



Elements to understand the challenges of migration

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Migration in Chile: trends and policy responses in the period 2000-2021

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Abstract

This document summarizes the current state of migration in Chile and analyses some of the main changes that have taken place in the last 20 years. Based on a literature review and an analysis of secondary sources, it analyzes migration flows to Chile. The study focuses on the recent increase in the number of migrants entering through unauthorized border crossings in northern Chile and examines the situation of displaced people and those seeking refugee status, the majority of whom are Venezuelans. It looks at the core components of the migration policy implemented in recent years in Chile and examines the main changes in the conditions of entry to the country, which led to increased controls and restrictions on migration flows. It also describes the progress made on sector-specific policies for education, health and housing; analyses the effects of immigration on the country's society and economy; and examines some of the factors addressed by the literature on the relationship between Chilean society and the foreign population. Finally, it puts forward some recommendations for public policymaking on migration in Chile.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, Chile has become a major destination for migrants from certain Latin American countries. One of the reasons for this is the relative economic and political stability that the country has experienced since the return to democratic rule in 1990, which has led to more job opportunities and a more secure environment (Aninat and Vergara, 2019). Second, the deep economic, social and political crises that countries such as Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have experienced have caused steady outflows of their citizens to various international destinations. Third, the increased restrictions on migration imposed by the countries of the Global North (Canada, the United States, and countries in Europe), combined with the relatively greater ease of entry into Latin American countries, have redirected some of these movements within Latin America itself. Other factors contributing to this trend include geographical proximity, the lower cost of travel, the use of the same language and other similarities between the countries of origin and destination (Stefoni and Sánchez, 2021).

This growth in the migrant population has prompted a need for a migration policy that guarantees their inclusion in Chilean society. There are at least three core components to this: i) the regulation of entry and stay in the destination country; ii) the implementation of a policy of inclusion in the destination society that addresses certain specific aspects of migration; and iii) the development of mechanisms that promote the participation of the migrant population in the host society (de Lucas, 2003).

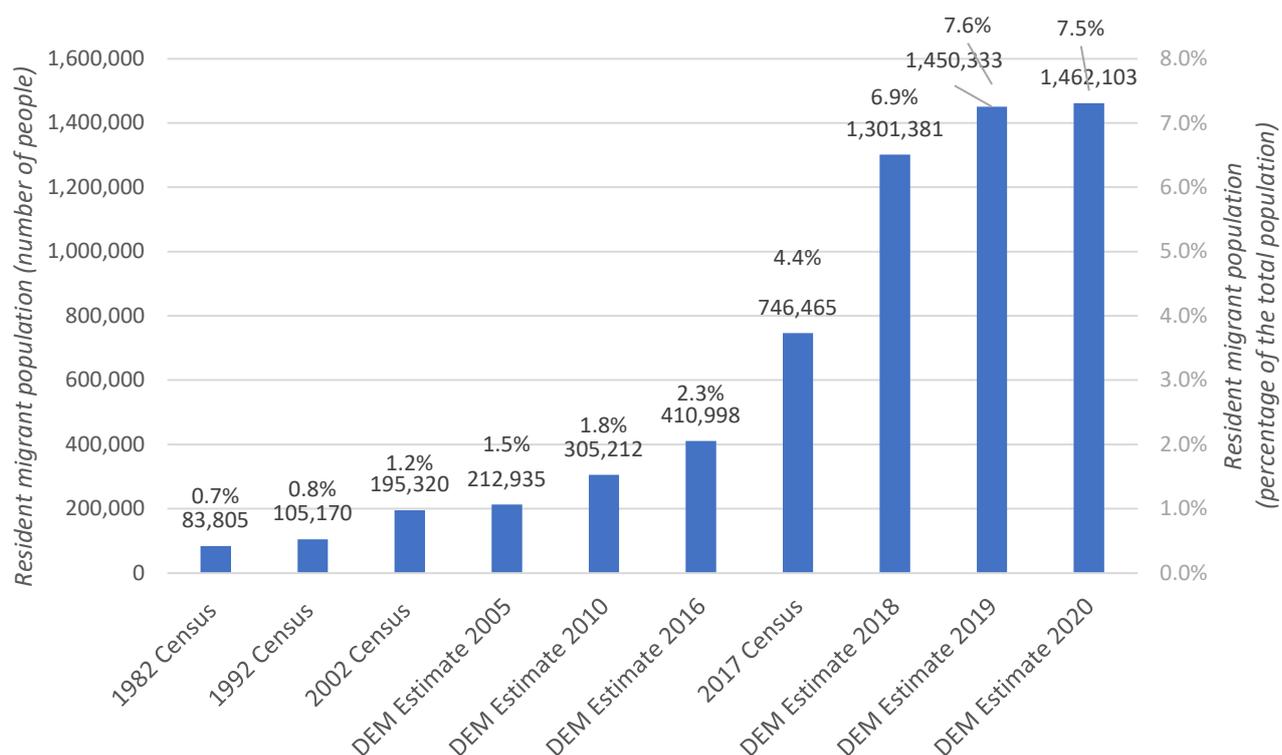
This document aims to provide a general diagnostic review of the current state of migration in Chile, analyse the measures and policies implemented over the last 20 years and describe the pending challenges affecting different sectors. The circumstances of the Venezuelan population are analysed in particular detail because this is the group that has grown the most in Chile in recent years and because there were a higher number of irregular entries of Venezuelan migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The paper is based on a review of the existing literature and an analysis of the secondary information available in Chile. Section two, which follows this introduction, summarizes migration flows in Chile in recent years, examines their demographic contributions and provides an in-depth analysis of the growth of the Venezuelan population, the recent increase in arrivals through unauthorized entry points in the north of the country and the characteristics of the displaced and refugee populations. Section three reviews the main migration policies implemented in recent years in Chile at the national and local levels and the main changes to conditions for entering the country, which have led to a marked increase in controls and restrictions on migration. Section four analyses sectoral policy developments, looking specifically at education, health and housing policies. Section five examines the effects of migration on society and the Chilean economy, particularly its effects on the labour market, and reviews some of the factors addressed in the literature on the relationship between Chilean society and the foreign population. Finally, section six sets out some guidelines for the formulation of public policies to address the main migration policy-related challenges that Chile is facing.

2. Immigration flows in Chile between 2000 and 2021

Chile is one of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to have received the largest migrant population flows in recent years. Figure 1 shows that the percentage of the immigrant population in relation to the country's total population has increased sevenfold in the last 40 years, going from 0.7 percent of the national population in 1982 to 7.5 percent in 2020.

Figure 1. Evolution of the resident migrant population in Chile (in number of people and as a percentage of the total population), 1982–2020

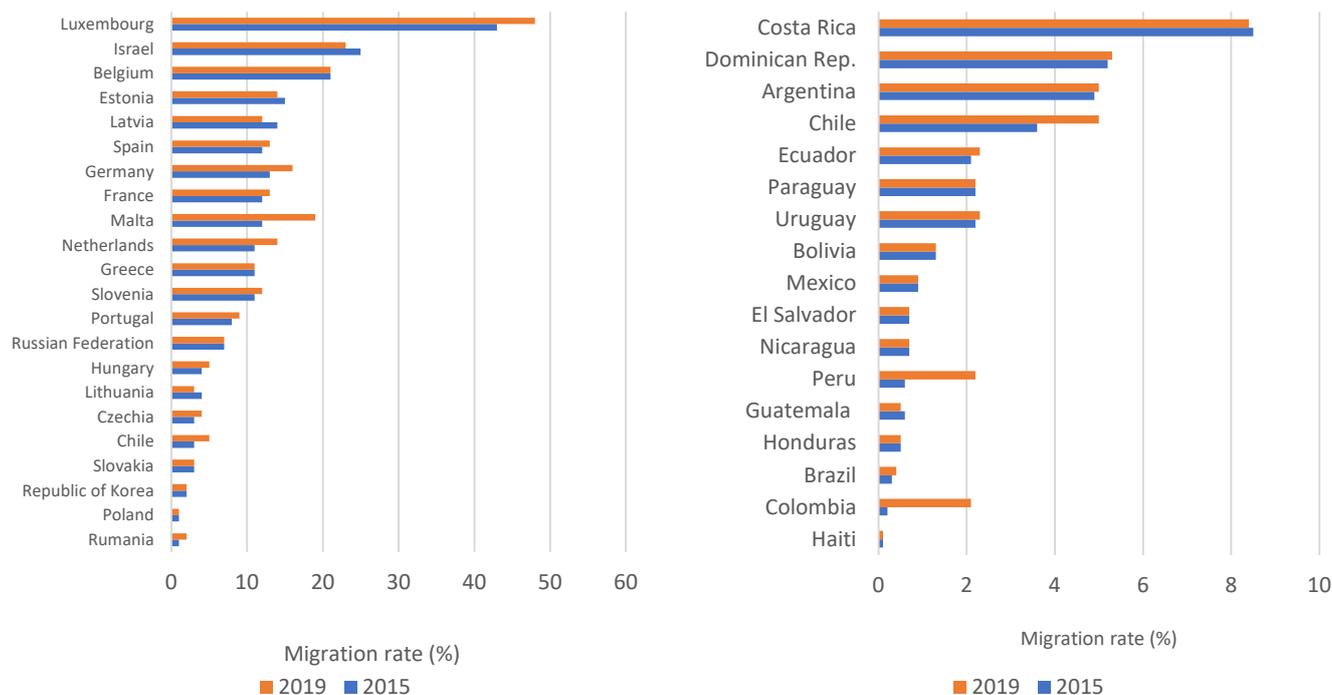


Source: Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (n.d.).

Note: INE stands for Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (National Institute of Statistics), and DEM for Departamento de Extranjería y Migración (Department of Aliens and Immigration).

Although Chile has a low immigrant population relative to member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (figure 2A), in 2019 it had the fourth-highest share of immigrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, after Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Argentina (figure 2B). Moreover, along with Colombia and Peru, Chile is one of the countries to have seen the largest increase in the ratio of foreigners to the native-born population between 2015 and 2019.

Figure 2. Immigration rates in OECD and Latin American and Caribbean countries (in percentages), 2015–2019

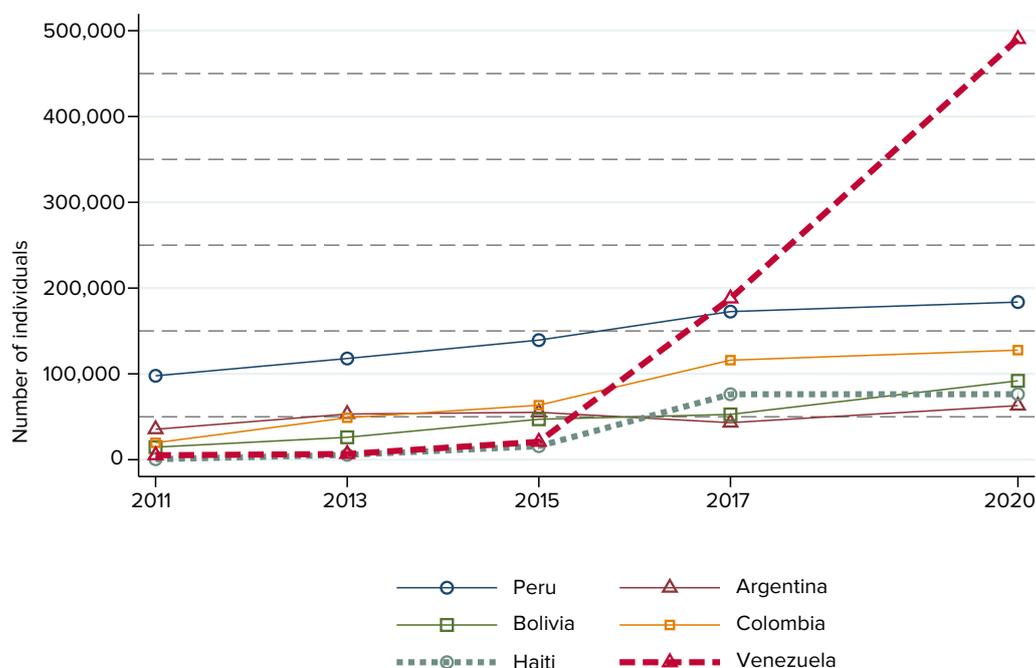


Source: United Nations (2019).

Note: The immigration rate expresses the percentage of the immigrant population relative to the country's total population.

Figure 3 shows the evolution of the resident immigrant population in Chile from 2011 to 2020 by the six main countries of origin. The figure reveals three things. First, the stable upward trend in Peruvian population numbers. Secondly, the decline in the relative importance of the Argentinian community, which has gradually come to account for a smaller share in the total than previously, moving to sixth place by 2017. Third, the rapid increase in the Venezuelan and Haitian immigrant populations between 2015 and 2017, including the fact that the former became the largest community in Chile (constituting 24.2 percent of the total migrant population), outstripping the Peruvian community (22.2 percent of the total migrant population) for the first time in Chile's history.

Figure 3. Evolution of the migrant population by country of origin in Chile (numbers of people), 2011–2020



Source: Compiled by the authors based on data from the National Socioeconomic Classification Survey (CASEN), 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2020.
Note: Calculations were made using regional expansion factors.

Canales identifies the countries of origin of the main groups of migrants in Chile today, namely Peru, Colombia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Haiti, which together constitute 82 percent of the migration flows that arrived in Chile from Latin America and the Caribbean between 1992 and 2017 (Canales, 2022, p. 17).

Given Chile’s specific geography, the regional distribution of the migrant population is another factor worth considering (see table 1). A National Institute of Statistics (INE) report noted that four regions had migrant population shares of over 10 percent in late 2018: Tarapacá (16.9 percent), Antofagasta (13.6 percent), Arica and Parinacota (10.4 percent) and the Metropolitan Region (10.2 percent) (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2019). A comparison between the 2017 census and INE data from late 2018 reveals that migrant population shares have increased significantly, especially in the Antofagasta region, which moved from third to second place in a single year.

Table 1. Distribution of the migrant population in Chile by region (in percentages), 2017

Region	Migrant population			Average years of education	
	Share	Total	Distribution	Native-born population	Migrant population
Region I Tarapacá	0.139	46,062	5.87%	12.21	11.50
Region II: Antofagasta	0.107	65,084	8.29%	12.62a	12.19a
Region III: Atacama	0.032	9,126	1.16%	12.02a	11.29a
Region IV: Coquimbo	0.021	15,739	2.01%	11.36	12.58
Region V: Valparaíso	0.025	44,636	5.69%	12.35	13.81
Region VI: O'Higgins	0.016	14,307	1.82%	11.19	12.89
Region VII: Maule	0.011	11,474	1.46%	10.78	14.18
Region VIII: Bio	0.008	16,995	2.17%	11.78	13.63
Region IX: Araucanía	0.013	12,080	1.54%	11.25	13.90
Region X: Los Lagos	0.014	11,353	1.45%	11.21a	12.21a
Region XI: Aysén	0.022	2,312	0.29%	11.50	12.50
Region XII: Magallanes	0.045	7,563	0.96%	12.28a	11.74a
Region XIII: Metropolitana	0.071	503,611	64.18%	12.53	13.76
Region XIV: Los Ríos	0.011	4,272	0.54%	11.49	13.79
Region XV: Arica	0.089	20,071	2.56%	12.39	9.47
Total	0.045	784,685	100.00%	12.03	13.44

Source: Compiled by the authors based on data on the regional distribution of the migrant population from the 2017 census and data on average years of education from the National Socioeconomic Classification Survey (CASEN), 2017.
^a Statistically equivalent values under a test of means using a significance level of 5%.

In terms of its geographical distribution, the migrant population is concentrated in the Metropolitan Region (64.18 percent), Antofagasta (8.29 percent), Tarapacá (5.87 percent) and Valparaíso (5.69 percent) (see table 1). It is important to note that in addition to the regions in which the migrant community accounts for a high proportion of the total population, migrants are also present in every region and practically every city in the country, regardless of their size. This represents a challenge for local governments, especially in small and medium-sized cities.

The last two columns of table 1 show how many years workers have spent in formal education, disaggregated by region and the origin of the population. At the national level, migrants have more years of education than the native-born population (a difference of 1.41 years). This feature is specific to Chile (Martínez and Orrego, 2016) and points to the importance of designing policies to better leverage the potential of this human capital.

The growth of migration in Chile has had a major impact on the country's demographic profile. In recent decades, Chile has experienced a significant drop in fertility levels and a rapid decline in mortality rates due to the health policies implemented during the 20th Century (Canales, 2022). The immediate consequences of these transformations have been changes in the country's age structure, the ageing of the population and the emergence of various demographic imbalances. As Canales (2022) points out, there is a population deficit among certain age groups, specifically those under 30, which is too small to ensure the intergenerational reproduction of the Chilean population.

In this context, the current wave of migration becomes a key factor insofar as it contributes to social and demographic dynamics by increasing the size of the working- and reproductive-age population. Canales is clear on this point. While between 1990 and 2000 immigration contributed 1.1 percent to population growth in Chile, this percentage rose to 8.7 percent between 2000 and 2010, before soaring to 35.2 percent between 2010 and 2020 (Canales, 2022, p. 27).

Migration also contributes to offsetting or reducing the drop in total births caused by lower fertility rates among the national population. This does not mean that migrant women have more children than Chilean women, but rather that their fertility rate is higher because the migrant population is younger, on average, so a larger share of migrant women are of reproductive age. In contrast, the age distribution of Chilean women is older, so there are fewer women of reproductive age, which translates into a lower relative number of births.

In terms of age structure, 85.8 percent of the migrant population is in the 15-64 age group, which is 17.9 percentage points higher than for the native-born population (67.9 percent) (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2018). The share of older people among the migrant population is lower (only 3.6 percent of the total immigrant population is aged 65 and over), as is the share of those aged 0–14. This age group constitutes 10.6 percent of the total migrant population, which is lower than the share of this group in the local population (20.3 percent) (Stefoni and Sánchez, 2021). In other words, migrants in Chile are a young, working-age population.

Turning to women’s participation in migration, the data indicates that they slightly outnumber men overall (the total masculinity index for the country as a whole is 97.8—that is, there are 97.8 men for every 100 women).³ However, the migrant population varies by region and nationality. Canales (2022) notes that migration to Chile from Europe, North America, Africa, Oceania and Asia is generally more male-dominated. In contrast, migration from Latin America is more female-dominated, with the exception of migrants from Haiti and, to a lesser extent, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. For example, women account for 53.2 percent of Peruvians and 53.7 percent of Colombians residing in Chile but represent just 48.6 percent of the Venezuelan community (Stefoni and Sánchez, 2021).

The background information presented so far shows how dynamic migration has been in Chile during the period of study, which is reflected in the changes in the country’s main migrant population groups in recent years and the emergence and growth of new groups (Stefoni and Sánchez, 2021). The literature reviewed for this study also points to the presence of mixed migration flows and heterogeneous migration profiles (Stefoni and Sánchez, 2021). While a large proportion of current flows respond to traditional patterns of labour migration, circular migration is also present in Chile (Dilla and Álvarez, 2018; Tapia Ladino, Liberona Concha and Contreras Gatica, 2017). This is true for the flows associated with temporary agricultural work, such as Bolivians who cross the border to work the harvest in central or southern Chile, or Peruvians who enter the country for shorter periods to perform paid domestic work in cities in northern Chile from Monday to Friday or to work in the agricultural valleys of Arica, and who return on weekends to Tacna or other cities of origin (Berganza and Cerna, 2011; Guizardi, 2016; Leiva and Ross, 2016). Another flow observed in recent years is that of migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. According to some authors, this is a situation of forced displacement that has prompted Venezuelans to seek asylum in various Latin American and Caribbean countries (Freier and Parent, 2018).

³ The masculinity index refers to the ratio of males to females in a given population and is expressed as the number of males per 100 females.

2.1. Recent migration: Venezuela

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, estimates that some 5.6 million people have left the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to date. There are approximately 500,000 Venezuelans residing in Chile, making the country the third-largest destination country for Venezuelan migrants after Colombia and Peru (Organización de los Estados Americanos, 2020). The closure of land borders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the isolation measures adopted by various Latin American countries led to a decrease in the total entry of migrants and an increase in the number of irregular entries (through unauthorized border crossings). These circumstances expose migrants to greater risks and increase their vulnerability (Freier and Parent, 2018; Freitez, 2019).

Venezuelan migration to Chile can be divided into at least three stages. The first wave of migrants entered the country before April 2018 and often had sufficient means to start a life project (Silva and Stefoni, 2020). However, as time went by, more and more people with limited financial means began to arrive. This is evidenced by the fact that many migrants initially arrived by plane, after which significant flows began to arrive by bus, while many currently reach Chile on foot (Stefoni, Silva and Brito, 2019). Obtaining local documentation was not particularly difficult for those who arrived in the country before April 2018, since they could enter as tourists and apply for temporary work or professional visas once there.

The second stage in Venezuelan migration to Chile began in April 2018, when the Government created the democratic responsibility visa for Venezuelan nationals and eliminated work visas (Finn and Umpierrez, 2020; Vásquez, Finn and Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021). The aim of these measures was to reduce and control the number of Venezuelans entering the country.

The third stage covers the entry of the migrant population after the border closures triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Venezuelan population's migration patterns were significantly impacted by border closures to stop the spread of the virus and the severe financial crisis that hit every country in Latin America. The problem is that closing borders does not prevent people from entering countries but instead makes borders more dangerous places. Today, people enter the country in conditions of great vulnerability through unauthorized crossing points, and most arrivals are undocumented and lack the financial resources to survive for even a few days (Stefoni et al., 2022).

Most of these irregular entries took place at the Colchane pass, on the northern border with the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which is 4,000 metres above sea level (see map 1). The extreme climatic conditions at this border, coupled with the lack of water, food and adequate shelter, make it one of the most dangerous crossings in the Southern Cone.

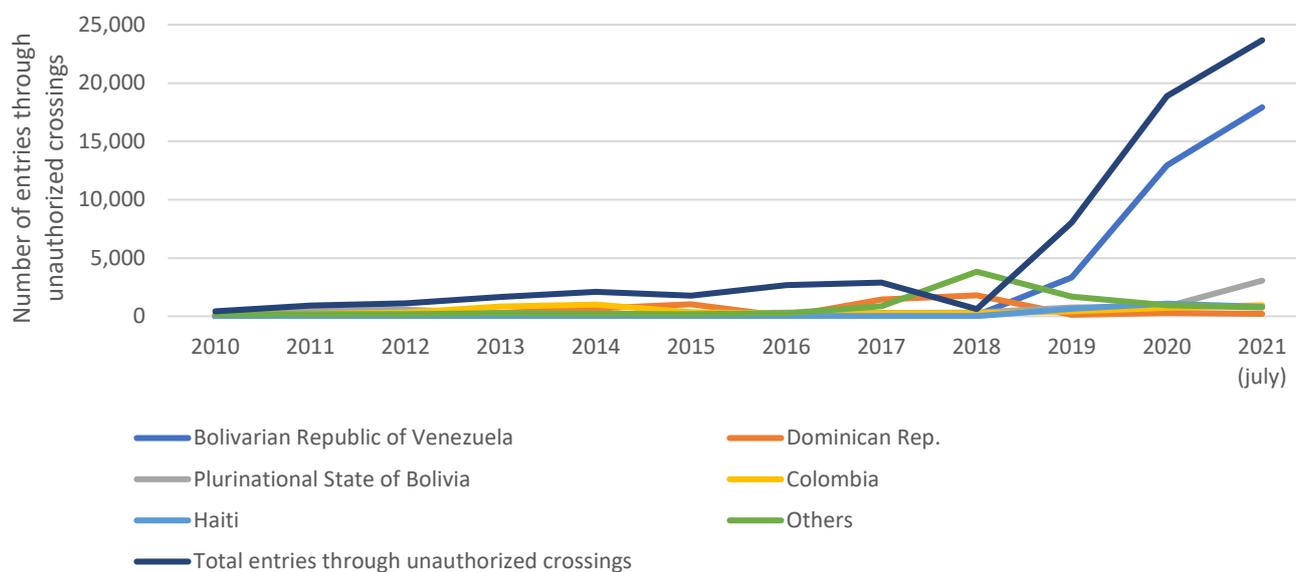
Map 1. Colchane Border Crossing, Chile–Bolivia Border



Source: Map created by Beatriz Seguel for National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FONDECYT) Project No. 1201130.

Figure 4 shows the increase in irregular crossings in recent years. Although the data covers all nationalities, the Venezuelan population has seen the highest increase in irregular crossings. This data is based on records of migrants who self-reported to the Investigations Police of Chile, and so it does not include people who enter the country irregularly and do not self-report. To date, there are no estimates of those who fall into this latter category.

Figure 4. Entries to Chile through unauthorized crossings by country of origin (number of entries), 2010–June 2021



Source: Compiled by the authors based on data from Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (n.d.).

Figure 4 clearly shows how unauthorized entry began to grow sharply from 2018 onwards, especially among the Venezuelan population. The irregular entry of nationals of the Dominican Republic increased from 2012 onwards, when the Chilean Government made the consular tourist visa an entry requirement.

On this point, Green (2018) notes that this change led to an exponential increase in clandestine entry and the number of expulsions from the country (which increased by 645 percent between 2012 and 2013). He goes on to cite a report from the Department of Aliens and Immigration (DEM),⁴ which argues that “the attempt to reduce the flow of Dominicans by requiring them to apply for a tourist visa in advance led to a worsening of the conditions of entry and stay of the members of this group, who still entered Chilean territory despite not holding the visa in question, doing so either through their own means or as victims of migrant smuggling or human trafficking.” The situation experienced by the Dominican population was later repeated with migrants from Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

According to Migration Act No. 1094, anyone who enters the country irregularly can self-report to the Investigations Police of Chile. Self-reporting sets in motion a process that may end in expulsion (the maximum sanction). No record of entry into the country is kept for those who do not self-report (Stefoni et al., 2022). Those who self-reported at the Colchane crossing had access to emergency humanitarian assistance (access to temporary shelter, food, medical check-ups and COVID-19 antigen testing) and were transferred by bus to a health centre in Iquique to quarantine.

Many of those who entered Chile via Colchane intended to move on to the centre and south of the country to meet up with family members or acquaintances. However, their chances of completing the last leg of the journey were hampered and delayed by the need to quarantine, obtain a bus ticket and get a PCR test done to board the bus. This forced many migrants to remain in Iquique, wandering the streets and sleeping in squares, on street corners or on the beach. In September 2021, the situation became untenable and sparked a conflict with the local community that ended in an anti-migration demonstration and the burning of tents and belongings of the Venezuelan population.⁵

⁴ Memo No. 1837 of 29 June 2017.

⁵ For more information, see Gálvez (2021) and Guerrero Jiménez (2021).

The conflict prompted the government to open a temporary shelter or transit camp in Colchane, a measure that had long been requested by civil society. This shelter at the border complex provides humanitarian assistance to people arriving in Chile. This consists of providing them with sleeping tents, mattresses and blankets and access to toilets and food. Migrants are given an antigen test before entering. The following day, the military police verify the relationship between mothers and their children, or between caregivers and the minors they are looking after. The arrivals are checked for injuries, and women who are travelling with children are prioritized in the self-reporting process.

Once these procedures are complete, a bus takes the migrants to a health centre in Iquique to complete the quarantine required by the health authority. According to the authorities that were interviewed, half of the people who enter through Colchane reach the transit camp. The rest enter the country without assistance, and thus there is no record of their presence in Chile (Stefoni et al., 2022).

Once they have quarantined, the vast majority of migrants do not have the means to support themselves. This is where social organizations and international agencies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR play a vital role, providing support and facilitating access to housing, bus tickets and counselling. However, demand is huge and resources are scarce, so most migrants continue to live on the streets while they scrape together some money for food and to buy tickets. A recent survey for UNHCR found that 74.6 percent (129 people) of the 190 respondents over 18 who had entered Chile irregularly via Colchane and were residing in Iquique or Colchane did not have a place to sleep that night. When asked where they had slept in the last week, 32 (18.5 percent) stated that they had paid to stay at a hostel, hotel or other such accommodation; 28 (16.2 percent) said that they had slept at a free hostel; 85 (49.1 percent) said that they had slept in tents set up in public spaces, and 23 (13.3 percent) said they had spent the night on a bus (Stefoni et al., 2022).

Some migrants decide to stay on in Iquique. These people tend to settle in camps in Alto Hospicio, which have grown significantly in recent months (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2021b). According to the National Settlement Census of 2020–2021, the number of camps in the Tarapacá region increased from 40 in 2019 to 62 in 2021, growth of 55 percent, one of the highest levels recorded in Chile after Araucanía (where they grew by 128 percent in the same period) (Centro de Estudios Socioterritoriales, Techo-Chile and Fundación Vivienda, 2021). The report indicates that the number of families in camps increased from 4,084 in 2019 to 8,458 in 2021.

The authorities' response to the migration crisis over the last year has consisted of reinforcing the border to prevent an increase in irregular crossings, while implementing an expulsion programme to organize migration flows and regain control of the border. Under this logic, in February 2021 the government announced the so-called Colchane Plan, in which the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were involved. This plan mobilized a larger army police force than before and also involved the use of drones, unmanned aircraft and other new technologies to control border crossings. Most significantly, it authorizes the Ministry of National Defence to monitor the "smuggling of migrants and human trafficking through unauthorized crossings", as stated in Decree 265/2021. However, these measures have not functioned as intended: increased military control has made crossing the border more difficult but does not discourage migration.

2.2. Refugee policy

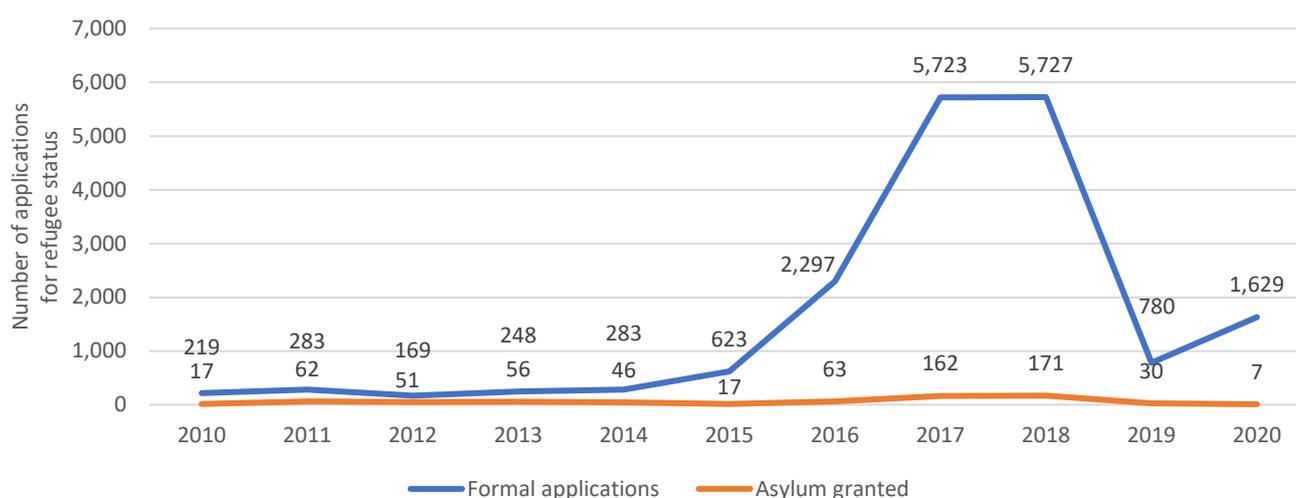
Through the entry into force of the Refugee Act No. 20.430 and the regulations governing it in 2010, the Chilean State reaffirmed its commitment to the universal instrument of protection for refugees, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (known as the Geneva Convention), and its 1967 Protocol, which the country ratified in 1972. This commitment, however, was interrupted by the 1973 coup d'état (Olea, 2012). After the return to democratic rule in 1990, Chile began to attract migrant and refugee populations and implemented resettlement programmes through the UNHCR, which targeted people from the former Yugoslavia and later Colombia and Syria.

Act No. 20430 included a broad definition of refugee status and recognized the five grounds for this identified in the Geneva Convention: nationality, race, religion, political opinion and membership of a particular social group. It also included the criteria of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, reaffirmed in the Mexico Plan of Action, which contemplates widespread situations in which life, personal integrity or liberty are at risk (Olea, 2012).

Chilean legislation enshrines four core principles to ensure the protection of refugees, namely: i) the principle of non-refoulement, which guarantees that the person will not be returned to their place of origin; ii) the principle of non-punishment, which applies in cases where the person has entered clandestinely or is in an irregular situation (arts. 5 and 6 of Act No. 20430); iii) the principle of confidentiality, which protects the right to privacy; and iv) the principle of non-discrimination and family reunification.

Various reports on the refugee situation note that this law put Chile in a prominent position in terms of rights protection (Olea, 2012; González and Palacios, 2013). However, the figures on refugee applications and the granting of refuge indicate that the reality of life in the country does not reflect the letter of the law, as only an extremely low number of applicants have been granted asylum, regardless of the increase in applications (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Applications for refugee status submitted and granted in Chile (number of applications), 2010–2020



Source: Compiled by the authors based on data from Departamento de Extranjería y Migración (2021).

As figure 5 shows, the number of applications granted has not changed significantly in recent years, with the exception of 2019 and 2020, when this number fell to 30 and 7, respectively. The number of applications also plummeted in 2019. This was not because fewer people are seeking refuge but rather because those wishing to do so faced greater difficulties in filing applications in Chile. Vargas (2019) notes the arbitrary nature of the formalization of the application process, as it is government officials who decide who is given an application form and who is not. Initially, this was a relatively informal process in which officers of the Investigations Police of Chile asked potential applications a series of questions to establish whether the person was eligible to apply for asylum. Later, however, this process was formalized through a pre-admissibility interview, which is now a major filter for those seeking refugee status (Vargas, 2019; Liberona Concha and López San Francisco, 2018).

In the current context, the denial of the right to seek asylum means that the Venezuelan population's need for protection is not being recognized. Indeed, Chilean authorities promote the idea that the population in question are "illegal" labour migrants because they have entered the country irregularly (Liberona Concha, Piñones Rivera and Dilla Alfonso, 2021; Stang Alva, Lara Edwards and Andrade Moreno, 2020).

3. Migration policy

Chile has a history of migration, which has prompted a changing series of policy responses since the the country's independence in the 19th Century.⁶ During the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990), migration-related issues were approached from a national security perspective. Decree Law No. 1095/1975 established a series of entry bans targeting people who were considered a threat to the country's security. This decree established highly bureaucratic procedures for the regularization of documents and did not recognize international human rights agreements and conventions (Doña and Mullan, 2014; Thayer Correa, Stang Alva and Dilla Rodríguez, 2020).

The democratically elected governments that followed the dictatorship upheld this law until 2021. The law was amended several times in that period, but its core tenets remained unchanged, which led to a significant mismatch between the realities of migration in Chile and the legislative instruments available for addressing this. One of the most common problems was the fact that visas were subject to a specific work contract, which the person had to hold for two years to be able to apply for permanent residence once this period had expired. These circumstances gave employers disproportionate power over workers (Doña and Mullan, 2014; Thayer Correa, Stang Alva and Dilla Rodríguez, 2020). If the individual lost their job, they had to start the entire two-year process again with a new employer to be able to apply for permanent residence. This situation led to a build-up of irregularities, which were then addressed through four extraordinary regularization processes.

The first of these processes took place in 1998, during the Frei Administration (1994–2000), and led to the issuance of about 44,000 visas. The second occurred in 2007, during the first Bachelet Administration (2006–2010), and led to the regularization of around 47,000 people (Finn and Umpierrez, 2020). In 2018, just after Piñera took office for the second time (2018–2022), a third regularization process was implemented. This time, the procedure included everyone who had entered the country before 23 April 2018, regardless of how they had done so. By the end of the process, 155,438 applications had been submitted, 96,257 of which were successful. The fourth process was launched in April 2021, following the publication of the new law. Those who entered the country irregularly were excluded this time, and it was established that such individuals should leave Chile (without being subjected to any administrative sanctions) and apply for a consular visa from outside the national territory. This process was extended through January 2022.

⁶ For an overview of the history of migration legislation in Chile, see Jarufe Bader (2018).

3.1. Main migration policies

Thayer Correa, Stang Alva and Dilla Rodríguez (2020) divide recent migration policy in Chile into three stages. The first of these spans 1992 to 2004 and has been described as “the no-policy policy” (Stefoni, 2011)—in other words, during this period, migration governance was implemented under the dictatorship’s Decree Law No. 1094, without any major changes being made to the regulations. According to Thayer Correa, Stang Alva and Dilla Rodríguez (2020), some of the measures that were implemented this time include the first migration regularization process, the creation of the border zone resident category for inhabitants of border towns and the ratification of the principle of non-refoulement when Chile signed the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1996. Non-refoulement is a principle of international law that prohibits a State from returning or expelling a person to a territory where their life or freedom would be threatened due to persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or gender, among other grounds (1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees).

The second stage described by the authors spans 2005 to 2017 and comprises the end of the Lagos Administration, the first and second Bachelet Administrations (2006–2010 and 2014–2018) and the first Piñera Administration (2010–2014). This stage entailed a significant increase in state actions at both the central and local levels. However, many of the measures taken entailed low levels of institutionalization. The consequence was that the authorities annulled decrees enacted by previous administrations. Further evidence of the shortfalls in the adequate institutionalization of migration policy was the limited progress made in Congress on bills proposed by the first Piñera and second Bachelet Administrations. This period is also noteworthy for a series of initiatives implemented by local governments, such as the opening of offices to address migration issues in various municipalities in the country (Thayer Correa, Stang Alva and Dilla Rodríguez, 2020) and the drafting of Presidential Instruction No. 5 of 6 November 2015, which set out the guidelines for a new migration policy. The instruction stated that it was the State’s duty to apply the human rights standards enshrined in the international instruments ratified by Chile through all its actions.

The third stage began with the measures implemented during Piñera’s second term in office (2018–2022). In April 2018, he introduced a series of changes to Chile’s migration policy. He submitted a new bill to Congress and launched a regularization process that included people who had entered the country through unauthorized border crossings (Stefoni, Silva and Brito, 2019). The specific measures that marked a shift in Chilean migration policy are listed below (Stefoni et al., 2021):

- i. Reformulation of the visa system: the employment-based visa created during the second Bachelet Administration⁷ was eliminated, and new visa categories were created: i) a temporary opportunities visa, which must be applied for from outside Chile, and which targets those wishing to migrate to the country and grants them a permit to reside and work there for one year, after which it can be renewed for another 12 months; ii) an internationally oriented temporary visa for people with postgraduate degrees from top international universities (defined according to a ranking established for this purpose), and iii) a domestically oriented temporary residence visa that can be applied for in Chile and is automatically granted to migrants who obtain a postgraduate degree from recognized Chilean universities. These visas came into effect on 1 August 2018.
- ii. For the Haitian population, a simple consular tourist visa for a maximum period of 30 days was established, as was a humanitarian visa for family reunification, and a ceiling of 10,000 humanitarian visas per year was established for people of Haitian origin.

⁷ The elimination of the work visa led to the re-emergence of problems that the migrant population had faced in the past, such as the position of power given to the employer, as the migrant worker must stay with the same employer for two years to apply for permanent residence. If they fail to do so, they must complete another two-year period with a new employer.

iii. For the Venezuelan population, a democratic responsibility visa was created, which must be requested from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This grants a temporary residence permit for one year and can be extended once. In June 2019, a tourist visa was established as an entry requirement for the Venezuelan population. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the processing of the democratic responsibility visa was suspended.

The temporary opportunities visa, the internationally oriented temporary visa and the domestically oriented temporary visa initiatives are part of a highly selective approach to migration that seeks to attract highly skilled people. However, these visas bear little relation to the profile of migrants entering Chile daily.

The bill took almost three years to pass. The most positive aspects of this legislation include the following: i) the strengthening of migration institutions following the creation of the National Migration Service and ii) the recognition of international human rights agreements and treaties on migration.

The Migration Act ended the possibility of migrants changing migration categories while inside the country and instead favoured the immigration of highly qualified individuals or those with their own financial means. The problem is that the vast majority of the foreign population in Chile comes from within Latin America and the Caribbean and arrives in search of work, and in some cases as refugees. As a result, these people have little chance of obtaining a visa from their respective countries of origin. Proof of this are the delays that typically affect the processing of applications for democratic responsibility visas for Venezuelan citizens and tourist visas for Haitians and Venezuelans (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2021b).

The challenges faced by the Boric Administration include implementing the Migration Act, establishing the different migration categories and launching the National Migration Service at the national and regional levels. Given that visas will be processed from Chilean consulates abroad, appropriate infrastructure will need to be implemented to manage applications, as this is not yet in place.

The next section examines three specific areas in which progress has been made on the protection of rights: education, health and housing. In the areas of education and health, a series of regulations needed to be implemented to guarantee the rights of all people, regardless of their migration status. In the housing sector, in contrast, the barriers are more complex and prevent or hinder access to housing for a significant share of the migrant population, especially new arrivals.

4. Sector-specific policies

4.1. Education⁸

A series of specific measures relating to access to education for migrant children were established at the beginning of the year 2000 to guarantee that they could access and remain in the education system. However, while access is guaranteed, there are a number of barriers that hinder the adequate educational inclusion of migrant children (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes and Estudios y Consultorías Focus, 2019; Bustos González and Gairín Sallán, 2017; Contreras, Cortés and Fabio, 2012; Stang et al. 2021). In the case of children from Haiti, for example, the weakness of intercultural policies increases experiences of discrimination and racism. Other

⁸ This section is based on the findings of a report on access to education for migrant children and adolescents in Chile that was created by Stefoni and Palma for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and published as “Análisis y recomendaciones para la modificación y desarrollo de marcos normativos y políticas nacionales que garanticen el acceso y la inclusión educativa de personas en situación de movilidad: resumen ejecutivo” [Analysis and recommendations for modifying and developing regulatory frameworks and national policies that guarantee access to education and inclusion for people in movement: Executive summary] (Saffirio and Klenner, 2021).

issues that have been detected include: i) the lack of documentation needed to admit the child into the Chilean education system and recognize their educational achievements in their country of origin; ii) the difficulties and slowness in regularizing the situation of migrant children's families; iii) discrimination and other difficulties that affect social harmony within schools with migrant students; iv) the assimilationist nature of the school curriculum⁹ and v) the municipal system's lack of resources for receiving and including students who require remedial and psychosocial support. These situations generated and continue to generate barriers that hinder the full inclusion of the school-age migrant population.

These barriers are analysed in several studies on school performance. Contreras and Gallardo (2020a) use longitudinal data from the Education Quality Agency and apply the differences-in-differences strategy to examine the effect that large-scale arrival of Venezuelan and Haitian migrants since 2016 has had on the learning outcomes of the native-born student body. The authors identified a low negative effect on the mathematics test (standard deviation of 0.04–0.05), and a larger negative effect on the reading test (standard deviation of 0.07–0.08), which increases when only the Haitian migrant population is taken into consideration. This may be associated with the fact that Haitians come from a non-Spanish-speaking country. Other explanatory hypotheses consider the complex conditions for social inclusion experienced by the migrant population, which could hinder children's school performance.

The first initiatives to address these inequalities sought to guarantee the migrant population access to education. In 1995, a decree was issued to recognize basic educational achievements and humanistic-scientific and technical-professional secondary qualifications from foreign countries, with the aim of facilitating the validation process (Supreme Decree of Education No. 651).

In 2003, Ministry of the Interior Circular No. 1179 promoted the educational inclusion of the children of migrants residing in Chile, regardless of the migration status of the child or their family, as part of the Right to Education campaign.

In August 2005, the Ministry of Education reinforced this principle through Official Notice No. 07/1008-1531 and established that education authorities and schools should provide facilitate and expedite the entry of migrant students into the Chilean school system (Poblete and Galaz, 2016).

Although this measure established channels and procedures to guarantee entry into the school system and specified that schools were obliged to provide this, it had the undesired effect of creating a "provisional" student category identified by a number for internal use by the Ministry of Education known as RUT 100, which ultimately created conditions of inequality between migrant students whose status was irregular and the rest of the student body (regular migrants and Chilean nationals). One of the problems caused by the RUT 100 system was that the identifier number was not recognized by the entire public system, so it did not actually constitute a regularization mechanism, nor did it promote the recognition of rights, as it did not allow access to other services such as health, inclusion in the social security system or educational grants or bursaries. It was a temporary identifier that was created to register migrant children with the school system, but it was not linked to the processing of a visa or any other regularization process, so migrant pupils continued to be viewed as irregular by the entire system.

As a result of the problems caused by the provisional RUT, in 2014 the Ministry of the Interior launched the *Escuela Somos Todos* [We're All Part of School] programme, the objective of which was to regularize foreign students and their families through initiatives implemented within schools and municipalities. As part of this programme, several

⁹ The assimilationist approach of the school curriculum refers to a discourse that reproduces the idea of a homogeneous, white society in which multiple diversities occupy a secondary and subordinate place to the symbolic power represented by the dominant culture.

agreements have been signed since 2014 between the Ministry of Interior and municipalities with significant migrant populations to promote the targeted implementation of the programme in specific communes (the smallest administrative subdivision in Chile)—specifically: Santiago, Quilicura, Independencia, Recoleta and Antofagasta, Estación Central, Peñalolén and La Reina. In communes where the programme was implemented, the migration statuses of a significant number of students were indeed regularized. However, the main problem with this initiative is that it was neither universal nor compulsory. Instead, its implementation was managed by each municipality, and therefore its application was discretionary.

The State's responsibility for ensuring that migrant children could access, remain in, and advance through the education system led it to put an end to the RUT 100 system in early 2017, a decision that was fuelled by a campaign organized by civil society to report the problems associated with the provisional identifier. This was replaced by the Provisional School Identifier (IPE), a unique number that allows children to enrol permanently in the school system, regardless of their migration status (Official Notice No. 894 of 7 November 2016).

Using data gathered by the IPE in its first year of operations and drawing on the work of the working group on migrant coordination (MINEDUC, CMM), which was created in 2016, the Homeland Government Department at the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security partnered with the Ministry of Education to develop the Chile Te Recibe [Chile welcomes you] plan. This nationwide regularization plan for migrant children and adolescents sought to “make it easier for foreign students to regularize their migration status and gain equal access to all benefits and rights” (Government of Chile, 2017, cited in Fernández, 2018, p. 16). According to a report from the Chilean Ministry of Education, as a result of this plan, 59 percent of students whose migration status was irregular at the beginning of 2017 had managed to regularize their status by December (Fernández, 2018).

In August 2017, the complementary agreement to the basic agreement on scientific and technical cooperation between the Government of Chile and the Government of Haiti was passed, which enabled basic and secondary educational qualifications to be officially recognized.

With regard to preschool education, an agreement between the National Kindergarten Board and the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security was signed in 2007 (Exempt Resolution No. 6.677 of 2007). The objective of this agreement was to facilitate access to preschool education programmes for children under 5 whose mothers are immigrants or refugees, regardless of their migration status. This measure served as a precedent for prioritizing enrolment in preschool education.

The way in which the social inclusion of migrants is implemented at educational establishments is a complex issue. To promote this, the Ministry of Education developed technical guidelines for the educational inclusion of foreign students in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2017). The document proposes inclusion measures based on three core areas:

- i. Include an intercultural perspective in the institutional management instruments and standards developed by the educational establishment itself, such as the Management Plan for Social Harmony within Schools; the Sexuality, Emotions and Gender Plan; the Comprehensive School Safety Plan; the Citizenship Training Plan; the Inclusion Support Plan and the Professional Development Plan for Teachers.
- ii. Strengthen actions and practices in schools that promote inclusion, such as the development of a welcome protocol for migrant families.

iii. Promote awareness and understanding of migrant students and their trajectories among the academic community.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education drafted the 2018–2022 National Policy for Foreign Students, which aims to improve students' possibilities of accessing, remaining in and advancing through the education system.

That same year, the Ministry of Education issued two publications, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): *Diálogos para la inclusión de estudiantes extranjeros. Informe de devolución* [Dialogues for the inclusion of foreign students: feedback report] (*Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia and Ministerio de Educación, 2018*) and *Mapa del estudiantado extranjero en el sistema escolar chileno (2015–2017)* [Mapping of the foreign student body in the Chilean school system (2015–2017)] (Fernández, 2018). These initiatives reflect the importance that public policymakers have started to place on social harmony within schools in contexts of diversity.

Finally, the Education Quality Agency, the Jesuit Migrant Service and Focus Consultancies jointly published a document entitled *Interculturalidad en la escuela. Orientaciones para la inclusión de estudiantes migrantes* [Intercultural factors at school: Guidelines for the inclusion of migrant students] (*Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes and Estudios y Consultorías Focus, 2019*). This publication aims to contribute to the work on education inclusion carried out by the Ministry of Education and different civil society organizations by providing guidelines that allow educational establishments to engage in recognizing different cultures; developing receptive, horizontal dialogues between them and managing social harmony within schools. The document establishes three action areas for moving towards the development of intercultural schools, which are in line with the areas addressed in previous documents: (i) institutional management guidelines, which highlight the importance of identifying progress and challenges around the inclusion of foreign students; implementing the intercultural approach in school insignias, institutional statements and planning instruments; and defining roles and initiatives that are in line with the planning and diagnostic instruments used; ii) guidelines for managing social harmony within schools, which include the importance of welcoming students and their families, promoting dialogue as a tool for inclusion and generating mechanisms to settle conflicts associated with discrimination and racism in a collaborative fashion; and iii) classroom management guidelines that emphasize acknowledging the language of origin of the non-Spanish-speaking population; promoting intercultural dialogue to encourage their participation in the classroom; valuing and treating all children with equality, dignity and respect; and recognizing, adjusting and institutionalizing teaching practices.

4.2. Health

The Chilean health system is made up of the public-sector National Health Fund (FONASA) and private health insurance providers (ISAPRES). Some 96 percent of the Chilean population belongs to one of these systems, but the percentage of the migrant population without health insurance is higher. According to a recent report by the Jesuit Migrant Service, the Medical Association and the Institute of Science and Innovation in Medicine (*Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, Colegio Médico and Instituto de Ciencias e Innovación en Medicina, 2022*), 75 percent of the migrant population is registered with FONASA and 12 percent with ISAPRES.

In other words, 11 percent of the foreign population does not have any health coverage. Most of these people are in the lowest income deciles, and the main differences between them and the Chilean population are found in two age groups: under-18s and over-60s. Likewise, 7 percent of those who have been in the country for more than five years do not have health insurance of any sort, while this figure increases to 14 percent among the migrant population that has been in Chile for less than five years (Stefoni, Vicuña and Contreras, 2022).

The situation is even more critical in the north of the country, where 4 percent of the Chilean population and 16 percent of the migrant population are not covered by the social security system. In the north, moreover, FONASA has a higher relative coverage of the migrant population (78 percent) than the Chilean population (74 percent), while the proportion of migrant population registered with ISAPRES (4 percent) is much lower than this percentage is for the Chilean population (19 percent), according to data in the report published by the Jesuit Migrant Service, the Medical Association and the Institute of Science and Innovation in Medicine (*Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, Colegio Médico and Instituto de Ciencias e Innovación en Medicina*, 2022). Northern Chile is where poverty rates are highest for the foreign population and labour market inclusion rates are lowest (Stefoni, Vicuña and Contreras, 2022).

For several years, the Ministry of Health has been implementing specific measures to ensure that migrants receive health care. In 2003, measures were put in place to guarantee health care for pregnant women (Circular No. 1179/2003). Since then, the regulations have been adjusted to gradually ensure that pregnant women have access to social security and labour rights, and to guarantee their access to prenatal and paediatric medical care, vaccination campaigns, emergency services, and services for refugees or victims of human trafficking and migrant smuggling (Cabieses, 2021). These measures include Decree No. 84 on emergency care for migrant workers and their families; Exempt Resolution No. 1914 on care for children and adolescents under the age of 18, which ensures care on equal footing with the local population, and care that is not linked to the processing of residence permits (Circular A15 No. 6/2015) (Cabieses et al., 2021).

A pilot of the National Migrant Health Care Scheme was launched in 2015, and then the programme was implemented in 2016 and 2017. In response to this plan, the International Migrant Health Policy was launched in 2017. This health policy has eight specific objectives (Cabieses et al., 2021, p. 36):

- i) Promote the participation of international migrants in the development, monitoring and evaluation of health policies and programmes in which they are involved.
- ii) Ensure that international migrants have equitable access to health promotion programmes, preventive actions and health care.
- iii) Describe the current state of the health care system and trends within this, including access to health care for international migrants.
- iv) Encourage an intersectoral approach to promoting the health of international migrants based on a “health in all policies” approach, in order to seek joint solutions that respond to the complexity of migration.
- v) Develop initiatives that seek to reduce the inequalities in access to health care that affect international migrants.
- vi) Promote specific actions to reduce discrimination, xenophobia and the stigmatization of international migrants.

vii) Develop relevant health strategies that respond to the specific health-related, cultural, linguistic, gender and life-cycle-related issues and needs of international migrants.

viii) Promote health strategies that foster intercultural dialogue among diverse communities to build social cohesion.

Despite these advances, there continue to be obstacles to accessing health care. A recent study for the World Bank mentions institutional, cultural and information barriers (Stefoni et al., 2022). One example of an institutional barrier is the fact that many medical centres require people to hold up-to-date documents or a RUT to receive assistance. Cultural barriers reveal the importance of making access to health care culturally appropriate (Cabieses et al., 2021). In other words, it is not enough to guarantee that people have access to the system if they do not then receive respectful treatment. This situation mainly applies to the Haitian population, who are frequently mistreated and discriminated against by health personnel. Information barriers refer to the difficulty migrants have in accessing complete, relevant information about how the Chilean health system functions.

4.3. Housing

Chile is experiencing a housing shortage that increased sharply during the pandemic. Some 969 informal settlements have been recorded throughout the country, a figure previously reached only in the 1990s, and about 82,000 families have occupied vacant land with the purpose of building housing there (Centro de Estudios Socioterritoriales, Techo-Chile and Fundación Vivienda, 2021). These families include Chileans and migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean who settle in undesirable areas on the outskirts of cities. The growth in these informal settlements owes firstly to the existence of a growing housing deficit to which the Chilean State has not responded in a timely manner, as the construction of social housing is low. Second, the continual increase in rental values in both the formal and informal markets limits families' ability to access housing. The decision to move to informal settlement is not an easy one for migrant families, who report experiences of abuse in the rental market, where they are charged unreasonable rates for properties in terrible conditions (Contreras, Ala-Louko and Labbé, 2015). As a result, informal settlements are often seen as the best solution to their housing problem, and some families have lived in these for several years.

In policy terms, it is important to note that the location of these settlements on the outskirts of cities has contributed to systematically rendering the population living there invisible. Local authorities do not provide them services, attend to their needs or take censuses of their inhabitants, nor do they provide them with information on how to solve their housing problems. Indeed, the authorities have ordered a series of forced evictions that not only constitute human rights violations but also make the housing crisis in Chile more complex.

A recent study (Centro de Estudios Socioterritoriales, Techo-Chile and Fundación Vivienda, 2021) concludes that there are two main obstacles to accessing housing. The first is the lack of documentation, which makes it difficult for migrants to access state subsidies for renting or buying housing. The second is abusive rent prices due to prejudice or landlords taking advantage of the fact that informal renting is often the only way that some families can access a place to live.

5. Effects of migration on Chilean society and the economy

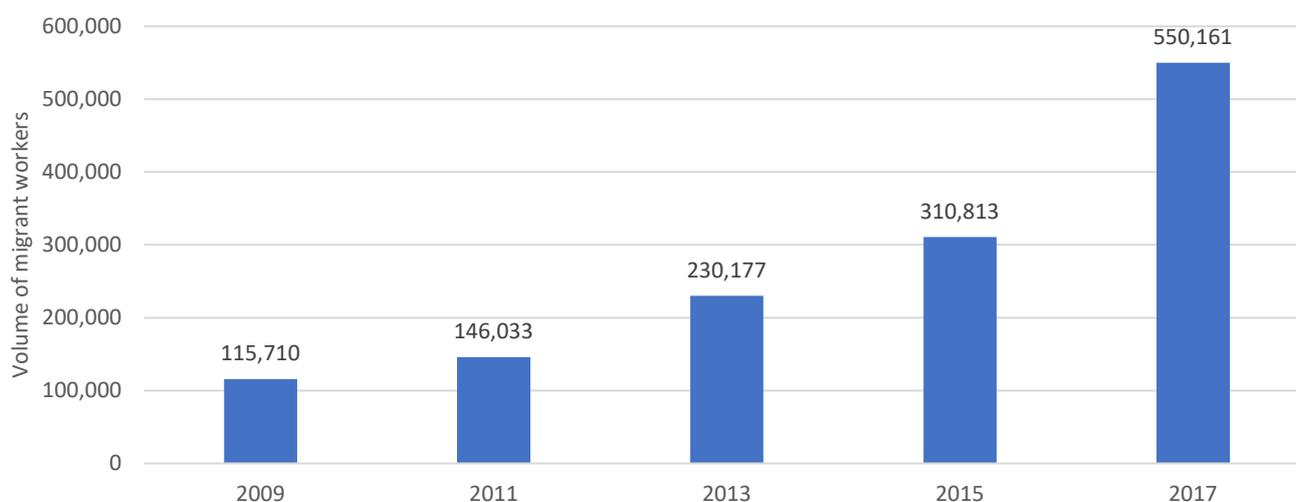
This section analyses the effects of migration on Chilean society and the economy, based on a review of the available empirical literature on the subject.

5.1. Inclusion in the labour market

The effects of migration on a country's demographics, discussed above, also influence labour market dynamics, in terms of both participation in the workforce and the generation of GDP and growth (Canales, 2022).

Figure 6 shows the growth of the migrant labour force from 2009 to 2017. This growth is also expressed in terms of the percentage of the national labour force that is represented by the migrant labour force. Canales points out that while in 2009 this share was 1.6 percent of the total labour force (115,710 people), by 2017, it had risen to 6.5 percent (550,161 people). If this data is disaggregated by area, this percentage increases to 11.9 percent in the Metropolitan Region and 11.7 percent in the north of the country (Canales, 2022).

Figure 6. Migrant workers in Chile (number of workers), 2009–2017



Source: Canales (2022).

If the migrant population's rate of participation in the workforce is disaggregated by sex, significant differences are revealed. The participation rate for native-born workers is 72.6 percent for men and 47.7 percent for women. Among the migrant population, these figures are 74.8 percent and 56.7 percent, respectively (Canales, 2022). However, if only the migrant population from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are considered, the participation rates for both men and women are much higher, reaching almost 90 percent and 74 percent, respectively (Canales, 2022). These high participation rates confirm that Chile is experiencing labour migration and that work is a vital issue.

A more detailed analysis of the labour market inclusion of the migrant population reveals there to be a significant concentration of men in the commerce sector (31.4 percent) and in the construction sector (18.4 percent), where their participation rates are higher than those of the local population. There is also a higher concentration of migrant

women in the commerce sector (33.1 percent) and in the personal services sector, which includes paid household work and care services (23 percent).

Women's high rate of participation of women in care work points to the key role they play in the care economy in Chile, a sector that is vital to the country's economic development (Acosta, 2013).

Table 2. Employment by sector of activity, sex and country of origin in Chile (in percentages), 2017

Sector	Men			Women		
	Total	Native-born population	Migrant population	Total	Native-born population	Migrant population
	Percentage					
Forestry, agriculture and fisheries	9.3	9.7	4.5	3.7	3.7	2.6
Mining	3.1	3.2	1.5	0.5	0.5	0.4
Industry	9.3	9.2	10.1	5.0	5.0	4.5
Electricity, gas and water	1.3	1.3	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.3
Construction	15.2	15.0	18.4	1.3	1.3	1.4
Commerce	20.0	19.3	31.4	27.5	27.1	33.1
Transport	14.5	14.7	11.4	4.0	4.0	3.8
Business services	11.8	11.9	10.4	13.7	13.6	14.8
Social services	13.4	13.8	8.0	31.9	33.2	16.0
Personal services	2.0	1.9	3.3	12.1	11.2	23.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Canales (2022, p. 52).

Contreras and Gallardo (2020) analyse the effects of migration on the labour market. Based on data from the census and the National Socioeconomic Classification Survey (CASEN) and using instrumental variables, the authors show that migration phenomenon has caused a 2 percent to 3 percent decrease in the wages of low-skilled native-born workers competing with higher-skilled immigrant workers, especially in the case of men. This suggests an effect caused by the competition between native-born workers and higher-skilled immigrant workers in local labour markets.

Although the literature on this point is not very extensive, some conclusions can also be drawn from international evidence. A Central Bank of Chile publication (Banco Central, 2019), for example, drew some conclusions from the evidence mentioned above: "It is to be expected that labour market effects will continue to be observed as immigrants enter the labour market. Specifically, these effects will be the containment of real wage increases and inflationary pressures. An increase in investment is also to be expected. In the medium term, this should generate positive effects on trend towards growth, given the increase in the labour force and changes in productivity".

Table 3 shows the distribution of the migrant population by economic sector, and the distribution of the native-born and migrant low-skilled population by economic sector at the 2-digit level of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). This data shows that the migrant population tends to participate in varying ways in all economic sectors. Data in the table is arranged in descending order of the distribution of the migrant population by sector. The table shows that wholesale and retail trade employs the largest share of migrant workers (21.9 percent), followed by hotels and restaurants (14.4 percent), real estate (12.3 percent) and private

households with domestic workers (10.2 percent). The shares of migrant workers in all other sectors are below 10 percent. The fourth column shows the distribution of the Chilean population with at least 12 years of education (i.e. low-skilled workers) by economic sector. Generally speaking, the less-educated Chilean population tends to work in sectors where the migrant population is larger. The distribution of the less-educated migrant population follows a similar pattern in all sectors, as can be seen in table 3, column (5). Specifically, the wholesale and retail trade sector—the main employer of the migrant population—accounts for the highest shares of the low-skilled native-born and migrant populations. Finally, the last two columns show the native-born and migrant populations' average years of schooling. In most cases, the latter outperform the former.

Table 3. Distribution of the migrant population by economic sector, and distribution of the low-skilled population by economic sector and origin in Chile (percentages), 2017

Sector	Migrant population			Low-skilled population (percentages)		Average years of education	
	Number of people	Percentage	Share	Native-born population	Migrant population	Native-born population	Migrant population
Wholesale and retail trade	110,830	21.89%	0.071	22.66%	23.35%	11.54	13.19
Hotels and restaurants	72,705	14.36%	0.184	4.77%	14.24%	11.83	13.29
Real estate and business activities	62,323	12.31%	0.105	4.61%	6.57%	13.93	15.21
Private households with paid domestic workers	51,815	10.24%	0.109	8.30%	12.95%	9.31	12.17
Manufacturing industries	47,490	9.38%	0.065	10.71%	12.06%	11.58	12.56
Construction	46,978	9.28%	0.067	11.18%	13.14%	10.79	12.08
Transportation, storage and communication	25,078	4.95%	0.044	8.16%	4.06%	11.95	14.28
Social and health care services	21,989	4.34%	0.049	2.56%	1.84%	14.82	16.11
Other community service activities	20,236	4.00%	0.068	3.32%	3.56%	12.78	13.79
Agriculture, livestock, hunting, forestry and fishing	17,975	3.55%	0.025	13.62%	5.47%	8.89	10.87
Teaching	13,337	2.63%	0.022	3.47%	1.25%	15.10	15.27
Finance	6,303	1.25%	0.051	0.70%	0.28%	14.73	16.59
Public administration and defence	5,388	1.06%	0.014	3.52%	0.54%	13.72	15.50
Mining and quarrying	2,549	0.50%	0.018	1.70%	0.53%	12.98	12.63
Electricity, gas and water supply	800	0.16%	0.014	0.71%	0.15%	12.61	13.66
Extraterritorial organizations and bodies	438	0.09%	0.517	0.00%	0.00%	14.66	17.16
Total	506,234	100.00%	0.065	100.00%	100.00%	12.03	13.44

Source: Compiled by the authors based on data from the National Socioeconomic Classification Survey (CASEN), 2017.

Note: Calculations were made using regional expansion factors. The low-skilled population has 12 years of schooling or less.

Aninat and Vergara (2019) also analyse the reality of life for the migrant population in Chile from different perspectives. They examine the migrant labour market from 2006 to 2017 and find that the migrant population earned higher average incomes than the local population, but that the two converged in 2017. The authors also found that the share of the migrant population in permanent employment was higher than this share for the local population in the period in question and that the migrant population worked longer hours than the native-born population. The latter

finding is basically explained by the fact that migrant women work longer hours than Chilean women. The authors also analysed whether there was a wage premium or penalty for migrant workers in Chile, finding a premium of 11.9 percent in 2006, which became a penalty of 16.9 percent in 2017. This could be due to the fact that it is now harder to regularize work permits, which means that the migrant population spends more time in the informal economy.

5.2. Social and economic integration

According to data from the Bicentennial National Survey, a project run by the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 78 percent of the people consulted consider that there are too many migrants in Chile, a value 18 percentage points higher than was recorded in 2020. Furthermore, 64 percent consider that there is currently a great deal of conflict between the Chilean and foreign populations, 16 percentage points higher than those who said so in 2019. At the same time, the vast majority of people surveyed stated that they have not had any negative experiences with migrants. The same survey shows that there is less consensus around the idea that regular migrants residing in the country should enjoy the same rights as the native-born population. While in 2019, 79 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that foreigners with regular migration statuses should have access to health, education and housing benefits on equal terms with the Chilean population, this figure dropped to 67 percent in 2021 (Stefoni, Bravo and Liberona, 2022). The authors wonder why negative perceptions of migration have increased in recent years. They argue that, beyond the numerical increase in the migrant population, it is the public discourse around migration statistics that leads to increasingly negative, less tolerant views of migration. In other words, they argue that the public discourse of political authorities and the media is extremely important.

Negative images and mistrust towards different groups (e.g. Colombians, Haitians and Venezuelans) hinder the social inclusion of the migrant population, as this mistrust shapes the actions of employers, landlords and public officials, among others.

One aspect that has been widely debated concerns the levels of discrimination, racism and xenophobia that the native-born population expresses towards the foreign population. These function as distinguishing factors that place migrant groups at a disadvantage in comparison with the local population. Research such as that carried out by Liberona Concha (2015) on the northern border highlights the persistence of these distinctions: “racist ideas have not disappeared from the collective imaginaries of the Chilean population and Chilean institutions. Indeed, the presence of the Black population has sparked polemics, and there are strong social divides between the national population and the Colombian population, regardless of whether they are of African descent” (Liberona Concha, 2015, p. 42).

This situation is particularly problematic within schools. Studies such as Pavez Soto (2012), Tijoux (2013) or Riedemann and Stefoni (2015) make reference to existing prejudices, which are based on racialized understandings of the migrant student body. This situation has been observed in several cities, as documented by Bustos González and Gairín Sallán in Arica (2017), Cárdenas in Antofagasta (2006) and Micheletti in Maule (2016), among others.

Furthermore, the fact that the foreign population is concentrated in the most vulnerable sectors of the economy points to the extreme segregation of the labour market, particularly for communities such as Haitians. For example, according to the Jesuit Migrant Service’s 2021 Migrant Voices Survey (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2021c), 36.1 percent of the migrant population works in services and sales.

A study of a self-selected sample of workers in Santiago found that greater interaction between the Chilean and Peruvian populations reduced the two groups' prejudice towards one another, since it reduced their anxiety and sense of threat (González et al., 2010). Furthermore, a study by González and Brown (2016) that was conducted inside schools showed that contact between students of Chilean origin and Peruvian migrant students can influence the acculturation-related preferences of members of the social majority by increasing feelings of trust and perceptions of similarity between the two groups. Furthermore, in relation to the school setting, results presented by Aninat and Vergara (2020) based on data from the Education Quality Agency suggest that contact with a larger share of migrant students within the classroom decreases the frequency with which native-born students report being victims of discrimination and violence within schools, and also seems to reduce the levels of violence that they perceive at school.

Based on information from the national public opinion surveys conducted by the Centre for Public Studies (CEP), Aninat and Vergara (2020) point out that people who live in socially diverse environments as a result of immigration have stronger anti-immigration attitudes, but only when they express a pessimistic view of the country's economic circumstances. Such associations do not appear to depend on the migrant population's country of origin.

Finally, there are certain effects of immigration that are more a popular belief than a reality. One such myth is that a growth in migration rates is associated with rising crime rates (Aninat and Vergara, 2020). These authors point out that this belief has no basis in reality, as the foreign population perpetrates relatively less crime than the native-born population, and their involvement in criminal acts has decreased over time. According to a study conducted by the Jesuit Migrant Service based on information requested for the purposes of transparency from Chile's military police and the Under-Secretariat of Crime Prevention, the "increase in the foreign population residing in Chile between 2010 and 2019 has not brought an increase in the percentage of foreigners among total perpetrators of criminal acts or those deprived of their freedom. Indeed, these percentages have actually decreased in recent years" (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2020, p. 4). The study concludes that in 2019 only 1.4 percent of the foreign population had come into contact with the criminal justice system as a perpetrator (among the Chilean population, this percentage was 4.1 percent). However, the report makes an important distinction. A higher proportion of the foreign population come into contact with the system as suspects, rather than after being convicted of a crime. The majority of Chilean inmates (70 percent) have a conviction, while 30 percent are suspects being held while awaiting trial. In contrast, the latter is true for almost half (46 percent) of the foreign prison population. One of the hypotheses put forward in the study mentioned above is that a significant proportion of those awaiting trial have been charged for having acted as "mules" to move illegal drugs. As such, this population's presence in the country is connected to the drug trade rather than migration. Ultimately, the study finds that in 2019, "the majority of the foreign prison population was being deprived of their liberty for drug-related offences (67 percent versus 18 percent of the Chilean prison population), and they were mostly in prisons in the north of the country (56 percent versus 13 percent)" (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2020, p. 4).

6. Migration policy challenges

There has been sustained growth in Chile's migrant population in recent years. There has been progress in various areas during this time. A series of regulations were approved and implemented to guarantee the rights of migrants, especially in the areas of education and health. Inclusion policies were implemented, four migration regularization processes were carried out, and offices were created to assist the migrant population in different municipalities around the country, among many other initiatives.

There is no doubt that the continuous flow of migrants into Chile has transformed the country's culture. Today, the country is more diverse and varied than ever before. The challenge, therefore, is ensuring that the population that has chosen Chile as the place to implement its life projects are able to do so on equal footing with the local population and have the same rights and opportunities to participate in the labour market and the country's political and social life. To achieve this, a series of measures need to be implemented to prevent a variety of inequalities from emerging on different levels.

In the area of migration governance, the first step is regularization. The delays in regularizing migration status far exceed what might be considered reasonable. The State must respond by providing the population with a more effective service, as delays with regularization mean that the migrant population do not have the documents they need to integrate into society. The fact that migrants' ID cards expire and cannot be renewed because their visas are still being processed means that they are denied access to a series of fundamental rights.

A mechanism also needs to be established to regularize the status of those who entered the country via unauthorized border crossings. Proposing that those who entered the country from 2020 onward leave, apply for a visa from abroad and wait for an answer before re-entering regularly is unfeasible. As noted above, most of these people do not have passports or other identity documents, nor do they have the financial means to leave, wait for a response and return.

Second, the National Migration Service needs to be strengthened and monitored, and the regulations for the new Migration Act need to be passed, as this legislation establishes the service and describes its objectives.

Third, Chile needs to sign the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Although this instrument is not binding, it provides guidance for guiding national migration policy based on principles that seek to guarantee the protection of migrants' rights.

Regularization is the first step towards inclusion, as it entails the recognition of all the migrant population's rights on an equal basis with the local population. However, to make headway on social inclusion, various aspects of social life need to be taken into consideration, including education, health, housing and employment.

The Chilean State currently recognizes and guarantees the migrant population's right to education, regardless of their migration status. Over the years, the State has generated various instruments (circulars, decrees and laws) to guarantee this right in line with international human rights standards.

Despite this, there are barriers that hinder migrants' exercise of this right in practice. Given these barriers, attention needs to be paid to the factors that result in lower school attendance rates among foreign students, which have been analysed in this paper. Recent migration flows from Venezuela pose an important challenge in this regard, as this community's precarious living conditions may make it difficult for children and adolescents of Venezuelan origin to access the school system.

Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education fostered initiatives to promoting intercultural policies within the school system to strengthen the sociocultural inclusion of foreign children and adolescents. However, these programmes were interrupted during the health emergency. Now that children are back at school, there is an urgent need for initiatives to promote social harmony among the student body by developing an intercultural approach in educational establishments. This should be fostered not only in establishments with large numbers of foreign students but throughout the entire school system (Stefoni et al., 2019).

Another aspect that needs to be analysed in depth is the inclusion of students of foreign origin in higher education. In this regard, barriers that could be hindering their access to the system need to be identified.

The Chilean State has also made progress on guaranteeing the foreign population's right to health, regardless of their migration status. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed in this paper also identify certain barriers to access that need to be removed, such as institutional barriers, cultural barriers and information barriers.

One factor that has received less attention is the inclusion of an intercultural perspective in the health sphere. Proposals in this direction suggest including intercultural mediators at health care centres and strengthening culturally relevant training for health professionals.

Another challenge concerning the newly arrived migrant population is mental health. The extreme vulnerability of this group and the situations of violence they have had to deal with lead to high levels of stress and possible trauma, which is why the provision of mental health services is so important.

Turning to housing, the pandemic severely affected living conditions. Key factors when designing housing policies include the growth in the number of informal settlements and the high numbers of migrants living in these, even though they do not account for the majority of the population.

Factors that need to be considered include living conditions in these settlements, the deregulation of informal leases in central urban areas, and the difficulties faced by the migrant population in accessing housing subsidies.

On the subject of employment, strengthening migrants' access to work on equal terms with the local population is one of the major migration policy challenges that Chile is facing. This paper has shown that the migrant population is highly skilled and that their labour force participation rate is high. Mechanisms need to be designed to make it easier for migrants to have their qualifications recognized and their competencies certified so that they can access employment that is appropriate to their education and work experience. Policies also need to foster formal employment, and the State will need to work with the private sector to achieve this.

One of the most critical issues in this regard is the situation of undocumented individuals. Those with irregular migration statuses can only access informal work, which means that the migrant population is exposed to abuse and labour exploitation.

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