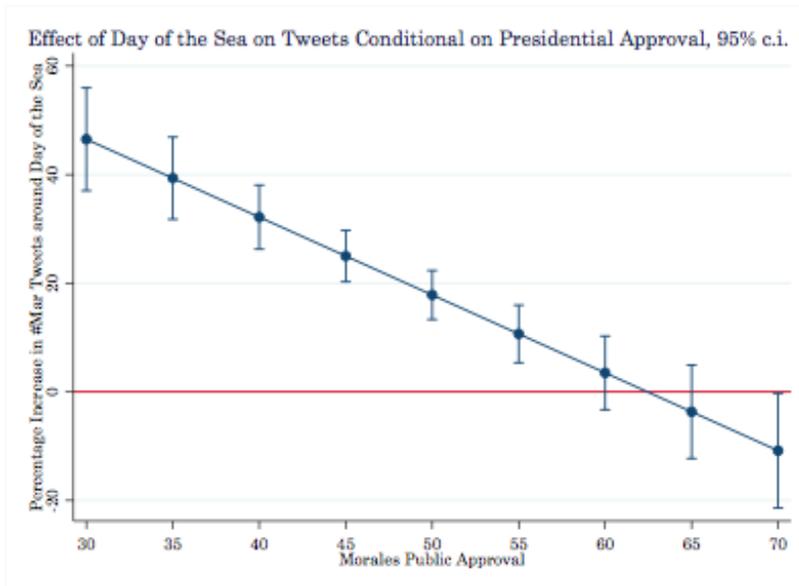


Figure 5:



The panel regression analysis for Bolivian Twitter feeds provide more accurate information regarding political usage of the tweets, and it also relates to the timing of the tweets as previously discussed. <sup>1</sup> The regression shows that the presidential approval rating for neither Chile nor Bolivia are statistically significant regarding the timing of relevant tweets. In other words, the percent of relevant tweets does not have any correlation to the presidential approval data. Therefore, the approval rating for both countries is irrelevant in regards to when Bolivians chose to tweet about the sea.

What is important, however, is the Bolivian “Day of the Sea.” In the month of March, which is when the Bolivians celebrate the holiday, the percent of tweets that talk about the ocean or the land dispute increases by about 20 percentage points. This is statistically significant, and shows that Bolivians are especially acknowledging their loss of the “Litoral” during this time period. One reasoning for the increase of tweets about the land dispute during the month of March is simply the fact that it is a month of commemoration, and therefore requires special attention to the dispute, just as in the United States, our media coverage of the War on Terror increases during the month of September.

Although the presidential approval rating alone is not, on average, statistically correlated showing increasing volume of tweets about the land dispute for Bolivia, however, the “Day of the Sea” variable is a moderating factor. *Figure 5* shows that when Evo’s approval rating is low, and it is the month of the “Day of the Sea,” he tweets about the “mar” more frequently than when he has high approval rating. The drastic increase in tweeting about the sea only during the month of March and when Evo has low approval

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Figure B, for summary of Regression Statistics

rating directly relates to the “diversionary use of force” theory which states that often times a trigger, or an excuse, is needed to cause the “rally-round-the-flag” effect. In this case, the “day of the sea” is utilized as the trigger which causes the frequency of tweets about the sea to increase, and therefore produces a rally effect on the population, and boosts presidential approval rating.

*Figure 4 and 5* are directly related because both show that when Evo has abnormally low approval ratings in the month of March, the Bolivian accounts tweet even more about the land dispute (when compared to a month of March in which Evo has higher approval ratings). Evo’s lowest points of approval during the month of March in which a key event occurred for the trial all combined to make an effective rally setting for Bolivia.

### ***Comparing Bolivia Internationally***

I also looked at how often Evo Morales tweets about other international interests so that I could have a basis to see if there is a discernable pattern of bringing up other issues. About 12.4% of all of Evo’s tweets contained the terms “EEUU” or “Estados Unidos,” but only about 3.4% of his tweets mentioned both “EEUU” AND “Bolivia.” Evo tweets about what is happening in other countries, but when it comes to mentioning international relations between his country and the United States, it consumes less than 4% of his total tweets. He has also only tweeted about China 43 times, respectively 0.4% of his tweets over the last three years. It is evident that Evo is largely more concerned with international relations with Chile than with other countries because about 6.4% of Evo’s total tweets discussed the land dispute with Chile. Chile “stealing” Bolivia’s sea

can be seen as a sensitive subject for many Bolivians, which is what makes it a hot-topic within the country, and enlarges its capacity to be a trigger for the “rally-round-the-flag” effect.

Another aspect that contributes to the “rally-round-the-flag” effect is the lack of coverage of conflicting opinions about an international dispute because the media only has access to what the government releases. In the case of the land dispute between Chile and Bolivia, *Pagina Siete* tweeted most about the land dispute in March 2017 (3%), when Bolivia delivered their response letter to Chile in the Hague, March 2018 (10%), when the court held public hearings, September 2018 (5%) and October 2018 (6%) when the press releases for the final decision were being released. In total, 2.4% of *Pagina Siete*’s tweets contained the word “Chile,” but only 1.5% of their total tweets (1,234 out of the 82,374 tweets) since January 2017 were relevant regarding the land dispute. They have tweeted about “EEUU” or “Estados Unidos,” 1.77% of the time, and “China” 0.68% (only 564 times). Venezuela, which is a country that has been very prevalent in the media in recent years, only consumes 1.3% of *Pagina Siete*’s tweets. Comparing these four countries from this Bolivian newspaper, “Chile” is tweeted about more frequently than “China,” the “United States,” and “Venezuela.” *Pagina Siete* has lower percentages overall due to their mass volume of tweets, from January 2017 until December 2018 they tweeted 82,374 times, which averages out to be about 3,432 tweets per month.

The fact that Chile has consumed over 2% of this Bolivian newspaper’s tweets, and up to 10% in a given month, is noteworthy in that a portion of their media coverage is being dedicated solely to Chile, which is more than any other country.<sup>2</sup> This can be tied

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<sup>2</sup> Percentage of *Pagina Siete*’s tweets dedicated to other neighboring countries: Argentina= 1%; Brasil=1.2%; Uruguay= 0.25%; Peru= 0.2%; and Paraguay= 0.2%

to the *opinion leadership* explanation for the “rally-round-the-flag” effect in that the media coverage of a “crisis” tends to follow the opinion and coverage of the President.

A bivariate correlation using Evo’s number of relevant tweets per month as the independent variable, and *Pagina Siete*’s number of relevant tweets per month as the dependent variable from December 2016 through November 2018 provides a goodness of fit,  $r = .916$ . This means that as Evo increases coverage of the land dispute, *Pagina Siete* increases coverage as well. This also corresponds to the *opinion leadership* explanation for the rally effect in that Evo’s coverage directly influences the media to dedicate more attention to the land dispute as well. It is even more meaningful because *Pagina Siete* has the reputation of being critical of the government, and because *Pagina Siete* is following Evo’s coverage and opinion regarding the land dispute we can assume that the media is aiding Evo in creating a rally effect to boost his approval ratings at key moments.

An interesting person to analyze for Bolivia is Carlos Mesa. Carlos Mesa was President of Bolivia from 2002-2005 before Evo Morales, he was also chosen to represent Bolivia in the Hague because of his extensive knowledge about the Bolivian sea (Alanoca 2018). It also recently came out that he is planning to run against Evo Morales in the upcoming election (Nova 2018). Only 4% of all of Carlos Mesa’s tweets were with regards to the sea, most of which were propaganda about his book “El Libro del Mar,” which was published and distributed by the Bolivian government, however there was no correlation found between his tweets and presidential approval rating nor were the timing of his tweets necessarily relevant.

A more interesting person to analyze for Bolivia other than Carlos Mesa is Diego Pary who was the Bolivian Ambassador in the Organization of American States, and was

elected as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia in September 2018 (Blanco 2018). He averages about 14% of his tweets which discuss the sea and the land dispute against Chile, which is almost twice as much as every other Bolivian account, except the official Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Relations account, which averages about 12% of their tweets regarding the land dispute. Pary's clear focus, especially around the decision of the Hague, is about Bolivian relations with Chile and access to the sea. As the Minister of Bolivian Foreign Affairs, the fact that he is dedicating a good portion of his tweets to discussing Chile indicates that Chile is the main concern of the ministry, which is also demonstrated by the large amount of tweets that the official account tweets.

### *The Chilean Perspective*

The Chilean analysis corresponds almost directly to my hypothesis that the land dispute is seemingly irrelevant to Chilean elites. *Figure 1* shows almost no relationship between the percent of relevant tweets about the land dispute and the presidential approval rating. However, the panel regression for all Chilean accounts shows that there is a relationship between the Bolivian "Day of the Sea" and the frequency of which Chilean accounts tweet about the sea. Chilean accounts tweeted about 5 percentage points more during the month of March about the land dispute than they did the rest of the year. March is the Bolivian celebration of "day of the sea," so why then, does Chile care?

During March, Bolivian elites are trying very hard to make the issue of the sea a more known and relevant phenomenon. In return, Chilean elites respond to this influx of tweets with their own increase of tweets about the sea as a form of reaction, however

Chileans tweet approximately 20% less about the land dispute than Bolivians do during the month of March

There is also a slight increase in tweets from the Chilean accounts when the Bolivian approval rates increase. There is a statistically significant correlation between an increase in Chileans tweeting about the sea and an upsurge in the approval rating of Evo Morales in Bolivia. Chileans tweet about 1% more regarding the sea and the land dispute when Evo has higher approval ratings. I do not have an explanation for this increase of coverage.

Sebastian Piñera, the Chilean President from 2010 until 2014 and again in 2018, also tweets significantly more about the land dispute around the court case.<sup>3</sup> Actually, the first time Piñera mentioned Bolivia or the land dispute was in April 2013, when Bolivia filed against Chile. Piñera held power during the onset of the court case, and then again at the end of the court case when the decision was presented. Piñera's largest amount of tweets regarding the land dispute, 15%, occurred in May 2015 when he was not in the Presidential role, but corresponded to the public hearings being presented in the Hague. Only about 1.5% of Piñera's total tweets were about the land dispute, which is four times less than that of Evo Morales'. Additionally, only 1.1% of Piñera's tweets contained the term, "Bolivia," which is considerably less than 6% of Evo's tweets containing "Chile."

Michelle Bachelet was the President of Chile from 2014-2018, unlike Piñera, she does not have a very active Twitter presence. She has only tweeted a total of 620 times since she created her account 2015. Bachelet has also only mentioned the land dispute one time, equating about 0.2% of her tweets. Her one and only tweet about Bolivia or the

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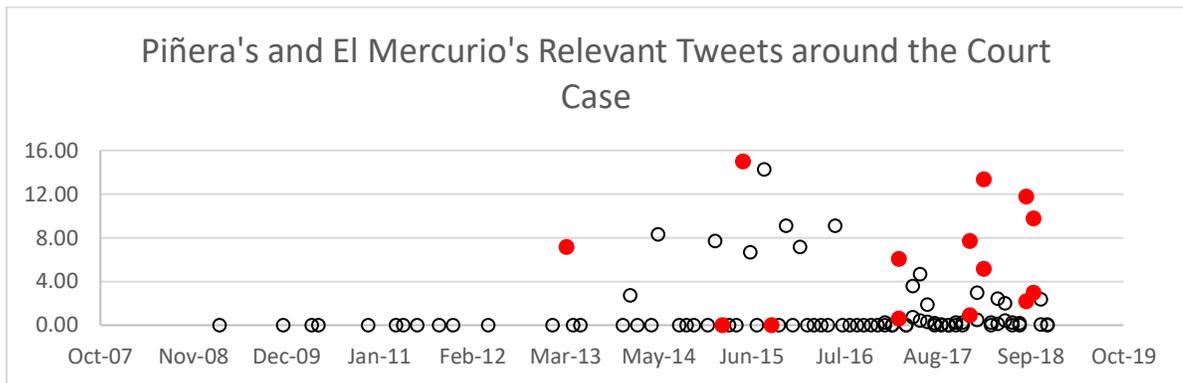
<sup>3</sup> Appendix, *Figure E*, is a graph of Chilean Presidential Approval rating and the tweets from the Presidents

land dispute was published on March 21, 2018, Bolivian “Day of the Sea,” but it occurred outside the realm of her Presidency.

Both Chilean presidents who held power during the time frame of the court case did not tweet a substantial amount until the end of the case. Piñera held power at this time, so his tweets were relevant with regards to communicating with his country, but Bachelet’s single tweet is seemingly irrelevant except that it does occur on Bolivian “Day of the Sea.”

Looking at how frequently Piñera mentions other countries with whom Chile has a relationship with, only 0.52% of Piñera’s tweets contained the terms “EEUU” or “Estados Unidos,” that is only 17 tweets out of his 3,282 tweets that I have scraped. Similarly, Piñera has only tweeted 18 times about “Argentina,” which is about 0.55% of his tweets. The tweets about the United States and about Argentina both account for about 1% fewer tweets than he dedicates to the land dispute, both countries mentioned combined are fewer than Piñera’s tweets about Bolivia, which occur about twice as often as the tweets about Argentina and the United States. In total, Piñera tweets about the land dispute 48 times (1.5% of his tweets), which is not, by any means, a considerable portion of his tweets. But, similar to Evo, Piñera does tweet more about Bolivia than he does other countries.

**Figure 6:**



Both President Piñera and *El Mercurio* have an increase in tweets around important court case dates, as shown in **Figure 6**. Piñera’s first mention of the land dispute was in April 2013 when Bolivia filed against Chile in the Hague. He also has a significant number of tweets that mention the land dispute in May 2015 and August 2015, as discussed above. However, his next big discussions about the land dispute were not until March 2018, which also coincides with the most amount of tweets by *El Mercurio* that discuss the land dispute. 13% of Piñera’s tweets in March 2018 were about the dispute, while 5.2% of *El Mercurio*’s tweets were about the land dispute in that same month. September and October of 2018 also saw an increase of tweets from both accounts about the dispute because that is when the press releases about the final decision from the Hague occurred. In between May 2015 and October 2018, Piñera had a steady amount of tweets that discussed the land dispute. Conversely, *El Mercurio* rarely tweeted about the land dispute except in March, September, and October of 2018.

By comparing the president and a key newspaper for Chile, it becomes evident that unlike in Bolivia, the media is not concerned with what the president has to say about this issue. Piñera is clearly tweeting about the land dispute as things occur in the Hague,

however, unless it's a major event, *El Mercurio* remains largely unconcerned with this dispute.

By analyzing "*El Mercurio's*" tweets that mention other countries that Chile engages in international relations with, we see that Bolivia is mentioned slightly more than some countries, but slightly less than others. For example: "Bolivia" is mentioned 208 times out of 39,535 tweets from the past two years, which is about 0.53% of *El Mercurio's* tweets, but the land dispute is discussed about 0.69% of the time. "EEUU" or "Estados Unidos" is mentioned 134 times or 0.33% of their tweets, and "Perú" consumes only 0.41% of their tweets. "Argentina" and "China" are mentioned 268 times (0.68% of the time) and 271 times (0.69%) respectively. The two foreign countries mentioned most frequently are "Brasil" who is mentioned 0.75% of the time, and "Venezuela" which accounts for 0.79% of *El Mercurio's* tweets.

In summary, the USA and Peru are mentioned less frequently than Bolivia, while on the other hand, Argentina and China are mentioned more than Bolivia but about the same amount as the land dispute, and Brazil and Venezuela are each mentioned about 145% more frequently than Bolivia. For a comparative figure, *El Mercurio* mentions "Chile" in about 8.5% of their tweets, so while all of the foreign countries combined make up less than 5% of their tweets, it can be interpreted that *El Mercurio* doesn't necessarily cover foreign affairs as frequently as it does domestic. In contrast to the Bolivian newspaper- *Pagina Siete*, *El Mercurio* tweets half as frequently as *Pagina Siete* in general, and half as frequently about international affairs.

The ministry of foreign relations account for Chile, on average, tweets about the land dispute 3.5% of the time. When compared to the Bolivian ministry of foreign affairs

official account, which tweets about the land dispute, on average, 12% of the time, the Chilean ministry tweets, on average, about 343% less than the Bolivian ministry. It is evident that the Chilean ministry of foreign affairs is indifferent towards Bolivia who is not their main concern internationally. If you take out March 2018 as an outlier (because it has twice the amount of tweets as any other month), the Chilean ministry of foreign affairs account only tweets about the land dispute, on average, 2.6% of the time. While Chile remains a key topic for the Bolivian ministry of foreign affairs, Chile is largely ambivalent when it comes to their relations with Bolivia, which is fairly obvious considering the how infrequently they discuss the land dispute

In summary, the frequency of tweets from the Chilean Twitter accounts that are most likely to tweet about the land dispute are drastically lower than their Bolivian counterparts. The Chilean elites have an indifferent attitude towards Bolivia, which is evident in the amount of tweets they dedicate to discussing the dispute, which is hardly any. Bolivia, on the other hand, commit a substantial amount of their tweets to discussing the land dispute against Chile.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Before conducting a content analysis of Tweets from various Chilean and Bolivian sources, I hypothesized that while Bolivian politicians use the land dispute as a diversionary tool, the Chileans tend to remain largely unconcerned about it. Essentially, I had two hypotheses about each respective country in order to make a comparison about how each country has handled the seemingly never-ending land dispute, so I will first draw separate conclusion and finally, I will draw a comparative conclusion.

### *Bolivia- Dispute as a Political Tool?*

Does Bolivia use the land dispute against Chile as a political tool to rally the country in support of the president? Primarily, in order to understand how the dispute could be used as a political tool, it is imperative to understand that part of the collective Bolivian identity is inherently related to geography, and that the long term effects of the War of the Pacific and “the lost provinces of Bolivia are at the heart of the collective memory and the coastline is the most significant to them” (Laetitia 2013). Therefore, references to the land dispute can be understand as a direct call to Bolivian nationalism, and can then be analyzed as a political tool. It is also important to note that in 2011, when Evo first established the resurgence of the coastal claim, it came after Evo’s first interaction with Bolivian opposition to the government in the form of strikes and overwhelming public disapproval.

When analyzing just the correlation between the presidential approval rating and the percentage of tweets about the land dispute, there is no significant relationship. However, when the time of the year is factored in, it becomes evident that the land dispute is used as a rally tool for the Bolivian government. For example, during the month of March, the month of the celebrations of the “Day of the Sea”, when Evo has low approval ratings, the percentage of Bolivian tweets regarding the land dispute is significantly increased. If we analyze the use of tweets as a measure of increased communication about the land dispute, and examine the time frame in which the frequency of tweets increases, it becomes apparent that the Day of the Sea and, on a smaller scale- the court case, are being utilized as a trigger point to increase discussion about the conflict with Chile, and in turn, create a rally effect to boost Evo’s popularity rating. For example, the celebrations of the Day of the Sea inadvertently sparks the country’s interest in the sea, Evo then increases his media coverage of the dispute, giving the impression that Evo is fighting more than ever to get their sea back, which causes his approval rating to increase.

The Bolivian accounts follow this pattern for other dates too. As important proceedings, hearings, or deliberations occurred within the Hague regarding the court case between Chile and Bolivia, the percent of relevant tweets about the land dispute drastically increased as well. Chile is also discussed a lot more frequently by the Bolivian accounts than any other country. By appealing to part of the Bolivian identity and invoking a call to nationalism, the land dispute and the disdain against Chile can be seen as a minor crisis that politicians utilize to garner approval, technically known as the “rally-round-the-flag” effect.

The “rally-round-the-flag” effect is also demonstrated by the media coverage of the Bolivian newspaper, *Pagina Siete*, which is consistent with the opinion leadership school of thought as to what causes the rally effect. An increase of Evo’s tweets about the land dispute is directly correlated to an increase in tweets about the land dispute from *Pagina Siete*. Effectively, this means that because Evo and the news outlets are communicating together about the land dispute, it becomes even more saturated in the media, which causes a rally effect because the people are only seeing positive media coverage about Evo’s involvement in the dispute, which is what the people want to see.

In summary, while there is not sufficient statistical evidence to demonstrate a direct correlation between presidential approval and an increase of media coverage surrounding the land dispute for Bolivia, there is evidence to demonstrate that the capacity for the land dispute to be used as a rally tool does exist. Low approval ratings in the month of March directly correlates to an increase of tweets about the land dispute, giving evidence that the land dispute is being used as a method to increase Evo’s approval rating. The resurgence of the land dispute in 2011 and an increase of coverage during the court case can both demonstrate the use of the dispute as a political tool because of the time periods in which they occur.

### ***Chile- ambivalent to Bolivian demands?***

Does Chile really not care about Bolivia’s demands for “their sea” back? I find this to be largely true. With exception to the major dates for the court case, the Chilean twitter accounts remain largely unconcerned with Bolivia and their demands.

The Chilean accounts increase their media coverage about the dispute around two occasions. First, Chileans increase discussion about the land dispute around the Bolivian “day of the sea,” which is a direct response by the Chileans to the large surge of tweets by the Bolivians about their demands during the month of March. Second, coverage is increased during important court case dates, (*El Mercurio* doesn’t tweet about the dispute outside of the court case) which is an expected response to being sued in the Hague, and keeping your population informed.

Comparing media coverage of other countries by Chile, Bolivia is discussed equally to other countries including the United States, China, Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. This means that although Chile and Bolivia have been undergoing an intense court case, Chile doesn’t discuss Bolivia any more than it does other countries.

### ***Comparative Conclusion***

Bolivia addresses the land dispute considerably more than Chile does, 350% more to be exact. The Chilean President and Ministry of Foreign Affairs address the land dispute less than 1/3 of the time of their Bolivian counterparts. There is not sufficient evidence that there is a correlation between the coverage of the land dispute and presidential approval ratings for either country to assume a direct “rally-round-the-flag” effect. The Bolivians do, however, use the dispute more frequently and efficiently, especially compared to the Chileans who do not use the dispute for any political gain.

While my hypothesis regarding Bolivia was not completely correct, it was correct for Chile. For Bolivia, the evidence suggested that the land dispute has been utilized as a rally tool during time periods when presidential approval is low and the environment

within the country is already largely concentrated on the land dispute. For Chile, the dispute is never used as a political tool within the country, largely due to the fact that Chileans simply do not care about the dispute.

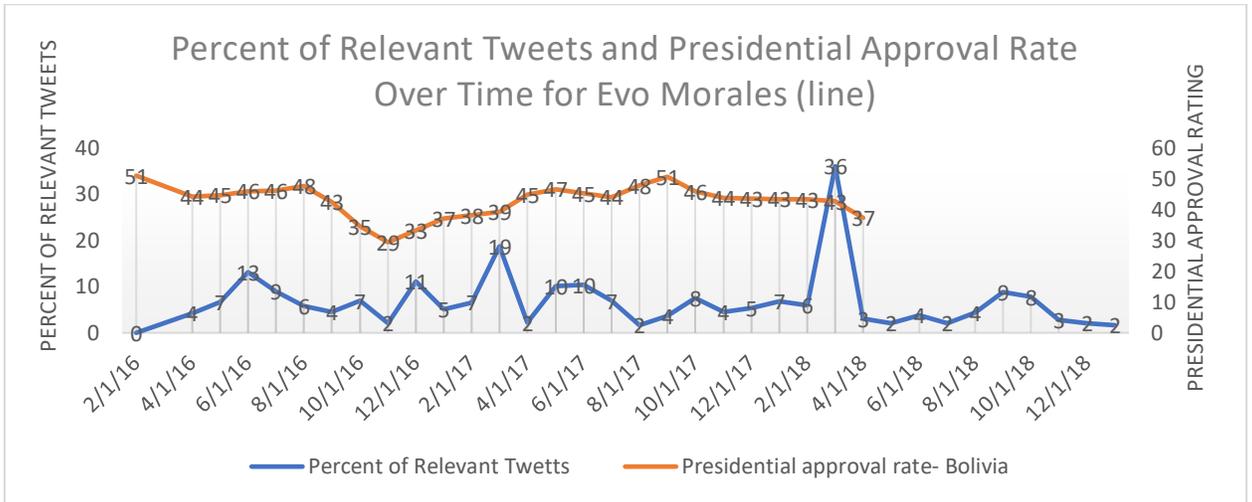
The use of Twitter as data was innovative yet had its downfalls. Twitter now allows for a method of direct communication with the public, which enables it to be analyzed as a direct reflection of the political tactics and goals that the politicians are trying to engage. Because Twitter is so new, it does not allow for a large amount of historical data. For example, I suspect that if Evo Morales had a Twitter account in 2010, the correlation between low approval rating and an increase in tweets regarding the land dispute would have been statistically significant, however the data from Twitter does not allow that.

Moving forward, I believe that the use of Twitter to analyze politicians can be extensively used, especially among a certain class of politicians. For example, the current political environments in the United States, Venezuela, and Mexico all which have hostile environments (some more than others) as caused by their largely populist leaders.

Finally, in my opinion, the Twitter environment is the perfect catalyst for the “rally-round-the-flag” effect due to its potential to reach large masses of the population, and serve as a direct reflection of one’s own personal thoughts and opinions. By analyzing the rally effect in a different mode and region from the typical diversionary literature, I was able to draw unique conclusions with statistical evidence to something that has not been extensively studied before, especially within the Bolivian case. As the use of Twitter and other social media platforms continue to develop, so will the literature of the limitless potential of utilizing it as a political tool.

**APPENDIX:**

**Figure A:**



**Figure B: Regression Statistics for Bolivia**

| percent          | Coef.     | Std. Err. | t    | P>t   | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|------|-------|----------------------|
| day_of_sea       | 19.91374  | 2.491074  | 7.99 | 0     | 15.00099 24.82649    |
| approval_bolivia | 0.0171745 | 0.07538   | 0.23 | 0.82  | -0.1314855 0.1658345 |
| approval_chile   | 0.0092677 | 0.0711097 | 0.13 | 0.896 | -0.1309708 0.1495061 |
| _cons            | 4.676309  | 4.462346  | 1.05 | 0.296 | -4.124068 13.47669   |

4

**Figure C: Regression Statistics for Chile**

| percent          | Coef.      | Std. Err. | t     | P>t   | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|------------------|------------|-----------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| day_of_sea       | 4.666627   | 0.8939744 | 5.22  | 0     | 2.904409 6.428844    |
| approval_bolivia | 0.0701618  | 0.03015   | 2.33  | 0.021 | 0.0107296 0.129594   |
| approval_chile   | -0.0023157 | 0.0253255 | -0.09 | 0.927 | -0.0522378 0.0476063 |
| _cons            | -1.907793  | 1.415621  | -1.35 | 0.179 | -4.698289 0.8827026  |

5

<sup>4</sup> Love, Gregory. Panel Regression with an AR1 Correction. For the Bolivian Twitter feeds.

<sup>5</sup> Love, Gregory. Panel Regression with an AR1 Correction. For the Chilean Twitter feeds.

Figure D:

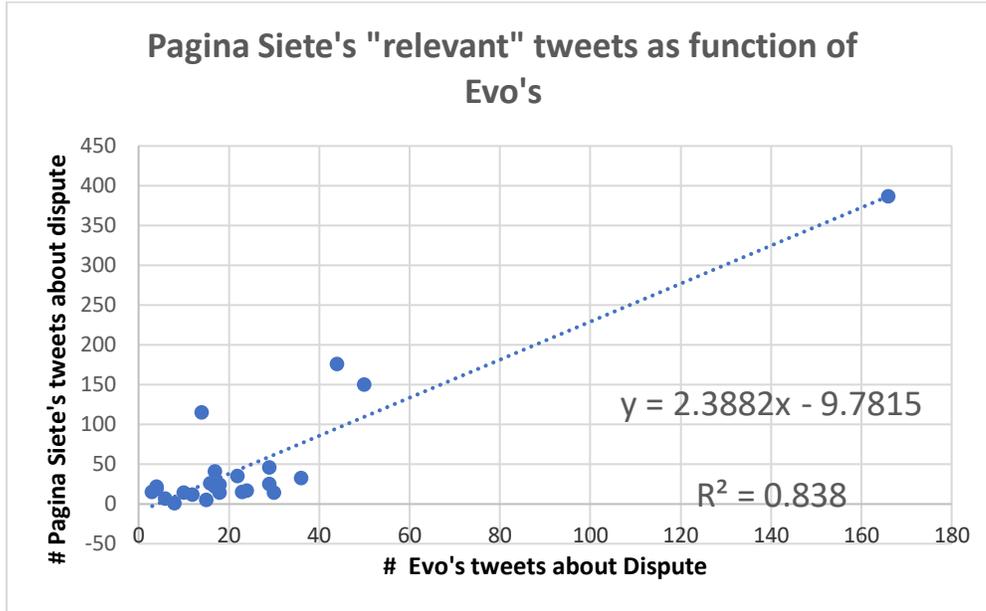
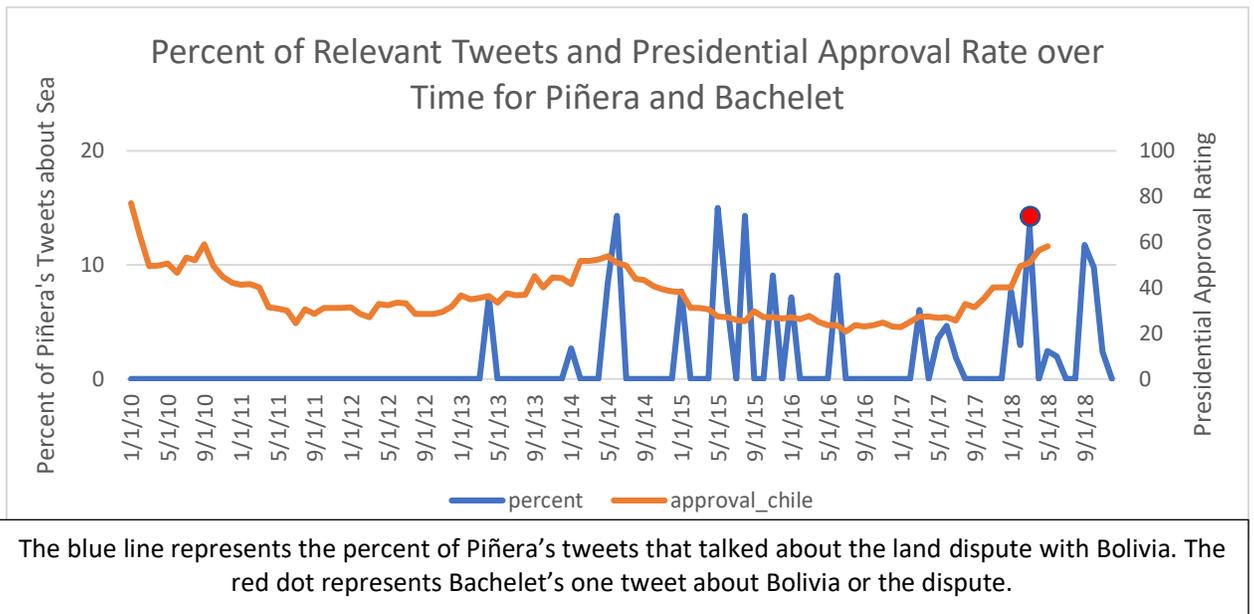


Figure E:



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