

Peruvian Migration to Chile: Cultural Crossroads and Social Incorporation in the Andes  
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Peruvian migration has for decades been a significant feature of Perú's demographic States, Japan and Australia and 10% of the total population is currently residing abroad<sup>1</sup>. However with the twin troubles in receiving countries of the current economic crisis and an increasingly restrictive set of immigration policies, South-South migration is on the rise. In the Peruvian case, many are now immigrating to countries closer to home, particularly Chile, where a relatively stable economy and proximity to Perú have made it an attractive destination for lower-skilled Peruvians, especially women. This is a new phenomenon for Perú as well as for Chile, a traditional sending country, and therefore little literature has surveyed what this means for immigrants and the communities that receive them.

Through representations of Peruvians in Chilean media this study looks at the ways in which Chilean society is reacting to the influx of Andean neighbors. Of particular interest is the way in which models and practices of social incorporation inform and are informed by debates in major newspapers. I hypothesize that a large presence of Peruvians leads to the creation of marginalized ethnic minorities and that, as a result, areas with little Peruvian migration do not perceive it as a threat to the social status quo. The survey takes a sample from the major newspapers of Arica, Santiago, and Concepción from the last three years, 2006-2009, a time period chosen because it encompasses the public discussion and eventual approval of amnesty for the undocumented immigrant population. Through this sample the study reveals the tensions, accommodations, and negotiations of Chilean society as it emerges as a new recipient of immigrant labor, and suggests that traditional models of social incorporation are modified in a dynamic

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<sup>1</sup> Teófilo Altamirano, Remesas y nueva "fuga de cerebros": impactos transnacionales (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2006).

deriving from South-South migration.

The Peruvian context: Push factors

Traditionally, Peruvian migration captures sojourners from a broad socioeconomic spectrum, including rural, urban, mestizo and indigenous groups<sup>2</sup>, a sample that reflects the culturally diverse nature and history of migration to Perú. While the U.S. is the primary destination on a global level<sup>3</sup>, Latin American neighboring countries, such as Chile, have also become important recipients of Peruvian migration. In the case of Chile, the feminization of migration is a recent characteristic unique to this particular flow, as is the decidedly lower-class background of these migrants. Young women of working age, many with children at home in Perú, exemplify the demographic profile of 60% of Peruvian immigrants in Chile, with 70% of those concentrated in largely domestic service sectors<sup>4</sup>.

So why would women leave their children behind to, in many cases, care for the children of others? The Peruvian economy in the past three decades was rocked by neoliberal reforms, rapid urbanization, high unemployment and a booming but perpetually precarious informal economy<sup>5</sup>. Many of the migrants from Perú to Chile come from informal settlements in urban settings and for whom migration to farther destinations is prohibitively expensive, and increasingly restricted. As Massey writes, emigration is “undertaken as part of a household strategy to adapt to failures in the urban labor market”<sup>6</sup>. Access to employment is limited to the informal economy, an inherently

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<sup>2</sup> Karsten Paerregaard, Peruvians Dispersed (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2008) 2.

<sup>3</sup> Paerregaard 45.

<sup>4</sup> Carolina Stefoni Espinoza, Gastronomia Peruana en las calles de Santiago y la construcción de espacios transnacionales y territorios (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Stefoni 46, de Soto.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas Massey, Magaly Sanchez, and Jere R. Behrman, Chronicles of a Myth Foretold: The Washington Consensus in Latin America (SAGE Publications: 2006) 7.

unstable market due to its illegality, and the extreme economic competition of the city, where 2 out of 3 Peruvians now live and vie for the increasingly unequally distributed resources of the neoliberal age<sup>7</sup>. It is these conditions that continue to sustain significant migration outflows from Perú. Therefore migrants set out in search of what de Soto has called “productive justice”- equal opportunity to produce<sup>8</sup>.

The ability to work has been seriously challenged by relatively new urbanization of the coastal cities of Perú, in particular where the majority of migrants to Chile originate from<sup>9</sup>. While many Peruvians from these areas arrive with tourist visas, which are approved for seven days and then overstayed or bought illegally in Tacna/Arica bus terminals<sup>10</sup>, they are nevertheless able to generate income greater than what they earned at home and/or earn in an institutionally stable environment that therefore provides a measure of security uninsured in their country of origin. Therefore this strategy of migration takes into accounts not only wage differentials, but more general financial incentives generated by economic security. The clientelism of Perú, where businesses are

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<sup>7</sup> Massey, Sanchez and Behrman.

<sup>8</sup> Hernando de Soto, The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World (New York: Harper and Row, 1989) 199.

<sup>9</sup> Carolina Stefoni Espinoza, Gastronomia Peruana en las calles de Santiago y la construcción de espacios transnacionales y territorios (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Rodrigo Barrio and Rodrigo Cea, La Nueva Inmigración en Chile (Santiago: El Mercurio, October 7th, 2007) Accessed November 5th, 2009. <http://diario.elmercurio.cl/detalle/index.asp?id=%7Bf5159a35-be53-4158-8fbc-d7669f350c63%7D>

“politically efficient, not economically efficient”<sup>11</sup>, is a motivating factor.

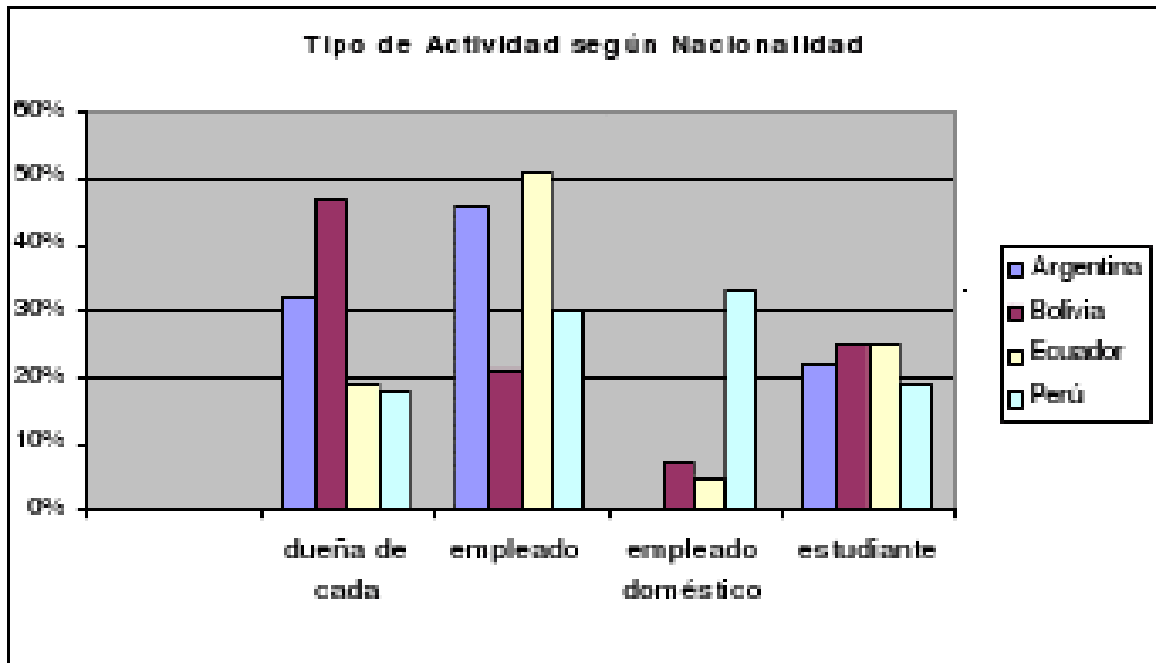


Figure 1.1 Type of Activity According to Nationality  
 Source: Maria Florencia Solivellas, *Inmigrantes en Chile: La Exclusión Vista desde la Política Migratoria Chilena*

Where other immigrant groups such as Argentinians and Bolivians distribute themselves more generally across the whole country and in various sectors of the economy (see figure 1.1)<sup>12</sup>, Peruvians have clustered in the capital, Santiago, and to some degree in the northern border territory of Arica. Arica has hundreds (or, considering the breadth of the Incan empire, thousands) of years of shared cultural history with Perú as it straddles that nation’s border, and is home to Chileans that tend to view themselves as sharing much in common with their Peruvian neighbors. Although there has always been

<sup>11</sup> Hernando de Soto, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989) 191.

<sup>12</sup> Jorge Martinez Pizarro, *El encanto de los datos: Sociodemografía de la inmigración en Chile según el censo de 2002* (Santiago: United Nations, 2002) 38

a Peruvian presence in Santiago, the relatively new spatial concentration of this group, with 80% of the 100,000 Peruvians currently residing in the country<sup>13</sup>, has made their concentration more visible. While Peruvian restaurants are broadly scattered across many neighborhoods and social classes, ethnic neighborhoods or territorial enclaves have been set up in the downtown area, as well as Recoleta and Independencia<sup>14</sup>. The Sunday meeting place of Peruvians in the Plaza de Armas has led to its colloquial, and derogatory, renaming as “Plaza Perú”. In this neighborhood a migration industry has emerged<sup>15</sup>, with internet cafes and telephone kiosks populating the streets so that Peruvians can contact families at home. However because 70% of Peruvians work in domestic service, and therefore often live with the families that they serve, there is a significant number of them living in upper-class neighborhoods like Las Condes. Perhaps this has led them to meet publicly on Sundays as there is little private space afforded them in light of their employment arrangements.

#### Chile: Monoculture or multicultural?

The spatial visibility of immigrants in Chile is not unique to Peruvians. The south of Chile still maintains strong German ties, with *colonias alemanas* dotting much of the lakes district. It is not uncommon to see German written and even spoken in this area. In Santiago there are Middle-Eastern, largely Lebanese, areas, and Chinese restaurants are as common as the ubiquitous empanada stands. Regardless, Chile generally considers itself to be homogenous, and perhaps more relevant to the increasing concentration of

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<sup>13</sup> Jorge Martinez Pizarro, El encanto de los datos: Sociodemografía de la inmigración en Chile según el censo de 2002 (Santiago: United Nations, 2002) 38.

<sup>14</sup> Carolina Stefoni Espinoza, Gastronomía Peruana en las calles de Santiago y la construcción de espacios transnacionales y territorios (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Stefoni

Peruvians, European in heritage and emphatically not indigenous. Chile, like Brazil and many other South American nations, carried through restrictive immigration policies on



Figure 2.1 Map of comunas of Santiago  
Wikipedia Commons

the basis of race for many decades, a process referred to as *blancamiento* or whitening, so as to “improve” the racial stock of the country<sup>16</sup>. In light of this history it is not surprising that Germans have been able to successfully sustain their language and culture relatively undisturbed in the South, while Peruvians, who share a common tongue, are distinguished as “other” by even slight differences such as accent.

There has been a notable lack of academic literature in Chile written on immigration which contributes to a more general vacuum of knowledge regarding the multicultural history of the nation. Under the dictatorship of Pinochet, many social science departments were shut down and immigration studies in particular was singled out and

<sup>16</sup> Carolina Stefoni Espinoza, Immigración Peruana en Chile: una oportunidad a la integración (Santiago: FLACSO-Chile., 2002) 48

censored. This is because the emigration of Chileans abroad at the time was political in nature, and therefore the study of fluxes in population was considered a political threat<sup>17</sup>. Only since the restoration of democracy and academic freedom have intellectuals been able to resume study of this important phenomenon.

However immigration policy also underwent restrictions under Pinochet, and has not recovered since. The Ley de Extranjeria of 1975 restricts immigration from dangerous or threatening elements<sup>18</sup>. The vagueness of this law has led it to be used as a political tool for labeling any “unwanted” persons from legal settlement, and has yet to be amended or otherwise revised since Pinochet’s exit in 1990. While this has not directly affected Peruvians, it contributes to the general deficiency of comprehensive immigration policy in Chile to date. A lack of comprehensive data on migration is symptomatic of the same problem, whereby Chile relies on census data, collected only every ten years, to determine immigrant numbers and distribution. The last census was in 2002, and therefore is not current with the increasing numbers of immigrants moving to Chile annually.

However, it is important to note that immigrants as a percentage of the population are few. Only 1.8% of the population is foreign-born, much lower than many other countries including Venezuela and Argentina<sup>19</sup>. Therefore the spatial visibility of Peruvians, as well as the racial and classist overtones with regards to their social incorporation, takes on greater significance than their perceived effect on culture and social services. There

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<sup>17</sup> Jorge Martinez Pizarro, El encanto de los datos: Sociodemografía de la inmigración en Chile según el censo de 2002 (Santiago: United Nations, 2002) 38

<sup>18</sup> María Florencia Jensen Solivellas, Inmigrantes en Chile: La exclusión vista desde la política migratoria chilena (Córdoba: Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población, 2008) 3

<sup>19</sup> Jorge Martinez Pizarro, El encanto de los datos: Sociodemografía de la inmigración en Chile según el censo de 2002 (Santiago: United Nations, 2002) 23



are almost as many Argentines in Chile as Peruvians, and yet their presence appears to be of less import as they are more generally scattered and, due to their phenotype, are permitted to incorporate with less resistance. Regardless, the magnitude, repercussions and future evolution of the “new immigration” wave in Chile are all often grossly overstated<sup>20</sup>. The lack of general knowledge and acceptance of the multicultural dimension of Chile’s history must be considered as a contributing factor to this distortion.

Another significant dimension of social incorporation and social dynamics of immigration in Chile is socioeconomic in nature. Due to the demand for and concentration in “unskilled” sectors of the economy, particularly domestic work, Peruvian immigrants are identifiable by their class as well as their ethnicity. The Office of International Immigration undertook a survey in 2003 regarding this topic, and concluded that these characteristics were as important to understanding social incorporation and discrimination as nationality<sup>21</sup>. The class dimension of recent immigration is of particular import given the increasing inequality of Chilean society, the worst in Latin America according to some studies, and therefore contributes to greater competition in low skilled work.

So what has made Chile a popular destination for immigrants, even in light of its staggering inequality? Setting aside the 18 years of dictatorship, Chile’s institutional and political legacy is one of stability, a characteristic unique to this nation in a continent known for its military coups and inflation. Neoliberalism in particular was instituted in a context quite distinct from that of Perú, wherein in Chile the Washington consensus (as

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<sup>20</sup> Jorge Martínez Pizarro, El encanto de los datos: Sociodemografía de la inmigración en Chile según el censo de 2002 (Santiago: United Nations, 2002) 9-10

<sup>21</sup> María Florencia Jensen Solivellas, Inmigrantes en Chile: La exclusión vista desde la política migratoria chilena (Córdoba: Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población, 2008) 13

neoliberal policy is also known), functioned “as much because of its strong institutional foundations as because of the tenets of the consensus itself.”<sup>22</sup> While in Chile immigration policy and marked inequality demonstrate that the nation is not uniquely “fair”, it is, politically and economically, considered to be relatively efficient and effective, precursors that Massey has demonstrated as fundamental to successful development. It is in this context that Peruvians have been able to generate sufficient remittances to sustain families left at home.

It has been suggested that in the case of female migrants, there is a desire to be free from the oppressive dynamics of machismo at home<sup>23</sup>. While economic activity cannot be ignored as a liberating force, in and of itself it is questionable whether its effects alone produce significant independence. Particularly in domestic work, where a woman is largely sequestered from the public sphere and tends to work alone, it is unclear whether the resulting social isolation produces the type of liberating circumstances women perhaps intend to seek out<sup>24</sup>. Therefore the author perhaps agrees that this may be a motivating factor, rather than an end product, of female migration.

The public perception of migrants as vulnerable and needy low-skilled workers contrasts with their representation as a positive and productive influence, both as employees and as entrepreneurs. These perceptions directly inform the way in which social incorporation takes place, in effect establishing the parameters and direction for social incorporation by identifying migrants as being a particular way, and therefore

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<sup>22</sup> Douglas Massey, Magaly Sanchez, and Jere R. Behrman, Chronicles of a Myth Foretold: The Washington Consensus in Latin America (SAGE Publications: 2006) 5.

<sup>23</sup> María Florencia Jensen Solivellas, Inmigrantes en Chile: La exclusión vista desde la política migratoria chilena (Córdoba: Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población, 2008) 5

<sup>24</sup> Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Gender and U.S. Immigration: Contemporary Trends (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)

contrasting them from the host society, and therefore determining the distance of difference. While history brings to bear on historical models of social incorporation and, as we have seen, determines how migration in general is seen in the context of national identity, the actual identity and activities of current migrants also informs how the nation proceeds from the current reality.

### Models of social incorporation

Historically there have been significant advances in the way in which host societies conceptualize social incorporation of immigrants. The application of these new concepts, however, is varied, and can be simultaneous even as they conflict with one another, and tend to coincide with the way in which the nation understands its cultural and linguistic heritage<sup>25</sup>. It therefore also takes on a distributional effect, determining who belongs and therefore who is deserving of resources, services, and power<sup>26</sup>. Assimilation, whereby immigrants are expected to adapt to and adopt local customs, beliefs, traditions, language and social norms, is unidirectional in nature and assumes homogeneity of the host society. The burden of change is offset to the immigrant, who is marginalized if she has not divorced herself from the ways of being she brought with her from the sending country. Difference then becomes the basis for discrimination and “othering”.

Multiculturalism accepts the “persistence of marked difference” and embraces heterogeneity (source). In societies that see themselves as historically uniform in race and culture, this model tends to demand greater changes in the way that society (re)envision itself, thereby calling for a reinvention of what it means to belong. It still assumes a static receiving culture and imagines different groups as atomized circles

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<sup>25</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, The Age of Migration (USA: Guilford Press, 2009) 245-46.

<sup>26</sup> Carolina Stefoni Espinoza, Inmigración Peruana en Chile: una oportunidad a la integración (Santiago: FLACSO-Chile, 2002) 99.

independent of one another, when in fact the construction of identity and its practice is one of constant contact- a Venn diagram. Therefore there is also a third model, social incorporation, which more neutrally describes the dynamics of social contact and context in the national body without using prescriptive language such as integration.

However it is important to note that these models have largely covered North-South or North-North migration, and therefore their usefulness in describing South-South migration may be questionable. Language is generally a focus of social incorporation, and in the case of Peruvian-Chilean dynamics is not applicable as they share a common tongue. The more subtle differences in regional vocabulary and accent become linguistic markers of the “other”, as opposed to language in general. Additionally the geographic proximity and similarities of the two groups are not reflected in models that often take as their unit of analyses societies that are receiving immigrants who are substantially different. Therefore the class and, to some extent, ethnic dimension (I.e. indigenous heritage) of social incorporation in Chile take on greater import, and resulting frameworks for understanding the formation of ethnic minorities must then also rely on these characteristics to describe resulting processes.

The representation of these processes plays out publicly in the media<sup>27</sup>. Acting as a feedback loop, newspaper articles both inform and are informed by popular depictions of immigrants, and consequently the host society itself. Using articles from three geographic areas, gathered from 2006-2009, this content analysis seeks to identify models of social incorporation through representations of Peruvian immigrants and the immigration debate in Chile. As this analysis will show, there are conflicting but

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<sup>27</sup> Carolina Stefoni Espinoza, Inmigración Peruana en Chile: una oportunidad a la integración (Santiago: FLACSO-Chile, 2002) 99

convergent portrayals of Peruvians as victims and victors, parasites and producers, foreigners and brothers. Where a lack of Peruvian migrants is documented, as in Concepcion, so there is a lack of media coverage regarding their presence, whereas where they are highly visible, as in Santiago and Arica, migration is a consistent topic of public debate. Despite the documentation of Chileans as discriminatory against Peruvians,<sup>28</sup> newspapers tend to highlight commonalities and contributions, attempting to reconstruct a multicultural past and connect it to the current social milieu even as political conflict between the two nations inflames conflict over territory.

#### Concepción- *Diario El Sur*

Using the search terms *migrant* and *migration*, only one article appeared in the southern daily El Sur of Concepcion. It was an article reporting the results of a study conducted by La Católica university that 55% of Chileans oppose Peruvian immigration. Interestingly this article would also appear in El Mercurio, in Santiago, but reported as “45% of Chileans approve Peruvian immigration”, a revealing reversal of the study’s findings that perhaps suggests latent hostility towards Peruvians in an area distant from sites of actual Peruvian migration. Regardless the notable lack of articles relating to this theme suggests that it is irrelevant to Concepcion’s public sphere.

#### Arica-*El Morrocotudo*

The search of Arica’s community newspaper, El Morrocotudo, produced three articles on Peruvian migration. One, from July 2008, highlighted general trends in immigration worldwide, with an eye to Latin America and Peruvian migration in particular. It used positive terminology, particularly referring to unauthorized Peruvian migrants as the

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<sup>28</sup> Cristián Dona, Percepción de la inmigración reciente en Chile a través del análisis de medios de prensa (Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 2002)

undocumented instead of the more politically loaded and common term, illegal. It also referenced the multicultural nature of Arica, highlighting the strong ties the region has to Perú, with an emphasis on shared cultural practices. The second article, from March 2009, detailed the work a Catholic charity set up to temporarily shelter and feed migrants before they continued on in search of work. It uses the voices of Peruvians, quoting one migrant as saying that Chile had stolen Peruvian land and ocean, but emphasizing more so the migrants' gratefulness for having a place to stay and for the shelter's hospitality. In addition, the phrase "un migrante, un hermano" or "a migrant, a brother" is used, echoing Christian themes of the stranger as family. The third article, from September 2008, discusses a new government campaign called "Women Migrants, Women of Chile", which attempts to humanize migrant women by defining them as part of the Chilean social fabric.

Therefore it is clear that in Arica portrayals of migrants demonstrate the value in their difference, as well as how perceived otherness is often historically a commonality. Peruvian voices are heard in the articles, and attempts to assist Peruvians in their journeys are seen as valuable and worthwhile devotions of resources. It is the sustained contact of Peruvians and Chileans in this region coupled with the public acknowledgement and regard for shared culture and history that informs Arican social incorporation models. The articles demonstrate that Aricans see this process as a two-way endeavor that has always already been unfolding, and that therefore values ethnic difference even as greater commonalities are emphasized and represented.

#### Santiago-El Mercurio

El Mercurio, a national daily newspaper based in Santiago, returned 20 articles in the

search of Peruvian migration. Considering the concentration of Peruvians in the capital, as well as the concentration of national economic and political resources, it is unsurprising that this topic would be the basis for sustained coverage. However, contrary to the hypothesis of this study, the presence of Peruvians did not lead to greater discriminatory language in the content of articles, which tend to take neutral positions or even assert positive representations of Peruvians. There was a notable lack of inflammatory rhetoric often common in the United States and France, to name just two examples. The following analysis will highlight other themes that emerged from these articles, yet their general tone is strikingly similar to the articles in the Arican newspaper, suggesting an attitude towards social incorporation that heavily draws from the multicultural and social incorporation models.

I will be dividing these articles into three categories: economic, political and cultural. While there is obvious overlap in these categories, it is useful to divide them in this way because these are the three most common paradigms for thinking about migration and its effects. They also function as axes upon which identity is built- migrants as economic actors, as political subjects/objects, and as cultural conveyers and practitioners.

The articles with a more explicit focus on culture emphasize the mutual practices and beliefs of Peruvians and Chileans. One article described shared Catholic holidays, covering a street event where Peruvians and Chileans worshipped a particular saint together. Two articles focus on the increasingly popular role of Peruvian food in Chilean homes, and the contribution of Peruvian maids as cultural emissaries through their production of food. The connection they make to the economic sphere of businesses that provide Peruvian specialty food also means that Peruvian domestic workers perform

economic work on two levels- as maids in Chilean homes, and as purveyors of Peruvian goods for those same homes, in effect connecting Peruvian markets to Chilean consumers.

The last article attempts to challenge what the author calls “the mechanical link between race and country”<sup>29</sup>. Written just prior to Chilean Independence Day celebrations, this article highlights the multicultural history of the Chilean nation, while concurrently acknowledging that heterogeneity is not accepted as a part of the national myth. Therefore, to disrupt the assumption of a connection between race (I.e. European) and country, evidence to the contrary must be reincorporated into celebrations of the nation. In reflecting on the diverse populations whose descendants now populate the country, culture takes on a multidimensional tone, and the innate “otherness” of Peruvians is more solidly questioned. Interestingly all of the articles with a focus on culture are from 2008-09, after amnesty was approved. Perhaps the cultural contributions of Peruvians are more fully emphasized once their legal status as undocumented is resolved.

The economics of difference, or representations of “the other” in the economic sphere, as represented in the articles with an emphasis on the economic impact of Peruvians is likewise even-handed. Four articles discuss the Peruvian context for migration, illustrating the conditions of rapid urbanization in coastal Perú that motivates migrants to leave this area. By emphasizing the economic and therefore structural factors that prompt this new wave, the articles put forth a vision of migrants as contributors to the economic sphere because they are strategizing, surviving and supporting loved ones at home. One article even then goes on to detail a study by La Católica university

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<sup>29</sup> Roberto Ampuero, Chile, una pluralidad (Santiago: El Mercurio, 2009)



regarding the revitalization of waning neighborhoods by the influx of migrants and their businesses. Their contributions are therefore physically tangible, as once-blighted barrios are rejuvenated by ethnic commerce, some of it supported by the new culinary demands of Chileans employing Peruvian maids. However no mention is made of why Peruvians originally clustered in run-down neighborhoods; housing discrimination specifically is never mentioned, even while a more nebulous invocation of discrimination is frequently commented upon. The lack of concrete examples of discrimination perhaps signals an unwillingness to acknowledge its specific practices, and therefore name the social forces responsible for its perpetuation.

It is detailed in two articles that portray the dangerous journeys that migrants undertake in order to enter Chile for work. Fraudulent job offers, *jaladores* (those who resell their old tourist visas at bus terminals), and increasingly sex slavery are all menaces that migrants, particularly women, must navigate before they even reach Santiago and obtain work. Two other articles highlight the recent improvement in development in Perú, and the number of Peruvians who have left Chile to return to their homeland. The number of Peruvians who have returned is equal to the number who has left for Chile, netting no increase or decrease in real numbers. This means that the dangers migrants face are not sufficient to prevent them from continuing to come to Chile, nor are the developments at home, in largely high-tech industries, able to absorb workers who are largely low-skilled.

The vision of Peruvians as low-skilled is given as a reason for their continued discrimination in another article. The author argues that these immigrants have less human capital, and therefore are less likely to be viewed as bringing valuable skills to the Chilean labor market. However the author also claims that human capital relative to

other low-skilled workers is still relatively high, as the costs of migration and therefore the fortitude of character that migration requires becomes an indicator of human capital in and of itself.

Strangely the only article that treats the issue of domestic work specifically focuses on the new arrival of a small group of Haitian and Dominican women to work as maids and nannies, briefly mentioning Peruvians only as *ilegales* or illegals. The marked absence of a story highlighting the work of 60% of Peruvian migrants is a latent gesture of devaluation. Interestingly, this group is higher-skilled than its Chilean counterparts, with more average years of completed schooling<sup>30</sup>. Yet while there are articles that speak to the human interest of migrant economic contributions, there is a breach in the sector in which Peruvians are most highly concentrated and in which they are relatively educated. By highlighting the positive influence of Peruvians and other immigrants in other sectors of the economy, the noted lack of coverage of Peruvian contributions in the sphere in which they are most found thereby implies a lack of positive contribution. The sphere identified most commonly as “immigrant” is therefore diminished in importance. As this is the realm of women and lower-skilled workers, it thereby also devalues these groups.

The cultural and economic participation of Peruvians is enveloped in the broader political dragnet of Chilean-Peruvian relations, as well as domestic political concerns. The articles that pertain to the political realm deal particularly with the nature of international relations between the two countries, politician’s positions on immigration, and finally amnesty of 2007 for those who were living with irregular legal statuses. The latter was discussed in two articles, one giving the basic details of the process of seeking

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<sup>30</sup> Carolina Stefoni Espinoza, Immigración Peruana en Chile: una oportunidad a la integración (Santiago: FLACSO-Chile, 2002).

amnesty. The other couches the discussion of amnesty in the reality that it benefits more than 15 different nationalities of immigrants, and referring to amnesty as “the big apology”. In the former article Peruvians are interviewed, and their general contentment with amnesty and the process of obtaining it is placed at the center. In the latter amnesty becomes a *mea culpa* of the Chilean people to immigrants from many different countries who have been restricted access to social services and workplace protections as a result of failing Chilean immigration policy.

The political use of this event as well as Peruvian immigration in general tends towards the discriminatory. The articles give space to voices critical of this position, however, and attempt an explanatory tone that give context to discrimination while privileging voices that challenge it. One such article reports on the call of one Congressional candidate for the deportation of all Peruvians, who according to his perspective are gangs of delinquents. Both the Peruvian Consul and the Director of the Secretary of the Presidency are quoted, stating that this type of commentary is xenophobic and racist, and by highlighting the absurdity of such a suggestion by suggesting that Argentina should then deport the 200,000 Chileans living in that nation. In essence these articles acknowledge racist and discriminatory political tooling of the immigration debate, while providing space for this discourse’s disruption.

The third political level in which immigration is defined and debated is international in scope. The bad blood between the two nations is commented on regularly, but in this context is defined as conflict between politicians, not citizens. Disputes over land and maritime rights are reported on, but always with the caveat that on a micro-level Peruvians and Chilean tend to get along. One politician from Perú says that amnesty is

an example of the type of horizontal gesture that defines real relationships between the two peoples, in spite of continued conflict between governments. One article mentions a study by La Católica that found that those with the most social contact with Peruvians were the most likely to support their immigration. Therefore while immigration is used as a political tool on domestic and international scales, the social networks most touched by immigration tend to reject the hostility and discord that characterizes the public face of Peruvian-Chilean relations.

These various, multidimensional and sometimes conflicting portraits of Perú and Peruvian migrants mean a number of different things in light of the models of social incorporation introduced earlier in this paper. The inherent tensions of difference are defined in the distance societies must travel to incorporate one another and this chasm, as reflected in the media, is labyrinthine but navigable by both Chileans and Peruvians. However the route will not be the same for all stakeholders.

As imagined in the public sphere, Peruvian women are either victims or cooks. Their voices were never given venue in any of the articles, even in spite of their majority and their visibility in high concentrations in the domestic service sector. Therefore their incorporation into Chilean society will be inherently imbalanced; as their positive economic contributions go unmentioned upon, and their actions to work against discrimination they may encounter (particularly as many of their employers seek them out in migrant shelters), their incorporation takes on three potential and converging conclusions. One, they will be forced into the domestic underclass, as Portes has suggested happens in segmented assimilation models, or more broadly into subservience to the broader machismo culture as a result of their characterization as victims.

Two, they will be continuously identified with private, household work and therefore excluded from economic participation in other sectors. Three, their role as vessels of Peruvian culture in the form of cuisine will relegate their other skills and knowledge to peripheral spaces, whereby only Peruvian cuisine is seen as worthy of incorporation; other cultural differences become liabilities and are expected to be shed.

Discrimination in these articles, while acknowledged, is never thoroughly challenged as it's foundations in policies of "whitening" of the racial stock and the denial of indigenous roots of the country is left untold. The class dimension of discrimination is not properly analyzed either, although it is mentioned in the article about perceived immigrant human capital. Regardless due to the absence of a thorough treatment of discriminatory practices as found in social inequities, Peruvian social incorporation then means that the association of Peruvians with low-skill work becomes a deterministic representation. The narrative of social mobility in many immigrant stories is therefore relegated to chance.

In light of the surprising awareness of the media of Chilean discrimination and marginalization of Peruvians, it would be disingenuous to say that Chilean society is uninterested and unprepared to meet Peruvians halfway in processes of social incorporation. However what these articles most clearly demonstrate is that despite this awareness there is widespread acceptance of the shared, entangled histories, economies and cultural practices of these two groups. Without running roughshod over the differences between them, there does seem to be a public consensus that similarities are significant and recognizable.

Therefore social incorporation models between South-South countries rely on

commonalities as they genuinely exist, which implies an intersecting, bidirectional process of social change cast as historical awareness. Invocations of similarities focus on the micro level and on their horizontal practice. However they also gloss over class and racial differences in the absence of more easily identifiable linguistic markers, and in so doing assume that there are then no racial or class hurdles to overcome in the process of social incorporation. The distance of difference is then artificially shortened, and incorporation is thus imagined as being as simple as the clasping of two hands. As the dimension of difference in the Peruvian case is heavily feminine, women take on the unacknowledged burdens of these errors.

### Conclusions

Peruvian migration to Chile in its current form is new to both groups. The push and pull factors in these countries produce a feminized, low-skilled stream of undocumented workers for the Chilean domestic sector. Their representation in the media as triangulated within the broader political, economic and cultural spheres of Chilean society is complex, and serves as much to illuminate as to obscure their encountered socioeconomic realities.

As these representations determine models of social incorporation they are important to the ways in which migrants are able to negotiate the newfound social milieu as well as speak to the potential for social and economic mobility. They also reflect and reposition receiving society's views of themselves. Because South-South migration in this instance includes people whose similarities are as numerous as their differences, the model of social incorporation that reflects and invokes this reality is most commonly referred to. However in the absence of more explicit differences, the real racial and class dimensions

of migrant realities are erased, placing the burden of representing authenticity and then overcoming it on the migrants themselves.

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