

The Dual Discourse About Peruvian Domestic Workers in Santiago de Chile: Class, Race, and a Nationalist Project

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the functions of the “dual discourse” about Peruvian migrant domestic workers in contemporary Santiago. A 2002 field study found that middle-class employers of Peruvian workers simultaneously praised them as superior workers and denigrated them as uneducated and uncivilized. While this response is not unique to Santiago, this study argues that it fulfilled particular ideological functions in this context. The praise served to discipline the Chilean working class, who middle-class employers claimed no longer knew their place. The epithets served as a foil for Chilean national identity. Stories about Peruvians serve as tools in ongoing ideological contestations over class, race, and nation in Chile and, at the same time, shape the working conditions and integration of the migrants themselves.

Ten years ago, domestic workers in Santiago were largely migrants to the metropolitan region from rural southern Chile. Today, Peruvian migrant women are a visible, much-debated presence in this sector. When this study began, the transition from internal to international migrant domestic workers was the main puzzle. How had this new migration been shaped by the conditions in both Peru and Chile? To what extent were women migrating in response to a shift in demand among Santiagan employers of household workers, either for larger numbers of workers or specifically for foreign domestic workers?

This case seemed especially interesting, considering that the composition of Peruvian migration was largely female and that it was occurring between states in the developing world. The existing literature on the international “maid trade” (Heyzer et al. 1994) has tended to focus on the market for foreign domestic workers among the wealthiest states, identifying women from less-developed countries as “servants of globalization” (Parreñas 2001) whose displacement and migration destinies are shaped by neoliberal economics and the structural inequalities between states, as well as patriarchies both at home and in receiving societies. The migration into Santiago has been shaped by similar global forces, but strikingly, it is taking place in a developing country with no

substantial history of labor immigration. Field research for this study was undertaken in 2002, aimed at making sense of the transnationalization of domestic service in Santiago.

As often happens, new puzzles arose once the field study began. The most striking aspect of the interview material gathered was the “dual discourse” among middle-class employers about Peruvian domestic workers. On the one hand, employers who hired Peruvian domestic workers claimed that they did so because the Peruvians were superior to Chilean household workers in some critical ways. They maintained that Peruvians were harder-working, educated, and clean; that they spoke better Spanish; that they cooked well; and that they were more devoted, caring, submissive, and service-oriented than Chilean workers. On the other hand, widespread beliefs and narratives were expressed by these same employers (as well as in the media and among job placement agencies) stereotyping Peruvian women as dirty, criminal, lazy, backward, uncivilized, uneducated, slow, and childlike. That is, Peruvian workers were simultaneously praised and stigmatized, sometimes in the same breath by the same person.

This kind of dual discourse is not unique to the Santiago context. It bears some resemblance to the representation of “natives” by colonial powers (as spiritually pure but subhuman), to the kinds of stories told about immigrants virtually everywhere (as hardworking but criminal), and to common representations of servants by masters who need them as individuals but revile the classes of people from which they come. While dual discourses have arisen in various situations marked by servitude, conquest, and social inequality, they appear to serve different functions in different social and political contexts. The following analysis interrogates what the dual discourse about Peruvians makes possible in both material and ideological terms in contemporary Santiago.

This study found that both the negative and the positive stories about Peruvian workers reflected some of the logic of the shifting labor market in the greater metropolitan area. They served to rationalize hiring choices and migrants’ poor working conditions in a context of heightened tensions between native-born workers and middle-class employers. Simultaneously, they seemed to serve as a foil against which Chilean identities could be constructed. That is, employers who described Peruvian women as backward, uneducated, or indigenous thereby positioned themselves as civilized, modern, and white. Such stories did not seem to be simply a matter of individual status definition. Instead, they appeared to be part of a larger public contestation over the boundaries of class and national identities in Chile, which arguably became more actively disputed with the end of the dictatorship. The nationalist project evident in employer discourse strongly parallels hegemonic state discourse that resurrects some of the common historical

themes of Chilean nation building, such as Chile's claims to exceptionalism in Latin America and its imagined whiteness and modernity in contrast to Peru and Bolivia. The dual discourse about Peruvians in Santiago appeared to have broad political resonance in addition to rationalizing the labor relationship.

FIELD SITE AND METHODS

The material for this analysis draws primarily from a 2002 field study in Santiago that combined participant observation and interviews to capture the kind of labor market dynamics and discursive constructions that are not detectable solely from demographic statistics. Given a highly decentralized labor market, the study began by interviewing the heads of five major domestic placement agencies in the metropolitan area in order to gather general information about local hiring practices. Of these agencies, only two placed Peruvian workers at all, and just one "specialized" in Peruvian workers.

The primary agency brokering Peruvian workers was operated by the Catholic Church and was officially nonprofit.¹ Two months of participant observations permitted the authors to speak informally with employers as they arrived and left the agency and with job applicants who waited in a group (30 to 50 women daily) on site for interviews. The authors had access to the workers' application forms, which provided some demographic information about migrants, and used contacts at the agency to obtain formal interviews with both employers and workers.

Employers hiring workers at this agency came from a range of middle- and upper-class neighborhoods, a more diverse group by geography and class than those patronizing other placement agencies in Santiago, which each tend to cater to a specific neighborhood and social stratum. Those doing the hiring were almost always women, mostly women with children looking for live-in workers to do both childcare and housecleaning. On the basis of observation of 195 job applications of Peruvian migrants, along with information offered by the agency director, it is estimated that virtually all the Peruvian women seeking work at this organization had migrated since 1996, and most had arrived in the previous two years, entering Chile on tourist visas.

These women were strikingly well educated: 90 percent reported on their applications that they had at least a secondary education, and more than 40 percent of these had some technical or university training.² About a third of them were under 25, and 82 percent were younger than 40. More than half had children, most of them living in Peru.³ The majority of these women had migrated from the larger cities in Peru, such as Lima, Chimbote, and Trujillo.⁴ Many reported that they had been employed in professional positions before emigrating. Although the

application had no question regarding race, observations suggest that nearly all the Peruvian women seeking work at this agency were mestizo. None of them came directly from an indigenous community or background. There were virtually no highland women, no Quechua or Aymara speakers, and no traditional clothes.

The demographics of these job seekers illustrate a different kind of migration from the traditional scheme of peasant migration to the cities. Peruvian migrants do not much resemble the rural Chilean women who have historically supplied Santiago with domestic labor in their premarriage years. These demographics also largely contradict the widespread stereotypes encountered about Peruvian migrants as indigenous, rural, culturally traditional, and less educated.

The profile of the women seeking work through this agency may not fully represent all Peruvian domestic workers in Santiago, given that many workers find jobs through social networks rather than through an agency. This study estimates that the women finding work through this agency may have lacked social capital compared to those finding work independently, and therefore were in a relatively weak position that necessitated their reliance on a paternalistic church organization. It is also possible that workers who are placed in jobs through an agency would be more likely to have a formal labor contract than those who find employment through social networks, given that agencies advise employers and workers to sign a labor contract and oversee the process. Thirteen domestic workers were interviewed at length to supplement the informal conversations at the agency, eight of them contacted at the agency and five contacted elsewhere who had found work through social networks. Although this sample was nonrandom and small, it showed no significant differences between the two groups in terms of their salaries, their likelihood to work under contract, or personal characteristics such as education, age, or profession in Peru.

Some of the most compelling material in this study emerged from the interviews with employers, so the following analysis draws most strongly from the semistructured, in-depth taped interviews conducted with 13 employers of Peruvian domestic workers. Four of them were contacted through the agency and 9 through personal social networks. Although this sample included some geographic, occupational, and class diversity, all the employers interviewed were native-born Chileans between the ages of 30 and 60 who lived in the middle-to-upper-class neighborhoods east of the Plaza Italia, including Las Condes, La Reina, Providencia, Nuñoa, and Lo Barnechea. In addition, the authors interviewed eight relevant government officials, leaders of migrant and labor organizations, and local academic experts.⁵ A workshop was held at FLACSO with 15 expert participants from organizations such as the International Labor Organization, the International Organization for

Migration, a national domestic worker union (ANECAP), the Center for the Study of Women (CEM), and the Fundación Instituto de la Mujer, and observations were conducted during other Santiago events related to Peruvian migrants and Chilean immigration policies.⁶

This combination of methods permitted the study to take stock of hiring patterns, to collect information regarding the migration and circumstances of Peruvian migrants in Chile, and to tap into the kinds of narratives among middle-class Chilean employers about the new migration and the domestic service labor market.

MIGRATION AND DOMESTIC SERVICE IN CHILE

Up to the mid-1990s, domestic service occupied more than 18 percent of Chile's employed female population (MIDEPLAN 1998, 112); and in 1996, despite a general decline, personal services still constituted the largest single category of female employment (Todaro et al. 2000, 213). Domestic service labor in the Santiago metropolitan region has traditionally been supplied through internal migration, particularly from the southern regions of the country (Hojman 1989; Sasz 1992). Like most rural to urban migrations in Latin America, this flow has been largely feminine (Pappas-DeLuca 2000, 101), and rural women working in the capital have been primarily occupied in domestic service (Rebolledo 1995, 408; Sasz 1992, 547–49). During the 1990s, however, Chile experienced a new migration flow, adding to and partly replacing female migration from the south. Santiago households increasingly employed Peruvian women for domestic work, mostly on a live-in basis.

The New Peruvian Immigration

Three major characteristics of Peruvian immigration into Chile can be identified. First, it is a fairly recent phenomenon without strong historical precedent. Significant Peruvian migration into Chile did not occur until the early 1990s, after the liberal economic reforms of President Alberto Fujimori had begun to take effect in Peru and after the end of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile.⁷ According to the Peruvian consul, the migrations in the early 1990s were politically motivated, and primarily comprised professionals and skilled workers fleeing the violent conflicts between terrorist groups and the Peruvian government. During the second half of the decade, migrant flows from Peru expanded and tended to be more economically motivated (Núñez Melgar 2002). A second feature is the strong presence of women in the flow, reflecting a global trend toward feminized migration. In 2002, 60 percent of the Peruvian immigrant population in Chile was female, rep-

resenting the most feminized migrant flow into the country (Martínez 2003b, 28).

Third, Peruvian migrants in Chile are concentrated by region and occupation. The 2002 census documented almost 80 percent of Peruvian migrants living in the Santiago metropolitan area (Martínez 2003b, 38), where the great majority of the Chilean service-consuming population is located (Pappas-DeLuca 2000, 100–101). The segregation in low-skill jobs is true for both male and female immigrants, with domestic service and small-scale vending as the main sources of employment (Martínez 2003b, 18). The occupational segregation of women is particularly striking: 70 percent of registered Peruvian immigrant women in Chile work as domestics, and they constitute 80 percent of all registered foreign domestic workers (Martínez 2003b, 43–44).

The Market for Domestic Service Labor

As these numbers suggest, there has been a clear shift in the domestic service labor market in Santiago, such that *las nanas peruanas* are a visible presence both on the street and in media discourse. Why have Santiagan employers begun to hire foreign domestic workers? In part, this pattern reflects some general economic trends that have increased the need for domestic workers, decreased the number of native-born workers available for household service, and raised the costs of hiring household labor. Collectively, these trends have put a real squeeze on social reproduction—on families' capacity to meet their needs for daily and intergenerational caretaking.

Historically, the demand for domestic service labor in Chile has been heavily dependent on economic cycles (Hojman 1993, 97; Gálvez and Todaro 1989). In times of economic expansion, demand for domestic labor has increased and supply declined, given the other, more preferable job opportunities for women who were likely to work in this sector. In times of economic crisis, however, some former employers went without household help, while lower-class women either had to enter the domestic service labor market for the first time to provide or complement family income, or had to shift from other jobs to the private household as their job options narrowed. During the 1990s, Chile experienced a period of steady and sustained growth that would partly explain the domestic labor shortage about which many employers complained.

Employment data reflect the trend of Chilean women leaving domestic service and abandoning live-in arrangements in favor of live-out jobs that permit more independence and privacy.⁸ In Chile as elsewhere, live-in employment is usually the last option for workers, even while it remains popular among employers. This dichotomy has contributed to some of the demographic shifts in the domestic service labor

market. During the 1980s, Santiago-born women slowly left live-in service and were partly replaced by internal migrant women from the south (Sasz 1992).⁹ During the 1990s, fewer southern women were willing to perform live-in service, and the overall migrant flows from the south tapered off with the prevalence of new employment opportunities in export agriculture and the fishing industry (Moreno and Hueitra 2002; Sasz 1992, 550). At the same time, the demand for live-in workers remained high. The growing entry of middle-class women into professional and “pink collar” or office jobs (Todaro et al. 2000, 209), combined with very limited state support for childcare, also increased the need for paid household labor in Chilean families.

These employment trends suggest that Peruvian immigrant women are at least partly filling a gap left by native-born women who are no longer economically obliged or willing to perform domestic service. However, the interviews suggest that hiring patterns were not solely the product of a labor shortage. They were also shaped by employers’ discontent with the “quality” of native-born domestic workers. Employers did mention difficulties in finding Chilean household help, particularly on a live-in basis, but they also perceived native-born workers’ attitudes as problematic and even inappropriate for the job.

“THIS TYPE OF NANNY? NOT ANYMORE”

Among the convoluted and multiple narratives employers offered about Peruvian migrant domestics, the most common themes of praise referred to their service orientation, submissiveness, devotion, and willingness to work hard. Employers noted that Peruvians had a “more submissive attitude” (Pablo), “aren’t resentful” and “don’t feel that they are exploited” (María Carmen), and “never put on a long face” when asked to do something (Elena). These kinds of observations were the inverse of stories they told about native-born workers, who were represented as too demanding and resentful. These narratives arguably were elements of a “servant problem” discourse that served to discipline native-born workers at the same time as it rationalized the poor working conditions and relative disempowerment of migrants.

The Servant Problem

Employers’ critiques of native-born workers (whom they identified as “Chileans”) focused less on the quality or cost of their labor than on their attitudes, their lack of deference, their refusal to perform proper servitude, and their sense of entitlement to make demands.¹⁰ Employers remarked that Chilean workers had begun to negotiate salaries, inquire about working conditions, and refuse to do certain tasks, such as windows and floors.

The people that you'd call for interviews, Chileans, would ask you: Do you have a washing machine? Do you have a drier? Do you have a juicer? Who comes to clean your windows? Do you have anybody who comes to wax your floors? They'd ask you. They'd ask you the conditions instead of you asking them the conditions. . . . I think that Chileans don't want to cover the area of the domestic worker. (Magda)

Others criticized Chilean domestics for the "resentment" with which they did their jobs; as Marcela explained, they performed their work "with anger and not with love." Similarly, Pablo complained about Chilean workers who "demand more things every time, who become more and more precious [*preciosa*]," and added that the real problem was that they lacked a "nanny attitude."

It began to be difficult to find a Chilean nanny. First of all, the schedule problem and the attitude a little. The Chilean nanny we had for several years—it's true that they were clean, they had good appearance [*presencia*] and everything, but they didn't have like a *nanny attitude*; let's say, they didn't want to use the uniform in the house. . . ., to say it in a decent way, they didn't like to accept their role as a nanny a lot. Like, normally they are young girls who want to study at night. (Pablo, emphasis added)

The complaint about native domestic workers not assuming their role as servants anymore is in many ways a classic "servant problem" discourse, another refrain of the popular chorus among employers that "it is so hard to find good help these days" (Romero 1999). As in other historical contexts in which servant problem discourses have arisen, this one reflects changes in the political and social environment that have equipped native-born working-class women with more opportunities and a greater sense of entitlement. In Santiago, these changes include a growing degree of state regulation of the domestic service labor market and the activities of national domestic worker organizations since the democratic transfer.

Beginning under the Aylwin government in 1990 and subsequently in 1993, a series of new labor laws were implemented. Democratic authorities reintroduced regulations for the domestic service sector that provided workers with more legal resources than under the dictatorship, when domestic service had been completely deregulated. Mandatory employment contracts stipulate the agreed salary, the hours, the concrete tasks expected (cleaning, childcare, cooking), the space granted to the worker in the household, and the duration of employment.

Current labor laws also obligate employers to provide social benefits for workers, such as unemployment insurance, healthcare, and pension contributions. Since 1998, national maternity laws prohibiting a

layoff during pregnancy or within a year of childbirth have also applied to domestic workers. These legal changes have made it slightly more expensive to hire domestic workers and have equipped native-born workers who do domestic service with a greater capacity to defend their rights, because employers confront fines when they are caught not complying with these regulations. Native-born domestic workers still suffer abuses and find their labor undervalued in relation to other occupations; they report many of the same kinds of problems that domestic workers everywhere experience. Yet these legal changes have begun to transform the traditional *patrona-empleada* relationship.

The efforts of domestic worker organizations like ANECAP (*Asociación Nacional de Empleadas de Casa Particular*) and SINTRACAP (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadoras de Casa Particular*) have contributed to these legal changes and have also raised Chilean domestic workers' consciousness about their entitlement to labor rights.¹¹ This tendency was not only confirmed by ANECAP leaders (Moreno and Hueitra 2002), but also noted by employers. As Magda mentioned, in a tone that suggested she was displeased, Chilean women know their rights "backwards and forwards" and demand them.

Much as in other contexts in which employers have complained of a servant problem, these criticisms imply a contrast to a nostalgic and partly illusory ideal of servitude in the "good old days." Both employers and agencies often mentioned *las nanas antiguas* (nannies in the old days), the domestic workers of their childhoods who had come to their families as young girls and lived with them all their lives, not having any further aspirations, sacrificing families of their own. For instance, Susana described the former relationship as follows: "Generally, the people from the countryside who came and stayed here, it was their house, their home. And the children they looked after were like their own. . . . But this type of nanny, not anymore."

The nostalgia expressed in "servant problem" stories tends to obscure the extent to which conflicts always existed in the relationships between *patronas* and household servants, and overstates the degree to which servants were satisfied to dedicate their lives to the service of others (Rollins 1985). However, employment agencies, employers, and ANECAP leaders all confirmed a general transformation from an era in which domestic workers had lower salaries, fewer rights, more specialized tasks in multiservant households, and lifetime employment with a single family, to a time when the labor became regulated by contracts, most households hired only one worker to do a broad range of tasks, and workers changed employers when they were not satisfied with work conditions. This transformation has been accompanied by workers asserting labor rights and being less willing to perform the kinds of ingratiating and subservience expected in the traditional *patrona-*

empleada relationship. Some Santiagan employers arguably began to turn to Peruvian immigrant women, who were said to “assume their role as a nanny,” partly to maintain the traditional structure of submission and dominance.

Las nanas peruanas

Peruvian immigrant women working in domestic service in Santiago were in a legally and socially more vulnerable position than native-born women who worked in the same sector and, arguably, were therefore more willing to enact elements of traditional servitude. Their subordinated position was largely a product of international migration itself. That is, the disempowerment that employers tended to mistake for subservience was not something inherently Peruvian but a trait created by political and legal circumstances that shaped the migration flow.

The neoliberal economic restructuring policies of the regime of Alberto Fujimori in the early 1990s inordinately affected women, who typically bear a disproportionate burden from economic reforms that dissolve social services and are frequently the first ones laid off in a job market with high unemployment.¹² At the same time, the strong growth of the Chilean economy in the 1990s provided job opportunities for economically displaced Peruvians who could continue to support their families financially through remittances. In addition, anecdotal evidence in this study showed that some women were migrating in order to escape abusive relationships.¹³ On the whole, Chile is not a haven of female emancipation compared to Peru, but migrating internationally for plentiful domestic service jobs in Santiago may permit some women to escape proximity to their abusers.¹⁴

In many ways, Peruvians in Chile face a better situation than migrants entering states with more draconian immigration laws. They generally enter Chile on a tourist visa valid for three months. Once a migrant finds a job and has a work contract, she can apply for a temporary residence permit that is valid as long as she stays in that job. The mandatory work contract enforces the same labor rights and benefits for migrants as for native-born workers. Perhaps partly because domestic service labor is actively regulated by the government, this study did not find that Peruvian migrants earned lower average salaries than their Chilean counterparts. The observations and interviews at the employment agency and the information provided by migrant women contacted through other networks suggest that Peruvian women working in household service earned between 120,000 and 220,000 Chilean pesos a month (US\$175–\$320), with salary levels heavily dependent on the neighborhood (and hence the class) of their employers.¹⁵ This range coincides with the average salaries for Chilean domestics mentioned

both by placement agencies and ANECAP.¹⁶ These findings suggest that the growing demand for Peruvian domestic workers in Santiago is not a matter of employers' economizing with "cheap" foreign labor.

As much as official policies legislate equality between migrant and native-born workers, though, migrant women, in reality, tend to be relatively disempowered. The Peruvian women interviewed did not stress a low salary as one of the problems they experienced at work, but they did complain about the nonpayment of their salary, sometimes for more than a month's work. Migrant workers also reported inadequate food, verbal abuses, violations of personal privacy, and working hours long beyond those stipulated by labor laws or agreed on in the work contract. Not all Peruvian migrants actually worked under contract, given that many employers preferred to employ someone informally in order to avoid the costs of social benefit contributions or to avoid liability for the working conditions of their employees.¹⁷ Some workers also preferred to work without a contract, under the perception that their salaries would be lower if benefits were subtracted and the belief that they would not be in Chile long enough to claim a pension or other benefits (Araujo et al. 2002, 58). Without a work contract, foreign workers cannot apply for a residence permit, so Peruvian workers who entered Chile on a tourist visa but then worked without a contract fell out of status both as migrants and as workers, a position much more vulnerable in terms of their capacity to claim or defend their rights.¹⁸

Even migrant workers with a formal labor contract still remained vulnerable, given the displacement of international migration. Peru has a tradition of domestic worker organizing, but many migrant women in Chile did not have previous experience in domestic work. In a foreign legal and political system, they did not know their rights as well as their Chilean counterparts did, and did not know where to turn in case of abuse or violation. In addition, the migration process had displaced Peruvian women from other kinds of informational resources that would have been available to them at home. In Chile, their Peruvian social networks were thinner, and could be a burden or source of abuse as much as a resource.

In any country, migrants with limited access to capital tend to take advantage of other migrants (Morokvasic 1984, 890; Maher 2004, 65–66), and this study saw some limited evidence that Peruvians in Chile are no exception. One domestic worker said that when she first arrived, she contacted a Peruvian family she knew, who then used her as an unpaid servant and treated her very badly. Even social networks back home were not always a resource, as they put migrants under pressure to provide income to their extended families and to return home with the gifts and savings that would mark their migration as successful (Stefoni and

Núñez 2003). Such pressures left some domestic workers living on a very tight budget in Santiago, such as Susana, who sent home all but about \$43 per month. These kinds of circumstances attenuated migrants' leverage in relation to their employers, making it more possible for employers to obtain ingratiation and servitude in addition to labor from their domestic workers.

Why should a "nanny attitude" be so important in the domestic service relationship, above and beyond the job requirements of competent labor? The domestic service literature suggests that household servility not only places employers in a position of power in relation to workers but also helps define and naturalize their social superiority or class position. The mere capacity to hire a domestic worker defines an employer's class status; but equally important are the daily performances of deference and domination that naturalize the inequality (Rollins 1985; Rubbo and Tausig 1983). Such performances appeared to be important to employers who said they preferred Peruvian workers who were "always content" (Lidia) and "don't feel that you exploit them" (María Carmen). Such comments suggest that part of what Peruvian domestics were supplying was an interaction that lacked the specter of injustice disrupting the smooth surface of the fantasy of a "natural" subordination.

That it was immigrant women enacting the subordinate role may have also permitted employers to evade direct confrontation with enduring class conflicts among Chileans. Class conflict in Chile became especially intense during the late 1960s and the Allende regime (1970–73), with open divisions between upper-class economic interests and workers who had seen their rights expand during this period (*momios* versus *rotos*). The military coup of 1973 and the following dictatorship overturned these achievements, repressing workers' movements and workers' rights discourse while building a strong coalition between the military government and Chilean entrepreneurs. The Pinochet regime thereby encouraged the persistence of right-wing class prejudices and also exacerbated class divisions materially, with increases in income inequality and poverty. The postauthoritarian governments have not rectified these structural inequalities: income inequality remains the same (CEPAL 2000; Feres 2001), and there is still a huge power imbalance in capital-labor relations (Barrett 2000). The democratic regime has been reluctant to touch these issues, fearing a revival of political violence and class-based polarization.

In this context, it is easy to imagine that Peruvian domestic workers constitute a new *roto* class that lacks the historical baggage of native-born workers.¹⁹ The interview materials in this study certainly support this proposition: the contrast between uppity Chilean workers and submissive Peruvians was one of the dominant patterns in the interview

data, replicated in virtually every employer interview in some form. Marcela told us, for example, “This is the other thing the Peruvians have, this appreciation of respecting the employer. And here in Chile I find it the other way around. Almost as if it were embarrassing to respect the employer. They have a lot of resentment.” Employers’ numerous comments about Chilean domestic workers’ “resentment” may reflect historically rooted class mistrust as well as dissatisfaction with the shift in the traditional domestic service relationship. In either case, employers’ praise for Peruvian women who “assume their role as a nanny” has to be seen in direct relation to the critique of Chilean working-class women who fail to do so. The message of the positive narratives about Peruvian women is not just that Peruvians are desirable workers, but also that the Chilean working class does not know its place.

HOUSEHOLD SERVICE AND NATIONAL IMAGININGS

The praise of Peruvians as good domestic servants was only one side of the dual discourse. Other narratives were stunningly negative and discriminatory, reflecting widespread stereotypes of Peruvians as backward, slow, lazy, dirty, uneducated, or criminal. Some employers generalized experiences with particular workers into statements about Peruvians in general or comparisons between Peruvians and Chileans as national groups. Virtually everyone (even those who had had good experiences with Peruvian employees) talked about “cultural” differences between the two societies and compared them more generally, repeating well-known stereotypes about Peruvians or media representations of immigrants. In general, the criticisms of Peruvian workers and, by extension, of Peruvian society tended to be expressed in opposition to “us” in Chile. Such comparisons seemed to serve two purposes: to rationalize the subordinated position of migrant workers and to construct a positive, unified image of Chilean national identity.

National comparisons were especially evident in narratives about Peruvian poverty or backwardness, which appeared in roughly half the interviews. For instance, one employer declared that Peruvians “have very little education” and “different customs—they are accustomed to eating a lot on the street” and behave in uncivilized ways when they gather at the Plaza de Armas on Sundays, where “some even urinated” (Elena). This critique extended to other issues of hygiene and health, like “the other one I had, you had to force her to shower” (Lidia). Or, as a woman who worked at a health center explained,

[Peruvian] people are of little financial means, they come escaping the poverty there, they have a very low level of culture in their

habits, in their attitudes, in everything. They carry diseases, there is a lot of tuberculosis, they bring infections that Chileans here do not have, vaginal infections, syphilis, sexually transmitted diseases. (Stefoni 2003)

To such people, one employer reasoned, Chile's higher standard of living must be very attractive: "Chile is nice, a country that is nice at all levels . . . where there are beautiful malls, where the beaches are beautiful. This, then, gives them an incentive to come." And, she added, even the poor in Chile are better off: "here there are more day nurseries, the level of the poor people is higher. Exactly. The social level is higher. The poor walk around better dressed" (Elena).

Note that Elena does not deny that there is poverty in Chile but instead asserts that Chilean poverty is "better" than Peruvian poverty. While Peru does have a higher poverty rate than Chile and very real problems with infectious diseases in the highlands, syphilis and sexually transmitted diseases existed in Chile before the Peruvian migrants came, and the very poor in Chile live a life just as miserable as the very poor in Peru.²⁰ Such a discourse situates Peru as the source of infectious diseases as well as "real" poverty.²¹ Rhetoric that focuses on issues of poor hygiene and disease among immigrant populations is a classic nativist formulation (Perea 1997), one that demarcates social and political boundaries with narratives about the potential for contamination (Douglas 1966). The gap between empirically supportable assertions and the discourse in the interviews illustrates ideologically based identity construction. Such discourses serve to differentiate Chileans and Peruvians, affirming Chile as more advanced and more civilized.

A less prevalent pattern in the interviews was to construct the social boundaries between Chile and Peru in racial (as well as national) terms. Six of the 13 employers spontaneously introduced race as an issue in their interviews, and 4 of these attributed racist tendencies to Chilean society rather than asserting racial stereotypes themselves. All the commercial placement agencies, on the other hand, talked a lot about race, making explicit racial comparisons between Peruvians and Chileans and recounting the prejudices of their employer-clients. Given the widespread denial of race in Chile and the common tendency to lump race with class differences (which are much more acceptable to discuss), this theme is significant.

The pattern is not entirely surprising, however, considering Chile's historical policies to "improve" the race through European immigration (Solberg 1970, 18–24) and efforts to differentiate Chile from neighbors such as Peru and Bolivia on the basis of racial superiority (Larraín 2001, 265).²² Pablo, for instance, described his surprise with a Peruvian nanny who was quite "intellectual," although she had indigenous traits "like

the majority of Peruvians. . . . Because we are a bit racist, we tend to see them. . . , because they have indigenous traits, so one thinks that they . . . are not very intelligent, and no. That surprised me, I have a different attitude now.”

Susana repeated the distinction between Chile as a white society and Peru as racially mixed: “Here, we do not have different races, that’s it, there are not here as in Peru *cholos* [Andean mestizos], Chinese . . . There are many. Here, no, there aren’t.” This comment is quite remarkable in its complete denial of Chile’s indigenous population, as well as the mestizo heritage of much of the population. The denial of races other than white in Chile has a long history: race was not measured in the census before 1992, when 7.5 percent of the total population identified as indigenous (Barrientos 2000, 276).

The indigenous population was both numerous and visible in metropolitan Santiago at the time of this study, even in neighborhoods like Susana’s, where Mapuche domestic workers are employed. Both employers and agencies discussed experiences with domestic workers from the south in ways that represented Mapuches in very negative terms. Their general preference for nannies from the south, for example, often seemed to exclude Mapuche women from southern communities, particularly the Temuco region. One agency owner explained that there was a difference between *sureña* and Mapuche: some employers who wanted a *sureña* would not want a Mapuche, because they were aggressive and “proud.” Another agency owner imitated some employers’ demands, such as “I want her *bien chilanita*, I don’t want a *temucana*.”

In this sense, the prejudices against indigenous peoples reflected in this study extended not only across national boundaries but also within them. When directed at Peruvians, however, such prejudices tended to be expressed in national terms that represented Chile as homogenous and white by comparison.

Convictions about Peruvian poverty and indigeneity or racial inferiority were sometimes asserted even in the face of contradictory evidence. Both the Peruvian consul and a Peruvian female entrepreneur said that Chileans complement them by assuring them that they do not seem to be “real” Peruvians, given their relative wealth and respected social standing.

The stereotype of the Peruvian who comes to Chile is the dirty Peruvian, the disrespectful Peruvian. . . . People are so influenced by it that a lot of times when I chat with people from Chile (who don’t know me for example) . . . , they tell me: “You don’t seem Peruvian!” But I tell them: “And what do I seem like?” “Chilean.” And what is the Chilean like? I think it’s absurd. (Núñez Melgar 2002)

Similarly, several employers described particular employees as exceptions to the rule when they did not find them to have negative "Peruvian" racial traits; for example: "She was really pretty, she wasn't ugly, she wasn't the typical Peruvian, like that, really dark" (María Carmen). Again, such statements reflect a construction of difference between Peruvians and Chileans that contradicts empirical reality, a commitment to stereotypes about Peruvians in contrast to a preferred image of Chileans as uniformly white and wealthy.

It is interesting that in two interviews, the stereotypes employers expressed about Peruvian backwardness were articulated in gendered terms. Claudia said, "I have been told that their system is a hundred times more *machista* than ours." Magda developed this theme in detail, claiming that Peruvian women were less worldly than Chilean women and more accustomed to a subordinated gender role: "The *peruanas* still have internalized machismo much more, they are more degraded than the *chilenas*. The *chilenas* are respected, they have a certain education. It is another style of life." Magda explained that this difference is a potential advantage for the gendered subordination of domestic service employment, "because the people who suffer machismo are used to it.

Because I'd say that the *chilenas* want more independence. They want their rights, they want their time, their space. In contrast these people, no. They come out of necessity and are willing to do anything for the money. But the *chilena*, no. [She] is not willing to do everything. (Magda)

The contrast of a traditional gender order in Peru, in which women are used to machismo, and a more gender-liberated society in Chile, where women are educated and respected, serves not only to explain why Peruvian women would more happily occupy a demeaned or subordinated feminine role in the household, but also to construct Chilean women (and hence Chilean society) as more modern. In these terms, Magda portrays Peruvians as appropriate for a degraded household position because they are destitute, and frames this representation of Peruvian women in contrast to Chilean women, who are "not willing to do everything." Her positive tone about Chileans in this instance contrasts significantly to her earlier critique of native-born domestic workers for knowing their rights all too well. However, here the self-respect of Chilean working-class women is absorbed into a more encompassing narrative about the modernity, education, and emancipation of Chilean women more generally. It becomes a source of national pride.²³

Magda was not the only employer to assume that Chilean women had higher educational levels than Peruvians. However, employers could not have deduced this from the actual educational levels of immigrant women working in Chilean households. The data from observing

the placement agency, based on 195 Peruvian job applications, included about 50 percent with secondary education, about 30 percent with technical training, and about 10 percent with university education; only about 10 percent had only a primary education. These proportions are very close to those from a larger study on internal migrants in the Andean Community (Araujo et al. 2002, 50). This information is not available only to scholars of immigration; it has also been the topic of various news reports (for example, *Revista Ya* 2002). Some employers had encountered these educational trends personally, such as Claudia, an employer studying education, who discovered that her Peruvian nanny had been a school dean back in Peru.

Well, I found out, like, the third day that she was here. My daughter came, she was chatting and she says to me: listen Mom, do you know that this lady says that she was a school dean? . . . And then I started to talk to her and we ended up talking about transversal objectives [*objetivos transversales*].²⁴ That is, she was familiar with a lot of the concepts in education, right, that are only known among people working in this area. And this was how I sat down to chat with her and she told me that she was retired. (Sonia, interview by Carolina Stefoni)

Sonia's revelation was uncommon among the employer interviews. More usual was an insistence that household workers were uneducated or less bright than their employers, a discursive move that has also been documented in studies of domestic service relationships in other international contexts as a strategy to emphasize employers' superiority to their domestic workers (Constable 1997, 77–79). Such contrasts serve not only to legitimate the inequalities and work conditions of domestic employment, but also to construct larger social divisions (Adams and Dickey 2000, 8; Rollins 1985; Rubbo and Tausig 1983); in this case, national divisions.

A related theme both in the international literature (Maher 2004; Constable 1997; Rollins 1985) and in this case is that employers commonly want to see foreign domestic workers as economically inferior and therefore make more of their employees' poverty and "desperation" than is often warranted. Susana, for instance, asserted that Peruvians "come here because it's the only thing they can do." Similarly, Rosa declared that "they can't lose their job because the whole family in Peru depends on her," and Magda said, "for a Peruvian a nanny income is fabulous . . . all they're interested in is that you give them money, nothing else." These kinds of statements acknowledge some of the constraints under which Peruvian women were working in Chile and their relatively disempowered position. On the other hand, they also serve to reinforce the class division between Chileans and Peruvians, when the actual social position

of some of the Peruvian migrants at home did not differ so much from that of their current employers. Such stories help employers defuse the class conflict in the domestic work relationship (Constable 1997) and, like the narratives about poverty and machismo in Peru, rationalize foreign workers' subordinated position in the household.

Clearly, employers' negative discourse about Peruvian migrants served to naturalize and legitimate their subordination and disempowerment and to undercut their claims to legal equality—an age-old, well-documented strategy among employers of domestic workers (Gill 1994; Romero 1992). However, the contrasts between Chileans and Peruvians in these narratives also had identity functions. They reinforced imagined social distinctions between Chileans and Peruvians more generally: between whites and indigenous peoples; between a developed, civilized state that is more European than Latin American and another that is backward, poor, and truly part of the less-developed world. Such comparisons imply an image of a unified “us” among Chileans, a national homogeneity that momentarily erases or overshadows internal class, racial, and gender divisions. Such discourses might be symptomatic of a larger national identity project occurring in Chile.

SO FAR FROM EUROPE, SO CLOSE TO PERU

The narratives that construct national identity in opposition to a Latin American “other” on the individual level, and attempt to position Chileans as the natural superiors of their household workers in national terms, were not invented by the people this study happened to interview; they strongly parallel more general discourses about Chilean identity among Chilean elites. The generalizations employers made about Peruvians make sense in the context of a larger national “identity project”; that is, an attempt to construct a particular national image that serves political purposes.

Historically, some of the central themes of this national image are the modernity, racial superiority, and economic success of Chile in opposition to other Latin American countries. Ericka Beckman (n.d.) documents how the Chilean state, during the War of the Pacific (1879–83), adopted imperial language and politics to define the war as a “civilizing mission,” “affirming the whiteness, virility, discipline, and morality of ‘the Chilean race’ in opposition to the effeminate, disorderly, and backward Creoles, halfbreeds, Indians, blacks, and Chinese of Peru and Bolivia.” Chile’s relative “modernity” was framed not only in terms that borrowed a post-Enlightenment, imperial vision of progress but also in racialized terms that equated progress and moral superiority with whiteness. According to Jorge Larraín, such notions of modernity that

adopt Europeanness as the standard have been most prevalent historically during periods of economic expansion, such as in the second half of the nineteenth century, from 1950 to 1970, and again in the postdictatorship years (Larraín 2001, 132, 136).

In the past decade, the notion that Chile is atypical of Latin America has been omnipresent in public discourse, media representations, and tourist and business marketing to the rest of the world. In opposition to the reputation of Latin America as tropical, informal, and multiethnic, such discourses represent Chile as culturally, racially, and climatically more like Europe. Chile is “a good house in a bad neighborhood.”²⁵ It is a First World country located in the postcolonial South by some cosmic mistake. With discursive representations of Chileans as nontropical (*no somos tropicales*) or the “English of Latin America” (Andrés Benítez, cited in Subercaseaux 1996, 76), this discourse ignores the broad range of shared traits that connect Chile with other Latin American states, such as language and historical and cultural parallels. Instead, the most common forms of this discourse have focused on Chile’s economic performance during the 1990s, apparently to promote Chile to tourists and investors in a global market.

A striking illustration of this is Chile’s contribution to the 1992 World’s Fair in Seville. The centerpiece of the Chilean pavilion was an enormous chunk of iceberg shipped there from the Antarctic sea, an artifact that was to be the ultimate proof of Chile’s lack of *tropicalismo*.²⁶ The iceberg was apparently intended to evoke associations of Chile as a cold place that shared not only a climate but also cultural and economic qualities with Northern Europe—a place technologically advanced enough to master nature and move the unmovable, with refrigeration techniques that also cool Chile’s perishable exports, such as salmon, fruit, and shellfish.²⁷ It was a sign of prosperity and progress intended to distance Chile from the image of Latin America as indigenous, exotic, underdeveloped, and riven by ethnic and political conflict. As the businessman and official fair representative Fernando Léniz explained,

The idea is that Chile is seen as a modern country. Here, there aren’t ethnic problems, we don’t have a big pre-Columbian tradition. We’re not interested in impacting the European with the image of an exotic country, because we aren’t. In the pavilion we’ll have people with an excellent appearance [*presencia*], bilingual, well dressed, and this is not because of snobbiness. . . . It’s simply the need that they see us as equal to them. (Quoted in Subercaseaux 1996, 60)

The denial of ethnic divisions in this statement offers a striking parallel to some of the employers’ discourse about racial differences

between Peru and Chile, obscuring the indigenous population and most Chileans' mestizo heritage. Léniz's denial of "ethnic tensions" in Chile also overlooks ongoing tensions in the Mapuche region, where well-organized indigenous groups struggle against state control of their territories, domination by transnational enterprises, and lack of recognition of their rights. These struggles have generated growing public concern about the situation of the Mapuche (Sznajder 1998, 202–5).

The success of the national image manufactured by elites and its common reproduction in the discourse of employers interviewed does not mean that it has remained uncontested. Indeed, the Seville exhibit attracted much criticism from intellectuals who preferred a more pluralist, humane national identity embedded in the Latin American map (for example, Subercaseaux 1996, 85–86). The neoliberal identity promoted at Seville was also criticized as whitewashing the past in the name of political and economic stability (Moulian 1997, 31–36). In 1992, only two years since the first democratically elected president took office after more than 16 years of dictatorship, social, political, and ethnic conflicts persisted under the sparkling surface of the iceberg, and still mark political life in Chile.

Although narratives about Chile's relative modernity, whiteness, and economic prosperity have been around for a long time, they arguably have had greater resonance in recent years, given circumstances in both international and domestic politics. States that are being drawn into the global economy are under pressure to develop a distinctive, positive, business- and tourist-friendly international image. This economic pressure has been identified as one of the reasons that localized, place-bound identities like nationalisms have become more rather than less important in an era in which globalization is supposedly homogenizing cultures and making territorial boundaries irrelevant (Massey 1992). In order to win the trust of foreign business and political authorities in the First World, the Chilean state and business interests have constructed a national image for international consumption.

This official approach has been successful in terms of trade policy and foreign investment. A free trade agreement between Chile and Canada came into force in 1997. Five years later, a free trade agreement with the European Union was signed, followed by an agreement with the United States in 2003, which was the first of its kind with a South American country. Chile's rates of direct foreign investment rose significantly between early 1990 (\$661 million) and 1999 (\$9,221 million).²⁸ The contemporary national identity project in Chile might be seen partly as an externally oriented marketing strategy on a global stage.

This identity project, however, also serves some purposes at home. Nationalist discourses like the ones that appear in this study create the illusion of a homogenous Chilean "we" by externalizing social divisions, ethnic tensions, and instability to an imagined Latin American other.

They are constructed to produce a sense of community despite internal social, ideological, and political divisions. As Ernst Renan once argued, those who think of themselves as belonging to a single nation base this belief not only on shared memories but also on forgetting. The belief in unity requires a selective amnesia about past violence (such as colonial conquest and the fratricides among Chileans under the dictatorship) embedded in one's own history (Renan [1882] 1996).

The selective amnesia about human rights violations and state terror during the dictatorship was imposed by the Pinochet regime in both judicial and political terms (Loveman and Lira 2002). The amnesty law implemented in 1978 not only prevented holding the military responsible for its deeds, but also erased the deeds from history by not allowing investigations of human rights violations. This amnesty law still posed an obstacle to confronting the history of human rights violations under democratic governments in the 1990s, which tried to encourage forgetting and encouraged the public instead to "look to the future" (Moulian 1997). The forgetting imposed by law and by nationalistic public discourse serves to stretch "the short, tight skin of the nation" (Anderson 1991, 86) over the heterogeneous and divided body of Chilean society.

Pinochet's detention in London in 1998 disrupted the state-sanctioned silence about the violence and divisions among Chileans in recent history, but apparently did not puncture the national imaginings of at least a subset of the population, given the active constructions of Chilean identity as comparatively modern and white that appeared in the interviews in 2002. Employers' narratives of difference between Chileans and Peruvians paralleled more general narratives of Chile's exceptionalism in Latin America. In both cases, the focus on a "more different" other contributes to the perception of a "more similar" we.

NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

What is the relationship between the nationalist narratives promoted by the state and economic elites and the similar narratives among employers of Peruvian domestic workers? Several explanations seem possible. On the one hand, we might conclude that this nonrepresentative group of employers had internalized the kinds of official and public discourse about Chilean identity, modernity, and economic progress that proliferated during the years of the dictatorship and in the past decade (see Moulian 1997). Because our interview sample was nonrandom and oversampled with those from middle- and upper-class neighborhoods, we might conclude that such attitudes are most common among these classes rather than characteristic of the general population.²⁹

On the other hand, political elites did not invent such stories from whole cloth, but drew on historically available narratives about Chile's

exceptionalism and racial superiority to its Latin American neighbors (Larraín 2001; Beckman n.d.). Such narratives would surely have been familiar to middle- and upper-class employers even without state encouragement. In this sense, we might conclude that elites and the employers interviewed were all drawing from a common pool of narratives that have long been part of Chile's nation-building project.

Those drawing from a common pool may have very different reasons for appropriating available national narratives. Middle-class employers are unlikely to profit economically or politically from a nationalist project in the same way as political and economic elites, but ordinary people can use nationalist discourse nevertheless as part of popular contestations over social boundaries within the nation. (For instance, identifying Chile as a white country undercuts Mapuche claims, and identifying it as wealthy or even solidly middle-class dismisses the poor as legitimate members of the national body.)

As this study illustrates, nationalist narratives can also help legitimate a particular kind of household relationship with Peruvian domestic workers: the inequality of the *patrona-empleada* relationship can be grounded in the imagined differences and inequalities between Peru and Chile rather than on class or race alone.

CONCLUSIONS

In examining the shift toward foreign migrants rather than internal, rural migrants as domestic workers in Santiago, this study expected to find a wage discrepancy between these two groups and a prevalent discourse among employers about Peruvians as "cheap labor." It found neither. Instead, it revealed a complex set of stories from middle-class Santiaguans about Peruvian household workers, a dual discourse that simultaneously praised them as superior workers and stigmatized them as social inferiors. While the apparent contradictions in these stories were initially puzzling, closer analysis suggests that both dimensions of this discourse had important identity functions. The praise of Peruvian women as hard workers with a good attitude helped set up a "servant problem" critique of the native-born working class at a time when these workers were no longer legally or socially obligated to perform an obsequious servitude. At the same time, the critiques of Peruvian workers as backward or less civilized permitted the construction of a homogenous national "we" among Chileans, a national image that paralleled the dominant representations among political and economic leaders of Chile's relative modernity, wealth, and whiteness in opposition to its Latin American neighbors.

One of the most interesting dimensions of this dual discourse was how class and national identities intersected. For instance, most

employers appeared to construct their class identity in relation to Chilean workers, a pattern apparent in the class-based critiques of uppity and resentful Chilean domestic workers. On the other hand, class differences among Chileans seemed to disappear when employers spoke of their identity as Chileans in opposition to Peruvians. This may not mean that national identity cuts across class lines. Neither class nor national identity appeared to predominate all the time; instead, they intersected in ways that permitted employers to switch fluidly from one to another in strategic self-representation.

Peruvian migrant domestic workers occupied a particularly complex position in relation to class and nation in Chile. In part, their class position came out of the kind of work they performed, domestic service being a solidly working-class occupation. But the position of Peruvian domestic workers was not strictly equivalent to the class position of Chilean *rotos* because it was also defined in terms of Peru's and Chile's relative development or wealth. That is, Peruvian domestic workers had a lower-class position in Chile not only because they were engaged in low-status, low-paid labor, but also because they were understood to be from a country that has less economic clout in the global economy. Their material circumstances as Peruvians and as household workers certainly mattered, but their position was also a product of social constructions by Chileans that defined and justified the subordination of Peruvians in ideological terms. The relative difference in wealth between Peru and Chile tended to be redefined in terms of "backwardness" and "whiteness" in ways that reflected a postcolonial imagination more than empirical reality. This finding suggests that the class relations occurring in household service take on another layer of complexity when the workers are foreign.

Employers' representations of both native-born and foreign domestic workers reflected a range of ideological contestations over the boundaries of class, gender, race, and nation. However, even discursive political tools have material consequences. Certainly, they shaped the treatment of Peruvian migrants in Santiago households. Claims about Peruvians' inferiority, desperation, and poverty legitimated poor treatment and exploitative working conditions, following the logic that bad jobs were better than no jobs at all. On a broader level, these narratives also informed more general patterns of reception and integration of immigrants in Chile. The dual discourse observed in Santiago played an immediate role in the interpersonal politics of transnational household labor, in addition to reinforcing the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the national body.

NOTES

1. This organization asked employers for a “donation” of 10,000 pesos (US\$15) to hire women who earned from 110,000 to 220,000 pesos (\$160–\$320) per month. Most employers paid this donation as if it were a fee. Some of the women seeking work here, and others in the Peruvian migrant community, told the authors they did not think this organization’s main goal was to serve the migrants, and questioned where the employer fees went, if the organization also charged the migrants for food, shelter, and other services. However, the “fee” of this agency was much lower than those of commercial agencies, which charged from 30,000 to 50,000 pesos (\$45–\$75) depending on whether they brokered a live-in or a live-out worker.

2. These patterns are confirmed in Araujo et al. 2002.

3. This trend was recently confirmed in a survey carried out by Stefoni and Núñez (2003). According to their findings, 66 percent of the women had children: 19 percent in Chile, 31 percent in both Chile and Peru, and 50 percent in Peru only.

4. This pattern has also been noted in Stefoni and Núñez 2003 and Araujo et al. 2002.

5. All employers and domestic workers were guaranteed anonymity and are cited in the text with pseudonyms. The expert interviews are included in the reference list. Each of the 38 interviews lasted from one-half hour to two hours. They were all taped and transcribed, except 8 of the interviews with domestic workers that were not taped in order to facilitate a more comfortable, conversational interaction. The authors worked closely during this process with Carolina Stefoni of FLACSO, Santiago, who conducted some of the interviews cited here as part of a separate study of Peruvian migration into Chile (see Stefoni 2003).

6. For instance, the authors attended a two-day discussion about needed reforms in Chilean immigration law in which representatives of Chilean ministries met with the Peruvian consul, church leaders, and local NGOs working with migrant populations (VIs Jornadas Migratorias 2002).

7. Despite the limitations of census data in capturing undocumented populations, the available records reflect this development. The 1970 census documented a population of 3,804 Peruvian residents in Chile. By 1992, this number had increased to 7,649, and by the 2002 census, the number had skyrocketed to 37,860 (CELADE 2000; Martínez 2003b, 16). Although the rapid increase is partly because of a campaign by the Chilean government to offer amnesty to undocumented immigrants in 1998, the 2002 census also confirmed that about 80 percent of the Peruvian women and 73 percent of the Peruvian men residing in Chile had arrived since 1996 (Martínez 2003a, 17).

8. A study in 2000 from the Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (CEM) shows that although the absolute number of women working in domestic service had increased since 1990, it had declined as a female employment category, with the decline greatest in live-in employment. In 2000, 80 percent of all domestic service arrangements were on a live-out basis, and most live-in arrangements were located in Santiago (Díaz and Delgado 2001, 5–13).

9. Industrialization and import substitution economic policies implemented from the late 1930s on led to stagnation in the agricultural sector and started a

process of migration from the southern regions to the manufacturing centers like Santiago (Loveman 1988, 234–35). By the 1980s, these trends had become visible in the domestic service sector. A large proportion of these internal migrants were women looking for work in private households (Hojman 1993, 75).

10. Chilean nannies from the south were also sometimes called *sureñas*, a moniker that has different connotations from those of *chilena*. Employers tended to represent *sureñas* as traditional, rural, and simple, whereas *chilena* was used primarily in comparison to *peruana*.

11. Domestic labor organizations in Chile have never been very powerful, even during the most intense years of mobilization under the socialist government of the Unidad Popular (Moreno and Hueitra 2002), but their efforts have surely contributed to domestic workers' class consciousness. The working classes mobilized in support of the Allende regime, and consequently, workers' organizations and trade unions became a major target of the political "cleansing" after the 1973 coup (Ensignia 1987). During the Pinochet regime, working-class women's engagement in popular protest arguably contributed to increased gender and class consciousness; women dominated popular economic organizations (for example, soup kitchens, *arpilleras*) to confront the impact of economic crises and took leadership roles in associations of the relatives of the detained and disappeared (Chuchryk 1989). Few studies are currently available about the history of domestic worker organizing and the relationship to class consciousness among workers, but Hutchison (n.d.) will make important contributions in this regard.

12. About the political economy of gendered displacement by structural adjustment policies and global capitalism, see Chang 2000; Pettman 1996.

13. Three of the 13 migrant women interviewed identified abusive relationships as one of the key reasons they migrated. This observation has also been made in a study conducted by Susana Córdova Rivera, a Chilean social worker and leader of a migrant NGO, who found that 11 of the 23 Peruvian immigrant women she interviewed had experienced physical abuse by family members, husbands, or lovers. Although it might not have been the sole cause for their emigration, Córdova sees domestic violence as a factor that facilitated the decision for migration among these women (Córdova Rivera 2002).

14. Despite the achievements of the feminist movement in Chile, some policies are still extremely conservative, such as the ban on divorce still in effect at the time of this study (repealed in 2004) and the continuing ban on all forms of abortion (Shepard 2000). The female economic activity rate is similar in Chile and Peru, and Peru actually ranks higher in the Human Development Index gender empowerment measure (UNDP 2001, tables 22, 24). Domestic violence remains a serious problem in both countries that is beginning to be addressed through policy.

15. Many of the women waiting for work at the Catholic agency would reject jobs that offered less than 140,000 pesos per month (\$200), particularly if these jobs did not offer preferred benefits such as Saturday afternoons off, no children, or a relatively small house requiring less effort to clean. The Peruvian domestic workers interviewed in other contexts were earning salaries between 140,000 and 200,000 pesos per month (\$200–\$290).

16. ANECAP identified the typical salary range for Chilean domestic workers as 120,000 to 200,000 pesos per month (\$170–\$290). Agencies placing

Chilean workers across a range of neighborhoods or classes of employers reported salaries ranging from 90,000 to 280,000 pesos per month (\$130–\$400).

17. Virtually all of the migrant domestic workers interviewed who were currently working had a labor contract. However, a survey conducted by the NGO Grupo Misionero Scalabriniano in Chile in 1999 with 2,400 migrant respondents found that 61.7 percent were working without a contract, a number that included both male and female migrants in all industries (Araujo et al. 2002, 57).

18. Although migrant workers without a contract or authorization for residence could hypothetically make labor claims at the Dirección del Trabajo, they are unlikely to do so, given that working without a contract is illegal. When the authors asked one scholar in a confidential interview whether the laws apply to migrant workers without authorization, her response was that such workers should get authorization.

19. We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this important point.

20. In Chile, 20.6 percent of the population lived below the poverty line as of 2000 (CEPAL 2002, 211). The UNDP 2002 Human Development Report (table 3) noted that 9.6 percent of the Chilean population lived on less than \$2 per day, in contrast to 37.7 percent in Peru.

21. See Vila 1997 for a similar argument about Mexican Americans in El Paso, Texas who perceived that “real” poverty existed only across the border in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

22. Of course, these selective immigration policies also existed in other Latin American countries, notably Argentina and Peru; and racialization, introduced by the Spanish colonial caste system, has a long history in the Americas.

23. We believe that the conflation of modernity and gendered emancipation may be a more significant pattern than emerged in our interviews, since we did not explicitly ask about it. Other studies that focus specifically on how gender orders play out in the lives of migrant women would very likely find rich material. We did, however, more closely examine the complex intersections of gender, race, and class in our field site in a separate article (Maher and Staab 2005).

24. This phrase relates to the notion in English of a “hidden curriculum,” or educational objectives that are structured into the curriculum but not explicitly taught.

25. We heard this phrase informally during our fieldwork from middle-class professional Chileans and the media.

26. Again, this narrative is not new. Beckman (n.d.) observes that even during the War of the Pacific, Chileans articulated their difference with the rest of Latin America (and particularly Peru and Bolivia) in terms of climate, representing “Peruvian climates, cultures, and races as tropical,” whereas “the more ‘temperate’ climate of Chile, by implicit contrast, produces greater sobriety, and by extension, a higher level of civilization.” Palacios’s *La raza chilena*, published in 1904, also argues for the immigration only of those “races” that would blend with Chileans, excluding all matriarchal races and those from warm climates (including *iberos*, blacks, and all Latin races) in favor of Nordic and German races (cited in Larraín 2001, 95).

27. This characterization draws from Ariel Dorfman’s novel *The Nanny and the Iceberg* (1999), in which Chile’s Seville exhibit is much discussed and ridiculed.

28. In South America, Chile was among the four largest recipients of direct foreign investment (along with Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela) until 2001, when it became the second-largest recipient after Brazil, given the breakdown of the Argentine economy (CEPAL 2000, 96, 2002, 32).

29. The two interview subjects with the lowest socioeconomic class among our sample (who were also the youngest, in their 30s) did differ a bit in their attitudes: like the others, they noted differences between Peruvians and Chileans in national terms and identified Peruvians as more submissive, but they explained this submissiveness in terms that did not implicate Chilean workers for being too demanding. Instead, they said that Peruvians were easier to manage because they did not yet have a life formed here, unlike Chileans. The other interview that differed was with a woman who had a class position similar to most of the others but had a more critical perspective toward what she called the "arrogance" of Chilean chauvinism toward other Latin Americans and racism toward Mapuches. This woman was more educated than most of the other respondents and had lived in Europe for a time. These three cases suggest that further study might find different narratives about race, class, gender, and nation among different sectors of the Chilean population, despite the existence of a hegemonic discourse among elites. Further study may also find significant differences in attitudes across the political spectrum among members of different political parties.

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