Chile: Heterogeneity and Complexity of a Country in Motion. Peruvian Community in Santiago

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Abstract: *Since the 1990s, Chile has found itself handling a complex migratory transition and, therefore, is governing the reception and integration of a growing and heterogeneous incoming population.*

The aim of the first part of this work is to reconstruct the dynamics of interregional mobility, thus placing Chilean immigration in the broader context of geographical and cultural belonging. Next, the migration policies adopted by the democratic states after the end of dictatorship will be examined through a critical analysis of institutional documents and the reference literature to raise the idea of an emigrant subject sustained on the basis of the power that has 'ordered' individual lives as functional to societal organisation. Finally, prominence will be given to an analysis of the case study on the Peruvian community that has settled in the capital, focusing on the dynamics of the community's relations with the Chilean and on the mutual representations that mark the encounter and cohabitation in the barrios [neighbourhood] of Santiago.

Keywords: *Chile, migrations, integration, emigrant subject, Peruvian community.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Chilean migratory history as an immigration country is quite recent as it has until the more recent past mainly been a country of emigration, affected by the alternation of a complex and intermittent incoming and outgoing mobility. The adoption of an interdisciplinary, historical, socio-political-cultural perspective appears to be the most appropriate to outline with the greatest degree of possible relevance the complex peculiarity and 'circumstantiality' (Geertz, 1973) of the alterations that have concerned and still concern the dynamics of displacement and settlement in Chile. An exploration and verification has been undertaken of such local dynamics and how they are connected to regional and global contexts and whether and how the aspiration and right to individual mobility have found opportunities or symbolic and material barriers supporting or hindering their realisation inside the cultural and social environment of the various historical periods. In this way, the history of the host country will not be separated from that of the people it receives (Cohen, 1987). An holistic vision allows an exploration of the wide range of social and cultural phenomena induced by migration and the repercussions that have at the same time occurred (Brettell, 2008) and welcomes the idea of 'movement' connected to the condition of 'being a migrant', thereby making clear that culture is not located in a naturally and historically delimited territory. Rather, it is anchored to the movement of its own bearers and transported elsewhere to give rise to new and unprecedented configurations. Observed from such a perspective, mobility becomes an innovation bearer and, as such, an unpredictable tool for cultural change/enrichment (Bhabha, 2001; Schaffhauser Mizzi, 2016). The recent Chilean migratory transition is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a broader interregional mobility that is traceable since pre-Hispanic times, a mobility that has mainly concerned neighbouring countries, although in different forms and with different characteristics. As part of this 'culture of mobility' that has its roots in time, some countries have historically been privileged destinations for migratory movements, such as Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela, while others are countries of origin, such as Mexico, Cuba, Colombia and Chile. The distinguishing feature of such interregional movements has always been that migrants, who have mainly limited their movements to border areas or have moved towards the city, have primarily been regarded as serving a complementary function to internal migration, which is to work in 'ethnicised' sectors, such as that of

construction for men and domestic work for women (Martinez, 2009; Pellegrino, 2003). Currently, Chile is one of the most economically and politically stable countries in South America, and this makes it an important pole of attraction both in the interregional and international context. The image of a growing country, which is also adequately promoted at the level of political propaganda, conveys the idea of a desirable Elsewhere for those who want to give their biographical path a new trajectory, aiming towards a future of social success and personal fulfilment far from home.

2. MIGRATION DYNAMICS, LEGAL AND POLITICAL APPROACH TO THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS IN CHILE

1.1. The Chilean Migration History: A Brief Excursus

At the end of the 1990s, with the collapse of the dictatorship, the turn towards democracy and the country's regained political and economic stability, conditions arose in Chile that favoured the return of political exiles to their homeland and, at the same time, the entry of immigrants from Latin American countries while the inflow of Europeans began to decrease (Martinez, 2003; Mora, 2008b). Until the military coup of 1973, the country had been the recipient of the *migración de ultramar* [overseas migration], which was characterised by the alternation of the arrival of immigrants, particularly from European, Arab and Asian countries. This migration can be interpreted to be a consequence of the policy of attraction and 'selective colonisation' that was promoted by the governments of the time and was linked to a broader project of modernisation of Latin America by politicians and intellectuals who were strongly influenced by European positivism. The laws and political strategies adopted contemplated the idea of a migrant subject with characteristics that met precise utilitarian requirements that would be functional to populate the south of Chile – a process known as *política de colonización [colonisation policy]* – and to *mejorar la raza* [improve the race] by favouring the entry of white European immigrants. This choice was also undertaken by the governments of several Latin American countries, such as Argentina, Brazil and Peru. Thus, the migrant became an indispensable agent both for the modernisation of the country and for the creation of the image of the ideal Chilean, who was of a certain culture and who implicitly associated him/herself with a certain ethnic origin (white). The actual number of immigrants was not high, but Chilean society strongly felt their presence because their participation was very active from an economic and political point of view. It reacted by assuming different attitudes and reactions towards the different immigrant ethnic groups: closed and animated by prejudices, especially towards Palestinians, Syrians, Jews and Koreans; open and tolerant towards Europeans, consistent with a society and a state that favoured the white 'race'. The admiration for the old continent by the intellectuals of the time and a migration policy that established, as we could say, a sort of hierarchy among the most 'adequate' nations were the cause of social scorn for those with an ethnic origin different from the European one. This prejudice was very evident and was reinforced through stereotypes against immigrants of Arab origin, which resulted in outright discrimination, so much so that Arabs were considered a threat according to the country's ruling class. After the interlude of the dictatorship—during which thousands of Chileans crossed the border to escape political persecution and the economic problems generated by the concomitant recession—immigration resumed, distributed throughout the country but favouring the Metropolitan Region of Santiago, a socio-geographical and cultural space characterised by an economy linked to services, construction and trade. Other regions attracted immigrants based on the characteristics linked to their geographical position that made them more suitable for the realisation of the individual migratory project, as confirmed not only by data but also by ethnographic research. The inflow of immigrants in the central regions follows the demographic trend of the country, which is related to the concentration of the main economic and commercial activities in these areas, with Santiago becoming the centre of attraction of the population at the national and international level, reconfirming the Santiago-centric myth of internal (local and regional) and external migration (Stefoni, 2010). The latest government research confirms that the Latin American component is still clearly prevalent compared to the others[1], which is in line with historical regional mobility. Although this population comes from the same geographic region, it is far from homogeneous both in terms of nationality and social composition of

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[1] Cfr. UNE/DEM, Migración. Estimación de Personas Extranjeras Residentes en Chile al 31 diciembre de 2019. https://www.ine.gob.cl

the various groups. This factor carries important consequences related to the possibility of job placement and, therefore, the quality of integration, and it especially disadvantages the most vulnerable groups due to the condition of poverty. Even though legislation provides for the same procedure for the regularisation of presence, in practice, it is the social and economic capital of the different groups that determines the different outcomes of bureaucratic procedures and access to rights. An example of this selective integration is given by the different conditions of employment of Peruvians and Bolivians compared to Argentines and Ecuadorians, with the former mainly converging in the less qualified and more precarious sectors, such as domestic work and informal trade, while the latter have a more heterogeneous and less ethnicised situation along with access to high- and medium-skilled jobs. The way in which the individual nationalities of migrants are perceived by the Chilean population is also very decisive, even though in recent years, hostile and rejection attitudes have been indiscriminately shown towards all migrants (Stefoni, 2010). The figure of the migrant triggers defence mechanisms, regardless of the distinction between good/regular and bad/irregular, evoking feelings of fear and uncertainty, and for this reason, the migrant is increasingly considered a threat to employment and security. All this at a time when Chile is experiencing a second demographic transition characterised by a growing decline due to the combined effect of a decrease in fertility and an increase in the elderly population resulting from longer life expectancy. Immigration partly compensates for this decline, while at the same time, filling the imbalances in the labour market with the inclusion of immigrants in sectors of work that are not attractive to Chileans. The constant and quick growth of foreign citizens, similar to what has already happened in Europe and Italy, has caused strong alarm among the public for what is perceived as an invasion, a danger upon which 'selective attention' is concentrated and in favour of which the media play a fundamental role. It is also decisive in directing *blaming*, that is, the mechanism of attributing blame and responsibility once the danger has been socialised (Douglas, 1991) and in pandering to a certain populist propaganda, favouring those political orientations that build their success by intercepting the moods of public opinion, with predictable consequences on migration policies, which we are going to discuss (Grassi & Giuffrè, 2013).

1.2. Chilean Migration Policy between Denial and Recognition of Migrants' Rights

Chile's migration policy after the end of the dictatorship must be considered in the context of the more general topic of international migration that has affected Latin American regions since the end of the twentieth century. Although security issues continue to dominate both the debate and political practices, as a consequence of the inter/trans-nationalisation of migration policy, new demands are emerging at national and regional levels in favour of the defence of migrants' human rights. This has triggered a socio-political process known as '*ciudadanización* de la politica migratoria [citizenship of migration policy]' (Domeneck, 2008), which sees the combined action of civil society participation in migration problems and the formal recognition of migrants' social, economic, political and cultural rights. Evoking citizenship means not only the recognition of a *status*, that is, the ownership of rights, but also its different lived dimensions that include practice, participation and identity (Delanty, 2000). Anthropologist Aihwa Ong (2005, p. 174)) highlighted that, in reality, citizenship is made up of a set of practices that aim at the construction of oneself and others and, in the particular context of migration, create unequal relations of power that are revealed through the mechanism of inclusion/exclusion of different categories of people, with effects on the definition and exercise of citizenship itself. In fact, as Bruno Riccio (2014, p. 19) pointed out:

> In addition to macro-dynamics through which citizenship rights are gained, micro-dynamics exist through which the same rights are negotiated, actualised, or denied. [...] That is, despite the fact that citizens are theoretically the bearers of equal rights, the actual ability to fully exercise them is influenced by tensions and divergent positions defined by gender, origin, religion and ethnicity.

The aspiration to a realised citizenship also gives meaning and depth to the planning of individuals and communities.

> The concept of citizenship shows the level of access of individuals to modernity, broadly conceived in terms of a stable sense of the future and therefore as a time horizon that allows a wide range of individual and collective projects (Nguyen, 2006, p. 89).

Since the migration policy of the Chilean state is defined in institutional documents and disclosed by politics, the topic of citizenship rights of immigrants is inevitably marked by the country's historical past, which has influenced its relationship with otherness: from the process of formation of the nation state after colonisation as well as by the practices and strategies of domination and resistance implemented during the period of dictatorship, particular conditions have been determined within which the whole process of construction of otherness by the population and institutions develops. The dialectic of dominators/dominated, inclusion/exclusion built on racial and cultural prejudices, never revealed in public debates but not absent for this reason, can explain the incongruous progress of the various governments that have followed one another in the last thirty years in Chile, dealing with opposing demands connected with the defence of national identity on the one hand and the fulfilment of international commitments to protect immigrants on the other. The most important body of legislation on immigration is the *Decreto Ley de Extranjería No. 1094* [Decree-Law on Foreigners N.1094], which was issued in 1975 by the Military Government. By analysing the spirit of the law, it becomes apparent how tightly it is bound to the concept of 'security of the national territory', an aspect that can be explained by the political context within which it took shape. The idea of security as a form of protection of the territory from outside dangers is directly associated with the concept of 'selectiveness', since the territory is protected only from those who could be a source of danger. It is precisely from the definition and identification of those who could be a potential danger that the selective migration policy starts, characterised by a political orientation towards border control aimed at preventing the entry of 'elementos peligrosos' [dangerous subjects], including not only common criminals and weapons and drug dealers but also those who have the reputation of agitators. Basically, those responsible for all those acts that Chilean law qualifies as 'delitos contra la seguridad exterior' [offences against external security] (art. 15, paragraph 1).

> A political orientation focused on a state-centric vision, which certifies the bond that binds the border to the power of the State, making the former a device for the control of migrants and populations, which gives shape to the 'landscape': a device that is not something new, but goes hand in hand with the institution of the border itself (Foucault, 1978; Harvey, 2014).

The protection of the territory, a principle this orientation is based on, creates de facto exclusion and 'human excess' or 'disposable lives' (Bauman, 2003; Settinieri, 2013) through all those processes of *b/ordering* that filter and examine the crossings, generating a system of production of illegality and the normalisation of the militarisation of the border itself (De Genova, 2004). The power of the state, in fact, is exercised not only in identifying who should be part of it and who should not but also by drawing the boundaries between what is legal and what is not. This is a vision attached to the naturalisation and linear and static representation of the border that is incapable of conceiving its dynamic dimension, which knows how to recognise and interpret the political and socio-cultural processes that unfold there as a set of transformative potentialities resulting from the clash between subjective wills produced by the deployment of hegemonic powers and resistance conflicts (Brambilla, 2017). From the first democratic governments that followed one after another at the end of the dictatorship emerges the need for a modernisation project in the political management of migration, one that is capable of receiving the transformations that have taken place at a global level in the labour market and in the mobility of people since the 1970s due to the *laissez-faire* and technological revolutions at the global level. In this context, the various, successive Presidents placed the evolution of the migrant's condition through a series of devices capable of eliminating the barriers that opposed both the return of exiles and the entry of new immigrants. Migrants went from being a 'selected subject' for the purposes of national security or to be 'transiting' to a 'subject to be protected and integrated'. In the immediate aftermath of the end of the dictatorship, the primary target of the state was the recognition of the fundamental rights of migrants, such as freedom of transit and the right to migrate, which was immediately actualised with the signing of a series of commercial treaties and international and inter-American agreements[2] aiming to mitigate the security approach of the *Ley de Estranjería [Foreignness Law]*. At the level of national policy, these agreements were actualised in a

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[2] At the inter-American level, we recall the *Convención Americana sobre Derechos Humanos (Pacto de San José)* and the *Pacto Internacional de Derechos Civiles e Políticos*; at the international level, the most important is the *Convención Internacional sobre la Protección de los Derechos de todos los Trabajadores Migratorios y de sus Familiares,* approved by the UN in December 1990. However, it does not result in legislation.

series of measures that mainly concerned the return of Chilean political exiles (*Apoyo al Retorno* [Return Support] project), the facilitation of the mobility of migrants between border locations and the implementation of international agreements on refugees and asylum seekers in order to avoid their expulsion and discrimination according to the principle of 'no devolución' [no return]. The expulsion mechanism would have created the forced and often irreversible exit of migrants from the social system because once they had crossed the margin, they would have become invisible as they lacked legal and economic–political subjectivity (Thomson & Sassen, 2014). The priorities of political action have also shifted towards integration, with a vision that contemplates a series of *ad hoc* devices that can allow the real enjoyment of formally recognised rights, thereby supporting the process of *ciudadanización [citizenship]* of regional migration policy. For this reason, priority is given to initiatives for the protection of certain particularly disadvantaged categories of migrants (women, children) and to international agreements to prevent, repress and sanction the trafficking of human beings and the illicit trafficking of migrants. With the constitutional reform, the *jus sanguinis* principle was introduced, which allows those born in the country with at least one Chilean parent to acquire nationality. In the following years (2006–2022), Michelle Bachelet[3] and Sebastián Piñera, who belonged to two different political fronts, took turns in the presidency, proposing to give a new course to migration after what appeared to them to be a period of post-dictatorship adjustment: therefore, there was a pronounced discontinuity compared to their predecessors. Michelle Bachelet aimed to act on social cohesion to make Chile a country open to reception, with an approach to integration that was made explicit in a particular way in her project to reform the migration law, which was presented in 2017 but never reached parliamentary approval. The project was to take place within a determinative context that the official presentation speech (Discurso, 21 August 2017) designated as being of 'conciliation of different and legitimate demands', so that it would be able to reconcile 'severity and respect', rejection of prejudices and realism *sin ingenuidad* [without naivety] and, thus, would not ignore the widespread fear that the presence of immigrants caused in the population. In order to reconcile these needs, the new law identified 'transparency' as one of the main tools to be adopted, meaning a continuous monitoring of the number of migrants through the establishment of a *registro nacional de extranjeros* [national registry of foreigners] as well as a more effective regulation of entries to be accomplished through the creation of two *catálogos* [catalogues]. They would contain a detailed list of all the duties that migrants were obliged to perform and the reasons forbidding their entry and that could lead to their expulsion and rejection. These operational control strategies were an answer to the ultimate target of having 'clear and fair rules' capable of fighting situations of irregularity that would bring benefits not only to Chileans but also to immigrants, who would benefit equally from the elimination of the process of making reality invisible, an allusion to the widespread alarm about the presence of immigrants[4]. What is immediately evident are the power's discursive modalities through which control is normalised, in this case, associating the achievement of political transparency (presented as a 'neutral' and convenient target for all) with tangible operations, such as monitoring, recording, cataloguing, obliging that underlie mechanisms of selection, and surveillance of individuals, in order to give the population the desired 'shape', to allow its maintenance as a compact body and to maintain its governability (Foucault, 1978). A confirmation of this rhetorical practice is also represented by the fact that despite the security approach of the new project, the legislation was not very different from the legislation in force that was intended to be modified, and the institutional discourse conveys an image of the migrant as a 'subject to be welcomed' to allow him or her to realise his or her personal project. However, it is a 'conditional' reception, in other words, subordinated to the migrant's willingness to insert himself or herself as an active subject in the process of inclusion with a willingness to 'sumarse' [join] in the construction of a common project called Chile (Discurso, 2017). A model of unidirectional integration emerges from these statements that sees the foreigner adapt to the conditions of the host society and that does not take into account the processuality and bidirectionality of the intercultural relationship (Ambrosini, 2008; Seppilli & Guaitini Abbozzo, 1973). The other culture that immigrants bear is referred to only insofar as it is recognised that diversity is a source of enrichment for the country as well as workers and the desire to

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[3] With two consecutive presidential terms: 2006–2010, 2014–2018.
[4] Discurso de S.E. la Presidenta de la República M. Bachelet al firmar *Proyecto de nueva ley de Migraciones*, Santiago, 21 de agosto 2017, La Tercera, www.latercera.com.

improve that drives many people to choose the country as a destination of settlement. President Piñera's *Reforma Migratoria [Migration Reform]* project[5] also starts from the observation that the concern about immigration in the country is widespread and justified, testifying to how obsolete and inadequate the existing law is to manage the complexity of contemporary migration. For this reason, the purpose of the project is to establish new guidelines and new rules that go in the direction of ensuring 'safe, orderly and regular migration', and which mainly respond to objectives that are able to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of migrants, mitigation of the risks associated with the mobility of persons, fight irregular migration and migrant trafficking, and repress illegal cross-border activities (Discurso [Speech], 2018). The political and regulatory changes he announced in fact lead the variety of migrant conditions to two main dichotomous categories: the regular/desired migrant to be welcomed and for whom 'fair and humane treatment is reserved'; and the irregular and clandestine/unwanted migrant, for whom a faster expulsion procedure is expected. Despite the reference to human rights and integration in crucial sectors, such as health, education and housing, the reform of the rules on the granting of residence permits effectively restricts the possibility of entry and stabilisation, especially to the disadvantage of some communities, such as the Haitian one, and of the least skilled workers. The selective nature of the reform is in fact expressed in the dual action of excluding those who are not desirable because of conduct or ethnicity and, at the same time, of attracting young talents from abroad with special benefits. The possibility of automatically obtaining a temporary *Orientación Nacional* [National Orientation] permit, which can be converted into permanent residence, must be considered within this last direction. This permit is reserved for those who have obtained a Master's degree in one of the universities present in the *World University Rankings* in consideration of the advantages that a selected and highly qualified workforce can bring to increase the human capital of the population. The tourist visa reform pursues the opposite target. With the new decree, Piñera eliminates the possibility of turning this visa, which previously authorised a stay of a maximum of thirty days, into another work visa. The text explicitly refers to Haitian citizens, who are provided with the intention of 'adapting the situation of Chile to that of most Latin American and Caribbean countries' (Discurso [Speech], 2018) a *Visa Consular de Turismo Simple [Simple Tourist Consular Visa]* with the right of stay of 30 days for reasons 'de recreación, de turismo, deportivos, de salud, de estudios, familiares y otros, sin propósito de immigración, residencia o desarollo de actividad remunerados' [of recreation, tourism, sports, health, studies, family and others, without the purpose of immigration, residence or development of remunerated activity] (Discurso [Speech], 2018).

This measure fully embraces the attitudes of rejection and intolerance that have long been widespread in the country, especially towards the Afro-descendant population, for whom skin colour is assumed as an additional factor of discrimination by the Chilean population (OIT, 2017, p. 5). The 'coloured' other in the Chilean collective imagination is opposing even more than the multiethnic ancestry [meticcio] otherness itself to the construction of a collective identity perceived as more similar to the white European world than to the original indigenous one, which is trying to be concealed. The role of the state is decisive in these processes of shaping collective and individual identities through redrawing the boundaries between citizens and foreigners and in managing the challenges of national identity raised by the entry of immigrants (Ong, 1996).

After all, the origin of immigrants has always been a key element of Chile's reception policy, which has provided for differentiated treatment with facilitations or restrictions depending on nationalities by using different types of visas and has determined legality/irregularity/illegality depending on the case. The country of origin is also crucial for the employment of immigrants as stereotypes are particularly widespread, and Chilean society assigns certain characteristics to individual groups, thinking that each of them is predisposed to certain types of work, as in the case of Peruvian women who are associated with domestic and care service. Essentially, the political orientations that inspire the migration reform act favour, as in the past, the symbolic construction of the migrant as a threat and a social problem, thus contributing to the reproduction of discrimination and exclusion through the ethnic and cultural selection between the 'aptos' [suitable] and the 'inhabilitados' [unfit] to fully participate in citizenship (Vior, 2009, p. 13). What emerges from the excursus on migration policies is the fact that Chile, even

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[5] Cfr. Discurso de Presidente Piñera: Presentación de la Reforma Migratoria, 9 April 2018, https://prensa.presidencia.cl.discurso.aspx?id=73020.

if it recognises itself as a multicultural country, especially with reference to the presence of the ethnic and indigenous component, does not contemplate cultural diversity in politics, which both at the parliamentary and governmental levels is hidden in the name of a homogenisation that has historical roots in the formation of Latin American states. For the Chilean state, the concept of integration linked to international migrants—Martinez (2011) points out— refers only to the social inclusion of those who are in a regular situation in the sense that they are recognised as having the opportunity to benefit from the services offered by the state. By evaluating the different programmes and legislative initiatives undertaken by democratic governments with the aim of improving the condition of migrants, we can say that they have obtained only partial and sectorial results that are surely inadequate to manage the complexity of a multicultural society as there has been a lack of explicit policy and a shared perspective in the context of public administration. Although these measures have eliminated some inequalities by improving access to the social system and human rights, they did not solve the basic problem, namely guaranteeing the rights of all those who reside in the country. What emerges is a widespread orientation towards the achievement of immediate results dictated by the need to respond to emergencies without the desire to build a space for encounter and to place otherness in an active dimension that does not consider it only as a receiver of political measures dropped from above.

The lack of adequate and coherent legislative and political instruments has led to the definition of the Chilean 'política de la non política' [policy of non-policy] (Stefoni, 2010, p. 112), behind which lies the absence of a political project, which takes the form of emergency measures but does not modify the principles of security and control that are the basis of the law. Essentially, such a policy would be based on a paradox: on the one hand, the programmes and measures adopted are inspired by the principles of the protection of human rights, while on the other hand, the law does not protect the human rights of migrants; on the contrary, with its now anachronistic constraints, the law determines conditions of irregularity that are the first cause of an impediment to access to rights. Suffice it to recall the slow bureaucratic process of regularisation that places migrants in precarious and vulnerable conditions, preventing them from moving freely in the territory and taking advantage of social services:

> Irregular or 'Indocumentada' [undocumented] migration is the main expression of migrants' lack of protection, because it has no regard for their human rights, in the various areas of physical and mental integrity, work, family reunification or social protection, resulting in partial integration into the society of arrival, a cause of exclusion and vulnerability. This is why many migration experts have pointed out that the worst migration policy is non-policy, due to the absence of a clear and transparent policy that creates irregular and/or 'indocumentada' [undocumented] migration, which is fertile ground for all kinds of risks associated with Human Rights violations[6].

As an antidote to 'non-politics', the new Política Nacional de Migración y Estranjería [National Policy of Migration and Foreignness]-PNME (Gubierno de Chile [Chilean Government], 2023), which was inaugurated this year under the presidency of Gabriel Boric, places order, effectiveness and coherence at the basis of its project, receiving much of the content present in the reforms introduced by the last two presidents. These targets include strengthening both internal control (through the establishment of a biometric registry and faster expulsion mechanisms) and external control by intensifying border protection and push-back mechanisms. 'Selected' migrants, that is, those who meet the requirements to guarantee 'orderly, safe and regular' migration, will be able to share a common space that promotes intercultural dialogue, which, by overcoming strategies of acculturation and assimilation, will be able to enhance cultural diversity (Gubierno de Chile [Chilean Government], 2023, p. 9). In conclusion, government policy in this case also seems to have intercepted all the discontent and fears expressed by public opinion for some time and that derive from the fact that immigration in Chile has increased faster than elsewhere in Latin America. The growing ethnic diversification of the population, made even more visible by the arrival of thousands of Tahitians, has contributed to altering the perception of the migration phenomenon, which is increasingly considered a threat to national security, social stability, employment and the socio-cultural identity of the country (Doña Reveco, 2018). Restrictive political measures are called for by many in accordance with the

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[6] Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile (2015), *La migración en Chile su carácter intrarregional y la legislación nacional*, Series Informes n.33-15, Departamento de Estudios, Extensión y Publicaciones, Santiago de Chile, p. 6.

example of US and European models, even though immigration towards Chile has its own characteristics and dimensions that are completely different from the experiences of the countries of the northern hemisphere (Mora, 2008b). The need for a management of immigration based on securitisation, on the objectives of recovering the ability to control borders and public order, that contains and prevents regular flows and that rejects and expels foreigners in an illegal position is gaining ground—even from the 'bottom' by various components and groups of society. According to Foucault (1978), this could be explained by the positive and constructive function exercised by power that is linked to its ability of being performative, that is, to the ability to create the referents of its own discourse through the act of naming them and producing knowledge and knowledge about them. Power would not act externally on elements, groups and identities but would create and incorporate them into its definition. For this reason, we cannot think of it as a superstructure acting on social elements from the outside: power relations are, in fact, coexistent and immanent to other types of relations (economic, sexual, social relations...) and have a productive role in them (Foucault, 1978). Looking at it from another perspective, there are those who instead argue that it is the social perception of the 'proximity' and 'distance' of the foreigner with respect to the consolidated social space that guides the attitude and judgment of all of us and, therefore, also of public decision makers. In fact, social policies would find an obstacle or support to their actualisation in the cultural climate as well as in the socio-economic structure of the respective territorial contexts (Castles, 2000): xenophobic attitudes, prejudices and lack of knowledge of migration problems would be combined with other structural factors such as the degree of intensity with which immigration occurs, the characteristics of the labour market, the quality of social services, the efficiency of individual administrations and the financial resources available (Orgazú et al., 2021). As far as Chile is concerned, the 'dialéctica della negación del otro' [dialectic of the negation of the other], which runs through its entire history, must be considered with the watchword of national homogenisation (Zavala San Martin & Rojas Venegas, 2005, p. 169). The denial of the other would have been carried out first with the subjugation of indigenous peoples by means of a cultural ideal inspired by the European white *standard* and later with the exclusion of the foreigner other seen as a threat to national identity, thus legitimising legal regulations tending to outline the desired cultural features.

3. THE PERUVIAN COMMUNITY IN SANTIAGO

3.1. Transnational Practices and Integration Processes of Peruvian Communities

According to a widely held opinion among scholars, Chile and Peru are undoubtedly the most important cases of regional migration in South America, as Peruvians represent the majority group characterised by a high level of social cohesion and geographical concentration. In addition to a substantial number permanently or temporarily settled in Chile, their presence is widespread all over the world, attesting to the inclination of Peruvians for mobility.

'Quinto Suyo' [Its Fifth One] is the expression designating, in political discourse and among a large part of the population, the community of Peruvian migrants wherever they live. It derives from the Quechua word *Tawantinsuyu,* which indicated the four regions composing the Inca empire; thus, it is a metaphor to appoint the 'Peruvian nation' that extends beyond its borders as ideally incorporating its 'fifth' region of scattered citizens, mainly alluding to the moral responsibility that binds the migrant to his or her country of origin, which is mainly actualised by the sending of remittances (Berg & Perregaard, 2005). Regardless of its rhetorical use that recurs in official discourses, the expression is used in academic research to appoint the approach to Peruvian migration as a 'total social fact' (Sayad, 2002) that accounts for the interweaving of factors contributing to the mobility of many Peruvians, to their 'diaspora' (Maffia & Tamagno, 2014) in the various countries of the north and south of the world and to the organisation of transnational practices and spaces, that is, those processes by which they build 'social camps binding together the country of origin and the country of settlement' (Schiller Glick et al., 1992, p. 1). For several centuries, Peru was the destination of *conquistadores* [conquerors], refugees and settlers from Europe, North Africa and North America, attracted by the riches of the new world. Since the second half of the last century, it has turned into a country of emigration that scattered Peruvians in many directions, including those from which its immigrants previously came. Data and literature outline the heterogeneity of social classes, ethnic groups and the age of the migrant population as distinctive features of Peruvian migration, but above all, a balanced presence of men and women, which is a countertrend with respect to a more accentuated presence of

women in migration at a global level. Moreover, unlike other groups of Latin American migrants who tend to concentrate in specific territories, Peruvians tend to disperse across the various continents and to create a network of transnational connections between the various places they choose to reside, a migration in the form of a *very structured 'telaraña'* [cobweb] that favours the concentration of certain groups in specific areas (Berg & Paerregaard, 2005, p. 12). For example, Peruvians from the central coast prefer to settle in the United States and Japan, while those from the northern coast (Piura, Chimbote, Trujillo) head towards Buenos Aires and Santiago. In the second half of the 90s of the last century there was a change in the direction of Peruvian migratory flows, as a consequence of the dynamics affecting the previous countries of destination (USA, Japan, Mediterranean countries, including Italy), dealing with restrictive migration policies and the political and economic crisis that affected Peru itself, impoverishing the most productive social classes. It is in this context that among the new destinations, Chile and Argentina have become the most attractive destinations for Peruvians, as a response as well to the demand for unskilled labour by the two countries. This aspect along with the geographical proximity that makes it possible to reduce the cost of travel is a factor of attraction, especially for people from the poorest neighbourhoods and young people, for whom Chile and Argentina represent the last chance to realise their migratory project once the other less accessible destinations have been discarded (Berg & Paerregaard, 2005). The common language and culture add other elements of attraction. Some scholars speak of a new, very disruptive phenomenon that has no precedent in the history of the two countries, (Stab & Maber, 2006), while others reiterate that migrations in the northern regions of Chile, especially through the two triple borders—the Andean one (Chile, Bolivia, Peru) and the Circumpuneña (Argentina, Chile, Bolivia)—have historical roots much earlier than 1990 (Gonzales Miranda, 2009). If anything, something new would be a massive presence of migrants from the north coast of Peru heading to Santiago for work, mainly women who find employment in domestic and care work. According to Stefoni (2005), the novelty would not be related either to the Peruvian origin of the migrant population or to the fact that this exodus has Chilean territory as its destination, but rather to the 'invasion' of what is considered by Chileans to be the identity space par excellence:

> The novelty basically refers to those migrants who reach Santiago for the first time and in a massive way, occupying a space that has historically identified Peruvians and Bolivians as 'los otros' [the others] for a presumed white and not indigenous Chilean identity (p. 266).

From the point of view of spatial dynamics, the Peruvian population in Chile finds its greatest concentration point in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago where it represents 24.2% of the migrant population (MDS, 2017). We also find the spread of its presence in all other regions, albeit with different incidences between those of the north and central and those of the south in which it tends to thin out. Some studies that are supported by qualitative and quantitative analyses identify Peruvian migration to Chile as generally having characteristics similar to the south–north ones in that they would also be characterised by a high concentration of immigrants in specific work areas, such as domestic work, construction, trade and services, by uncertain integration into the world of work with unskilled jobs, underemployment and exposure to prejudice and rights violations, especially in the event of irregularities (Cano et al., 2009; Mora, 2008a). Shifting our gaze to the heterogeneity of migration outcomes and individual trajectories, we are led to consider a range of elements to explain the intertwining of individual decisions, factors and contexts (global, regional, local), family organisations and social networks that underlies individual migration projects and contributes to their success (Harbison, 1981; Lacomba, 2001). The intermediary role of the latter ones is central both in the pre-migration dynamics, the support to potential migrants and the construction of new and unprecedented forms of parental connection in the context of translocal and transnational contexts that would explain the combination of political macro conditions with the personal and family circumstances of the migrant (Oso Casas, 2008). In the case of Peruvian emigration, too, the role of networks as information channels and support structures is decisive in all the phases that accompany the migration process from its conception (Paerregaard, 2008), and even more so with regard to the social cohesion of the group already mentioned. The informal family or friendship relational plots, which are intertwined in the context of *personal networks*, as well as the broader relationships that are established in social networks at an ethnic, social or community level, (Boyd, 1989) accompany, together with the family, the entire decision-making process and the practices of the *salida* [departure], from the choice to emigrate to the identification of the family member or community that is most

convenient to emigrate, from the selection of the country and city of destination to the travel form and how to contact the chosen place. Once in the country of destination, the network takes care of the settlement and integration, including the tasks of the first reception, moral and practical support, contact with the world of work and assistance in carrying out bureaucratic procedures (Lacomba, 2001). Contact with people from your own country or city allows for the recreation of aspects of your own culture and the coexistence of your place of origin and, at the same time, through these relationships, the very meaning of community extends beyond the borderline. Contact with others and the recognition of a sense of common belonging creates the construction of a collective 'we', a process in which culture is de-territorialised:

> The construction of identity and sense of belonging is not anchored in a particular territory but is reproduced in other territories [...]. In this way, culture appropriates new spaces, expanding its range beyond its previous and limited boundaries. In this expansion, it modifies and transforms by incorporating new elements. It acquires the different, incorporates it and adapts it to new needs. It is precisely this process that allows to maintain ties with the society of origin. More than a break with the world left behind, it is the extension and expansion of it outside of the local territory (Stefoni, 2003, p. 62).

Through his or her networks of cultural, social and economic relations, the migrant can face the problems of settlement and integration in the context of arrival and, at the same time, is not forced to sever ties with the land of origin and with those who have remained there, to whom he continues to be linked by means of a system of connections and correspondences that cross national and geographic borders (Riccio, 2007; Vertovec, 2009). Relational weaves can replicate family and social ties and religious affiliations in the country of arrival, redefine value orientations and build forms of solidarity based on an identity bond. Through the bond of kinship or due to being from the same country, migrants often favour forms of settlement that bring together groups of identical origin in the same physical space, cities or neighbourhoods of the cities themselves (Concha, 2001), as in the case of the Peruvian people of Santiago. According to some guidelines, the new forms of relations that are created in migratory contexts would require a new language, more suitable and proper to also describe the new types of kinship that migrations create. It is observed that they introduce a new cultural and social praxis based on 'relationality', a new more open and flexible kinship that is socially and not genealogically based and that defines other ties, values, symbols and meanings between people beyond, or in addition to, those of blood. In this way, kinship is enriched in dynamism and creativity through the articulation of bonds and practices all its own. As Janet Carsten (1995, 2000) argued, a kinship that questions a fundamental parameter of anthropological knowledge, that of the relationship between 'biological' and 'social'. By means of the category of *relatedness*, the author intends to take 'a new path far from the preconceived opposition between biological and social in which many anthropological studies have settled' (Carsten, 2000, p. 4), a perspective that is still not entirely satisfactory in her opinion and, in any case, open to uncertainty. Through the critical exploration of a wide variety of ethnographic cases, Carsten has reconstructed the different languages and codes through which the 'culture of relationality' has expressed and expresses itself to highlight, with the selection of the contributions of different authors, the inclination common to all of them regarding the 'openness towards indigenous languages' without being conditioned by rigid pre-established definitions. The criticalities of this approach are not entirely different from those regarding the concept of kinship itself, but its main problem concerns the application of the concept of relationality, as underlined by the author herself:

> [...] Either it is used in a restrictive sense to identify relations largely based on genealogical ties, in this case it is open to the same problems as kinship, or it is used in a general sense to include other types of social relations, in this case it becomes so broad as to be harmful and completely empty from an analytical point of view (2000, p. 5).

For this reason, the category of *relatedness* does not want to offer a univocal perspective but rather a peculiar approach in the study of the interrelations regarding the different issues and the different contexts, avoiding—in Carsten's opinion—the conditioning by rigid and already pre-established hypotheses. The mechanisms activated by migration also involve the family, which takes on new forms and practices; thus, we speak of 'hogares transnacionales' [transnational homes] (Parreñas, 2005a), dynamic domestic units that would preserve their 'familyhood' through appropriate strategies,

even though their members are dispersed outside national borders and lack physical proximity and everyday relationships (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 3). Dispersion does not erase feelings of unity and belonging, shared affections and mutual expectations, but it necessarily changes the family and the roles and modes of interaction of its members, reshaping parental relationships to adapt them to the new transnational spaces, so that the diversity of the life trajectories of each member can be reconciled. With its symbolic weight, family is, therefore, the fulcrum of mediation in transnational practices, the place of synthesis between identity references and adherence to the new context of life, between internal cohesion and placement into society.

> Family is the place of synthesis between identity references and adherence to the new context of life, between internal cohesion and integration into the external society, between maintaining respectability among compatriots and the gaining of social acceptance among the majority population (Ambrosini, 2007, p. 21).

Transnational practices, cultural dynamics linked to migratory projects also involve those who remain in the migrants' departure contexts in local identity reconfigurations that arise mainly from the sending of money remittances, which are also accompanied by cultural remittances, through the narration of the experiences lived in the arrival context, the sharing of the outcome of the migratory project and the increased social prestige of the family. As has been said, the Peruvian migrant introduced into the new context can count on a tried and tested network of relations that supports him or her even in the very delicate phase of searching for work, and in this case, the extent of the difficulties encountered also depends a lot on the efficiency of the network on which he or she relies and on his or her level of integration into Chilean society. Situations of abuse and exploitation often occur due to the lack of documentation, determined by the objective difficulty of obtaining a residence permit, a circumstance that gives the employer an immeasurable power since the granting of the visa is subject to the existence of a contract. Not having documents allows the employer to pay lower wages since the immigrant is not in a position to negotiate better working conditions, with the consequence that the same non-compliant worker tends to conform and accept a situation of abuse without turning to the competent authorities to claim his or her rights under the same labour laws. The irregularity situation entails the loss of citizenship rights, keeping the immigrant in a condition of extreme social and economic vulnerability that implies, among other things, the inability to access social services and the inability to move freely on Chilean territory or reunite with family. The press and the authorities associate the condition of irregularity, of 'indocumentados' [undocumented ones], with that of illegality and, therefore, of delinquency, creating confusion between the administrative situation in which the immigrant finds himself or herself and that linked to crime. In the cultural representations and stereotypes elaborated by Chileans, the immigrant and illegal/delinquent association has a specific connotation as it refers exclusively to Peruvian immigration. Law enforcement also contributes to this, always presiding with their patrols over *Plaza de Armas* in the capital, a traditional meeting place of the Peruvian community. The association of two independent concepts such as 'Peruvian' and 'illegal; is built through a media and political discourse in which the joint use of both words in a repeated and constant form over time contributes to spreading the idea that Peruvian immigration is associated with a situation of illegality and crime. Studies have shown that the Chilean media developed the issue of Peruvian immigration as a problem of both social and public order, resorting to a series of categories that can essentially be traced back to illegality, delinquency, poverty and marginalisation, work stigmatisation, and cultural aspects as differentiating elements (Stefoni, 2003, p. 101). Through ad hoc content and discursive strategies, the media construct the representation of the category of *Perunidad* [what constitutes being Peruvian] and often the emphasis in the newspaper headlines is on the nationality and ethnicity of the protagonists of the facts, univocally directing the mechanism of guilt towards an entire 'criminal category', concealing the difference and diversity of the group that is to be represented. Therefore, immigrants are assigned a condition of illegality that involves their whole person, as if their bodies and identities were 'illegal', in such a way that they do not have the right to be in that place, while it is not considered that 'irregularity' expresses an administrative situation that does not determine in any way an immigrant's condition of being. The current Chilean law, both in the case of irregularities due to possession of false documents or illegal entry, penalises the immigrant and not the deviant networks or organised teams that profit from the journey and people, allowing them to enter the country as irregulars. This implies that the immigrant is left in a condition of extreme social vulnerability as well as personal

vulnerability due to the lack of suitable documents necessary to exercise his or her rights, making him or her more exposed, as we have pointed out, to the abuses of employers or to the circuits of organised crime. The aspect that in the collective imagination represents Peruvian immigration as a social problem is its association with the condition of poverty and marginality, a condition in which Peruvians would find themselves both in the context of origin, in which poverty would figure as the main factor of expulsion, and after emigration to the country in which they arrive. No reference is ever made in daily speeches, in the media or even in public discourse to the presence of a lively Peruvian business community or to the many professionals and artists who have established themselves, yet the reduction of Peruvian migration to those socially unprotected groups continues to be perpetuated, thus fuelling the perception that almost all Peruvians live in conditions of extreme vulnerability. Social labels produce an imposed identity that places individuals, in our case, Peruvian immigrants, in places they do not want to be, an identity built on the basis of what one 'wishes' to see, which becomes what one 'wants to see' (Aime, 2000), denying them any possibility of autonomy and individual planning. The processes of social construction of the foreigner tend to represent immigrant minorities as 'negative symbolic actors'; in addition, their presence strengthens the mutual understanding and consensus among the natives (Althabe, 1996). The construction of the other within the dualistic superior/inferior perspective or of a *we-group* as opposed to an *other-group* necessarily also entails its marginalisation or exclusion:

> by virtue of factors that are not so much biological as rather cultural and social, shifting the problem of the diverse to be removed from the level of race considered in a genetic sense to the cultural one, a new form of racism 'without race', of growing tribalism (Aime, 2017, p. 108).

This return into culturalism, in which the cultural dimension is emphasised to reaffirm individual differences, can be ascribed to the context of contemporary racism to which the new interpretative paradigms trace the process of 'racialisation' of immigrants, which is expressed precisely through the radicalisation of differences. In everyday interaction, the perception of immigrants by means of stereotypes leads to categorisation of heterogeneous social groups in an asymmetrical and unequal way compared to the natives (Silverstein, 2005). In this context, Didier Fassin (2010) suggests consideration of how racialising dynamics are expressed through the complex relations between external political–territorial borders and the production of internal borders, so that after crossing national borders, migrants find themselves experimenting with new socially structured symbolic borders, which create new divisions in the society that hosts them through the treatment of differential inclusion. These boundaries remain unchanged in the case of Peruvians even when Chileans show appreciation for some aspects of their culture—such as cuisine, music, dances, traditional festivals – and recognise their high level of education. Their construction has its roots in the history of the two countries, which has shaped the mutual perception of the two communities through a series of antagonistic images by which they represent each other. For some, its origin can be traced back to the period of the conquest, but the decisive event is identified by scholars as the War of the Pacific that involved Chile, Peru and Bolivia (1879–1884), a 'milestone' in the relationship between the two countries that redefined the identities of both by placing a common border between them (Milet, 2004). For most Peruvians, it led to a feeling of national pride wounded by the defeat and the Chilean invasion, which was countered in Chile by the persistent idea of an armed force that was never humiliated or defeated, which over time generated a feeling of excessive national pride that over the years turned into arrogance. The main consequence of the war was the production of images by both sides that fuelled the negative construction of the other. They can be mainly traced back to three opposing pairs: that of a victorious country opposed to a defeated country, generated by the occupation of Lima by the Chilean army and the lack of a solution, in the opinion of Peruvians, to the border-related problems; that of an invading country opposed to a country that has been invaded, also from an economic point of view, according to how the recent incursions of Chilean investors into the Peruvian market are perceived; finally, that of a successful and stable country as opposed to a politically unstable Peru with high levels of poverty (Milet, 2004; Rivera & Muñoz, 2008). The construction of the national identity of the two countries would have taken place through the incorporation of certain values forged by the war and linked to victory or defeat through a process that, starting from the comparison with an 'el otro' [otherness] to which to be opposed, builds a collective 'nosotros' [we] precisely emphasising the differences from the others who are outside of it (Larraín, 1996). The discriminatory attitudes towards Peruvians, however, also originate in the collective

imagination of Chileans, who perceive themselves as a country with characteristics more similar to the European world than to the indigenous one. In this way, immigration from neighbouring countries, especially Peru and Bolivia, would confront them with their multiethnic identity [identità meticcia], which they would like to remove:

> The denial of indigenous origin as part of the nation caused the exclusion and discrimination of native peoples since the dominant culture with a homogenizing discourse wants to eliminate, among others, the diversity of Mapuche, Aymara and Pehuences cultures. For this reason, the indigenous population in Chile has created an invisible 'other', systematically silenced in the formation of the Chilean nation and identity. It represents everything we don't ask to be, so it's hidden and denied [...] (Stefoni 2005, p. 226).

The operation that identifies the Peruvian other as 'Indian' [indio] produces a political classification that reflects colonialism as a structure of the production of otherness and hierarchies of power found in the structure of national belonging ideologies in Chile and erects symbolic borders inside and outside the nation in a vision that opposes Chileans to Andean-indigenous people in aspects that do not only concern culture:

> The category of 'Indian' [indio] simultaneously combines biological (racial and racist) and cultural aspects and is a product of the subordination and denial of the group's humanity in the face of an otherness that constructs itself as white, European (or Euro-descendant) and superior (Bello & Rangel, 2002, p. 40).

Migrations reveal the hegemonic discourses of the Chilean nation-state building project as a country that constitutes an exception in the Latin American context thanks to its presumed *blanqueamiento* [whitening] and its supposed modernity that contrast with its Peruvian and Bolivian neighbours (Staab & Maber, 2006, pp. 88–89). With their 'indigenity'[7], these groups of immigrants destabilise the ethnic paradigms upon which the entire discourse of Chilean national identity is constructed, which explains the discriminatory and rejective attitude of Chileans towards them.

3.2. Plaza de Armas and the New Transnational Spaces

The cultural and social tensions between Chileans and Peruvians find a tangible manifestation in the public space by definition with the greatest tradition in Santiago: *Plaza de Armas*. Renovated a few years ago, the square is the meeting place for a multitude of men and women of a certain age, but it is also a place for family walks on weekends, for the selling of handicraft products and for the exhibition of artistic artefacts as well as a privileged setting for the many activities organised by the Municipality of Santiago. Due to its central location, the size of the space, and its proximity to services and offices, it is also the place chosen by the Peruvian community living in Santiago to meet. Over time, the *Plaza* has taken on such characteristics for them that they have transformed it into an important centre that serves as an exchange of information not only on the world of work and the bureaucratic procedures of regularisation but also serves as a privileged symbolic space in which to share experiences, memories and projects, and to talk about Peru, cuisine, music, about the people and of many aspects related to their own country: the traditional meaning of the square has been reinterpreted by them in comparison to the frequent visitors from Santiago. The square, in fact, interacts with the individuals who practice it, becoming an element of recognition and distinction with respect to other spaces and other individuals; therefore, it is an 'emotionally lived' place that acquires importance 'for the feelings, memories and suggestions that it transmits to the individual, through completely personal ways' (Pascuzzi, p. 79). Therefore, the conflicts that arise around this public space do not exclusively concern its occupation by both groups (Chilean and Peruvian), but rather are linked to the game of symbolic meanings that is assigned to the *Plaza* and to the hostilities of economic nature that arise from the mutual competition between Chilean and Peruvian traders, customers and consumers who work and circulate there. Since their arrival in Chile, Peruvians have successfully undertaken a series of commercial activities intended not only for regular visitors to the *Plaza* and their compatriots but also for all those who work and live in the centre. Faced with this new and unexpected situation, many Chilean traders, who for years had been the undisputed protagonists of the sector, began to denounce

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[7] For an in-depth analysis of the themes of identity, interethnicity [meticciato] and the indigenous term in Latin America and Mexico, see also Gorza, P. (2011). *Politiche dell'Identità nell'«altro Occidente»,* Il Mulino, Bologna; Grillo, R. M., (ed.), (2006). *L'America Latina tra civiltà e barbarie*, Oèdipus, Salerno.

the competing activities of the Peruvians as 'illegal' according to their point of view, so much so that the idea was considered at the level of the municipality to identify another space in the city centre where Peruvian traders could carry out their business, thus eliminating the problems of 'unfair' competition. In this context, to increase the conflict, there are even today the *performances* of comedians and street artists, who interpret the widespread feeling of hostility and tell anecdotes to passers-by about the changes that have distorted the use of public space, ironically starting with the name of the square they have renamed *Plaza de Lima [Square of Lima]*. On a deeper level, the comedians' 'utterances' contain explicit and offensive racist and discriminatory elements, which are almost normal by Chileans in Santiago who stop to listen, without anyone showing any sign of disapproval[8]. *Plaza de Armas* is currently also a space in which a series of social practices related to the satisfaction of the specific daily needs of purely immigrant users are intensified through commercial activities and services related to catering, telephony, currency exchange and the shipment of remittances. Peruvians have gradually replaced the Chilean merchants who keep their activities only in the field of clothing and hairdressing and for this we can speak of a territorial enclave in which an ethnic economy thrives, immediately identifiable in the eyes of the square's patrons. The square is not the only place where Peruvians successfully practice their work activities, as outside of it in several neighbourhoods of Santiago other initiatives related to catering with the use of typical products and dishes of Peruvian cuisine thrive. In this case, it is not a territorial enclave, a purely Peruvian *barrio* [neighbourhood], but rather a much larger gastronomic *barrio* in which competition is very high even among the compatriots themselves. Peruvian cuisine thus qualifies as an ethnic product of great cultural, social and identity value, and thanks to its authenticity and undeniable quality, it is able to meet the needs of different social levels, adapting to the various market sectors. There are many Peruvian protagonists involved in this project who each participate with their own professional contribution, mostly males who are usually the owners or *chefs* of the restaurants, while women are in charge of the kitchen and table service, especially in small popular cafes. Except for the haute cuisine workers who come mainly from Lima, most of the immigrants acquire their professional skills in Chile at the restaurants of their compatriots, and it often happens that after an apprenticeship of a few years as waiters or *chefs*, many of them manage to open their own businesses, in turn calling friends and relatives from Peru. This space, which is articulated around the enhancement of Peruvian gastronomy, is configured as a transnational social space due to the typology of practices that link the country of origin and that of the arrival of Peruvian migrants[9], of which examples are the growing import of products from Peru, the journeys to find and select labour and the network of friends and family. This social space also transcends the limits of the Peruvian *barrio*, not because its territorial and identity boundaries disappear but in the sense that a new space of relationship is created between 'el barrio y no barrio' [the neighbourhood and the non-neighbourhood] (Stefoni, 2010). Through a symbolic and physical appropriation of urban space by the Peruvian community, processes of 're-territorialisation' are recorded (Appadurai, 2012; Giuffré & Riccio, 2012).

> By interacting with the individuals who reside there, a space becomes part of them, an essential element of recognition and distinction compared to other spaces and other individuals, a space in which the history of the places and the subjects that populate them create a unique mixture [...] Human geography considers places as emotionally lived spaces [...] Any space can become an 'anthropological place', a place in which and through which local identity is shaped, both as a space of daily life, identity, relational, historical, and as a heritage that fixes changing forms of belonging and relationship [...] Anthropological places change, they are endowed with dynamism [...] their life is closely dependent on the relationship they maintain with the ability to define the identity of the group, which belongs to them and to which they belong (Pascuzzi, 2012, pp. 78–79).

These practices, however, do not prevent the reproduction of social inequalities and gender asymmetries in both Peruvian and Chilean society, so that their transnational nature is reduced to the symbolic aspect and the whole movement generated by these practices ends up producing the illusion

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[8] I had the opportunity to see this personally during my study stay in Santiago in July and August 2009 for my PhD.
[9] For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between food and migration, see Seppilli, T. (2008). Migrazioni e processi di acculturazione alimentare. In: M. Minelli & C. Papa (Eds.), *Scritti di antropologia culturale* Oelschki Editore.

of being able to really cross social and cultural borders, an illusion destined for now to remain so in view of the condition of discrimination and of stigmatisation in which Peruvians continue to live in Chile, despite the recognition of the social value of their highly appreciated gastronomy.

4. CONCLUSION

Since the end of the last century, Chile has proudly displayed an image of itself as a politically stable and economically prosperous country with the intention of differentiating itself from neighbouring countries, which perceive this display as an arrogance that can be linked to the triumphalist discourse of a victorious country that has marked the entire process of building Chilean identity. National pride has contributed in no small way to pandering to the perception of possessing ethnic–cultural characteristics similar to white Europeans, and the myth of the so-called *blanquitud* [whiteness] has led to the construction of a symbolic universe that excludes the indigenous *no blanco* [not white] and denies the *mestizo* [multiethnic], the result of the interbreeding between indigenous people and Spaniards. This leads to a revision of the historical past in which the country shared with other Latin American countries a common identity recognised as 'other' by Europeans and was the cradle of the so-called indigenous 'civilisation' comparable to that of Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Guatemala that saw the *Mapuches* of Arancanía oppose such subjugation. The myth of the indomitable Indian [indio] persisted during the resistance, first during the Spanish era and then in the Republican era, to be extinguished with the symbolic and real exclusion of the indigenous people themselves by Chilean society during the process of building national identity. The mythology of white origins has, in fact, led to the spread of an occult racism present at all levels of society that attributes to indigenous people specific features associated with violence, poverty, rebellion and the fact that they are devoid of history (Canales, 2019; Waldman Mitnick, 2004). These attitudes of discrimination towards certain components of Chilean society inevitably have consequences on the reception of the migrant population, all the more so since we have seen how the stigmatisation of Peruvians and Bolivians originates precisely from their *mestiza* [multiethnic] condition. The racial and cultural prejudices against certain groups that have settled throughout the country's history define borders and barriers that preclude the enjoyment of citizenship rights, determining their inclusion in the subordinate levels of society. There has been a lack of awareness of this situation in the institutional discourses, and there is a desire to evade/deny it in order to convey the image of a socially pacified, integrated and homogeneous country, or the maintenance of traditional 'borders' as part of the plan of modernisation of migration policies could be considered within the scenario of globalisation, which, with its contradictions and the accentuation of relationships of power between unequal powers, not only strengthens them but also multiplies and stratifies them in new configurations to give a new shape to the world (Augé, 2007; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2014). The reception and integration of migrants has been hindered by the guidelines of government policies that have sometimes adopted conflicting methods of integration, which resulted in legislative and administrative measures that have often not gone beyond the formal recognition of rights without actually translating them into equal opportunities for access to citizenship. There has also been a lack of political will to equip itself with suitable legislative tools, allowing a clear contradiction to persist over time between the targets of managing a completely new migratory reality and the migration law dating back to the time of the dictatorship and, therefore, based exclusively on security targets. The very meaning attributed to the concept of integration has not gone beyond the unidirectional model, which shifts the responsibility for integration mainly onto the migrant, ignoring the reciprocal acculturative processes that equally involve native and immigrant subjects. In this regard, it is important to pay attention to the contents recently attributed to the concept of responsibility to understand the role it takes in defining the state approach to migration through the impact it has on the migrant. In the institutional discourse, this responsibility is first configured for the migrant as a participation, both at an ideational and practical level, in imagining and building the 'wonderful' Chilean nation by contributing mainly to putting order in this 'hogar' [house] that is shared with all the others (Piñera, Discurso, 2018). For this purpose, state power delimits a set of tasks that the migrant is required to perform that, taking up Foucault's thought, are configured as a set of rules through which specific subjectivities functional to power itself are produced (Foucault, 2001 [1976], p. 190). This aspect clearly emerges if we consider the practical contents associated with the task of 'putting things in order': for the migrant who desires integration, it entails the duty to participate in the selection of new entries on the basis of the assessment of the intention of individuals to respect the laws and to integrate into Chilean society as

well as to contribute to the development of the country through the defence of national security, associated with the fight against irregular and illicit entries (Piñera, Discurso, 2018). This set of rules is incorporated into what is envisaged as a real 'pact' unilaterally offered by the State to the migrant, in which in return for the latter's commitment to conform to the image of the regular/desired migrant, the state takes on the responsibility of welcoming him or her and reserving for him or her 'fair and humane treatment' (Piñera, Discurso, 2018). Otherwise, new and more effective expulsion devices are envisaged in the context of the practices of subordination of bodies and control of the population itself (Foucault, 1978). Practically, the intention to inaugurate the era of a 'new immigration' translates into again proposing a state-centric vision and a static representation of the border, considered from the point of view exclusively functional to the state-territorial demarcation, ignoring all those dynamics that make the border a social and cultural space in continuous evolution as a consequence of the daily practices of crossing that unfold there and the processes of confrontation and negotiation of meanings, openness and exchange produced by them (Rossi, 2022, p. 519). In contrast, the reform projects again propose an approach based on the *chilenización* [Chileanisation] of immigrants, which is an approach based on the homologation of the migrant subject, which is one of the main characteristics of Chilean migration policy in general, which does not consider how migrants are bearers of a different culture and how cultural factors can be an impediment to access to rights. Even the guidelines of the new migration policy, which has just been inaugurated, do not seem to differ much from the migrant model of the previous governments: despite the references to human rights, interculture and the harmonious integration of migrants, an orientation based on security continues to prevail, accompanied by the restriction of new permits, granted as a priority to a 'selected' workforce in view of filling jobs refused by Chileans (Gobierno de Chile [Chilean Government], 2023, p. 6). However, the reception problem can not be solved only with migration policies or administrative reforms but also requires a cultural change that predisposes the Chilean population to an 'actitud receptiva' [receptive attitude] and to the acceptance of other cultures (Estrada, 2016, p. 19). About the future perspective, the opposition put in place for some years by historiography and some anthropological investigations against the *adulteracion* [adulteration] of history by Chileans with the intention of creating the myth of their white descent bodes well. Through new theoretical and methodological paradigms, there is the will to recover the essential contribution that indigenous and *mestiza* realities have given to the formation of national identity, putting at the foundation of reconstruction the incorporation of the other that is tried to be concealed. As scholar Gilda Waldman Mitnick rightly points out (2004, p. 11):

> Fortunately, the country opens up to the critical examination of the missing, of the subtracted, of the incomplete vocabularies, bringing out a paradox but in a story full of paradoxes, many of which appear like ghosts in a country where the main conflict concerns asking to be what one is not.

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