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EL ROL DE LOS ESTUDIOS DE POBLACIÓN TRAS LA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19 Y
EL DESAFÍO DE LA IGUALDAD EN AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE

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**Labour market integration of intraregional immigrants' in Chile: The
role of informality**

ABSTRACT

This article provides an analysis of employment and occupational attainment of immigrants to Chile. We use data from the Chilean household survey for the years 2013, 2015, 2017, and compare the probabilities of being active, employed and informally employed among immigrants and native-born Chileans, using logistic regression models. The second part of the paper then analyses occupational attainment achieved, as well as the role of informality in constraining upward mobility by means of multinomial logistic regression models. After controlling for sociodemographic confounding factors and the role of time since arrival, we find evidence that immigrants are not at disadvantage compared with natives regarding activity and unemployment. Risk of informal employment is more likely among women during the first years since arrival. We find evidence of a diversified assimilation which depends on migration origin and gender. Employment informality among Latin American immigrants seems to be reducing access to higher skilled and quality jobs compared to formal migrants, but it does not necessarily constrain upward mobility.

Keywords: immigrants' assimilation, labour market segmentation, informality, Chile, Latin America.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the shift towards intraregional migration driving international movements in the Latin-American region during the last decades, Chile has become a hub for Latin-American immigration, confirmed by an increase of the its migration stock from 1.2 per cent in 2002 to 7,8 per cent out of the total population in 2019. Out of the 1.49 million of foreigners (INE & DEM, 2020) counted in 2019, 80% arrived during the last decade.

In this context of migration upsurge to the country, a growing amount of research has contributed to provide an understanding of the situation of immigration in the Chilean labour market. While some scholars have focused on income, showing higher earnings for immigrants compared to Chileans (Contreras, Ruiz-Tagle, & Sepúlveda, 2012), studies tackling immigrants integration in the Chilean occupational have found a heterogeneous pattern in which extraregional migrants outperform locals, Andean migrants (i.e. Peru and Bolivia) do worse, and Southern Cone migrants (Argentina, Uruguay) perform relatively similar to Chileans (Cristián Doña, 2016; UN-ECLAC & ILO, 2017). The focus on occupational attainment is crucial to understand how foreign workers may perform depending on different labour market structures, with various demands for low or high skilled labour (Brodmann & Polavieja, 2011). Drawing on the international academic debate on immigrants' labour market incorporation, we identified a research gap in relation to control for confounding sociodemographic factors and to comprehend the role of time in the host country on socioeconomic integration (Chiswick, Lee, & Miller, 2005; Reyneri & Fullin, 2011). In line with this previous research, we focus on the different migration origins and compare their rates of economic activity, employment and occupational attainment. Due to its unique highly market oriented nature of the Chilean economy, but also the persisting levels of labour market segmentation posed by levels of informality ranging 30-40% in the last three decades, Chile consists of a unique context to better understand immigrants socioeconomic assimilation and the persisting of ethnic penalties. Drawing on empirical research from other contexts, we aim to provide an analysis on whether ethnic penalties decrease after controlling for sociodemographic factors and time in the host country. Our focus is both on time since arrival, as a proxy for host country experience, and on economic informality, since the latter is a growing concern associated to occupational and social exclusion not only in Chile and Latin-America, but also in Southern European countries and other developed areas. Finally, it is important to note that our analyses finish in 2017, two years before the social protests that set the base for structural political and economic changes (i.e. discussion of a new political constitution), and three years before the global economic recession associated to COVID-19 that decreased immigration to the country.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The next section provides a description of the characteristics of recent upsurge of immigration flows to the country and its labour market. Then, we present the theories from which we draw in order to explain immigrant's disadvantages in the labour market. The methodology of this study will be further discussed, followed by the presentation the descriptive and analytical results. Finally, the paper concludes with a summary of the findings.

IMMIGRATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN CHILE

The combination of more stringent borders in the global north with a lax national border policy until 2018, together with an economic expansion in the country have been accounted as

determinants of immigration to Chile (Cristian Doña, 2019). Migration stock in Chile increased from 1.2 per cent in 2002 to 7.8 per cent out of the total population in 2019, corresponding to 1.49 million of foreigners (INE & DEM, 2020). Moreover, 80 per cent of migrants arrived during the 2010-2019 period and 9 per cent in the previous period (2000-2009). Arranged by population numbers, the main migration groups are Venezuelans, Peruvians, Haitians, Colombians, Bolivians, Argentinians, and Ecuadorians which concentrate the 82.9 per cent of the total stock. While Argentinians, Bolivians, Ecuadorians and Peruvians constitute an older trend, Colombians, Haitians, and Venezuelans are more recent migration flows to the country (Martinez & Orrego, 2016). These dynamics have to be understood as part of shift a towards an intensification of intraregional migration corridors in Latin America (ILO, 2017). In fact, between years 1970 and 2010, the intraregional migration stock increased from 24% to more than 63% (Martinez & Orrego, 2016). In Chile, the stock of intraregional migrants increased from 58% in 1990 to 78% in 2015 (United Nations, 2017).

The Southern Common Market (Mercosur) Residence Agreement helps explaining the relatively opened border regime towards Latin American migrants from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The agreement grants a temporary residence permit of up to two years, which can later be extended to permanent residence (OECD, 2019). Up until 2018, mostly all foreigners (including Venezuelans and Haitians) could enter the country as tourists, to later change their status to temporary residents by obtaining a job offer. Despite a rapid increase in visas and residence permits allocation, as for 2018, the estimation of irregular migrants was 300,000 (SJM, 2020), corresponding to 24 per cent of the migrant stock to that date. A series of reforms to the 1975s frameworks were implemented by governments since the 1990s, such as granting equal access to public health and public education for immigrants and their children regardless of their migratory status, as well as regularization programs in 1998, 2013 and 2018 (Cristian Doña, 2019). Also in 2018, a set of policies oriented to limit inflows, as well as to promote high skilled migration were implemented (OECD, 2019). Some scholars have critically reviewed its implementation as it would be increasing barriers to access regular status, especially among Haitians and Venezuelans who are now requested to obtain visas to enter the country (Finn, 2020; Stefoni, Lube, & González, 2018). Note that, however, all changes implemented since 2018 do not affect our analysis, which ends in 2017.

The setup for the upsurge in immigration has been a sustained and relatively stable economic growth since the early 1990s (OECD, 2018). Economic growth is associated with a steady increase of employment and salaries which have in turn improved workers' income and living conditions. Unemployment rate has maintained in a historically low rate of 7% since 2013. Also, job growth rate has been positive and with a greater pace among high productivity sectors, compared to medium and low (OECD, 2018). However, the economy is still little diversified, and growth relies heavily on natural resources with little value added and a lack of technology introduction in firms that have opted labour intensive strategies (Romaguera, González, Mizala, & Montero, 1997). Chile's economic growth is paired with a highly de-regulated labour market, because of the pioneer introduction of free market oriented policies since the 1970s, aiming at promoting foreign investment that transformed the shape of the labour market by reducing labour costs and decentralize wage bargaining across all private sector occupations (Romaguera et al., 1997). Despite during the 1990s a series of changes to improve employment protection were implemented, wages are highly flexible under economic shocks and the use of temporary contracts is widely used (Romaguera et al., 1997). As for 2014, the proportion of temporary contracts (27.5%) is the highest among OECD countries (OECD, 2018). Economic informality

has remained stable between 30-40% during the last three decades (UN-ECLAC, 2019). Workers with no contracts or with a temporary one tend to receive lower salaries and have lesser access to public support and contributive social protection schemes, such as training and unemployment benefits (Abramo, Cecchini, & Morales, 2019). In fact, due to the lack of a record of contribution to the social security system, only 50% of workers on fixed term contracts are able to access unemployment benefits (Romaguera et al., 1997).

The presence of immigrant labour is diversified across productive sectors, although previous studies have shown different concentrations depending on migration origin, with extraregional migrants highly represented in higher skilled occupations and intraregional migrants the lower quality jobs (Carrasco & Suárez, 2018). Among certain immigrant groups with more difficult access to regular status (e.g. Haitians and Bolivians), informal work is more prevalent (ILO, 2017).

THEORIES

Chile's fast upsurge of immigration flows, uniquely flexible but highly segmented labour market, as well as its lax border regime constitutes a unique research ground to explore the external validity of assimilation and segmented assimilation theories (Chiswick et al., 2005; Heath & Cheung, 2007). Oriented to explain the disadvantages faced by immigrants in the labour market, and drawing from the human capital theory, these two set of theories provide interpretations on how migrant-native differentials in socio-economic position evolve over time. The *immigrant assimilation model*, establishes that earnings and occupational attainment gaps between foreign born and native born tend to disappear as time since migration increases. This approach acknowledges an immigrants' poor host-country relevant human capital at arrival, generated by factors such as lower competencies than required in host countries, difficulties for transferring educational certificates, and lack of knowledge to navigate local labour markets. However, an increase in labour market experience and postschool training among immigrants is also expected from this model, which predicts migrant disadvantage to weaken over time. Authors drawing on this theory have shown upward trends on immigrants' earnings and occupational attainment since arrival, in contexts characterized by flexible labour markets (Chiswick et al., 2005).

Segmented assimilation theories, on the other hand, question the idea that ethnic penalties should necessarily weaken over time. Even when controlling for time since arrival, educational attainment, and other sociodemographic factors, there are mechanisms making migrants specific barriers for assimilation to remain, namely: access to non-migrant social capital (Oesch & von Ow, 2017); discrimination levels in host societies (Bonoli & Hinrichs, 2012); and labour market structure and flexibility (Brodmann & Polavieja, 2011). Despite immigrant's social networks might indeed be helpful to access employment, they can also reinforce ethnic occupational segregation into certain niches. In order to reach the better quality jobs, social capital beyond the ethnically homogenous migrant networks (i.e. ties to locals) is needed (Munshi, 2003). Discriminatory practices such as employers who may choose to reward differently to groups with equal productivity levels or use of hiring practices where certain migrant groups are associated signals of worse employees, have been accounted as mechanisms underlying persisting ethnic penalties (Bonoli & Hinrichs, 2012). If present, disadvantages resulting from discriminatory practices are more likely to affect migrants that are visible distinct (e.g. different skin colour) from the local population (Heath & Cheung, 2007). In the Chilean case, its colonial history led to the creation of heavily racialized institutions that pose discrimination as an underlying mechanism

explaining non-European migrants, indigenous people and afrodescendants persisting labour market disadvantages (Tijoux, 2016). As regard discrimination towards migrants in Chile, several studies mainly from a qualitative approach, have documented the presence of discrimination, especially towards Bolivians, Colombians, Haitians and Peruvians who may be perceived as phenotypically different by a Chilean population who self-represents as modern and white (Mora & Undurraga, 2013).

When applied to the study of ethnic and migrant penalties, segmented labour market theories provide a framework to understand how labour market structures might affect foreigners' social mobility. Segmentation refers to the persistent differentiation in the labour market opportunities (i.e. wages and job security, as well as in training opportunities and access to internal labour markets) of similar-productivity workers, resulting from the partial introduction of flexibilization strategies that focus on new entrants (age or cohorts) and/or on the 'non-standard' employment relations for particular marginal groups (Barbieri, 2009). Previous research in developed countries shows that segmented labour markets are characterized for presenting an insider/outsider scenario in which the workforce is divided into primary and secondary sectors. While the primary labour market corresponds to the better quality jobs characterized by high security, wages, upward mobility opportunities, and access to social protection, the secondary part is precarious, as a result reduced labour costs provided by fixed-terms contracts and the lesser access to social protection (Blossfeld, Mills, & Bernardi, 2006). The outside, peripheral or secondary part of the labour market serves as a buffer which absorbs external negative shocks, allowing for the numerical flexibility needed by firms in the globalized economy and protecting the core or primary workforce. Research in highly segmented labour markets (e.g. Spain, Italy) shows that more vulnerable groups such as the lower educated or new labour market entrants without public support can restrict social mobility, letting them trapped into precarious trajectories and higher risks of social exclusion (Piore, 2002).

Labour market segmentation can also be present across the social class spectrum, with a series of segmentations or internal differentiated labour markets along occupations (Blossfeld et al., 2006), being thus linked to the concept of informality. The conceptualization of informality evolved from a focus on firms and its productivity as the units of analysis (*informal sector*), to a broader approach that considers employment quality and it can therefore tackle labour precariousness in firms aiming at increase competitiveness via labour cost reduction of outsourced and temporary workers (*informal employment*) (ILO, 2003). In this sense, outsourced and workers on temporary countries can be also considered informal, because they might not have access to social protection and other type of benefits associated to labour laws.

Due to the urge to send remittances back home, lack of necessary permits, or not having savings that allow waiting for better opportunities, migrants are forced to accept more precarious jobs. Highly segmented labour markets can in fact concentrate large proportions of migrants, attracted by the lower entry barriers posed by the informal economy and income opportunities, such as in the cases of Italy and Spain (Bernardi, Garrido, & Miyar, 2011; Reyneri & Fullin, 2011). Informality may facilitate migrants' access to the host country labour market, since there are little legal or administrative barriers to access jobs. But on the other hand it may lead to a strong segregation into low level and precarious occupations. This is problematic because the worse working conditions (e.g. extended hours), less access to social protection (e.g. unemployment insurance), and income instability limits migrant's ability to perform long term investments (e.g. post school training at destination), increasing chances of letting migrants trapped, segregated

within lower quality jobs, negatively affecting chances of upward mobility (Bernardi et al., 2011). The lack of social capital may act as a reinforcing mechanism of migrants' occupational segregation. In addition, access to social rights have also been accounted as an important institutional to be consider in migrants' employment and occupational attainment trajectories (Kogan, 2011). In fact, host countries with greater public support upon arrival would let migrants wait for better quality jobs and relief income pressures; although a trade-off with higher unemployment rates for the first years should be expected.

We developed a set of three hypotheses to be applied to the Chilean context. First, the *convergence hypothesis* states that employment patterns converge between immigrants and Chileans. We argue that the relatively high labour flexibility of the Chilean labour market, combined with the marked employment-oriented nature of Latin-American migration, let us expect similar or rapidly convergent employment patterns from migrants to that of Chileans. Second, the *segmented assimilation hypothesis* deals with occupational attainment, for which we expect some degrees of occupational assimilation that will be however constrained by underlying segmentation mechanisms. We argue that mechanisms associated with segmentation (e.g. discrimination, lack of social contacts, occupational segregation) will hinder socioeconomic integration and therefore constrain occupational convergence for specific migrant groups, namely: those perceived as visible distinct by the Chilean population; and migrant informal workers. Third, the combination of high levels of labour market segmentation in the Chilean labour market, with the low public support to the unemployed, provides ground for an *informality trap hypothesis*. We expect informal migrant workers will be trapped into lower skilled jobs. Compared to informal Chilean workers, informal migrants should present lower probabilities of accessing higher skilled occupations. Moreover, informal migrant workers should tend to have a persistently low probability of accessing higher skilled occupations, compared to formal migrant workers who should present a convergent trend towards that of Chileans.

DATA, VARIABLES AND METHODS

Our analysis draws on the Chilean Household Surveys (HHS) and is focused on Chileans and Latin American respondents aged 15 to 64. The survey is conducted every three years and has a cross-sectional nature with a sample size of approximately 200.000 individuals in each wave. Units of analysis are individuals, which due to the cross-sectional nature of the data are different between survey waves. Due to the use of census data as sample framework, the dataset includes both regular and irregular immigrants, although there is no way to distinguish them. This might yield worse socioeconomic performance of immigrants as a whole, compared to studies not considering undocumented migrants.

We merged the last 3 rounds of the HHS, years 2013, 2015 and 2017, letting us analyse the main immigrant groups separately in most cases, as well as distinguishing by sex. It is important to note that up until the submission date of this article, the 2019 wave wasn't available. The larger amount of cases also contributes to having more robust results in our analyses. Additionally, because we are interested in the relation of time since migration and the socioeconomic assimilation in the labour market, having different cross-sectional measures let us decrease possible biases due to cohorts effects concerning changes in immigrants characteristics over time (Borjas, 1985). However, due to the nature of the data, controlling for return bias is beyond our analytical possibilities. Therefore, unobserved characteristics of those migrants that stayed in Chile, compared to that of those who returned are not controlled for.

Our analyses are divided in three parts, one associated to each hypothesis. The first part of the analysis consists of logistic regression models to study the probability of being economically active versus inactive, the probability of being employed versus unemployed, and the probability of being informally employed versus formally employed. Second, in order to study occupational attainment, we estimate a multinomial logistic regression based in the European Socio-economic Classification (ESeC). The ESeC is collapsed into four categories, namely: 1) salariat (higher and lower service class); 2) Intermediate occupations and self-employed (Higher grade white collar, small employers and own account workers); 3) skilled manual workers, and; 4) Manual or non-skilled workers (Rose & Harrison, 2007). As a complementary analysis, we also include the variable informality in the exploration of the second hypothesis. It's important to note that because the variable measuring informality deals with informal employment in relation to the presence and nature of working contracts, whenever including it, the analysis restricts to employees only, leaving out self-employed and employers. Third, in order to study the effect of time since arrival among informal migrants, but also to account for gender, our last analysis includes a triple interaction between variables *female*, *time since arrival*, and *informality*. By this, the odds and predicted probabilities of accessing higher skilled occupations for informal Chileans and Latin-American migrants are compared. In all but the model including the interaction, men and women are analysed separately.

As regard independent variables, we use *country of origin*, with Chileans as reference category, to distinguish the main Latin-American migrant groups in the country arranged by its relative size out of the total migrant stock, namely: Venezuelans, Peruvians, Bolivians, Argentinians, Colombians, Haitians, and Ecuadorians. We have generated the variable *time since arrival*, coded with dummies of two years period (with the exception for the last category) ranging from 0-2 to 9+ years. Moreover, in order to facilitate the analysis of socioeconomic assimilation we use Chileans as the reference category. The measurement of *informality* considers workers without contract, on temporary (fixed-term), as well as those outsourced. By this, we are not only looking at the informal sector, focused in skills and productivity, but also to informal employment across sectors and access to better quality jobs across the social class spectrum. We argue that the informal sector, or in other words, the lower skilled positions associated with lower productivity firms, is covered by the ESeC scheme. In this sense, our analysis looks both into informal employment and sector, allowing us to look differentiation of internal markets across the social class spectrum.

Control variables considered are *female* (yes/no), *age groups*, *education*, *partner status*, having *children* (yes/no), *partner's social class*, *informal employment*, *region of residence*, *observation year*. Education is coded following four broad categories: primary or less, lower secondary, upper secondary, and tertiary. The variable partner status of respondents is coded in three groups: no partner, Chilean partner, or migrant partner, letting us account for social ties to the local population. Partner's social class follows the same ESeC classification explained above, with the exception that a category for inactive is added in order to keep partners in that situation in the analysis. The variable region groups individuals from the Metropolitan region, North, and the rest of Chile. Finally, in order to control for possible period effects, the variable observation year accounts for survey years, namely: 2013, 2015 and 2017.

DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

We carried out a series of descriptive sociodemographic analyses, which detailed can be requested to authors. We found that the overall pattern for Latin American migrants is characterized by a younger structure, especially among migrants from Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela and Haiti. Chileans average education years (11.6) is only higher than that of Bolivian and Haitian migrants, both for men and women. Haitians display a rather low educational attainment compared to the rest of migrant groups, where only 16.7 and 14.1 of men and women, respectively, have completed tertiary education. As regard patterns of employment, we found that, among men, activity levels are above to that of Chileans for all immigrants, especially when compared to Venezuelans, Haitians, Colombians, Peruvians and Ecuadorians. Moreover, the levels of unemployment are lower for all immigrant groups (with the exception of Haitians), compared to native-born Chileans. The proportion of economic informality displays a somewhat similar pattern to employment, with the exception of Bolivians and Haitians for whom proportions are higher. Among women, the gap in terms of activity is large, reaching up to 30 percentage point difference between Chileans and Venezuelans. A deviant case from this pattern is Argentinian women, who resemble the proportion of inactivity of Chilean women. As regard to unemployment, immigrant women present a similar pattern than for men. However, the exception seen for Haitians is deepened, as women reach 25% of unemployment. Concerning informality, the levels are higher than for migrant men for mostly all groups, although only Bolivian and Haitian women present higher levels of informality compared to Chileans. Patterns of occupational attainment are quite distinct by men and women. While for men the proportion of unskilled workers is around 30% (with the exception of Haitians who reach 42%), female migrants tend to concentrate much more within these occupations, especially among Haitians, Peruvians, Bolivians, and Colombians. Note, however, that in both sexes there is an average proportion of 15.5 and 19.7 for men and women migrants, respectively, that occupy salariat positions and that resembles that of Chileans, confirming an heterogeneous pattern at the descriptive level. Finally, Argentinians and Venezuelans present higher proportions of men and women within this social class category.

Descriptive analyses are important to provide a raw overview of immigrants' socioeconomic integration in the Chilean labour market. However, performing multivariate analysis is necessary in order to have a better understanding, as it controls for sociodemographic characteristics and other possible confounding factors. We are interested in the role of time influencing socioeconomic assimilation, separating its effect from variance explained by our control variables such as age, sex, partner status, etc. In the following sections we present our results in relation to the aforementioned theoretical expectations.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS: RESULTS OF THE MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Tables 1 and 2 present the results for the logistic regressions of the odds of being employed and active. When controlling for sociodemographic characteristics (e.g. age, education, region, partner status, etc.), we found a systematic result indicating that immigrants have higher odds of being economically active and employed, compared to Chileans, confirming the descriptive results from above. We found that time since arrival to the country does play a role in closing the migrant-native gap, especially for the odds of being economically active. However, in relation to the odds of being employed, results suggest that only women tend to resemble patterns to that of Chileans when controlling for time since arrival, whereas men remain with significantly higher odds compared to locals. This is consistent with studies pointing at the labour-oriented nature of Latin American migration to Chile (ILO, 2017), but also with evidence in other contexts such as

in Southern Europe and with employment-oriented migration flows (e.g. Spanish) in Germany (Fullin & Reyneri, 2011; Kogan, 2011). Finally, as regard informality we found a significant effect for the first two years, which however disappears for later periods. In this sense, results confirm our hypothesis regarding assimilation in terms of economic activity and employment. In relation to informality, results are only partially consistent for women, among whom a migrant penalty tends to persist for the first years since arrival. In addition, note that our indicator on partner status shows that being married to a migrant would increase the odds of being economically active, but it would decrease the likelihood of being employed and being in formal employment.

Table 1

Table 2

OCCUPATIONAL ATTAINMENT: RESULTS OF THE MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

We present odds ratios for men (table 3) and women (table 4), as well as predicted probabilities (figures 1 and 2) of a multi-nomial logistic regression of class attainment measured according to the ESeC class scheme collapsed into four categories (the reference category being unskilled occupations). Our results indicate a diversified pattern by migration origin and gender, but also according to social class. Overall, we observe that occupational assimilation may occur already since arrival, although time in the country does play a role for some migration groups. This means that despite there are persisting ethnic penalties that tend to remain over time, we also observe that to some extent all migration groups achieve some degrees of assimilation and in some cases may even outperform Chileans. For instance, by looking at model coefficients and figures, we observe that Argentinians, Ecuadorians and Venezuelans do reach the highest levels of the social spectrum. Peruvian men and Bolivian women, on the other hand don't reach salariat positions, but present similar or higher odds of being self-employed. Also, our model suggests Haitian men are overrepresented in lowest occupational level and remain disadvantage in accessing salariat occupations, but would however reach skilled manual occupations. Regarding the indicator controlling for social ties to Chilean (i.e. partner status), we found that having a migrant partner decreases the odds of accessing salariat occupations, both for men and women. Among men with migrant partner there is a slight higher chance of being employed in intermediate and self-employed jobs.

Table 3

In order to systematize these results, we identified three distinctive groups, which can be represented by the following migration origins. First, Venezuelans would outperform Chileans in their access to higher skilled occupations already since arrival. As some studies have shown, Venezuelans are not only mostly higher educated, but also have accumulated job experience in professional occupations at origin (OIM, 2018), present the highest level of social networks of all groups (together with Peruvians), and up until 2019, when the implementation of the new visa scheme was not in place, almost didn't enter the country irregularly (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes SJM, 2020). Likewise, there is probably a selection effect for Venezuelans, whom might be richer and therefore wait for better labour market opportunities. Argentinians are also either similar or outperforming Chileans already since the first period of arrival, as they benefit from the easier access to residence permits granted by the MERCOSUR agreement and studies suggest they are

not perceived as phenotypically and culturally distant (Mora & Undurraga, 2013), but are rather considered close due to a supposedly common European heritage. A second group of migrants characterized by Colombians may start with lower occupational attainments compared to Chileans, but tend to converge later in time and even end up outperforming Chileans. As we have depicted, Colombian present higher educational attainment to that of Chileans, although the gap is not as large as for Venezuelan and Argentinians. Ecuadorians could also be classified in this group, as they represent an older migration and relatively small group characterized for higher educational attainments also.

Table 4

Finally, a third group represented by Bolivians, Peruvians and Haitians, who present persistent lesser chances to access higher skilled occupations, but would still manage to get into skilled job positions and self-employment. In fact, among Haitian men, our results suggest access to skilled manual occupations already since arrival. Evidence from other studies describe that Haitians in Chile are pioneer migrants and thus more selected in terms of income and educational attainment. At origin, many of them were having professional jobs and were part of relatively middle class families (Nicolás Rojas, Amode, & Vásquez, 2017). Among explanatory factors of these barriers for accessing higher skilled occupations, studies point to lack of fluency in Spanish and more difficulties to get recognition of their educational certificates. Scholars in Chile have strongly argued for the presence of discriminatory practices towards Haitians both in the labour market and in the access to regular status (Nicolás Rojas et al., 2017; Stefoni, Leiva, & Bonhomme, 2017). Bolivians and Peruvians could be classified in this group too, as they can also access skilled manual positions (e.g. Peruvian men) and self-employed jobs (e.g. Peruvian men and Bolivian women). Note that among Peruvian women, ethnic penalties tend to remain and they are a group that tends to be highly segregated to the lowest skills jobs, letting us think of a possible fourth group characterized by higher levels of occupational segregation. To explain the characteristics of this group we may rely on the presence of negative selection effects combined with high levels of social capital that might be directing employment towards self-employed and less qualified niches. In particular, there is evidence concerning migrant enclaves in the commerce, agriculture and services in the North and the Metropolitan regions (Nicolás Rojas & Bueno, 2014). Moreover, in (Mora & Undurraga, 2013) the authors points out how the process of racialization of migrants as different to the Chilean population would also include Bolivians and Peruvians.

All in all, our results are consistent with the segmented assimilation hypothesis in that the Chilean labour market would allow for immigrants integration, although constrained by persisting ethnic penalties for some groups due to its high levels of segmentation. However, we did not account for relevant nuances according to gender. Among men in the unskilled social class, gaps are less pronounced both between migrants and compared to that of Chileans, whereas for women the pattern by migration origin depicted is much clearer. The latter indicates the coexistence of occupational convergence with persisting ethnic penalties for some groups. One explanation for these socioeconomic assimilation differences by gender might be less labour regulations in jobs performed by migrant men than by women, which are therefore more prone for discrimination. To rule out this possibility, we added *informality* to our multinomial logistic regression and analysed what happens among employees, which detailed results can be requested to the authors. We found that informality it is significant for all workers (Chileans and migrants) and that occupational convergence among migrants is delayed to later periods. In the next section we

explore the role of informality in more detail. Another explanation of the differences by gender in the occupational attainment convergence might be the type of tasks performed by men and women, for which we are not controlling in our model. In addition, despite we expected a heterogeneous assimilation pattern, with invariant trajectories for some groups who are perceived as different by Chileans, the outperformance of some migrant wasn't foreseen.

Figure 1

Figure 2

THE ROLE OF INFORMALITY

It is important to note that the “informality trap hypothesis” has two parts, depending on the reference group of interest (see above). To facilitate interpretation, results for men and women are presented separately. Figure 5 and 6 show predicted probabilities of informal migrant over time, with two straight lines representing probabilities entering high level classes for Chileans in the formal and informal employment. As mentioned earlier, note the current analysis is restricted only to employees, leaving out of the analysis all self-employed and employers. We find that our results are partially consistent with the hypothesis. When focused on informal workers we obtained that predicted probabilities of entering higher skilled occupations between migrants and Chileans are either equal or present an upward convergent trend for the former, although with considerable differences according to gender.

Table 5

As regard men, figure 5 shows that migrants in the unskilled social class present similar probabilities to Chileans already since arrival. Due to overlapping confidence intervals for all observed time periods, a stable and invariant trajectory over time for occupations within this social class is inferred. Trajectories within salariat occupations present an upward trend for migrants that would converge to Chileans from the sixth year onwards. Among women, migrants in unskilled jobs present greater disadvantages and they tend to remain for longer periods. Figure 6 shows much higher probabilities of occupying unskilled occupations, although eventually constraints seem to be overcome for migrants that have spent more than nine years in Chile. For Salariat positions among women, our model suggests convergence and eventual assimilation over time, such as the case for men. Now, when comparing trajectories for informal and formal migrants, we observe very similar patterns, with the exception among men in unskilled occupations who seem to be leaving behind occupations within the unskilled social class as time passes, although the pattern is not that clear. Note that among women in unskilled jobs, both informal and formal migrants remain with high probabilities of occupy these occupations. In this sense, we find an occupational trap among migrants which is not necessarily associated with informal employment but rather to gender. This is an interesting finding that could be associated with migration projects characterized by an urgent need to maintain global care chains, leaving them with fewer chances to invest in the necessary skills or waiting times necessary to access the better opportunities jobs. In the case of Chile, one qualitative study conducted for UN-WOMEN focuses on Peruvian women working in domestic services as a paradigmatic case. According to the study, most Peruvian women would migrate by themselves, be exposed to precarious labour trajectories due to the nature of domestic work in Chile which in many cases requires workers

living at employers households, making working hours extensive and job inspections less likely (Arriagada & Cadenas, 2012).

Figure 3

Figure 4

CONCLUSION

When controlled for time since arrival, or time in the labour market, studies have found that migrant and ethnic penalties regarding the probability of being employed are inexistent, especially in contexts of high labour market flexibility and demand of low skilled labour such as in Southern European countries (Bernardi et al., 2011; Fullin & Reyneri, 2011). In line with this, our results for the study of immigrants' labour market integration in Chile do not indicate migrant penalties regarding rates of economic activity and access to employment, but rather the opposite, even at the descriptive level. Note, however, that access to more secure jobs is less likely for migrants during their first years since arrival. In this sense, concerning general employment patterns of being economically active, employed and informality, Latin American migrants tend to assimilate to Chileans, probably because of the clear employment-oriented nature of migration projects and the relative openness of the labour market.

Nevertheless, as regard occupational attainment, we find a diversified situation by gender and migration origin, which might be indicating the presence of ethnic rather than migrant penalties (Heath & Cheung, 2007). While several Latin American immigrants groups among men assimilate to Chileans already since arrival for all occupations but those within salariat, occupational convergence among women is much slower or even unreachable for some migrant groups. Bolivians, Haitians, Peruvians, both men and women, have much lower chances of accessing higher skilled occupations, although they do reach skilled manual occupations and self-employed. On the other hand, Venezuelans and Argentinians (and to some extent Ecuadorians) outperform Chileans in accessing higher skilled jobs. Underlying segmentation mechanism might be contributing to this heterogeneity among migrant groups, such as the presence of discriminatory practices towards some migrants due to a perception of being phenotypically different to the self-represented as modern and white Chilean population. However, one can also question whether this holds for Colombians and Ecuadorians, given they are performing much better in accessing salariat occupations compared to other migrants. The presence of ethnic enclaves and the high proportion of social networks among some groups (i.e. Bolivians and Peruvians) might also be playing a role in directing employment to certain niches. This might be an opportunity of letting migrants out of unskilled positions, although limiting further upward mobility chances. For Haitians, the lack of language fluency should be considered also in their limited access to the top jobs, something that is not accounted in our model.

We found that despite informality negatively affects access to higher social classes, there is a greater negative influence of gender rather in explaining occupational segregation among migrants, which is probably linked to the presence of global care chains influencing migration projects among women. The greater pressures to send remittances combined with individual migration might be putting more constraints to carry out the necessary long term investments necessary for upward mobility. Overall, employment informality among Latin American immigrants seems to be reducing access to higher skilled and quality jobs compared to formal migrants, but it does not necessarily constrain upward mobility. Nevertheless, neglecting the

hypothesis on the presence of an informality trap should not be read as an advantage over Chileans, but rather as reaching similar levels of segregation in their access to the better quality jobs in a highly segmented labour market.

Our results are, thus, in line with the literature indicating that in contexts characterized by flexible labour markets and segmentation, immigrants have relatively high chances of being employed. However, our results do confirm that occupational assimilation is reachable for several migrant groups. These findings are closer to the polarized occupational trajectories experienced by some migrant groups in the United States and the UK (Borjas, 1985; Heath & Cheung, 2007), and could be interpreted in light of the following characteristics for the Chilean context. First, as depicted, the labour flexibility in the Chilean labour market is very high for OECD standards, allowing for rapid hiring (and firing), combined with an open border regime period which provided relatively easy access to Latin American migrants through different regional mechanisms. Second, since the late 1990s, there has been employment growth both at the bottom and the top of the productive sectors, which is combined with a local population characterized by lower educational attainments compared to that of the majority of immigrants. Fourth, we cannot rule out the presence of discrimination mechanisms that constrain upward mobility for some immigrants perceived as different by the local population, as multiple qualitative studies have pointed out.

It's important to highlight that the data used does not consider the not yet released Household Socioeconomic Survey for year 2019, which might show worse immigrants socioeconomic outcomes. Since 2018, several reports have pointed out a shift in the characteristics of migration flows and their possibilities of labour market integration, mainly due to the changes in the visa and residence permits scheme put in place since that year, but also due to a worsening of a situation and subsequent stronger push factors at origin. For instance, Venezuelans, who as we have seen have had relatively successful occupational trajectories, are now having more difficulties to enter the country and to access regular status (SJM, 2020). Finally, note that our results are drawn from a cross-sectional sample and therefore no causal claims should be inferred from them. Within-changes among individuals cannot be tackled, so that a more precise and causal inference regarding the role of time couldn't be informed. Other type of biases, such as selection bias due to unobserved characteristics of migrants, as well as return bias can only be acknowledged as limitations to be considered. Despite all these limitations, we do believe our research provides a unique ground to keep working on the academic debate on immigrants' labour market integration in developing countries using socioeconomic classifications that facilitate international comparison, such as the ESeC scheme.