

“Si El Norte Fuera El Sur”
Chile’s Response to Immigration In the Context of the New South-South Migration

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“Y las balsas de Miami a La Habana, si el Norte fuera el Sur....sería la misma porquería”

- Ricardo Arjona

Abstract

Intraregional, South-South migration has been present in Latin America for decades, although the role of receptor nation is a new one for modern Chile. Despite its location in the “Global South,” this country of eighteen million has undergone rapid development and transition from an economically stagnant dictatorship to democratic powerhouse of the Southern Cone in less than two decades. Its immigration policy, however, has not evolved apace, and Chile now confronts a very First World problem – increased immigration from its less-developed neighbor, Peru. In this project, I assess Chile’s current migration policy and explore the factors behind official and popular responses to the primarily Peruvian flows. In my analysis, I argue that economic, security, and socio-historic concerns - both unique to Chile and common to the region - have resulted in a generally ineffective migration policy. I specifically examine the role of economic interdependence, export economies, undocumented migrants, border disputes, citizen security, immigrant population visibility, geographic concentration, xenophobia, the legacies of dictatorship, and national identity as factors that have significantly influenced Chile’s response to this phenomenon. Given the region’s steady development and potential for increased emigration *and* immigration flows, Chile’s experience is emblematic of current transformations in the region and the need to develop coherent migration policies therein.

In modern parlance, migration is often considered a problem *from* the developing world, not *of* the developing world. Thus, Latin America – one of the world’s most prominent “sender” regions - is not typically considered a destination for migrants, but rather the locus of the problems they flee: poverty, political oppression, and economic stagnation. While many Latin American nations have not yet recovered from the political and economic catastrophes of the “Lost Decade” of the 1980’s, there are certain notable exceptions. Along with Costa Rica and Uruguay, Chile possesses what some of its neighbors can only dream of - democratic freedoms, political stability, a booming economy, employment prospects, and the respect of First World nations. In fact, Chile has advanced to such a degree that not only does it consider itself to be on the cusp of First World status, but has actually shifted from being a country of emigration to a net recipient of immigrants.

While immigration from less-developed nations to more developed ones is hardly new,

such First World/Third World migration patterns were until recently, unusual in Latin America. Since stark socio-economic contrasts, like those visible at the U.S.-Mexico border, were less common in a region that has been underdeveloped as a whole, past migration flows were about the search for a slightly less meager existence, rather than broad opportunity. Thus, Chile's "new immigration" exemplifies both the increase in South-South migration, as individual countries in the Global South develop, as well as the unique problems of addressing First World migration flows in a developing country. Lessons from this case study are critical, precisely because this phenomenon will only increase with globalization, more effective transportation, and the development of former Third World countries, and it appears that this shift has already begun. According to the World Bank, there are currently 74 million South-South migrants,¹ at least three million of which are in Latin America.² The majority is undocumented, and most have migrated for economic considerations, sending home between \$18 and \$55 billion a year in the form of remittances.³ Only recently, however, have Chileans begun to recognize and address this "new migration." Jorge Muñoz, a project coordinator at the International Organization for Migration in Santiago exemplifies many Chileans, when he says "It's a brand new issue for us."⁴

In the following pages, I assess Chile's current migration policy and explore the factors behind official and popular responses to Peruvian immigration flows. While Chile is not the only country in the region experiencing increased immigration, several factors make it a unique case study. I specifically address Chile's economic relationship with Peru, the Chilean export economy, the number of undocumented migrants, historical border disputes with Peru, citizen

¹ Jason DeParle. "A Global Trek to Poor Nations, from Poorer Ones." The New York Times. 27 December, 2007.

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Juan Landaburu. "El debate sobre la inmigración ilegal se extiende a la región." La Nación. 24 June, 2007.

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DeParle.

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Tyler Bridges. "Illegal immigrants raising concerns in Latin America." The Miami Herald. 10 June, 2007.

security, immigrant population visibility, geographic concentration, xenophobia, the legacies of dictatorship, and national identity as factors that have significantly influenced Chile's response to this phenomenon. While the Chilean government has made some progress, I conclude that economic, security, and socio-historic concerns - both unique to Chile and common to the region - have resulted in a generally ineffective migration policy.

History:

Chile has not been traditionally considered a destination country for immigrants, a view professed by many scholars and international organizations, who assert that Chile's immigration flows never proved sufficient to significantly alter population characteristics or composition.⁵ The official consensus that immigration has neither played a major role in policy, nor been a significant factor of Chilean national identity, follows from this assertion. This perception is mistaken, however, as the Chilean government selectively encouraged European settlement throughout the nineteenth century and was forced to respond to undesired flows as early as the 1920's.

The mid-nineteenth century marked a period of active recruitment of European immigrants by the Chilean government. Such initiatives were first visible during the 1850's, as senator Vicente Pérez Rosales organized the settlement of 2,500 German colonists in southern Chile's Llanquihue valley, near today's Valdivia and Puerto Montt.⁶ This initially private initiative received official government sanction through the 1882 establishment of Chile's General Immigration Agency in Europe, which attracted prospective families with promises of

⁵ "Chile: Proyecciones y Estimaciones de Población. Total País Período de Información: 1950-2050." *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas with the Comisión Económica para América Latina y El Caribe (CEPAL)*. No. 208. 2002. p. 31.

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Carolina E. Stefoni. Representaciones Culturales y Estereotipos de la Migración Peruana en Chile. Informe final del concurso: Culturas e identidades en América Latina y el Caribe. Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO. 2001. p. 7.

free land upon migration.⁷ Such offers attracted more than 31,000 families to the sparsely populated south of the country during the 1800's, considerable flows that were followed by the settlement of the extreme north and south (Antofagasta and Magallanes) by Yugoslavians in the early twentieth century.⁸ In addition to the flows of Germans and Yugoslavians, more than 8,000 Spaniards, Swiss, and Italians were welcomed to Chile between 1883 and 1905.⁹ The magnitude of European immigration becomes apparent when one notes that "[O]n average, over 52.5 percent of total foreigners residing in Chile between 1865 and 1920 were Europeans."¹⁰ These flows continued into the twentieth century, as in the mold of Pérez Rosales, Chilean poet and Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda assisted in the settlement of refugees after the Spanish Civil War. The immigration of Italians also increased sharply in the aftermath of the Second World War.¹¹

Despite official sponsorship of German and Swiss immigration (and the concomitant emphasis on such settlement in Chilean historical memory), Europeans were not the only migrants to arrive during this period. Particularly in the case of the "[M]acro zona norte, la presencia de inmigración fronteriza – peruana y boliviana – se presenta como una constante histórica, ya desde los tiempos del auge de salitre,"¹² In addition to these flows from neighboring countries, the Arab immigrant population became dramatically visible between 1907 and 1952.

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Cristián Doña and Amanda Levinson, "Chile: Moving Towards a Migration Policy," Migration Information Source, February 2004.

⁸ *Ibid.*

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Carolina E. Stefoni. Representaciones Culturales y Estereotipos de la Migración Peruana en Chile. Informe final del concurso: Culturas e identidades en América Latina y el Caribe. Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO. 2001. p. 7.

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Doña and Levinson.

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"Políticas Migratorias." Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, Departamento de Estudios, Extensión, y Publicaciones. Vol. 11, No. 257. Santiago de Chile, July 2001. p. 1.

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"Informe Síntesis – Estudio exploratorio diagnóstico y percepción sobre la migración limítrofe/fronteriza en Chile." OIM (*Organización Internacional para las Migraciones*) Misión en Chile. Santiago, 2002. p. 6.

By 1952, they made up twenty percent of the total foreign-born population, as Syrians, Palestinians, and Lebanese sought to escape the disintegration of the Ottoman empire and seek their fortunes in Chile.¹³ Cristián Doña and Amanda Levinson note, however, that similar to Chile's situation today, "This migration was largely undocumented, and because the migrants were non-white, they were not welcomed with the open arms of their European predecessors."¹⁴

While Doña and Levinson argue that the potential for massive refugee flows after the global conflicts of the early twentieth century effectively ended Chile's official policy of selective recruitment of immigrants, it seems equally plausible that this policy shift resulted from the change in regional origin of the new immigrants. In a 2001 NACLA Report on the Americas, Soledad Ortega remarks:

"Chile presenta cierta dualidad cuando se trata de la actitud respecto a los extranjeros: la inmigración blanca europea siempre ha sido positivamente considerada, mientras que la inmigración de latinoamericanos, específicamente de aquellos países con una gran población indígena, ha sido temida y rechazada."¹⁵

As non-white and other South American migrants began to replace fair-skinned Europeans, Chileans suddenly became less enthusiastic about immigration. Whether the result of racism or refugees after global wars, Chilean lawmakers began to restrict the entry of foreigners after 1918.¹⁶ Remarkably, this "defensive" stance against immigration has continued largely unchanged to the present day.

What have shifted, however, are the migratory characteristics of Chileans themselves. While nineteenth century policies focused on attracting and retaining migrants, the military

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Doña and Levinson.

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Ibid.

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Soledad Ortega. "En Búsqueda del Paraíso Chileno: Peruanos en Chile Forjan su Comunidad. *NACLA Report on the Americas*. Vol. 35, No. 2. September/October 2001.

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Doña and Levinson.

dictatorship from 1973 to 1990 encouraged precisely the opposite. Desirous of eliminating opposition to his regime, Augusto Pinochet Ugarte forcibly exiled thousands of domestic opponents, while his notorious secret police and the abuses committed during that period drove thousands of Chileans to flee the country. While nearly a quarter million have returned since the transition to democracy, some 871,781 Chileans still live outside of Chile. Just to contextualize the magnitude of the exodus, “If one compares the number of Chileans outside the country to the numbers of foreigners residing in Chile, there are more than three Chileans abroad for each resident foreigner.”¹⁷ Inevitably, this has colored Chile’s current policy environment, as a significant portion of migratory initiatives have focused on attracting and reintegrating Chileans returnees – not actual foreigners.

Current Situation:

According to the UN, there are currently fourteen states with over one million inhabitants, where immigrants constitute more than a fifth of the population.¹⁸ Perhaps unsurprisingly, no Latin American country falls into this category. Even in Argentina – a historical locus for regional and global migrants – the immigrant population in 2002 was a mere 4% of total inhabitants.¹⁹ While Chile’s immigrant population percentage exceeded Argentina’s 4% during the first half of the twentieth century,²⁰ it has since declined to roughly 1.6% of the total population.²¹ This 1.6% is deceptive, however, as it belies the dramatic shift in immigration

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“Evolución de la Gestión Gubernamental desde 1990: Desarrollo del fenómeno de las migraciones en Chile.” *Ministerio del Interior, Subsecretaría del Interior, Departamento de Extranjería y Migración*. p. 3.

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Elia Simeone R. “Chile, nuevo polo de inmigrantes.” *El Mercurio*, 17 October, 2004. Section C. p. 9.

¹⁹

Jorge Martínez Pizarro. “Magnitud y Dinámica de la Inmigración en Chile, Según el Censo de 2002. *Papeles de Población*, No. 44. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. April-June 2005. p. 115.

²⁰

Ibid, 118.

²¹

“Evolución de la Gestión Gubernamental desde 1990: Desarrollo del fenómeno de las migraciones en Chile.” *Ministerio del Interior, Subsecretaría del Interior, Departamento de Extranjería y Migración*. p. 2.

patterns visible in the last 15 years. In the period between the 1992 and 2002 censuses, international immigration flows were more significant than emigration, for the first time since the return to democracy.²² This “new immigration” – which can also be extended to include Chilean returnees – is a recent phenomenon, with most arrivals occurring after 1996.²³ Unlike migratory flows during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, Chile’s current resident foreigners are primarily non-European, arriving largely from neighboring countries in the region. According to the 2002 census, Argentines, at 48,176 composed the largest foreign resident group, followed by Peruvians with 37,860, while Bolivians and Ecuadorians occupied the more distant third and fourth slots.²⁴ Many experts estimate, however, that the Argentines have already fallen to second place behind the Peruvians, who are now said to compose 26% of the immigrant population, with Argentina sending 22%, Bolivia 6%, and Ecuador a close 5%.²⁵

The countries of origin are not the only notable quality of this “new immigration,” however, as the sheer increase in the number of immigrants has garnered attention from public and policymakers alike. According to the Chilean Library of Congress, immigration rose a dramatic 75% between 1992 and 2002,²⁶ and as reported by the April 2002 census, the net number of immigrants in the country is the greatest absolute number in Chilean history. This

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“Chile: Proyecciones y Estimaciones de Población. Total País Período de Información: 1950-2050.” *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas with the Comisión Económica para América Latina y El Caribe (CEPAL)*. No. 208. 2002. p. 21.

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“Evolución de la Gestión Gubernamental desde 1990: Desarrollo del fenómeno de las migraciones en Chile.” Ministerio del Interior, Subsecretaría del Interior, Departamento de Extranjería y Migración. p. 2.

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“Censo 2002 – Síntesis de Resultados.” *Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Chile*. p. 18.

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“Evolución de la Gestión Gubernamental desde 1990: Desarrollo del fenómeno de las migraciones en Chile.” Ministerio del Interior, Subsecretaría del Interior, Departamento de Extranjería y Migración.

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“Derechos Humanos de las Personas Inmigrantes.” *Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile*. p. 313.

figure surpasses even 1907 - previously considered to have been Chile's immigration "peak."²⁷

Given these shifts in the rate of immigration, number of migrants, and countries of origin, it becomes clear that Chile's migration landscape has changed, despite the small proportion of the population the new immigrants compose. Along with these transformations have come changes in both policy and attitude by the government and general population.

The New Migration:

To understand Chile's current migration policy, it is critical to examine not only the historical context of past migration flows, but the characteristics of Chile's new immigrants. Given that Peruvians now make up the largest proportion of foreigners, and that much of Chile's immigration debate has centered on this population, my analysis will also focus primarily on this migrant group. Although immigrants from Chile's northern neighbor have long been lured by economic opportunities, the rate of migration to Chile has increased dramatically in the past fifteen years – and not just among Peruvians. While between 1990 and 1994, a total of 63,752 visas were issued (to all foreigners), this figure doubled between 1995 and 1999, when 129,791 visas were issued.²⁸ With regard to Peruvians specifically, the 1982 census documented 4,308 Peruvians in the country - a figure that increased 900% in twenty years, to 39,084 persons, by the 2002 census.²⁹ By comparison, Argentine immigration has remained generally stable since 1992.³⁰ According to official figures, "Roughly 62,000 Peruvians (including students and

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"Informe Síntesis – Estudio exploratorio diagnóstico y percepción sobre la migración limítrofe/fronteriza en Chile." *OIM (Organización Internacional para las Migraciones) Misión en Chile*. Santiago, 2002. p. 15.

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Edmundo P. Serani. "Políticas Migratorias." *Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, Departamento de Estudios, Extensión y Publicaciones*. Vol. XI, N°257. July 2001. p. 14.

²⁹ José Carlos Luque Brazán. "Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la 'Lima Chica' en Santiago de Chile." *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 130.

³⁰ Carolina Stefoni. "Inmigración y Ciudadanía: La Formación de Comunidades Peruanas en Santiago y la Emergencia de Nuevos Ciudadanos." *Política*, Spring, No. 43. Universidad de Chile (2004). p. 322.

minors) have entered Chile since 1996.” Although this number is small in that it represents less than 1% of the economically active population, it’s a considerable figure compared to the total number of Argentines (14,000) and Bolivians (almost 10,000) that entered during this period.³¹ Upon examining these figures, it is obvious that net migration to Chile has increased sharply in the past decade, an increase even more dramatic if one focuses solely on the Peruvian population.

Despite the nearly 40,000 Peruvians in Chile, the actual figure is likely much higher if one accounts for the undocumented population. An October 2005 study by the Chilean Department of Labor relies on a Peruvian consulate estimate, and places the number of irregular Peruvians at roughly 13,000,³² bringing the actual number of migrants closer to 53,000. These new immigrants settle mostly in Santiago, as of the official total, 77.9% live in the Greater Santiago Metropolitan Area (GSMA).³³ This most recent immigrant flow is also demographically young, as 73% are reported to be of “economically active age,” or between 15 and 44 years old.³⁴ Despite their youth, these new migrants are surprisingly well educated, particularly compared with their non-migrating compatriots. A recent poll of 408 Peruvian migrants in Chile revealed that 94% had completed secondary education, with a considerable 42% possessing post-secondary training.³⁵ Unlike current flows from Argentina, where males outnumber females, the new Peruvian immigration is also 63% feminine.³⁶ This can largely be attributed to increasing

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Carolina Stefoni. “Inmigración en Chile. Mitos que confunden.” *El Metropolitano*. 30 April, 2002. p. 4.

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Paola Díaz. “Chile y Perú buscan regular inmigración a través de la profundización del ACE.” *Diario Financiero*. 27 December, 2005. p. 28.

³³

Ibid.

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Ibid.

³⁵ “Derechos Humanos de las Personas Inmigrantes.” *Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile*. p. 316.

³⁶

Ibid, 313.

demand for *puertas adentro*, or live-in household service among the middle and upper classes of the GSMA. The channeling of Peruvian women towards this market is visible in that of 15,441 resident female Peruvians working in the GSMA, 71.5% or 11,043, were employed in household service, according to the 2002 census.³⁷

One commonality with immigrant groups in other countries, is the frequent precariousness of Peruvians' employment situation and their exploitation by unscrupulous employers. Thus, it is not entirely surprising that 67.1% of Peruvians employed in the country do not have a work contract.³⁸ This figure, however, sheds doubt on the Peruvian consulate's estimate of undocumented migrants, considering that household service is among the mostly highly regulated occupations by the Chilean government. It would thus be unusual for so such a large proportion of Peruvians to be working without a contract if the undocumented population were actually so small. Nevertheless, given these figures and the demographic characteristics of this new flow, one can conclude that the roughly 53,000 Peruvian migrants in Chile, are heavily female, generally young, and surprisingly well-educated.

Why Are They Coming?

To comprehend the Chilean response this new migration, one must understand first, why this seemingly well-qualified demographic is leaving Peru, and second, why Chile has proved such an attractive destination for these migrants. The former is more complicated than the latter, however, as reasons for Peruvian emigration have not remained constant. Even in such a short period as twenty years, the push-factors have shifted from economic crisis and civil war, to political repression, and back to economic difficulty. At the end of the 1980's, Peruvian

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José Carlos Luque Brazán. "Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la 'Lima Chica' en Santiago de Chile." *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 138.

³⁸

Díaz, 28.

emigration was “[F]undamentally due to the economic and political problems in Peru at the end of the decade.”³⁹ By the end of Alan Garcia’s administration, for example, inflation had reached an incredible 7,000 percent annually,⁴⁰ and Peru was embroiled in a virtual civil war between the state and insurgent groups, namely the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA) and *Sendero Luminoso*. By the beginning of the 1990’s, the civil war had killed 14 thousand, and produced over 570 thousand internally displaced persons.⁴¹ Not surprisingly, this sparked the emigration flows into Chile that would peak at mid-decade.

What caused its peak, however, came about in 1992, with the election of Alberto Fujimori. While President Fujimori managed to reduce inflation, his introduction of neo-liberal economic reforms and his own corrupt brand of pseudo-democracy perceptibly stirred discontent among certain sectors of the population. CLACSO researcher Carlos Luque Brazán notes that “[A]ll of the Peruvian political refugees interviewed who arrived in Chile after April 1992, indicated that the coup d’état and privatization of state enterprises, together with the institutional reforms, prompted their exile.”⁴² While many Peruvians who remained in the country were also uncomfortable with Fujimori’s “auto-golpe,” the economic consequences of the period’s neo-liberal reforms affected a wider swath of the population, and thus can be considered the principal emigration push-factor of the 1990’s. By 1997, the privatization of 187 state enterprises during Fujimori’s administration had resulted in tremendous job loss,⁴³ and likely contributed to the decline in public sector wages (down 1/8th) and private sector wages (down 1/3rd) that has

³⁹ José Carlos Luque Brazán. “Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la ‘Lima Chica’ en Santiago de Chile.” *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 127.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Ibid., 128.

⁴³ José Carlos Luque Brazán. “Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la ‘Lima Chica’ en Santiago de Chile.” *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 128.

occurred in the past forty years.⁴⁴

With the political instability and depressing economic prospects, educated young Peruvians began to look abroad for sanctuary and employment opportunities. Chile appeared promising, not only due to language and proximity, but because of the country's return to democracy and auspicious economic growth. At precisely the time Fujimori's policies were beginning to yield its unsavory fruit, Chile was experiencing a minor boom. In 1992 – the year of Fujimori's election - only 48.2% of Chilean households had a washing machine. Just ten years later, roughly 78.8% did, and this figure can be extrapolated to a number of household goods once considered luxuries in Chile, and still viewed as such in poorer neighbors like Bolivia and Peru.⁴⁵ Chile's 1999 financial slump (a result of the Asian and Brazilian financial crises) aside, the country's GDP grew an average of 6.5% annually between 1992 and 2000.⁴⁶ Although the bulk of Peruvians during this period selected the United States or Spain as primary destinations, Chile's proximity, comparatively low unemployment (only occasionally surpassing 10% in the past twenty years),⁴⁷ and growing economy lured many young Peruvians south instead of north. Unfortunately, existing Chilean policy has proved unequal to the task of responding to an influx of these "new immigrants."

Current Policy:

“Uno de los principios fundamentales de la política exterior del actual gobierno chileno es ‘priorizar sus relaciones con los países vecinos, de manera de asegurarle al país un entorno de paz y desenvolvimiento económico sobre la base de estabilidad y prosperidad

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Ibid, 137.

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“Censo 2002 – Síntesis de Resultados.” *Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Chile*. p. 50.

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“Chile – Rasgos generales de la evolución reciente.” *Estudio Económico de América Latina y el Caribe* – CEPAL (2000-2001). p. 136.

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“Empleo y Desocupación – 1986-2007” (table). *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*, Chile.

también de sus vecinos.”⁴⁸

Given this statement of solidarity and bilateral cooperation, one would expect that the new flows of Peruvian immigrants have spawned the rapid creation of policies to address the situation – perhaps even jointly with the Peruvian government. Little of the sort has occurred, however, and despite the changes in migration flows, Chilean immigration policy has remained shallow, ineffective, and virtually unchanged since the Pinochet era. What policy does exist is basically encompassed by three legislative decrees:

- (1) Decreto Ley 1.094, (1975)
- (2) Reglamento de Extranjería - Decreto Supremo 597 (1984)
- (3) Decreto Supremo 5.142 (1960).⁴⁹

Notably, the first two were emitted during Pinochet’s tenure, and thus addressed immigration through the prism of national security. Exile, “dangerous persons,” and political persuasion occupied a prominent place in this legislation – still used to regulate the entry of foreigners today.

While immigration legislation has received scant attention during the transition to democracy, successive administrations have each made their mark on the issue. The government of Patricio Aylwin became the first to sign major international agreements on refugees. His successor, Eduardo Frei, declared Chile’s first amnesty, regularizing the migratory status of an estimated 44,000 foreigners by granting temporary residence permits.⁵⁰ During the tenure of Ricardo Lagos, Chile ratified the *Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*, as well as the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, supplementing the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized*

⁴⁸ Paz Verónica Milet. “Chile-Perú: Las dos caras de un espejo.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 232.

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“Derechos Humanos de las Personas Inmigrantes.” *Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile*. p. 314.

⁵⁰ “Evolución de la Gestión Gubernamental desde 1990: Desarrollo del fenómeno de las migraciones en Chile.” Ministerio del Interior, Subsecretaría del Interior, Departamento de Extranjería y Migración. pp. 3-4.

Crime.⁵¹ Currently, the administration of Michelle Bachelet has detailed a four-pronged plan of action in her 2006-2010 “Programa de Gobierno,” that intends to

- (1) develop new legislation in a rights framework
- (2) incorporate international conventions into legislation
- (3) incorporate migration issues into bilateral/regional agreements
- (4) incorporate theme of immigration into educational curriculum.⁵²

In addition, the Bachelet administration has prioritized the training of personnel, and is also working to computerize the records of foreigners, create a call center for the *Departamento de Extranjería y Migraciones*, and is trying to improve registration of foreign children to facilitate their access to education and health services.⁵³ While bilateral initiatives with the Peruvian government have had a less prominent role, 2006 nevertheless saw the creation of a Social Integration Council, consisting of five ministers each from Chile and Peru. According to Chilean Foreign Minister, Alejandro Foxley, the Council should serve to increase “[S]tep by step, the social protection offered by one nation to migrants from the other nation.”⁵⁴

Despite the promise of these initiatives, it remains to be seen whether such programs can be effective in the long term. Clearly, much needs to be done, and whether the Chilean government is up to the task remains uncertain. In 2001, Jorge Correa Sutil, Deputy Minister of the Interior bluntly admitted “La institucionalidad no está preparada para la llegada masiva de extranjeros y el sistema pone trabas a la llegada de trabajadores migrantes.”⁵⁵ The fact is, that

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Ibid, 5.

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Ibid, 6.

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Ibid, 7.

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“Chile, Peru sign labor, migration accords: begin talks on military cooperation.” *People’s Daily Online*. 23 August, 2006.

⁵⁵ Paola Díaz. “Chile y Perú buscan regular inmigración a través de la profundización del ACE.” *Diario Financiero*. 27 December, 2005. p. 28.

despite the progress made by recent administrations and the ostensible desire of the Bachelet government to address the matter, there is a serious lack of personnel and technical capacity to address migratory issues in Chile.⁵⁶ Shortages of equipment and personnel are hardly novel in the developing world; the problem arises, however, when lesser-developed countries like Chile are forced to confront situations common to the First World, by trying to implement First World policies requiring the resources they lack. Unsurprisingly, such measures frequently run into trouble.

The problems with Chilean migration initiatives go beyond shortages, however. While some new policies have mitigated the difficulties immigrants and refugees face, some of the most recent legislation – although well intentioned – may have actually exacerbated certain problems. Ley N°19581, for example, was established in 1998 and created the visa category of “border zone residents.” This permits holders to enter Chile for periods of seven days at a time, although they are not allowed to work or participate in remunerated activities.⁵⁷ While in theory, this allows Peruvians in Tacna to go shopping in Arica, or vacation in San Pedro de Atacama, it just as easily facilitates visa overstaying, human trafficking, and illegal immigration – exacerbating three serious problems already present in Chile. Similarly, Decree 2910 now permits foreigners to obtain a work permit while they are processing temporary residence permits, which allows Peruvians to enter Chile as tourists and begin looking for work upon arrival in Santiago.⁵⁸ What the Chilean government seems to have overlooked, however, is that

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“Informe Síntesis – Estudio exploratorio diagnóstico y percepción sobre la migración limítrofe/fronteriza en Chile.” OIM (*Organización Internacional para las Migraciones*) Misión en Chile. Santiago, 2002. p. 18.

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Ley N°19581, “Establece categoría de habitantes de zonas fronterizas.” Ministerio del Interior, Gobierno de Chile. 1 September, 1998. p. 1.

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José Carlos Luque Brazán. “Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la ‘Lima Chica’ en Santiago de Chile.” *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 136.

the benefit of such a policy is contingent on the approval of the residence permit; if it is rejected, the work permit will eventually expire, and the migrant will likely remain in the country – now undocumented and subject to exploitation. Despite these drawbacks, one is almost inclined to look sympathetically upon these initiatives, when remembering that there have been almost no changes to Chile's migration policy since the fall of Pinochet.

The obvious problems with the new legislation prompt a bigger question, however – how serious is the Chilean government about addressing this “new immigration” in the first place? Given the suddenness and magnitude of these new flows from Peru, one would expect a more vigorous response than minor decrees intended for the benefit tourists or refugees – not the demographic the country is currently receiving. Even such laudable initiatives as the 1998 regularization program of Eduardo Frei have been less successful than hoped, because of the cost and complexity of the process for the target group – undocumented migrants.⁵⁹

Furthermore, recent projections made by Chile's National Institute of Statistics (INE), regarding the future of immigration flows, frankly call into question the realism and seriousness of the Chilean government in addressing this issue.

59

Cristián Doña and Amanda Levinson, "Chile: Moving Towards a Migration Policy," Migration Information Source, February 2004.

Cuadro 10
CHILE: Hipótesis de evolución de los saldos migratorios netos
internacionales por sexo, según quinquenios. 2005-2050

PERÍODO	Saldos Migratorios Netos		
	Total	Hombres	Mujeres
2000-2005	30.000	14.000	16.000
2005-2010	30.000	14.000	16.000
2010-2015	20.000	9.000	11.000
2015-2020	10.000	4.500	5.500
2020-2025	0	0	0
2025-2030	0	0	0
2030-2035	0	0	0
2035-2040	0	0	0
2040-2045	0	0	0
2045-2050	0	0	0

The findings illustrated in the table above are essentially that a global drop in fertility levels and birth rate, will cause immigration to Chile from neighboring countries will taper off and eventually cease altogether by 2025.⁶⁰

“[E]xisten evidencias que indican que el saldo migratorio internacional continuaría con signo positivo tal como se observara durante el período intercensal 1992-2002, atenuando su intensidad hasta hacerse nulo.”⁶¹

Such an assertion is ludicrous; even if the global birthrate experiences a precipitous decline, other factors such as economic crisis, political instability, and natural disasters will always remain potential push factors. Given the nearly endemic nature of all three to Latin America, predictions that immigration will cease entirely are naïve, at best, if not downright irresponsible. This combination of misdirected or poorly thought-out initiatives with assertions that the “new immigration” is temporary belies a degree of denial by the Chilean government as to the nature of the problem.

Policy Factors:

⁶⁰ “Chile: Proyecciones y Estimaciones de Población. Total País Período de Información: 1950-2050.” Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas with the Comisión Económica para América Latina y El Caribe (CEPAL). No. 208. 2002. p. 32.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 31.

The reasons behind Chile's alternately fragmented, archaic, and well-intentioned policies can be grouped into four general categories: (1) economic; (2) security; (3) social; and (4) historical/cultural. While each category encompasses a variety of interrelated factors, these general groupings give some shape to the influences on Chilean policy and allow for linkages between seemingly disparate policies.

Economics:

Not surprisingly, economic considerations have had a significant, albeit, less publicized role in Chile's responses to these "new migrants." The country boasts one of the region's strongest economies and possesses an active export sector, specializing in minimally refined agricultural products (primarily grapes, fish, and wood) in addition to copper mining. By contrast, manufactured products "[A]ccount for less than 15% of total exports."⁶² While extremely profitable due to the current high price of commodities, Chile's exports are generally labor intensive. Logging, grape, and apple harvests all require considerable manpower, as do certain mining operations in the north of the country. Furthermore, while traditionally labor-intensive manufacturing only accounts for 15% of national exports, it makes up 82% of the exports from the GSMA,⁶³ making the metropolitan area particularly susceptible to labor fluctuations. As a result of the economic boom of the 1990's, required labor was occasionally in short supply, leading to increased demand, but also opportunities for foreigners looking to enter the labor market.

Given the push-factors detailed in the previous section and Chile's promising economic situation, this is precisely what many South Americans did during the 1990's:

⁶² Hornbeck, J.F. "The U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement: Economic and Trade Policy Issues." *CRS Report for Congress*. 25 July, 2003. p. 8.

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Soms García, Esteban. "Santiago de Chile: Viejos Problemas, Nuevos Desafíos." *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*, Vol. 20, No. 2. El Colegio de México, A.C. (May-August, 2005). p. 365.

“Médicos ecuatorianos y cubanos están entrando en los diferentes circuitos del sistema de salud. Uruguayos y argentinos están revolucionando con su estilo y fineza los cafés y restaurantes, amén del mundo del modelaje y la farándula, donde son tan apreciadas las mujeres trasandinas.”⁶⁴

While the presence of foreigners in the workforce steadily increased, Chile’s “boom” proved less than resilient. 1999 marked a dramatic slowdown, as the aftershocks of the Asian and Brazilian economic crises reached Chile, and the administration of Eduardo Frei decided to allow the Chilean peso to float, in an attempt to stabilize prices and better insulate the country from future economic shocks.⁶⁵ The mini-crisis of 1999, which saw the country’s GDP growth drop from a respectable 3.9% to a negative 1.1%,⁶⁶ apparently shook the confidence of policymakers and public alike, as labor – particularly immigrant labor - became an issue of contention for both sides. This crisis, and the accompanying rise in unemployment, marked the first campaigns publicly referring to Peruvians as “illegals,” and accusing them of exacerbating unemployment by stealing Chilean jobs⁶⁷ - a phenomenon not unlike the anti-immigrant campaigns in First World receptor countries like the U.S.

In the year 2000, the Chilean government attempted to placate the restive working class and jump-start the economy through a series of labor reforms. The government created a “contingency fund” worth \$200 million (equivalent to 1% of the total budget) to finance direct employment for up to 100,000 people, in the event that the future unemployment rate exceeded 9%.⁶⁸ It was estimated that this initiative would reduce unemployment by a fairly significant

⁶⁴ Elia Simeone R. “Chile, nuevo polo de inmigrantes.” *El Mercurio*, 17 October, 2004. Section C. p. 9.

⁶⁵

“Chile – Rasgos generales de la evolución reciente.” *Estudio Económico de América Latina y el Caribe – CEPAL* (2000-2001). p. 139.

⁶⁶

Ibid, 136.

⁶⁷

José Carlos Luque Brazán. “Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la ‘Lima Chica’ en Santiago de Chile.” *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 127.

⁶⁸

“Chile – Rasgos generales de la evolución reciente.” *Estudio Económico de América Latina y el Caribe – CEPAL*

1.5%.⁶⁹ Among the most controversial reform was the government's prohibition on the hiring of substitute workers during strikes, which sought to augment the negotiating power of the unions.⁷⁰ While such measures are popular among the Chilean working and lower classes, employers worry and analysts admit that they may potentially raise the cost of labor,⁷¹ essentially nullifying government efforts by discouraging private businesses from hiring more labor, and increasing the unemployment rate. The 6.25% minimum wage increase authorized in July 2007⁷² may also worsen the situation, given that employers will have a disincentive to legally hire workers, or will hire them for only three months at a time (beyond which a contract is required).⁷³ Although the increase in minimum wage to \$277 a month is appreciated by many, the newly mandated 140,000 peso salary is still insufficient to support a family.⁷⁴ Furthermore, if Chilean companies begin turning to undocumented migrants for labor, not only are the rights of the Peruvian and Ecuadorian newcomers placed in jeopardy, but so are the job availability and conditions of the Chilean working class.

A factor missing from this analysis, however, is the impact of these new protections for unions and labor on the mobilization of *migrant* workers. While recent labor measures and wage increases were technically intended for legally contracted workers, migrant labor appears to have taken these initiatives as tacit approval for their own petitions for improved conditions. Large

(2000-2001). p. 138.

⁶⁹

Ibid, 138-139.

⁷⁰

Ibid, 140.

⁷¹

Ibid.

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"Chile: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2007." U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 11 March, 2008.

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Ortega, Soledad. "En Búsqueda del Paraíso Chileno: Peruanos en Chile Forjan su Comunidad. *NACLA* Report on the Americas. Vol. 35, No. 2. September/October 2001.

⁷⁴

"Chile: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2007." U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 11 March, 2008.

agricultural enterprises are probably more surprised by this turn of events than anyone, since Chile's 1990's economic boom and resulting labor shortage had led "[F]ruit industry leaders recently to lobby for government approval to *invite* [emphasis added] Bolivian and Peruvian fruit harvesters to Chile."⁷⁵ Nevertheless, 52 migrant fruit pickers went on strike in the agricultural city of Copiapó in December, 2007, after being offered what they deemed to be an unfair deal. Incredibly, all the fruit-pickers in the city joined them, forcing the growers to increase their minimum monthly wages to 251,000 pesos (approximately \$500).⁷⁶ Luis Schmidt, President of Chile's National Agricultural Society (SNA) admitted, "Fruit growers in Copiapó were forced to negotiate, or they risked losing their entire crop,"⁷⁷ While this was an isolated incident, were it to recur on a broader scale, such migrant labor mobilizations could jeopardize Chile's time-sensitive fresh fruit export sector, worth \$2.2 billion.

More important, however, is what this incident illustrates about the complex relationship between migrant labor, working-class Chileans, and agro-industry in Chile. While as in the United States, the agricultural sector has vigorously defended the need for migrant labor, mobilizations like the one in Copiapó were not part of the plan, and call into question the likelihood of future agribusiness petitions for foreign labor. The very benefit of migrant labor for agribusiness – their willingness to accept poorer wages and working conditions, have traditionally made them anathema to low-class domestic workers. In Copiapó, however, some of these fruit-pickers *allied* with immigrant labor, posing the question of whether the working-class perception of immigrants might slowly be changing in Chile. As illustrated by both the Copiapó incident and the anti-immigrant responses to the economic downturn of 1999, labor markets and

⁷⁵ Steve Anderson. "Chile's Fruit Industry Braces for Labor Turmoil." The Santiago Times. 8 January, 2008.

⁷⁶

Ibid.

⁷⁷

Ibid.

economic conditions have an appreciable impact upon both the reception of migrant workers and government policies towards them.

Another, less visible economic influence on migration policy is tourism. While Chile has never been a mecca for visitors in the style of Spain or Mexico, the flows of visitors seeking to enjoy the country's beaches, mountains, and national parks have increased in a manner paralleling those of migrants. In 2001, national revenues from foreign tourists totaled \$788 million, equivalent to 4.5% of material exports for that year.⁷⁸ By 2006, however, revenues from tourism had increased roughly 192%, with Chile grossing over 1.51 billion that year – a sum equivalent to 54.7% of total agricultural exports.⁷⁹ Considering the visitors' considerable economic contribution, the Chilean government has been generally enthusiastic about this increase in tourism, and has tried to facilitate entry of this demographic.

Nevertheless, border officials have become increasingly wary that many "tourists" are immigrants in disguise, particularly when one compares the flow of Peruvian tourists between 2001 and 2006. While Argentines dominate regional tourist flows in both years, the proportion of Argentines visiting Chile fell from 49.4% in 2001 to 41.4% in 2006,⁸⁰ while the proportion of Peruvian visitors *increased* from just 8% to 12% in the same period.⁸¹ This issue has come to the attention of Chilean policymakers, who after signing an agreement with the Peruvian Foreign Ministry, now require Peruvians entering the country as tourists to present proof of a "bolsa de

⁷⁸ "Anuario de Turismo – 2001." *Servicio Nacional de Turismo and Instituto Nacional de Estadística*. Santiago de Chile, 2007. p. 14.

⁷⁹

Ibid, 11.

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"Anuario de Turismo – 2001 & 2006." *Servicio Nacional de Turismo and Instituto Nacional de Estadística*. Santiago de Chile, 2007. pp. 16 & 14.

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"Anuario de Turismo – 2001 & 2006." *Servicio Nacional de Turismo and Instituto Nacional de Estadística*. Santiago de Chile, 2007. pp. 16 & 14.

dinero” (money to sustain oneself) of at least \$30 for each day planned to be spent in Chile.

Notably, such a “bolsa” is not required for Chileans crossing into Peru, and thus is presumed to be a Chilean government attempt to deter would-be migrants.⁸²

This agreement between the Foreign Ministries of both countries also illustrates the close ties between Chile and Peru – ties that extend to economics, and subsequently impact Chile’s migratory policy. Since the (essentially) regional return to democracy in the 1990’s and early 21st century, relations between the two countries have stabilized considerably, leading many analysts to speak hopefully of a thaw in what has been a tension-fraught and historically conflictive relationship. While certain historical grudges have softened slightly, others – such as Peru’s contention of Chile’s northern border – have only deepened with age. Peruvian historian Alejandro C. Deustua notes that although the competition between the ports of Valparaíso, Chile and El Callao, Peru began before the War of the Pacific, the rivalry continues to this day.⁸³ The competition for regional ascendance has changed slightly, however, as this time it is between the ports El Callao and Antofagasta, Chile, both of which are vying for primacy as Asia-Pacific commerce increases and giants like China seek an economic “port of call.”

Added to these tensions are new resentments created by the economic relationship between the two countries – simultaneously interdependent and unilateral. The interdependence stems from the degree of physical trade between the two neighbors. Aside from its political significance, Chile is becoming an increasingly important market for Peru. While Peru’s 2003 trade with Chile only composed 5.15% of its total exports, the net value of Peruvian exports to

⁸² Carolina E. Stefoni. Representaciones Culturales y Estereotipos de la Migración Peruana en Chile. Informe final del concurso: Culturas e identidades en América Latina y el Caribe. Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO. 2001. p. 23.

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Alejandro C. Deustua. “Perú, Bolivia, y Chile: Por Una Nueva Relación Trilateral.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 219.

its southern neighbor grew ten times faster between 2001 and 2003 than did its exports to Bolivia in the same period, totaling \$412.4 million in 2003.⁸⁴ Peruvian migrants in Chile are also an important source of remittances, which constitute an increasingly important source of income for Peruvian families, and are contingent on labor market conditions in Chile. Many Peruvians also resent the extensive Chilean investment in their country, without being able to cite similar Peruvian investments in Chile. Deustua notes,

“[E]l intercambio financiero expresado a través de la inversión extranjera directa es tan asimétrico que resulta casi unilateral. En efecto, de los US\$ 26658 millones de inversión chilena en el exterior (el principal origen suramericano de este tipo de financiamiento), alrededor de 10% se afina en el Perú (dependiendo de la fuente, el stock se calcula entre US\$ 1340 millones y US\$ 2500 millones). No ocurre lo mismo a la inversa.”⁸⁵

The majority Chilean ownership of the Peruvian subsidiary of LAN airlines is an especially sore point for many Peruvians, who feel this is yet another example of Chilean economic domination in the region.

According to Deustua, Chile’s economic expansion in the realm of free-trade agreements is also threatening to Peru, who while possessing an older free trade agreement with the United States, views Chile’s cozy trade relations with powers like the European Union as an unwelcome strategic challenge.⁸⁶ Interestingly, however, concerns over migrants do not appear to have factored into Chile’s signing of a 2002 MERCOSUR accord intended to regularize the status of undocumented migrants in member states.

“The immediate beneficiaries of the accord, signed by the interior or justice ministers of the six countries [Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile] are the estimated 2.5 million people from member countries who are living as illegal immigrants in neighboring nations. Once the agreement goes into effect, they will be able to apply

⁸⁴ Alejandro C. Deustua. “Perú, Bolivia, y Chile: Por Una Nueva Relación Trilateral.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 225.

⁸⁵

Ibid, 225-226.

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Alejandro C. Deustua. “Perú, Bolivia, y Chile: Por Una Nueva Relación Trilateral.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). pp. 221-222.

immediately for amnesty that will permit them to remain where they are without fear of deportation.”⁸⁷

Clearly left out of this equation is Peru – who as non-member of MERCOSUR, not only fails to reap the benefits of the economic block, but with this agreement is rendered the sole target of Chile’s undocumented immigrant sweeps. The economic benefits accruing to Chile from MERCOSUR aside, the accord undoubtedly gives Peru another reason for resentment – this time, intimately tied to migration.

This historical resentment, augmented by such agreements and today’s economic asymmetries, has complicated negotiation of bilateral agreements on several matters, most unfortunately, migration. The 2005 negotiations to deepen a Complementary Economic Agreement (ACE) between the two countries is a fitting example, particularly since both sides had used the opportunity to introduce the subject of Peruvian labor rights in Chile. The final agreement was due to be signed after the last round of negotiations in November of that year. The discussions stalled, however, after the arrival of ex-President Fujimori in Chile and the revival of Peru’s complaints over maritime boundaries.⁸⁸ Once again, historical resentment intervened to preclude consensus and cooperation on an issue essential to Chile’s newest migrant population.

Security:

Economic concerns – despite their resonance with the public – are hardly the sole factor behind Chile’s migration policy. In First World-style, much of the immigration debate has been cloaked in security terms. With the major exception of Mexico (whose ties with the U.S. have

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Rohrer, Larry. "South American Trading Bloc Frees Movement of Its People," The New York Times. 24 November 2002.

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Paola Díaz. “Chile y Perú buscan regular inmigración a través de la profundización del ACE.” Diario Financiero. 27 December, 2005. p. 28.

encouraged an uncommonly militarized policy), few countries in Latin America approach migration from a visible security perspective. This could perhaps be attributed to the region's dependence on remittances from abroad, and the desire for the countries' own emigrants to be well-treated in receptor countries, reciprocally dissuading overly muscular attempts at border control. Assurance of favorable treatment is less relevant for Chilean emigrants, however, since a significant proportion of the estimated 800,000 Chileans abroad were not economic migrants, but enjoyed protections as political refugees. In short, the disincentive for a security-oriented migration policy is essentially absent from the Chilean context – permitting the government to pursue security initiatives that would be deemed inflammatory by some of its neighbors.

Some of Chile's security policy is actually the product of policy stagnation since the end of the Pinochet regime. Upon taking power, one of the leader's first priorities was eliminating political opposition by ensuring that "undesirable" citizens who fled the country were not permitted to return. The 1975 Ley N°19806 crystallized this new security framework for migration policy. Article 15 of said law is particularly explicit, detailing the sort of persons barred from entry:

"Los que propaguen o fomenten de palabra o por escrito o por cualquier otro medio, doctrinas que tiendan a destruir o alterar por la violencia, el orden social del país o su sistema de gobierno, los que estén sindicados o tengan reputación de ser agitadores o activistas de tales doctrinas y, en general, los que ejecuten hechos que las leyes chilenas califiquen de delito contra la seguridad exterior, la soberanía nacional, la seguridad interior o el orden público del país y los que realicen actos contrarios a los intereses de Chile o constituyan un peligro para el Estado;"⁸⁹

While it is today accompanied by other legislation and is rarely enforced, this decree is still on the books nearly twenty years after the return to democracy. The result of inertia or not, the security focus of Chilean migration policy thus appears to be quite intact.

⁸⁹ Ley N°19806, "Establece normas sobre extranjeros en Chile." Ministerio del Interior, Gobierno de Chile. 19 July, 1975. pp. 3-4.

While today's migration policy encompasses a wider range of initiatives, the apprehension and deportation of illegal immigrants appears to be rising in importance in Chile, as in other developed countries facing similar problems. As a result, Chile is developing increasingly vigorous measures to thwart illegal migration. 2003 marked the introduction of *Plan Vigia*, implemented to further improve border control, introduce new technology, and augment training of existing border officials.⁹⁰ Since its implementation, the number of foreigners apprehended has increased nearly 20%, from 596 in 2003 to 717 in 2004.⁹¹ Border apprehensions have also increased, with 2,086 foreigners detained between 2000 and April 2005. Whether this reflects the success of the program, or merely an increase in the number of immigrants attempting to cross the border remains unclear.

While *Plan Vigia* may be an example of a successful Chilean initiative, many of the government's policies towards undocumented migrants have not met with demonstrable success, partly due to irrationalities in existing legislation. For a example, a key part of the 1975 migration law mandates that employers "[P]ay for an immigrant's ticket home after the work contract is finished," – a clause ostensibly included to prevent unemployed migrants from staying and draining social services. Unfortunately, the employer-borne cost of this provision is "[A clear] disincentive for legally hiring immigrants."⁹² Another obstacle in reducing the numbers of undocumented migrants has also been the difficulty of regularizing their status. Paradoxically, legal status is necessary to obtain an employment contract, but this same contract hinges on legal residence in the country.⁹³ Furthermore, despite two amnesties in the past ten

⁹⁰ Francisco Águila. "Dos mil ilegales ingresaron a Chile en los últimos 5 años." *El Mercurio*. 2 April, 2005. Section C. p. 12.

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Ibid.

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Daniela Estrada. "Migration – Chile: Back Home, Things are Even Worse." *Interpress Service News Agency*. 23 April, 2007.

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years, regularization processes remain tedious and prohibitively expensive for the average migrant.

The second factor behind the Chilean government's tepid policy success may be the government's attitude towards the numbers of undocumented migrants. In an ironic contradiction, recent policy initiatives have begun to address the undocumented population, while simultaneously downplaying the extent of the problem. For example, official 2005 estimates coalesced around the figure of 15,000 undocumented persons in Chile - ⁹⁴ an extremely modest number for a country of 18 million, and even more so when one accounts for the increased migrant flows in recent years. In fact, there is good reason to believe that this statistic – widely espoused by the government and academia, is grossly inaccurate.

First, the 1998 amnesty decreed by the Frei administration estimated that some 40,000 Peruvians alone had not regularized their status.⁹⁵ Given that fewer than 12,000 were regularized by this amnesty, there should have remained, *at minimum*, 28,000 undocumented migrants in 2005, when the estimate of 15,000 was made. Furthermore, the recent 2007 amnesty for undocumented migrants definitively refutes this estimate. This regularization initiative provided one-year visas to those who entered the country before October 22, 2007. While the Chilean government expected roughly 20,000 petitions, more than 46,000 applications for regularization were received by January 30, 2008, with expectations of 50,000 by the February 5th deadline.⁹⁶ In short, official estimates of such migrants have consistently discounted 2/3 of the population.

Paola Díaz. "Chile y Perú buscan regular inmigración a través de la profundización del ACE." Diario Financiero. 27 December, 2005. p. 28

⁹⁴ "Derechos Humanos de las Personas Inmigrantes." Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile. p. 313.

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"Inmigración ilegal en Chile." La Tercera. 1 June, 2002. p. 10.

⁹⁶

Trey Pollard. "Over 40,000 Illegal Immigrants Apply for Amnesty in Chile." The Santiago Times. 30 January, 2008.

Even well-regarded academics like Jorge Martínez Pizarro appear to have “bought in” to the national delusion that illegal migrants are not an urgent problem, considering his astounding statement:

“En Chile, la presencia de migranes irregulares no parece ser significativa, y ello se infiere, de manera preliminar, por la similitud entre las estimaciones censales de 2002 con las derivadas de los registros de residencias y visas concedidas.”⁹⁷

Not only is this factually incorrect (in 2006 alone, 94,046 of the Peruvians documented as entering the country never exited⁹⁸), but to believe that concordance of visa registries with census data accounts for the undocumented population is naïve. Considering that censuses are typically completed by *documented* residents, the absence of such a discrepancy is not surprising, but does indicate the lack of investigation into the scope and causes of the problem by the Chilean government.

There is another crucial reason for Chile’s inadequate policies – its historically conflictive relationship with Peru, the primary source of these new migrants. While cooperation between the two countries has improved on several levels since the return to democracy, the historical tension still prevents the degree of cooperation necessary for addressing joint problems like border control. Alejandro Deustua notes that the two countries have

“[U]na sucesiva histuna tendencia a relacionarse a través de mecanismos de balance de poder antes que de integración y un patrón desconcentrado de alianzas externas y reclamos históricos pendientes, ciertamente constituye un escenario de muy específica problemática.”⁹⁹ (212)

The “historical claims” mentioned above are a reference to the War of the Pacific and continuing

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Jorge Martínez Pizarro. “Magnitud y Dinámica de la Inmigración en Chile, Según el Censo de 2002. *Papeles de Población*, No. 44. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. April-June 2005. p. 145.

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Mauricio Silva. “Inmigración por el Complejo Chacalluta: 94 mil peruanos se quedaron en Chile en 2005.” *El Mercurio*. 28 September, 2006.

⁹⁹ Alejandro C. Deustua. “Perú, Bolivia, y Chile: Por Una Nueva Relación Trilateral.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 212.

disputes over Peru's southern boundary. While Chile claims the pending clauses of the 1929 Treaty were resolved in 1999, Peru still disputes the delimitation of the southern border.¹⁰⁰ This complicates, among other things, joint patrols – essential to any effective migration policy. Furthermore, the Chileans are not always inclined to work with Peruvians on the issue of border control. For decades, there has been a hard-line minority in Peru who refrains from advocating overt seizure of lost territories, but vocally seeks to “keep a window open” for their eventual reincorporation.¹⁰¹ Given that Chile views the matter as settled, any border-related issues that could serve as such a window of opportunity for this faction of Peruvians, will prove anathema to the Chilean government, for both political and security reasons.

The resentment goes beyond border issues, however. In many ways, Peru's defeat to the Chileans in the War of the Pacific has permanently colored the country's interactions with its southern neighbor. As Verónica Paz Milet presciently observes:

“La imagen actual, que se ve alimentada por estas dos visiones – del país ganador e invasor –, y que estructura la percepción que existe en Perú respecto a Chile, es la de un país arrogante, orgulloso de su potencialidad económica y de su estabilidad política.”¹⁰²

The perception of Chile as a country with regionally hegemonic aspirations not only grates on Peruvians for reasons of national pride, but threatens their sense of security as well. In a recent poll by Grupo Apoyo, 82% of Lima residents felt that Chile was actively trying to surpass Peru in military capacity and did not desire any sort of equilibrium.¹⁰³ Given this resentful brand of nationalism, cooperative efforts are often hindered from the start. There has, however, been some

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Paz Verónica Milet. “Chile-Perú: Las dos caras de un espejo.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 229.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 229.

¹⁰²

Paz Verónica Milet. “Chile-Perú: Las dos caras de un espejo.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 231.

¹⁰³

Ibid, 234.

progress in this regard. September 2001, for example, marked the creation of the “Permanent Committee for Consultation and Political Coordination,” composed of members of defense and foreign ministries of both countries. The “Committee for Security and Defense” was born a month later in Lima, which includes members from both of the above ministries, but also officers of the armed forces.¹⁰⁴ Such collaborations – particularly between the highly nationalistic armed forces - may potentially ease tensions between the two countries, but it is still unclear whether the two bodies are willing or equipped to address ever more urgent migration issues.

A third factor influencing Chile’s security framework for migration policy has been increased feelings of vulnerability at both the individual and national level. After 9/11, security concerns gained new prominence in the policies of countries across the globe, and Chile – a U.S. ally – has been no exception. More important, however, has been the increasing sense of personal insecurity lamented by Chileans in recent years. A 2005 survey of citizen security conducted by the National Institute of Statistics in the GSMA, found that 77.5% felt that delinquency had increased in the past twelve months, and a disturbing 47.6% thought that they would be a victim of crime in the year to come¹⁰⁵ - an astonishing figure, considering that Santiago is among the safest metropolitan areas in Latin America. Furthermore, when asked what two issues of national concern were most important to them, delinquency ranked first for 20.7% of subjects polled, and second for 21.9% of participants,¹⁰⁶ an increase of 7.6% and 0.9% respectively, when compared to an identical 2003 study.¹⁰⁷ Esteban Soms García notes:

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José Miguel Piuzei Cabrera. “La relación cívico-militar en los nuevos escenarios de seguridad y defensa hemisférica: su impacto en la relación peruano-chilena.” *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 210.

¹⁰⁵ Encuesta Nacional de Seguridad Ciudadana 2005, Resultados de la Región Metropolitana (personas). *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*. 2005. pp. 6 & 11.

¹⁰⁶

Ibid, 4.

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“Santiago es una ciudad donde sus habitantes viven con temor e inquietud. A pesar de que Santiago es una de las ciudades más seguras de América Latina, prevalece un sentimiento de inseguridad relacionado con la violencia delictual, que se extiende al sistema institucional político y económico.”¹⁰⁸

This popular unease has permeated immigration policy, as the growing migrant population has become a frequent scapegoat for the perceived rise in crime. Such attitudes have occasionally incited official responses at the local level. For example, a minor scuffle between Chilean and Peruvian soccer fans after a weekend game resulted in calls for a permanent police presence in the Plaza de Armas – a request duly fulfilled, as a police cruiser now sits permanently at one side of the plaza to “dissuade foreigners from gathering as they had previously.”¹⁰⁹ Certain aspects of the “new immigration” have introduced new criminal activities, however, threats unknown in earlier times, or occurring on a smaller scale. As Chilean border controls have stiffened, human trafficking from Andean neighbors – long a problem – has become a lucrative enterprise. The \$30 a day requirement for a tourist visa, for example, has spawned both Chilean and Peruvian “mafias,” specialized in falsifying Chilean entry stamps.¹¹⁰ As cross-border movement has intensified, so have concerns over drug-trafficking – particularly worrisome, given that Peru and Bolivia are two of the largest producers of coca in the region. Chileans have even coined the term *narcomigrante* to describe drug-involved foreigners from production countries like Peru and Colombia.¹¹¹

Encuesta Nacional de Seguridad Ciudadana 2003, Resultados de la Región Metropolitana (personas). *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*. 2003.

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Esteban Soms García. “Santiago de Chile: Viejos Problemas, Nuevos Desafíos.” *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*, Vol. 20, No. 2. El Colegio de México, A.C. (May-August, 2005). p. 368

¹⁰⁹ Carolina E. Stefoni. Carolina. Representaciones Culturales y Estereotipos de la Migración Peruana en Chile. Informe final del concurso: Culturas e identidades en América Latina y el Caribe. Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO. 2001. p. 21.

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“Derechos Humanos de las Personas Inmigrantes.” Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile. p. 315.

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Carmen Norambuena Carrasco. “Chile y sus Nuevos Inmigrantes: Ni Acogidos, Ni Rechazados.” *Instituto de Estudios Avanzados de la Universidad de Santiago de Chile*, 8 May, 1998. *Revista Universitaria*. No 85 (2004).

Social Concerns & Cultural Considerations:

Attribution of criminal activity to foreigners is hardly unique in receptor countries. In Chile, however, the security-oriented response to increased migration belies both the deep social dislocations provoked by this “new migration,” and the effect that popular hostility towards immigrants can have on official policy in a democratic society. Despite traditional emphasis on economic considerations in migration policy studies, Chile’s recent social history and evolution may be the most significant factors of all in understanding the country’s current policy. These social factors include: (1) the newness and magnitude of today’s immigration flows; (2) the geographic concentration of the new migrants; (3) their high visibility compared to existing foreign populations; (4) their active and complex organizational structures that contribute to said visibility; (5) xenophobia in Chilean society; and (6) issues of national identity paired with legacies of the Pinochet dictatorship.

The first factor framing popular response to the new immigrants is the magnitude and relative newness of these flows. The bulk of immigration to Chile has occurred since 1996, meaning that the majority of immigrants have been in the country for less than fifteen years.¹¹² Furthermore, the newest flows have been disproportionately Peruvian. As recently as 1992, Chile did not even rank among the top four destinations for Peruvian emigrants, with 55.5% headed for the U.S. and 21.1% directed towards Venezuela.¹¹³ Consequently, Chilean society has had relatively little time to adapt to both the exponential increase in migrants, and the preponderance of immigrants from a new country of origin. An additional result of this short “processing

¹¹² “Evolución de la Gestión Gubernamental desde 1990: Desarrollo del fenómeno de las migraciones en Chile.” Ministerio del Interior, Subsecretaría del Interior, Departamento de Extranjería y Migración.

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Hania Zlotnik. “La Migración Internacional en las Américas - Crece la migración intrarregional.” *DemoS*. No. 005. January 1992. p. 2.

period” has been the societal conflation of the term “immigrant” with Peruvians, producing a rather flat and inaccurate conception of what is still a varied population.¹¹⁴

This caricature of the immigrant population as uniformly Peruvian and poor is also a product of Peruvians’ geographic concentration in the GSMA - a concentration that contributes to their greater visibility when compared to other foreign populations. While most Peruvian economic migrants enter by land through the border regions of Arica and Tarapacá, roughly 60% of international migrants eventually settle in the metropolitan area.¹¹⁵ According to the 2002 census, a total of 27, 736 Peruvians resided in greater Santiago, the majority concentrated in only four of 34 *comunas* (districts) of the capital: Santiago Centro, Recoleta, Estación Central, and Independencia.¹¹⁶ The concentration is such that the area is known among locals as the “Lima Chica.”¹¹⁷ While it may seem odd that an immigrant population would concentrate in the historic center of the city, Santiago – in a strange paradox – has been simultaneously expanding and losing population in the last decade. Middle and upper class Chileans have gradually moved to rural areas along the *cordillera* of the Andes, with noticeable population growth in the outer *comunas*. The city proper, however, has shed population, causing a fall in housing prices. This, paired with existing public transportation services and work opportunities in the city center, has proved attractive to migrants, who have quickly filled the void left by departing Santiaguinos.¹¹⁸

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“Informe Síntesis – Estudio exploratorio diagnóstico y percepción sobre la migración limítrofe/fronteriza en Chile.” OIM (Organización Internacional para las Migraciones) Misión en Chile. Santiago, 2002. p. 6.

¹¹⁵

Daniela González Ollino and Jorge Rodríguez Vignoli. “Tendencias de la migración interna en Chile en los últimos 35 años: Recuperación regional selectiva, desconcentración metropolitana y rururbanización.” Paper presented at the first Congresso da Associação Latino Americana de População, ALAP, in Caxambú- MG – Brasil. 18-20 September, 2004. p. 12.

¹¹⁶

José Carlos Luque Brazán. “Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la ‘Lima Chica’ en Santiago de Chile.” *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 137.

¹¹⁷

Ibid, 126.

¹¹⁸

Ibid, 136.

This concentration, however, has in effect ghettoized the new immigrants in the mind of native Chileans, now associated as they are with an economically declining and “dangerous” area of town.

The Santiaguinos’ perception of the new immigrants has a disproportionate impact on migration policy, because such a high proportion of Chile’s population resides in the GSMA. As of 2005, the Santiago metropolitan region had 6,038,974 inhabitants, composing roughly 40.1% of the country’s total population.¹¹⁹ Given that such large proportions of Chile’s native and Peruvian populations are concentrated in a small geographic area, it should not be surprising that Peruvians possess a high level of visibility in Chilean society, compared to other immigrant groups. Significantly, xenophobia also seems to have concentrated itself in the capital, as a 2003 study revealed that 53% of GSMA residents expressed xenophobic attitudes towards Peruvians, compared with 46% in the northern city of Iquique and just 41% in the more indigenous southern city of Temuco.¹²⁰

This visibility also results from the high level of organization within the Peruvian migrant community. When the “surge” in immigration commenced in earnest in the late 1990’s, Peruvians were already establishing organizations to address the problems of living in a foreign and often unwelcoming society. The earliest of these organizations, however, arose in response to political conditions in Peru and addressed the needs of the large refugee population at the time. The “Casa Andina de Solidaridad,” for example, was founded in 1996 in conjunction with the “Comité de Refugiados Peruanos en Chile,” with the objective of publicizing and protesting against the excesses of the Fujimori regime through marches and protests near the Peruvian

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Esteban Soms García. “Santiago de Chile: Viejos Problemas, Nuevos Desafíos.” *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*, Vol. 20, No. 2. El Colegio de México, A.C. (May-August, 2005). p. 366.

¹²⁰ “Derechos Humanos de las Personas Inmigrantes.” Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile. p. 321.

embassy in Santiago.¹²¹ As the proportion of Peruvian refugees to economic migrants dwindled, however, the nature of community organizations also evolved. While the “Comité de Refugiados Peruanos en Chile” still exists, the most powerful group today is “Proandes,” which maintains tight links with the Peruvian consulate and other government organizations in the capital.¹²² Furthermore, as the number of Peruvian migrants has increased, so have the number of decentralized community endeavors, such as restaurants, small businesses, call centers, and discotheques – all of which heighten the visibility of Peruvians in the city.

Another factor augmenting the visibility of the Peruvian population for native Chileans has been their informal takeover of the Plaza de Armas, and the rapid propagation of Peruvian businesses around the plaza. Between November 2003 and August 2005, 108 Peruvian-owned businesses were counted around the plaza, while nearby streets like Calle Catedral are today almost entirely Peruvian.¹²³ Needless to say, the “Peruvianization” of the colonial heart of Santiago has rankled more than a few Chileans, spawning complaints that Chile’s cultural patrimony is being overrun by foreigners, as well as several ugly jokes. In their skits, comedians frequently note the excitement they feel upon running into a Chilean in the plaza, joking that its name should be changed to “Plaza de Lima.”¹²⁴ Another common one is that there are no longer pigeons in the plaza, because the Peruvians have eaten them – a strange and visibly false assertion, but one that exemplifies popular attitudes towards these immigrants.

These immigrants is an intentional reference, because the attitude of Chileans to

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José Carlos Luque Brazán. “Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la ‘Lima Chica’ en Santiago de Chile.” *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 133.

¹²²

Ibid, 143.

¹²³ José Carlos Luque Brazán. “Asociaciones políticas de inmigrantes peruanos en la ‘Lima Chica’ en Santiago de Chile.” *Migraciones Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 2. July-December 2007. p. 138.

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Carolina E. Stefoni E. Representaciones Culturales y Estereotipos de la Migración Peruana en Chile. Informe final del concurso: Culturas e identidades en América Latina y el Caribe. Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO. 2001. p. 24.

immigrant groups is by no means uniform. While nearly all are viewed with a degree of suspicion, Peruvians and Argentines can be considered the outliers in this pattern. While economic and historical reasons detailed earlier account for much of Chile's attitude towards Peruvians, the country's harsh treatment of this population still contrasts sharply with that of Argentine migrants. In general, Argentine immigrants are viewed much more favorably than other immigrant groups. This is particularly true in the isolated south of the country, where interactions with Argentine communities across the border have historically been stronger than with Chilean compatriots in the distant capital. Generally, however, this overwhelmingly positive perception is the result of three factors: (1) the lower visibility of Argentine immigrants compared to Peruvians; (2) the desirable racial/cultural characteristics of Argentines; and (3) the more positive historical familiarity of Chileans with their Argentine neighbors.

A primary factor of this more positive attitude towards Argentines, is that this population, despite their (until recently) numerically greater presence, remains less visible than Peruvians.¹²⁵ One reason for this is geographic concentration, as Argentines appear to be more dispersed than the Peruvian population, who tend to gather in the GSMA. For the sake of comparison, roughly 46% of Argentine migrants settle in greater Santiago, a figure only 5.9% above the proportion of Chileans who live there - 40.1%.¹²⁶ By contrast, a much higher 78% of Peruvians live in the GSMA, nearly twice the concentration of native Chileans who live in the region.¹²⁷ Not surprisingly, residents of greater Santiago are much more conscious of the Peruvian population in their midst than of the Argentine, breeding the tendency to multiply the numbers of Peruvians

¹²⁵ Paola Díaz. "Chile y Perú buscan regular inmigración a través de la profundización del ACE." *Diario Financiero*. 27 December, 2005. p. 28.

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Carolina Stefoni, "Inmigración y Ciudadanía: La Formación de Comunidades Peruanas en Santiago y la Emergencia de Nuevos Ciudadanos." *Política*, Spring, No. 43. Universidad de Chile (2004). p. 322.

¹²⁷

Ibid.

and think of them as permanent settlers,¹²⁸ while minimizing the figure of Argentines.

Further contributing to the visibility of the Peruvian population is their presence as *puertas adentro*, or live-in household help in many upper-class (thus socially prominent and politically powerful) homes. While composing barely four percent of overall household help,¹²⁹ a significant proportion of Peruvian women work in this sector, with the percentages of resident female Peruvians working *puertas adentro* exceeding 85% in wealthy eastern *comunas* like Vitacura and Lo Barnechea.¹³⁰ Not surprisingly, the proximity of Peruvians in the everyday lives of the country's policymakers augments their visibility at the macro level.

A second factor in this more favorable perception, is the desired racial and cultural characteristics of Argentine migrants when compared to Peruvians. While Chileans are broadly *mestizo*, they view themselves as primarily European-descended and white, which incidentally, are the actual demographic characteristics of Argentina. Racial motivations were always part of Chile's nineteenth century considerations, as the government encouraged immigration from northern Europe, not only to populate rural areas, but to improve the racial mixture in the heavily indigenous south. Needless to say, the presence of immigrants with characteristics that *affirm* this narrative of national identity are less threatening than the visibly *mestizo* population of Peru. Hence the frequent remarks extolling the virtues of Argentines and culturally similar Uruguayans, and their appreciated contributions to various sectors of Chilean society. A 2004 article in Chile's main daily, *El Mercurio* remarked:

“Uruguayos y argentinos están revolucionando con su estilo y fineza los cafés y

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“Informe Síntesis – Estudio exploratorio diagnóstico y percepción sobre la migración limítrofe/fronteriza en Chile.” OIM (Organización Internacional para las Migraciones) Misión en Chile. Santiago, 2002. p. 10.

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Jorge Martínez Pizarro. “Magnitud y Dinámica de la Inmigración en Chile, Según el Censo de 2002. *Papeles de Población*, No. 44. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. April-June 2005. p. 137.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

restaurantes, amén del mundo del modelaje y la farándula, donde son tan apreciadas las mujeres trasandinas.”¹³¹

While the capability and servility of Peruvian housekeepers are privately extolled, one rarely finds praise for Peruvian migrants in any public medium – essentially because their contributions to society are both less public, and of undesirable racial quality.

A third factor in this denigration of Peruvian immigrants compared to Argentines can be understood within a framework of positive historical interaction. While Chile and Argentina have had their own border disputes, hostility has dissipated over the years and is today nowhere near the level of tension between Chile and Peru. On the contrary, Chile and Argentina have a friendly and, more important, *equitable* relationship, with tourism, trade, and investment occurring by both parties across the Andes. This warm relationship is especially noticeable in Chile’s south, where there is a widespread phenomenon of mixed Argentine-Chilean families.¹³²

Ironically, one aspect of this familiarity has been bilateral migration flows between the two countries. Jorge Martínez Pizarro notes that Argentina has long been the traditional destination country for Chilean emigrants, only distantly followed by the U.S. and Venezuela¹³³ - indicating a much greater Chilean familiarity with Argentina than can be said regarding its northern neighbor. While Chile has traditionally possessed one of the highest emigration rates in Latin America, with over 270,000 citizens abroad,¹³⁴ this familiarity with Argentina is also a recent phenomenon. Thousands of Chileans found refuge across the Andes during the Pinochet

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Elia R. Simeone. “Chile, nuevo polo de inmigrantes.” *El Mercurio*, 17 October, 2004. Section C. p. 9.

¹³² “Informe Síntesis – Estudio exploratorio diagnóstico y percepción sobre la migración limítrofe/fronteriza en Chile.” OIM (Organización Internacional para las Migraciones) Misión en Chile. Santiago, 2002. p. 9.

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Jorge Martínez Pizarro. “Magnitud y Dinámica de la Inmigración en Chile, Según el Censo de 2002. *Papeles de Población*, No. 44. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. April-June 2005. p. 113.

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Jorge Martínez Pizarro and Miguel Villa. “International Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Summary View of Trends and Patterns” - UN/POP/MIG/2005/14. United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development. 5 July, 2005. p. 7.

dictatorship, many returning only recently. In fact, some experts argue that one explanation for the magnitude of Chile's Argentine population, is that children of Chilean exiles returning home are classified as Argentines. Children of the estimated 300,000 Chileans still residing across the Andes are also classified as Argentines upon entering the country.¹³⁵ Not surprisingly, the fact that many "Argentines" are actually Chileans, or at least have family ties to Chile, contributes to the more beneficent attitude towards all Argentine migrants. In contrast, Peruvian historian Alejandro Deustua notes that one reason for the difficulties in addressing the migration situation is that immigration flows from Peru have always been a unilateral phenomenon, with a negligible number of Chileans ever settling in Peru.¹³⁶ This broad unfamiliarity with the country of origin of these new migrants, coupled with Chileans' narrow experience with Peruvians, has led to serious misconceptions about the nationals of this country and the nature of this new migration.

These misconceptions have exacerbated the latent Chilean prejudice towards migrants from *mestizo* Andean countries. This prejudice has roots in a xenophobia that is much older than the newest migrant flows, however. As amorphous and contested a concept as it is, culture is a factor in a society's willingness to accept outsiders, and Chilean society has been widely recognized as the most conservative in the world after the Philippines, a condition that "[S]in duda . . . afecta la integración, aceptación y convivencia con la diversidad y heterogeneidad."¹³⁷ One of the problems is that, historically, Chileans' principal interactions with foreigners have

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Francisco Bazo, Francisco. "Migraciones en Chile: Un Tema Pendiente." *Le Monde Diplomatique en Español*. July 2001.

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Alejandro C. Deustua. "Perú, Bolivia, y Chile: Por Una Nueva Relación Trilateral." *Revista de Ciencia Política*. Vol. 24, No. 2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2004). p. 226.

¹³⁷ Carolina E. Stefoni E. Representaciones Culturales y Estereotipos de la Migración Peruana en Chile. Informe final del concurso: Culturas e identidades en América Latina y el Caribe. Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO. 2001.

been through trade,¹³⁸ and given the current lack of reciprocal migration or trade with its northern neighbor, many Chileans have had little interaction with Peruvians outside the context of domestic service in Santiago.

Fundamentally, many Chileans view Peruvians as ethnically inferior due to the *mestizaje* they claim is absent from Chile's population. In a broad sense, Peruvian migrants have served "[A]s a foil against which Chilean identities could be constructed . . . [E]mployers who described Peruvian women as backward, uneducated, or indigenous thereby positioned themselves as civilized, modern, and white."¹³⁹ Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulian agrees with this idea of migrant as cultural foil, but takes it a step further, asserting that Peruvians are rejected not only because they are foreign, but because they remind Chilean society of purposely forgotten aspects of national identity.

"Así los peruanos no sólo son rechazados por ser extranjeros, un hecho que está arraigado en la xenofobia, sino también por ser mestizos. Vemos en los peruanos nuestra propia herencia indígena. No sólo eso, ellos están orgullosos de sus orígenes, mientras nosotros nos avergonzamos de de los nuestros."¹⁴⁰

Thus, while Germans, Swiss, and Yugoslavs were always welcomed for reminding Chileans of what they aspired to ethnically, Peruvians are rejected because they harken to a poorer, *mestizo*, Chile that still exists, but that most would prefer to forget.

Essentially, Chilean attitudes and policies towards Peruvian immigration boil down to questions of national identity and aspiration – two concepts hotly debated after the ruptures and social dislocations provoked by the Pinochet dictatorship. Experts generally concur that the

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"Informe Síntesis – Estudio exploratorio diagnóstico y percepción sobre la migración limítrofe/fronteriza en Chile." OIM (Organización Internacional para las Migraciones) Misión en Chile. Santiago, 2002. p. 8.

¹³⁹ Silke Staab and Kristin Hill Maher. "The Dual Discourse About Peruvian Domestic Workers in Santiago de Chile. Class, Race, and a Nationalist Project." *Latin American Politics and Society*. Vol. 48, No. 1. University of Miami (2006). p. 88.

¹⁴⁰ Soledad Ortega. "En Búsqueda del Paraíso Chileno: Peruanos en Chile Forjan su Comunidad. *NACLA Report on the Americas*. Vol. 35, No. 2. September/October 2001.

dictatorship era, aside from causing a massive exodus of Chileans, solidified class stratification, heightened social mistrust, and created a pervasive uncertainty as to what constituted *Chilenidad*. The effects of this tension are particularly apparent in Santiago, where socio-economic segregation is already manifested by the growing concentration of wealth in just six of 34 *comunas* – a stratification only exacerbated by the influx of new Peruvian immigrant underclass.

“Santiago, como el resto del país, aún no ha podido recuperar cabalmente lo perdido en los años de dictadura; perviven la desconfianza entre vecinos de un mismo barrio, el deterioro de la condición de ciudadano, la segregación territorial y la discriminación social, los frecuentes gestos autoritarios de quien dispone de alguna cuota de poder, y un cierto temor latente hacia lo que depara el futuro.”¹⁴¹

This “latent fear” of its own future arises from this society’s vehement, yet fragile assertion that it is – or very soon will be – a developed nation. Chile has long prided itself on its whiteness, development, level of education, and its political stability (in marked contrast to its more “Latin American” neighbors), and has marketed itself abroad as a fundamentally European nation in South America. The national narrative of a First World nation surrounded by the Third was largely created during the Pinochet era, but appears to have been eroded somewhat since the democratic transition, as Chile begins to resemble its neighbors with regard to certain social indicators. Income inequality, for example, has increased dramatically. Once possessing one of the region’s most equitable distributions of income, Chile has become one of the most unequal, with the wealthiest 10% controlling 47% of national income.¹⁴² At least in this respect, Chile has clearly moved in the direction of Guatemala, not Germany.

Furthermore, the national myth of a white society free of *mestizaje* is also beginning to crumble, as race was measured for the first time in the 1992, with 7.5% of the population

¹⁴¹ Esteban Soms García. “Santiago de Chile: Viejos Problemas, Nuevos Desafíos.” *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*, Vol. 20, No. 2. El Colegio de México, A.C. (May-August, 2005). p. 371.

¹⁴² Luis Reygadas. “Latin America: Persistent Inequality and Recent Transformations.” *Latin America After Neoliberalism*. (ed. Eric Hershberg and Fred Rosen). NACLA. The New Press: New York, 2006. p. 132.

identifying as not just *mestizo*, but actually indigenous.¹⁴³ While the breakdown of this national narrative commenced years ago, the influx of poorer, mixed-race migrants has forced Chileans to confront changes in their society much more abruptly than expected – complicating an already difficult task of social reconstruction after dictatorship. As Silke Staab and Kristin Maher note, today’s polarized immigration debate reinforces a false dichotomy

“[B]etween Chileans and Peruvians more generally: between whites and indigenous peoples; between a developed, civilized state that is more European than Latin American and another that is backward, poor, and truly part of the less-developed world. Such comparisons imply an image of a unified “us” among Chileans, a national homogeneity that momentarily erases or overshadows internal class, racial, and gender divisions. Such discourses might be symptomatic of a larger national identity project occurring in Chile.”¹⁴⁴

The fissures created by the dictatorship would have resulted in a social identity crisis eventually; the influx of immigrants has merely accelerated the process and forced the government to recognize that Chile is the throes of change. As Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Felipe Harboe recently confessed, “We are creating a consciousness that Chile is being converted into a multicultural society.”¹⁴⁵

Ironically, Peruvian migrants are threatening not just because they remind Chileans of elements de-emphasized in their own society, but also because of what countries around them may soon become – competition. Despite the comparatively poor economic situation in Peru, a surprising proportion of these migrants are highly educated. Among female Peruvian domestic workers, roughly 70% have completed secondary school, and 30% possess at least some

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Silke Staab and Kristin Hill Maher. “The Dual Discourse About Peruvian Domestic Workers in Santiago de Chile. Class, Race, and a Nationalist Project.” *Latin American Politics and Society*. Vol. 48, No. 1. University of Miami (2006). p. 101.

¹⁴⁴ Silke Staab and Kristin Hill Maher. “The Dual Discourse About Peruvian Domestic Workers in Santiago de Chile. Class, Race, and a Nationalist Project.” *Latin American Politics and Society*. Vol. 48, No. 1. University of Miami (2006). p. 104.

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Trey Pollard. “Over 40,000 Illegal Immigrants Apply for Amnesty in Chile.” *The Santiago Times*. 30 January, 2008.

university education.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the majority claims they intend to return to Peru. Despite the widespread denigration of Peruvians, the level of education among these migrants has not gone unnoticed in Chile, as many employers seek out Peruvians for their competence and “better Spanish”¹⁴⁷ –both colloquial proxies for education. Were the economic situation in Peru to improve appreciably and these migrants return, Peru would conceivably possess the human capital to spur development on par with Chile’s. Economic development of its “lesser” neighbors would, of course, weaken a pillar of Chile’s national identity – one already fragile after dictatorship.

In these pages, I have attempted to explain the current state of Chilean immigration policy and the factors that continue to mold it today. By examining Chile’s economic relationship with Peru, the Chilean export economy, the problem of undocumented migrants, historical border disputes with Peru, citizen security, immigrant population visibility, geographic concentration, xenophobia, the legacies of dictatorship, and national identity, one can begin to understand the forces that have influenced Chile’s response to this phenomenon. While the Chilean government has made some progress with regards to immigration, it is obvious that economic, security, and socio-historic concerns have produced a generally ineffective policy.

But why is this important? Why are the migration patterns and policies of a relatively small country significant in understanding the future of migration? I assert that Chile’s situation is emblematic of the transition already commencing in the nations of the Global South – particularly in Latin America. As certain countries develop and approach First World status, they

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Soledad Ortega. “En Búsqueda del Paraíso Chileno: Peruanos en Chile Forjan su Comunidad. *NACLA Report on the Americas*. Vol. 35, No. 2. September/October 2001.

¹⁴⁷ Silke Staab and Kristin Hill Maher. “The Dual Discourse About Peruvian Domestic Workers in Santiago de Chile. Class, Race, and a Nationalist Project.” *Latin American Politics and Society*. Vol. 48, No. 1. University of Miami (2006). p. 88.

will unfortunately be faced with that most First World of problems – immigration from less-developed neighbors. If today’s economic migrants were a country, they would constitute the sixth most populous nation on Earth.¹⁴⁸ This economic migration – visible in the case of Chile - will only continue to do expand as development shifts southward.

Thus, it is crucial to examine the forces shaping national responses to such flows. While some factors such as history and culture are unique to each society, others, such as economic interdependence, free trade, and feelings of citizen security can be extrapolated to a number of receptor nations. From Chile’s experience, developing nations can learn both what to expect as their own development accelerates, and how to better address the demographic shifts and social dislocations produced by immigration. As the Guatemalan singer, Ricardo Arjona wryly wrote in a famous song – if the North were the South, “rafts would float from Miami to Havana, and the South would be an equal mess.” While such a dramatic reversal in flows is amusingly unlikely, the latter prediction is not. For the sake of both its migrants and citizens, the developing world would do well to learn from Chile’s experience, because if development continues, the South will one day resemble the North – in both riches and rude realities.

¹⁴⁸ Donald F. Terry. “Para mejorar el impacto de las remesas en el desarrollo,” Foreign Affairs en Español. Vol. 5, No. 3. July-September, 2005.

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