Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice, 20:339–347

ISSN 1040-2659 print; 1469-9982 online
DOI: 10.1080/10402650802330196

The Peruvian Community in Chile

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Migration from neighboring countries has increasingly been at the cente political discussions in the Southern Cone. Intraregional migratory flo although modest compared to the extensive flows to the north, have doul in numbers in just over a decade. This south-to-south migration is becor the site of new forms of social conflict, as migrants often encounter preju and discrimination in their societies of settlement, together with a relati improved economic status. Focusing on Peruvian migration to Chile, essay will argue that while immigrants' gender and social class are rele in the configuration of intraregional flows, new forms of social stratifica and exclusion are also emerging in the receiving society. Social marginaliza has fostered the emergence of a migrants' community in response to discri nation, which is, at the same time, providing the framework for the developr of new forms of migrants' citizenship and identity.

Patterns of migration in the Southern Cone have undergone important sh in the last few decades. The movement of people to Europe and the Un States has given way to an increasing intraregional migration, where the soc of settlement is geographically close, as well as socially and culturally simil the society of origin. This is the case in Latin America, where the diversificat of flows has gone hand in hand with "border protection" policies in the Un States, the rising costs of migration, and the opening of employment oppo nities for migrants in some Latin American countries. Today, more than percent of Latin American migration happens within the region.

The gender composition of flows has also shifted: women r comprise half of migrants worldwide and the majority in south-to-sc migration. As Silvia Pedraza suggests, the feminization of intraregic migration has happened within the framework of structural changes, s as economic and political crisis, as well as people's capacity and propen to move as responses to these crisis. The search for employment in neighb ing countries has also augmented because niches for immigrant wome work have emerged in several Latin American labor markets.

In the case of Chile, after the return to a democratic governmen 1990, there has been a significant increase in migrant flows, mai

composed of workers in search of better economic opportunities. While, according to the last 2002 Census, the percentage of the foreign born population is only 1.2 percent of the total 15 million Chileans, immigration is becoming an issue of public concern. What has captured Chileans' attention is what makes this migration "new": its origin in other Latin American countries, and its significant increase in the inter-census period from 1992 to 2002 (105,000 to 184,000 foreign residents). The most numerous flows come from Peru and Argentina, followed by Ecuadorians. Peruvian migrants are mostly women (60 percent versus 40 percent men), and while they average over 10 years of education, they are concentrated in precarious, low paid, low status occupations: women in domestic service and men in construction work.

Most Peruvians live in the metropolitan area of Santiago, the capital city. They differ from other migrant groups in that a distinct Peruvian immigrant community with extensive networks in Peru and Chile has emerged, and it is primarily located in a bounded neighborhood in Santiago. Peruvians are the only group that have settled and formed an immigrant enclave. In this essay, I will argue that the community is a reflection and a result of the social exclusion of Peruvian immigrants. I will suggest that the community constitutes a space for the acting of migrants' citizenship—for their participation in a polity—and that it both hinders and enables Peruvians' integration into the Chilean nation-state.

Contemporary patterns of migration pose a challenge to traditional notions of citizenship, understood as the bond between individuals, their rights and responsibilities, and a nation-state. In a highly mobile world, immigrants do not always become—or want to become—national citizens. Human rights and international law provide a basis for the advancement of their interests in their societies of settlement, however, configuring a citizenship status Yasemin Soysal has dubbed "post-national citizenship"; that is, "citizenship in practice, without nominal national citizenship." This notion captures the reality of millions of migrants who, although not national citizens, call on universal norms to advocate for the recognition of basic social rights, such as access to health services and education for their children. As Irene Bloomraad has observed, claims based on human rights are not tied to a territory but are located in individuals, and hence, states are unable to deny them to non-citizens.

The notion of national citizenship is also challenged by immigrants' participation in transnational social spaces. Although political activity is mostly organized around the nation-state, acting citizenship can involve not just state institutions directly, but it can also be exercised via other groups; for example, transnational communities. Thus, rights claimed by immigrants can be derived from the legal status accorded them by a nation-state or by

supranational norms entitling individuals to new avenues of citizenship participation. In other words, national citizenship is no longer the only possible link to a political community. Tambini notes that in an era of globalization, migrants characterize the transformation of rights, participation, and belonging, capturing the different forms of participation in a political community.

In most cases of intraregional Latin American migration, and that of Peruvians in Chile, citizenship as legal status is attainable after a period of legal residence. Peruvians do not need a visa to enter the country. Upon entry, they are granted the right to stay for three months. Within that time they must find employment, because a labor contract and employer sponsorship are required to obtain a work visa. A temporary work visa may be transformed into a permanent permit after two years of continuous work for the same employer—a framework that forces the worker to stay with the same employer and sets back the clock to zero if they change jobs or miss payment of their social security taxes. After five years of legal residency, Peruvians can vote in Chilean elections, maintaining also their obligation to vote in Peru. Recently, these two governments have agreed to permit the transfer of social security funds, a positive step toward securing the exercise of migrants' rights to social security in both societies.

Formal citizenship involves a lengthy process and a series of requirements that not all Peruvian migrants can fulfill (mainly because the loss of their job means falling into irregular status and the need to pay a fine before reapplying to a new work visa). But other forms of citizenship are exercised in the distinct transnational community and ethnic enclave Peruvians have formed in Chile—the only migratory group identifiable in an enclave. The emergence of the community can be understood in the context of the social exclusion Peruvian migrants have endured in the country, and can be seen as a strategy to overcome blocked opportunities in Chile. Migrants' participation in the community offers them the opportunity for involvement in the cultural reproduction of the group and around specific political issues—exercising what Kymlicka terms multicultural citizenship. In other words, the community provides a space for immigrants' political activity and civic and cultural involvement, as well as to organize their demands *vis-à-vis* the Chilean state and institutions. Although participation in the community is still incipient—Peruvian migration is fairly recent—it is a reflection of the emergence of new forms of citizenship beyond the nation-state.

Intraregional migration is characterized by a relative fluidity of movement across borders and also by the similar sociocultural context immigrants face: a common language, religion, and history allow for a certain familiarity

and knowledge of how institutions work, and make insertion into the labor market somewhat less difficult. That the society of settlement may be a neighboring country implies not only that the cost of migration is lower, but that migrants can sustain a circular migration marked by employment rotation and periods of stay in the country of origin. The proximity between societies of origin and destination and the ease and inexpensive nature of travel (compared to south to north migration), determine a migratory group with scarce material and social resources, marking the vulnerability of this contingent. These characteristics help shape the limited opportunities they have to access the labor market. Most Peruvians are recruited to work in conditions that do not substantially overcome their economic and social marginalization, but that mark an improvement over the conditions in their community of origin.

Circular migration is common among Peruvians in Chile, which also contributes to their precarious insertion into the labor market. The majority of migrants are women who often leave their children, parents, and sometimes husbands behind. Hence, the proximity of the society of destination and circularity of the migratory pattern reflect not only the limited material resources of immigrants but also their gender responsibilities and existing hierarchies, because even when migrant women become the main providers of their households, they return to their place of origin to attend to child and parent care responsibilities.

The cultural similarities between neighboring countries do not prevent the continuous marginalization many Peruvians face in Chile. Several scholars have noted how systems of social stratification—class, gender, and race—sustain an unequal allocation of social benefits and rewards. These inequalities prompt most migration, and they are often reproduced, and even enhanced, in the country of destination. Immigrants' positions in social hierarchies are typically rearranged in the process of migration: they bring to the receiving society their own notions of gender, class, racial, or ethnic identity; they usually find a dissimilar political system and organization of the labor market, however, and are placed in hierarchies that may differ from their place of origin. In other words, they are often confronted to novel forms of social marginalization and exclusion, such as their categorization into new racial hierarchies or the heightening of their gender subordination.

Peruvians in Chile confront forms of stratification that categorize them in unfamiliar ways, limiting their life chances and integration into Chilean society. As mentioned, the majority of migrants are women without children employed in domestic service, filling in the void left by middle class Chilean women's entry into the labor force. This process profits from the vulnerability of migrants and draws from racial/gender images of Peruvians. The words of Chilean employers reinforce the social exclusion of immigrants. In a recent study by Hill-Maher and Staab, they contended that Peruvian women were

"more devoted, caring, and submissive," as well as "backward, unclean, and dark" than Chilean domestic workers. Peruvian women were "preferred" by employers, because they were willing to work as live-in nannies making fewer demands than local workers.

Gender stratification contributes to shaping intraregional migration and is reproduced and intensified in the receiving country. Peruvian migratory flows continue to feminize, partly because geographical proximity allows for the caring of children and families, but also because employment niches are opening at a faster rate for immigrant women in an exacerbation of their "natural" gender traits. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo observes that migration transforms gender responsibilities and identities within families. The status of immigrant women in the receiving society does not seem to improve, however, because they are chosen precisely because of their perceived gender characteristics—passivity and submissiveness. For women migrants, gender inequality and scarce material resources contribute to their renewed social marginalization.

Social class mediates the social exclusion based on gender, as does the process of racialization—that is, the construction of racial hierarchies and labeling of recently arrived immigrants. This is a novel process unfolding in Chile, as immigrant flows from the Andean region continue to increase. In Chile, race has been present in the national discourse as a unifying narrative. Chileans believe themselves to be white, although there is an underlying recognition (and rejection) of Chilean *mestizaje* in the valuing of lighter shades of skin as more beautiful and indicative of a higher social class.

Peruvian immigrants' (perceived) indigenous phenotype, social class, immigrant status, ethnicity, and national origin, are all elements in the creation of racializing hierarchies that position them on the lower end of social structures, also determining their life chances and trajectories. While the national media decry a "massive wave of Peruvian migrants" arriving in search of work, the almost two hundred thousand Peruvian migrants concentrate in domestic work and construction, regardless of their level of education. As several authors contend, the identification of racial traits tied to immigrants' poverty and national origin singles them out as "naturally" qualified for low-skilled labor, transforming immigrants' occupations into an important space for the reproduction of a racial other.

Intraregional migration, and that of Peruvians in Chile, is also characterized by the dynamism of the transnational space that emerges in the "in between" of their countries of origin and destination, and which is marked in the case of Peruvians by experiences of social exclusion. Several scholars have studied the types of transnationalism and transnational

practices that emerge with migration. Basch has defined transnationalism as the "processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement." These social relations can be political, economic, and/or socio-cultural, and can define those migrants who sustain them as transmigrants, who, the same authors suggest, "take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states."

The effort to conceptualize the transnationalism of migrants comes from a recognition that a process of assimilation, which presumes their adoption of their adopted society's way of life, or at least, a decline in their distinctions and differences, occurs more frequently in scholars' theorizing than in migrants' experiences. Faist notes that while most migrants engage in some form of transnationalism, whether they be activities linked to their membership in trasnational kinship groups, or because of their participation in transnational circuits marked by relations of exchange, not all develop a transnational community. What characterizes a community is the sharing of ideas, beliefs, and symbols that are ultimately expressed in a collective identity. For certain immigrant groups, conditions and experiences of social marginalization foster the formation of a transnational community, with a higher degree of social cohesion and a common repertoire of symbolic representations.

This is the case of Peruvians in Chile. The community is not only a site for economic exchange and cultural reproduction, but it is also a social space where migrants identify with others over common experiences of exclusion. The community serves as shelter from the discrimination and prejudice many Peruvians face in Chile. In this regard, a few studies have documented the negative media representations of the new migrant arrivals, especially from the Andean region, and opinion surveys have shown Chileans' animosity and prejudice against them. In a 2003 opinion survey, almost half of Chileans surveyed rejected the idea of Peruvian full integration into Chilean society, and almost 40 percent thought Peruvians were more prone to break the law. A hostile environment is one of the reasons behind the formation of a Peruvian immigrant enclave, the only group that has established a visible community in Santiago.

Peruvian migrants both engage in transnational practices and are part of a transnational community. While all immigrants groups in Chile have established and developed quotidian transnational practices, Peruvians have institutionalized their transnationalism to a larger extent than have the other large immigrant groups in Chile, Argentineans and Ecuadorians. Indeed, all groups maintain social relations that cross borders: they keep in touch with their friends and family in their country of origin, travel back and forth for vacations and holidays, and some also send remittances back home to pay for family

expenses. But neither Argentineans nor Ecuadorians have developed the dense and strong ties with their compatriots that characterize Peruvians in Chile. While these two other groups maintain transnational practices, the intensity of relations kept by Peruvians distinguishes a transnational community: Peruvians have engendered a transnational space where international movers and settlers are connected by what Faist defines as "dense and strong social and symbolic ties over time and across space to patterns of networks and circuits in two countries." This transnational community is also marked by the proximity and quotidian interaction provided by an immigrant enclave that has settled in downtown Santiago.

The density and strength of bonds in the Peruvian community have materialized because of the particular migratory experiences of Peruvians. Social marginalization has fostered the development of a transnational community that shares ideas, beliefs, evaluations, and symbols expressed in a collective identity. Peruvians have solidified and institutionalized their transnational ties, posing the question of the effects this will have on integration processes and the re-articulation of migrants' citizenship and identities in the Chilean host society. Indeed, the formation of a transnational community fosters and, at the same time, may hinder Peruvian migrants' process of integration in several ways.

On the one hand, the community provides a social space that may serve as a refuge from a hostile environment in the host society. Experiences of discrimination, racism, and exclusion may be reframed as they are analyzed and opposed to the different social locations that migrants occupy in transnational spaces. The community also provides a locus for organizing over migrant-specific issues, and is a site where institutional and cultural bonds in sending and receiving societies connect. An immigrant enclave enables a interaction and enmeshment into the host and sending societies, and offers support networks and employment sources to the newly arrived migrants. At the same time, the community may also help reproduce the processes of "othering," exclusion, and segregation of their society of origin, thus maintaining or intensifying social class, racial, and gender hierarchies. This could help push migrants further into a ghettoized space where hopes for integration are all but curtailed.

As a refuge for immigrant life or as a site of reproduction of social inequalities, immigrant communities may become the antecedent for the re-articulation of a multicultural identity and notion of citizenship. As Castles and Kymlicka have observed, citizenship can no longer be based on individual membership in a nation-state. New forms of citizenship should be able to incorporate peoples of diverse national and cultural origin, granting rights beyond national status, for example rights to group reproduction and representation in the polity. Peruvian involvement and

participation in their Santiago community through cultural events, civil society organizations, and in organizing politically to advance their interests are transforming the space and ways in which citizenship is exercised.

Migrants' participation in transnational spaces helps foster their identity as members of a particular political community. Peruvians identify with people of the same ethnic and national origin—a collective identity that "selects" commonalities born out of the migratory experience, especially those tied to social exclusion—but have not developed a new form of identity together with other migrant groups in Chile, in a sort of "panethnic identity." The dynamism of the Peruvian migratory experience keeps current migrant bonds to Peru while also fostering the emergence of a transmigrant identity that is evolving in the "in between" field of sending and receiving societies. In here, Peruvian migrants articulate claims to both nation-states separately and jointly, which may suggest a new form of citizenship and transmigrant identity characteristic of intraregional migration.

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