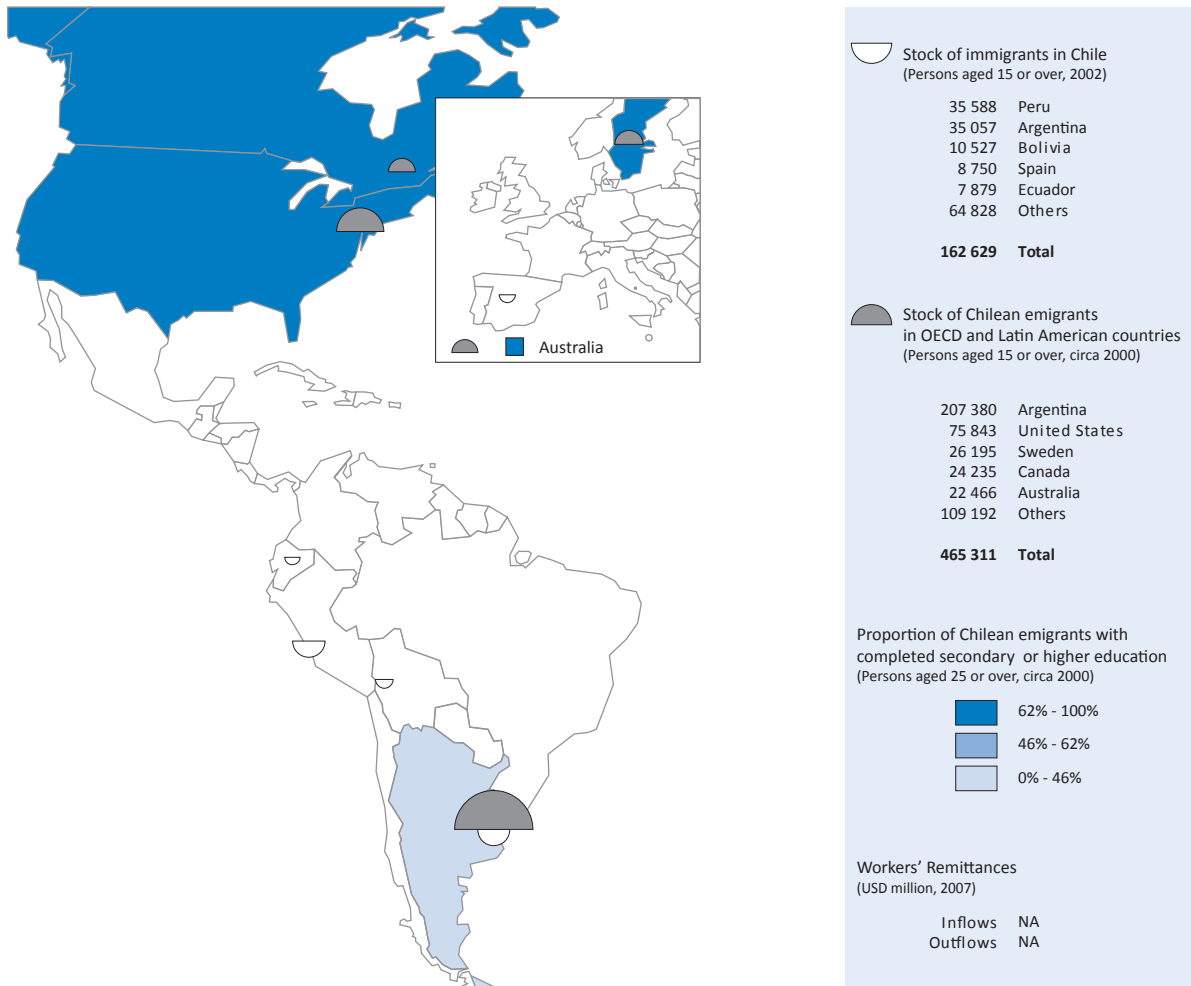


Increasing political and economic stability, in conjunction with the deteriorating economic and political situation of other countries in the region, has made Chile an attractive destination for Latin American migrants.

**Figure 1. Stock of Migrants and Level of Education of Chilean Emigrants to OECD and Latin American Countries**



Note: This figure reports the stock of migrants recorded in national censuses and workers' remittances in balance-of-payments data. It will therefore not reflect unrecorded formal or informal flows, which may be material.

Source: For details on definitions and sources, please refer to the Statistical Annex.

**Throughout** Chile's history immigration has been low relative to other Latin American nations. Nevertheless, 2002 saw Chile register the greatest inflow of immigrants in its history, with over 160 000 arriving in the course of the year. The most notable recent change is the increasing presence of Latin American immigrants, especially from Peru and Argentina.

**Although** the immigration panorama has changed since the late 1990s, Chile is a net emigration country. The stock of Chilean emigrants represents 4.1% of the total population, with Argentina as the main destination country.

**The percentage** of emigrants with primary education or less is 47%. This figure is influenced by the relatively low levels of education of emigrants to Argentina. In contrast, more than two-thirds of Chileans in the United States, Canada and Sweden have completed at least secondary education.

## Migration History and Policy Developments

For most of Chile's history immigration flows have not been significant. Over the 138-year period 1865-2002 on average only 2% of the total population were foreign born (Martínez, 2003). What immigration there was came from groups affected by Europe's economic plight at the end of the 19th century or by the two World Wars. European migration was directly encouraged by the state in order to populate and develop the local economies in uninhabited southern areas (Selective Immigration Law of 1845).

The increasing economic strength of Chile in recent years, in conjunction with the deteriorating economic and political situation in other countries in Latin America, has made the country an attractive alternative for regional migrants. According to the 2002 census, the largest regional group of immigrants are from Latin American countries, mainly Peru and Argentina. These new migration flows are recent and have a clear economic rationale. More than half of these immigrants arrived after 1996 and nearly 72% cite economic and labour difficulties in their countries of origin as a reason behind their decision to migrate (Chilean Ministry of the Interior, 2008).

Although immigration remains relatively small (the latest census found 1.4% of the total population were foreign born), its increasing profile is prompting political interest in the country's migration policy. The governments of the Concertación (1990 to present) have been active in formulating migration initiatives, including reforms to the framework Foreigners Law (Decree Law No. 1.094 of 1975), amnesties for irregular migrants, administrative modernisation of the Immigration Department and efforts to develop a regulatory framework that encourages integration of immigrants into the host society.

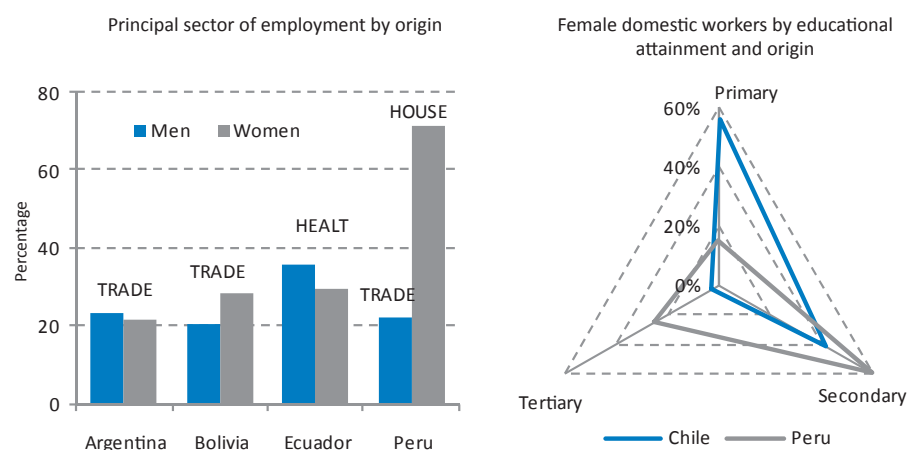
Another element of Chile's migration policy is the maintenance of relations with the more than 460 000 Chilean-born living abroad. (The government, in fact, recognises a total of close to 860 000 Chileans abroad, a number which, following the constitutional reform of 2005, includes the children of Chileans born abroad). Following the restoration of democracy, the early 1990s saw policies designed to promote the return of Chileans who had left the country for political reasons. In contrast, the main reason given by more recent migrants is to study (52%) (Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005). In 2005 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs compiled a register of Chileans living abroad, data from which are used to develop public policies oriented to overseas Chileans.

## Labour Market

The issue of work permits increased exponentially over 1996-2007, overwhelmingly to workers from neighbouring Latin American countries who have a job offer in Chile. Work permits can be job specific, with a duration tied to the labour contract, or open, valid for one year or two and potentially leading to a permanent residence visa.

### Figure 2. Principal Sector of Activity of Migrants and Educational Attainment by Origin

(Workers aged 15 or over, 2002)



*Note:* Sectors of activity are recorded according to the International Standard Industrial Classification, Rev. 3. The following abbreviations are used HEALT: Health and social work; HOUSE: Employment in private households; and TRADE: Wholesale and retail trade.

*Source:* OECD Development Centre calculations, based on the 2002 National Census of Chile (processed with ECLAC Redatam+SP on-line).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/716837331816>

The lefthand panel of Figure 2, which shows the principal sector of employment in Chile of migrants by country of origin, reveals a clear pattern. Peruvian migrants are heavily concentrated in domestic service (71.5% of women) and trade (22.2% of men), while Ecuadorians are found in health and social work (32.6%). This degree of concentration is not found among Argentinians and Bolivians, for whom the principal occupation is trade (at 22.4 and 23.8%, respectively).

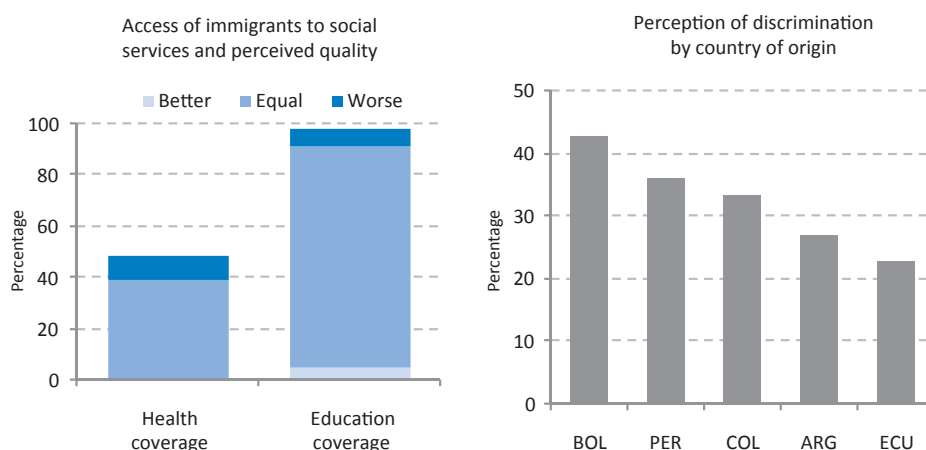
The righthand panel of Figure 2 compares the level of education of Peruvian and Chilean domestic workers. The Peruvian workers are generally more qualified than their native counterparts. This may be part of their attraction to employers.

Continuing integration of these immigrants may be one of Chile's chief migration challenges. Domestic service, at least, does seem to be a good source of employment and opportunity. A study on Immigration, Gender Equity and Public Safety conducted by the Chilean Ministry of the Interior found that the incomes of immigrant domestic workers were sufficient to cover basic needs (91%), allow for savings (52%) and the sending of remittances (70%).

## Relationship with the Country of Origin and Integration in the Host Country

A central element of Chile's current National Immigration Policy is promoting the successful integration of immigrants into Chilean society. Chile has held amnesties for irregular migrants, opening the way to their inclusion in the formal economy and in particular its health and pension systems. Existing labour legislation extends to migrants, and migrants' children have access to education regardless of immigration status of their parents.

**Figure 3. Integration of Immigrants in Chile, 2008**



Source: Chilean Ministry of the Interior (2008).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/716857433304>

The Immigration, Gender Equity and Public Safety study demonstrates significant success in access to education and health. The lefthand panel of Figure 3 shows that almost all respondents reporting dependent children of school age declared that they attended school regularly. Additionally, 49% of migrants indicated that they were covered by health insurance. Moreover, they had positive perceptions of quality compared to social services received in their home country.

Challenges nonetheless remain in the areas of housing and perceptions of discrimination. The immigrant population expresses difficulties accessing housing (61%), particularly in the case of irregular immigrants. Overall, one in three immigrants in Chile felt they had experienced discrimination while in the country. Peruvians and Bolivians reported higher rates of discrimination than the average.

Emigrant Chileans maintain strong links with their country of origin. A survey of migrants by the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted their high degree of contact with family (90%) and the frequency of return visits (74% made at least occasional return trips). The study found that 39% of respondents said they intended to return to Chile to resettle in the foreseeable future. This is borne out by the 2002 national census which recorded the return – mainly from Argentina and Europe – of almost 39 000 Chileans formerly living abroad (resident abroad in 1997 and now resident in Chile, aged 15 years or over).