

### **Incorporation of South American immigrants in Santiago de Chile: Migratory Networks and Occupational Mobility**

### **Incorporación de inmigrantes sudamericanos en Santiago de Chile: redes migratorias y movilidad ocupacional**

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#### ABSTRACT

The article explores the characteristics of the incorporation of South American immigrants in Santiago. Based on survey data, the analysis focused on the importance of using networks at the time of arriving in the city and looking for work, and the trajectories of occupational mobility of immigrants in relation to their positions in origin. The results shows the key role of social capital in the processes of incorporation into the city, the existence of differentiated and heterogeneous incorporation trajectories among the different national groups, and the presence of a segmented U-shaped pattern of occupational mobility.

*Keywords:* 1. South American immigrants, 2. incorporation processes, 3. immigrant networks, 4. occupational mobility, 5. Santiago de Chile.

#### RESUMEN

Este artículo indaga en las características de la incorporación de los inmigrantes sudamericanos en Santiago de Chile. A partir de los datos de una encuesta, se analiza la relevancia del uso de redes al llegar a la ciudad y buscar trabajo, y las trayectorias de movilidad ocupacional de los inmigrantes respecto de sus posiciones en origen. Los resultados apuntan al papel clave del capital social en los procesos de incorporación a la ciudad, la existencia de trayectorias de incorporación diferenciadas entre los distintos grupos nacionales, y la presencia de patrones de movilidad ocupacional segmentada en forma de “U”.

*Palabras clave:* 1. inmigrantes sudamericanos, 2. procesos de incorporación, 3. redes migratorias, 4. movilidad ocupacional, 5. Santiago de Chile.

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## INTRODUCTION

International immigration to Chile has become an increasingly important phenomenon from the economic social, and cultural points of view. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chile received migratory flows mainly from Europe and the Middle East. Immigration from Europe was stimulated by the State to extend its sovereignty in the southern territories and promote economic development (Tijoux & Sir Retamales, 2015; Cano, Soffia & Martínez, 2009), whereas immigration from the Middle East was unhelped for by the government and the target of harsh prejudice among the citizenry (Rebolledo, 1994).

These flows were reflected by the 1907 Census, a year in which the country's foreign population peaked to levels similar to those of the twenty-first century (4.1% of the population). From 1930 to 1990, the stock of international immigrants remained close to 100 thousand. The military dictatorship and the economic crisis of the 1980s generated emigration flows well above those of immigration; the lowest proportion of foreigners (0.7%) was recorded in 1982, and around 900 thousand Chileans reside in other countries (Dicoex, 2015).

Increasing numbers of people have migrated to Chile from other countries. Between 1992 and 2017, the number of immigrants increased from just above 100 thousand to 750 thousand, that is, the stock has multiplied by 7.1, which represents 4.4% of the country's population (INE, 2018a). This accelerated expansion indicates that Chile has shifted from being an irrelevant migration destination to being an attractive beacon for international immigrants.

The present article explores the characteristics of the incorporation of South American immigrants into the labor market in the capital, Santiago, emphasizing the role of social capital (social networks) when these people arrive in the city and look for work and their subsequent occupational mobility trajectories. Our purpose is to identify converging and diverging aspects of the different national groups in terms of their incorporation to the city's economic activity, as well as to identify their occupational mobility patterns associated with job transitions.

The article is structured into five sections. The first is a brief characterization of this new type of immigration, highlighting its regional origins, geographical concentration in the country, and distribution by sex, age, and educational level. The second section outlines the theoretical foundations of the study: social capital and occupational mobility. The third section describes the data sources and analysis methods used. The fourth section presents the results of the use of social capital and absolute and relative occupational mobility in the incorporation process of South American immigrants to Santiago. The final section presents the main conclusions of the study.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION

The vast majority of international immigrants in Chile are of South American origin. As shown in Table 1, 75% of immigrants in Chile are from countries in the region, more than 70% of them from six South American countries: Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina, and Ecuador (INE, 2018a). As a result, the composition of Chile’s immigrant stock has changed radically: in 1982, the proportions of European and South American immigrants in comparison with the total number of resident immigrants were similar, whereas in 2017, South American immigration was clearly predominant.

Table 1. Regional Origin of International Immigrants in Chile According to their Relative Proportions with Respect to the Total Number of Immigrants, 1982-2017

Origin	1982	1992	2002	2017
South America	43.8	55	67.1	75.9
Europe	41.7	27.5	17.6	6.5
North America	6.5	7.2	6.4	2.1
Central America	1.8	2.4	3.1	12.2
Asia	4.9	6.3	4.3	2.8
Africa	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.2
Oceania	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.3
Total (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total (N)	83,805	105,070	195,320	746,465

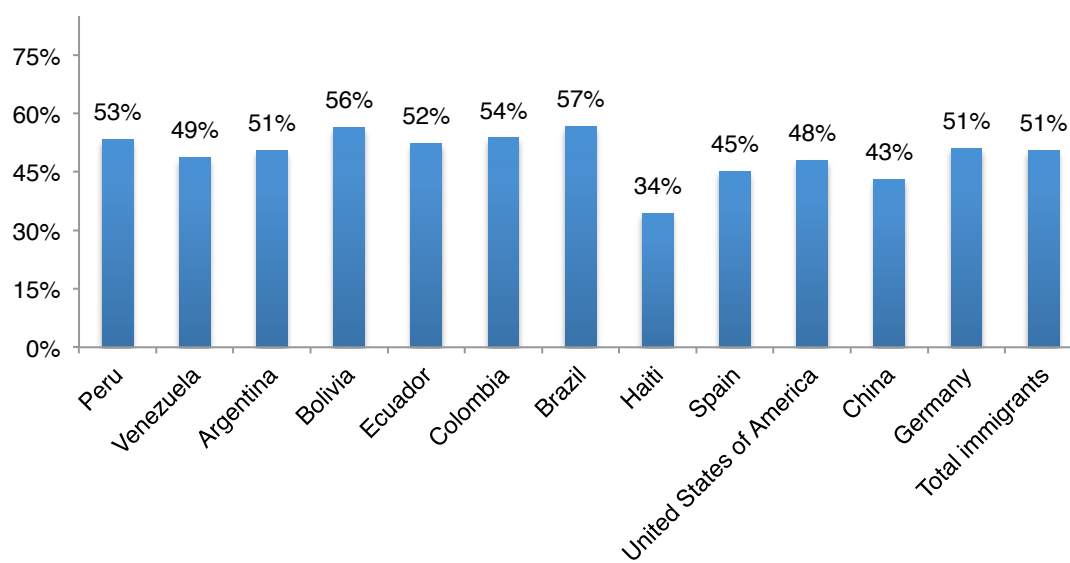
SOURCE: Elaborated by the author based on data from the 1982, 1992, 2002, and 2017 national population censuses, National Institute of Statistics (INE).

A second characteristic of the new immigration is that international migratory flows are concentrated in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago (MRS). This concentration has intensified over the past 10 years: in 2005, 59% of the immigrants lived in the MRS, whereas in 2017, this figure increased to 65.3% (INE, 2018a). It should be mentioned that, in 2017, immigrants represented 7% of the total population in the MRS, a lower percentage in comparison with that of regions in the north of the country, such as Tarapacá (8.2%), Arica and Parinacota (13.7%), and Antofagasta (11%). The concentration of immigrants in the country's capital reflects an emerging phenomenon of South-South intraregional

migrations characterized by the city-bound migration of two well-defined groups: professionals and unskilled workers (Durand & Massey, 2010).

A third relevant element concerning the current composition of immigration to Chile is the higher proportion of female migrants. As shown in Figure 1, 51% of the total immigrant population in Chile in 2017 consisted of women, especially in the case of immigrant stocks from Brazil (57%), Bolivia (56%), Colombia (54%), Peru (53%), and Ecuador (52%). Distribution by sex in the case of Argentina is closer to that of Spain, the United States, or China.

Graphic 1. Proportions of Female Immigrants in Chile by Country of Origin, 2017



SOURCE: INE (2018a).

Regarding distribution by age, the immigrant population in Chile is composed of the most productive age segments: 71% of all immigrants are between 20 and 49 years of age (INE, 2018a), widely surpassing the Chilean population in the same age group, whose concentration is 44.5% (INE, 2018b). In this regard, the United Nations notes that the working-age population (20 to 64 years) is significantly larger among immigrants in comparison with the host country's total population and that south-south migration flows are more significant among the age group from 20 to 34 years (UN, 2013).

The fifth characteristic of new immigrants in Chile is their high level of education. In general terms, immigrants aged 18 or more have higher educational levels than the Chilean population in the same age range: 82% of the immigrant population has a secondary or higher level of education, in comparison with 62% of Chilean adults (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2018). In average, immigrants have 2 more schooling years than the Chilean population, which averages 11.1 years, whereas among immigrants from South American countries, the percentages are: Venezuela, 15.5, Argentina, 13.3, Ecuador, 13.2, and Colombia, 12.5 (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2018).

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The growing flow of international immigration to Santiago de Chile takes place in a context of economic, political, and social dynamics that have restructured the capitalist economy (Glick Schiller, 2009; Glick Schiller, Çağlar & Guldbrandsen, 2006). Globalization has generated both dispersion and concentration processes in cities (Mattos, Fuentes & Link, 2014; Brenner, 2013; Sassen, 2002), such as the externalization of economic functions in search of better conditions (in terms of salaries, territory, taxing, legislation), and the concentration of control and management functions at the highest levels in the so-called global cities (Sassen, 2005, 1991). The contemporary city is traversed by this dialectic of implosion and explosion, concentration and expansion (Brenner, 2013).

Santiago has experienced significant changes in its employment structure since the 1970s. For example, the demand for occupations requiring low qualifications has decreased, for example those related to agriculture, livestock breeding, fishing, and unskilled work, as well as industrial and manufacturing employment, whereas low- and high-skilled, specialized and unspecialized employment in the tertiary sector has increased (INE, 2014, 2002, 1992, 1982, 1970).

In addition, the role of Santiago as the link between the national and the global contexts has become increasingly important over the past decades; this is because the city concentrates key economic functions, both administrative and managerial (banks, corporate headquarters, and trade, industrial, and mining associations, among others) and services functions (financial, professional, infrastructure, and communications). As a result, the service economy has come to prevail, concentrating three quarters of the city's workforce in tertiary sector activities: the average growth rate of this economic sector in the period from 1990 to 2013 was higher than the growth rate of the primary and secondary sectors in Chile, a trend experienced by other countries in the region, such as Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico (Aravena, Escobar & Hofman, 2015). The demand for work in the services sector is one of the main reasons why Santiago is today an attractive destination for regional immigration.

This is the economic and social space to which immigrants are being incorporated. We understand the concept of migrant incorporation in the sense of Glick Schiller & Çağlar, as a process of construction and maintenance of social, economic, and political relations on a regular basis by which subjects or groups become involved in multiple social fields composed of networks of asymmetric and unequal networks (2011). This approach assumes two theoretical positions. The first, that incorporation is not a single, linear, and a priori-determined process, as conceived by the canonical assimilationist current (Kivisto, 2004; Alba & Nee, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997; Kazal, 1995; Gordon, 1964); instead, we consider that the paths to migrant incorporation can be varied. These paths come to be in diverse and heterogeneous ways due to the characteristics and conditions of the social space in which they develop and the positions and resources brought by migrants themselves to such social space. The social capital possessed by immigrants is a critical factor in their incorporation processes.

### *Social Capital*

The concept of social capital, as described by Bourdieu (1985, 1980 and 1979), sheds light on the different trajectories followed by immigrants as they incorporate into their host societies. When the conditions in the host society are hostile (due to ethnic discrimination, legal obstacles, or labor segregation, among others), the social capital of immigrants creates opportunities within a limited, although dynamic, structure of individual and collective development.

Bourdieu defines social capital as the aggregate of current and potential resources associated with a network of stable and institutionalized social relations that provides each of the members of the network with the capital possessed by the group as a whole (1985 and 1980). The volume of an individual's social capital depends on the size of the networks that they can mobilize and the volume of economic and cultural capital that they possess by virtue of their connection to these networks. The subjects invest their efforts, consciously and unconsciously, in the generation and maintenance of networks of relationships that allow them to access certain resources. This investment is translated into exercises of interchange. On the one hand, the accumulated benefits of the group represent the basis of its solidarity, which at the same time makes it possible to accumulate benefits and exchange them among its members. On the other hand, the exchange takes place within certain borders and codes, which exclude the possibility of interaction under other parameters or outside the borders.

In the field of migration, and drawing from Bourdieu's work (1985, 1980, 1979), Alejandro Portes (Portes 2000, 1998, 1995; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993) defines social capital as the ability of individuals to manage scarce resources by taking advantage of their

position in networks or wider social structures. Social capital is not an inherent property of an individual: it exists and is anchored in the individual's network of relationships and contacts. Social capital can provide access to resources or restrict individual liberties by controlling behavior (through social norms). Social capital is preserved by engaging in different activities, such as meeting with people, maintaining periodic communication, participating in events, joining associations, etc. (Vertovec, 2003); as expressed by Bourdieu (1980) time and resources are invested to reproduce social capital.

Portes (2000, 1998) proposed a triple definition of social capital: a) social capital as a source of social control, b) social capital as a source of benefits mediated by the family, and c) social capital as a source of resources mediated by non-family networks; the last definition is the closest to Bourdieu's concept (1985, 1980). In his work, Portes applies the concept to social science (Cachón, 2012) to describe the unintended and negative consequences of social capital, classified by the author into four types (Portes, 2000, 1998 & 1995; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993): a) restricted access to opportunities because the bonds that unite the members of the group exclude non-members from access to such opportunities; b) individual freedom is restricted because participation or membership in a group entails an unavoidable loss of individual autonomy; c) excessive pressure over group members in connection with the "closure" of social relationships in the group, which provides benefits but, under certain circumstances, can limit the development of its members; and d) downward leveling norms, which in certain groups are expressed as social pressure that maintains individuals within the group and prevents them from seeking opportunities outside the group.

The field of migration studies has understood migration networks as a form of social capital defined as a series of interpersonal ties connecting immigrants, former immigrants, and non-migrants with relatives, friends, and their communities of origin, both in their native countries and in their host countries (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino & Taylor, 2006, p. 42). Migration networks are sources of shared information and provide migrants with economic aid and different kinds of support, increasing their probability to achieve social mobility inasmuch as they reduce its associated risks and costs and increase the individual's expected returns. Migratory networks are a form of social capital. They provide immigrants with access to fundamental resources, such as employment, higher salaries, options to send remittances, etc. They cushion the economic and emotional weight of migrating and represent spaces of certainty where migrants can obtain information and security (Gurak & Caces, 1992). They are, therefore, the main responsible mechanism for the expansion and endurance of migratory flows (Imilan, Garcés & Margarit, 2014).

Research in the field has shown that even if the original apparent causes of migration are overcome (wage differential, lack of formal recruitment, etc.), migratory flows become consolidated and reproduce thanks to existing migratory networks. Networks are

reproduced and extended inasmuch as immigrants use them and acquire the possibility and obligation of consolidating the system by providing more information to potential migrants (Tilly, 2007 and 1990). This process increases the complexity and extension of social networks and explains their role as migration microstructures (Portes & Rumbaut, 2010).

### *Occupational Mobility*

The issue of occupational mobility among immigrants has been a focus of attention since Barry Chiswick's (1979, 1978, 1977) pioneering work, in which the author notes that immigrants in the US were initially integrated into the labor market by providing them with low-level jobs and salaries below the average for Americans with similar characteristics. After a while, and as an effect of "Americanization," these differences became nuanced and even nullified, resulting in upward occupational mobility. A U-shaped mobility pattern, characterized by an initial decline and a subsequent recovery of occupational status, was proposed by Chiswick to explain the adjustment processes of immigrants in labor markets (1979, 1978, and 1977). Chiswick identified two determinants of the economic progress of immigrants: transferability and self-selection. Transferability has to do with the fact that human capital, work experience, and skills acquired by immigrants in their countries of origin are not fully transferable to the labor market in the destination country: transferability depends on the immigrant's language skills and possession of professional licenses, certifications, or credentials to support such capital (Redstone, 2008; Chiswick, Yew & Miller, 2005; Duleep & Regets, 1997; Chiswick, 1997, 1978). The second factor points out that people who migrate due to economic reasons are more capable and motivated than people who do not migrate (Chiswick, 2008, 1979, 1978), which implies that, given similar socio-demographic characteristics, immigrants have more innate ability or motivation relevant to the labor market than native people (Chiswick, 1978, p. 901).

Chiswick (2008, 1997, 1979, 1978, 1977) and other economists who have supported his approach base their research on the theory of social hierarchy (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992); that is, they analyze mobility as the movement of individuals between social groups organized hierarchically on the basis of their access to certain resources, such as prestige, wealth, or status (Goldthorpe, 2013; Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002, 1992). When considering occupational or wage achievement from an attributive perspective, that is, as a result of having or not having income and wealth, economists treat income correlations as continuous variables and disregard variables related to the social structure, for example, production relationships in the labor market (Goldthorpe, 2013; Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002, 1992). As a result, they tend to overestimate upward mobility and make economic immobility invisible—individual mobility trajectories are disassembled from the network



of economic and social relations through which people acquire more or less advantageous positions in the social structure (Goldthorpe, 2013).

Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) regard social mobility as an element of the class structure and analyze relationships between different positions. Class structure is built as a result of the relationships established by individuals with production units and the labor market; the authors propose a basic classification of class positions: employers, self-employed workers without employees, and employees (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992). The main argument of this perspective challenges the idea of social hierarchy and states that there are limited groups of positions whose central characteristic is their closure. Based on this theoretical approach, Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) point out that absolute mobility—the rate of intergenerational movements movement between class positions—is the result of exogenous structural factors, that is, of the evolution of class structure over time, and that relative mobility—social mobility rates independently of structural influences—shows stable invariance patterns (Goldthorpe, 2013; Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002, 1992). This relational analysis, focused on social fluidity, uses odds ratios to measure the individual's probabilities to attain certain social positions considering their initial positions (Goldthorpe, 2013; Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002, 1992).

Using the strategy proposed by Aysa-Lastra and Cachón (2013a, 2013b) in their analysis of occupational mobility among immigrants in Spain, the present article harmonizes Chiswick's (2008, 1997, 1979, 1978, 1977) perspective on occupational mobility and Erikson and Goldthorpe's (2002, 1992) sociological analysis of social mobility with the theory of labor market segmentation (Doeringer & Piore, 1985; Piore, 1979). The main argument of this theory is that the labor market consists of two segments: a primary segment, characterized by high wages, good working conditions, associated prestige, and stability, and a secondary segment, characterized by low wages, precariousness, poor working conditions, and instability. Consistent with the approach to social mobility as an element of class structure, the theory of labor market segmentation indicates that both segments have the characteristics of inward openness and outward closure. Thus, our analysis of absolute and relative occupational mobility within each labor segment considers each segment as an occupation cluster (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón, 2013a, 2013b) per the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88).

Two research hypotheses guide the present study:

1. National groups rooted mostly in the city and whose communities have a significant presence in the economic and social fabric display a more widespread use of their social capital (in the form of migratory networks). Recently arrived groups are characterized by closed networks held together by strong ties (Granovetter, 1983, 1973).

2. Using Chiswick's perspective (Chiswick *et al.*, 2005; Chiswick, 1979, 1978 and 1977), we identified downward occupational mobility in connection with the first job transition (from last job in origin to first job in destination) and upward mobility associated with the second job transition (from first to last job in destination). In other words, a U-shaped occupational mobility pattern. Reflecting Erikson and Goldthorpe's (2002, 1992) sociological analysis of social mobility and the theory of dual labor markets (Doeringer & Piore, 1985; Piore, 1979), the u-shaped occupational mobility pattern was observed to take place in both segments. These results suggest that that the social structure tends to reproduce and that social fluidity occurs within the labor segments but scarcely between them.

### *Methodology and Data Sources*

The present study used data from three different sources. Firstly, data on immigrant population from the last valid Population Census (2002) and administrative migratory records from the 2005-2014 period (visas, permits, nationalization procedures, refugee applications, and deportations) were obtained from the Department of Immigration and Foreign Status (DEM), Chilean Ministry of the Interior (2016). Secondly, data from the 2015 National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (Casen) (Ministry of Social Development, 2015), whose analysis unit is the household and its residents. Thirdly, data obtained using a survey developed by this author in the framework of the doctoral thesis entitled "Encuesta de Inmigrantes Sudamericanos en Santiago de Chile 2015" (survey of South American immigrants in Santiago), carried out between the months of April and June 2015.

In our survey, the sample consisted of immigrants of both sexes between 18 and 65 years of age who had lived in the city for at least six months; participants included people from the five quantitatively most important Spanish-speaking South American countries (Peru, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia), which represent 65% of total immigration in the RMS. The present study used non-probabilistic quota sampling. The sample was set at 700 cases, 140 per national group separated by sex: men (70) and women (70).

To avoid the overrepresentation of individuals (Corbetta, 2007) presenting certain profiles that are easier to locate due to their occupations (in commerce and services), we combined active recruitment in public spaces with the snowball technique, and the study included only the participants that were contacted via the snowball technique with two limitations. 1) the number of participants recruited by initial contact was limited to a maximum of two, excluding further contacts provided by these two; and 2) participants with family ties with the initial contact were excluded. The final sample, slightly different

from the projected sample due to difficulties to find participants and non-response errors (Corbetta, 2007), is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample of Survey Administered to South American Immigrants in Santiago de Chile in 2015

Nationalities	Men	Women	Total
Peru	70	69	139 (8.3%)
Argentina	95	64	159 (7.8%)
Bolivia	60	82	142 (8.2%)
Ecuador	61	47	108 (9.4%)
Colombia	73	79	152 (7.9%)
Total	359 (5.2%)	341 (5.3%)	700 (3.7%)

*Note:* In parenthesis: sampling errors; confidence level: 95%.

SOURCE: 2015 Survey of South American Immigrants in Santiago de Chile.

When the analysis considers immigrants from the five nationalities included in the survey as an aggregate, the sample is weighted according to the relative weights and sex-based distributions of the groups with the purpose of matching the characteristics of Santiago's population. These cases refer to South American immigrants. When the observations are focused on national groups, the sample is not weighted so that enough cases are available for an adequate comparative analysis.

Absolute and relative occupational mobility analyses use the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88), in its one-digit version (without considering category 0, Armed Forces):

1. Legislators, senior officials and managers
2. Professionals
3. Technicians and associate professionals
4. Clerks
5. Service workers and shop and market sales workers
6. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers
7. Craft and related trades workers
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers
9. Elementary occupations

This classification of occupations is in line with the theory of labor market segmentation, and it includes the two segments: primary, occupations 1 to 4, and secondary, occupations 5 to 9. The processes of absolute occupational mobility of South American immigrants between their first transition (last occupation in their country of origin and first in Santiago) and their second transition (first occupation in Santiago and occupation at the time of the survey) were analyzed using weighted joint distributions, shown as input (origin) and output (destination) tables for the two transitions. The analysis of relative occupational mobility, or social fluidity, used odd ratios<sup>2</sup> by labor market segments (primary, occupations 1-4, and secondary, occupations 6-9), and considered category 5 as a reference occupational category, a buffer or limit zone between the two segments (Parkin, 1978).

Both types of analysis used a subsample of respondents composed of immigrants who were employed in their original countries, obtained a first job in Santiago and, at the time of the survey, were employed in the city. These three conditions were applied in a summative manner. The variable of time was not controlled in the labor mobility analysis since 55% of this subsample had lived in Santiago for three years or less, and 70% for five years or less. That is, these migrants arrived in the city recently.

## RESULTS

Concerning labor market integration, the participation of South American immigrants aged 15 and over in economic activities was found to be considerably higher (80%) than the participation of Chileans in the same age group (62.4%) (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2016). Occupation rates (76.6%) and unemployment rates (5%) among South American immigrants were higher and lower, respectively, than the same rates for population born in Chile (58.1% and 7%, respectively), which reinforces the idea that their incorporation into the labor market of Santiago has been very active (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2016) and confirms what Chiswick has pointed out concerning immigrant self-selection (2008, 1979, 1978).

### *Migratory Networks*

Interviewed South American immigrants reported that, in their first six months in the city, immigrant relatives and friends were their primary support (Table 3). Different elements could be identified depending on specific national groups: Ecuadorian immigrants rely on closed networks, predominantly composed of relatives and very close associates

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<sup>2</sup>An odds ratio of 1 indicates independence between variables in the column and variables in the row; values of 1 or smaller indicate an association between both variables (Agresti, 2007, p. 29).

(Granovetter, 1983, 1973); Peruvian, Bolivian, and Colombian immigrants prefer more extended networks where, in addition to relatives, immigrant friends, acquaintances, and contacts are also important; Argentinian immigrants have developed the most open network, which includes the types of relations stated for the other national groups in addition to Chilean friends and businessmen, that is, a more significant presence of “weak ties” (Granovetter, 1983, 1973). A remarkable aspect of this context is the scant importance given to immigrants by public administration institutions (at the municipal and federal levels), even less than the interest shown by churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), reflected by the marginal relevance of migratory policies in the country (Stang, 2016; Thayer, 2015; Stefoni, 2011).

Table 3. Sources of Support of Immigrants in Their First Six Months of Residence in Santiago by Nationality

Source of support	Nationality (%)				
	Peru	Bolivia	Argentina	Colombia	Ecuador
Relatives	36.3	30.8	30.5	31.9	41.4
Immigrant friends	35.1	29.6	19.5	31.4	21.9
Chilean friends	7.6	8.9	25.3	8.1	7.8
Neighbors	1.2	4.7	0.5	1.1	0
Contacts/acquaintances	7.6	7.7	10	9.2	11.7
Municipality/government	0.6	0	0	1.1	0.8
Churches/CSO	1.8	1.8	1.6	2.7	3.9
None	9.4	15.4	11.6	13	11.7
Other	0.6	1.2	1.1	1.6	0.8
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note:* Data represents sum of options mentioned (N= 843) by surveyed subjects (N= 696).  
 Source: 2015 Survey of South American Immigrants in Santiago de Chile.

Concerning the role of networks as sources of job opportunities, Table 4 shows that the relative incidence of certain actors is accentuated to the detriment of others: it decreases the importance of the family in obtaining a job in favor of immigrant friends and contacts or acquaintances; the latter actors were found to be a significant factor to increase the individual's probabilities to enter the labor market. In other words, contacts and

acquaintances are more effective than the immigrant's family and friends when it comes to helping them to obtain a job in Chile, reflecting Granovetter's (1983, 1973) reflections concerning the higher potential of weak ties over strong ties in this regard.

One-fifth of the interviewed immigrants declared not having received support to find a job in Santiago; this circumstance was especially frequent among Argentinians (36.8%) and Bolivians (30.7%). However, both immigrant groups have different reasons for managing their incorporation into the labor market autonomously; these reasons can be placed in opposite ends of a spectrum. Argentinians, whose educational levels are the highest across immigrant groups and whose presence in the city is the longest, can enter the labor market by presenting their credentials (Chiswick, 1997), but Bolivians, who began arriving in the city much more recently and have lower educational levels than Argentinians, must use other strategies to obtain a job, such as approaching other immigrant groups. Peruvian immigrants were the group in which fewer people reported not having had help to find a job, which can be due to their quantitative importance in the city and, consequently, the availability of large networks of contacts and businesses run by members of the community, among other benefits.

Table 4. Sources of Support Available to Immigrants to Find Their First Job in Santiago by Nationality

Source of support	Nationality (%)				
	Peru	Bolivia	Argentina	Colombia	Ecuador
Relatives	21.9	16	9.8	16.3	25.4
Immigrant friends	36.8	24	13.5	36	20.2
Chilean friends	6.5	8.7	14.7	7.6	7.9
Neighbors	1.9	2	0.6	1.2	1.8
Contacts/acquaintances	14.2	13.3	17.2	8.1	14.9
Municipality/government	0.6	0	1.2	0.6	0
Churches/CSO	4.5	2.7	1.8	2.9	5.3
None	10.3	30.7	36.8	25.6	22.8
Other	3.2	2.7	4.3	1.7	1.8
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note:* Data represent sum of options mentioned (N= 754) of surveyed subjects (N= 696).  
 Source: 2015 Survey of South American Immigrants in Santiago de Chile.

### *Absolute Occupational Mobility*

The processes of absolute occupational mobility experienced by South American immigrants in their first and second job transitions are shown, respectively, in Tables 5 and 6. These results show that the prevailing pattern is immobility, and upward and downward trajectories occur mostly within segments, which expresses the closure of the groups and their relative internal mobility. In their first occupational transition (Table 5) more than half of the immigrants maintained the occupational category that they had in their last job in their countries of origin (56.6%), one third of them experienced downward mobility (33.2%), and only 10.2% experienced upward mobility. Mobility between labor market segments is also shown in the table. Among the people who experienced upward mobility (10.2%), 8.3% did so within the secondary segment, 0.9% within the primary segment, and only 0.9% moved from the secondary segment to the primary segment. As for downward mobility (33.2%), 19.2% of surveyed immigrants remained in the secondary segment, 2.3% in the primary segment, and 11.7% descended from the primary to the secondary segment.

Table 5. Absolute Occupational Mobility (Percentage Distributions) of South American Immigrants Between Last Occupation in Origin and First Occupation in Santiago

		First occupation in Santiago										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	%	N
Last occupation in country of origin	1	<b>2.5</b>	0.0	0.2	0.2	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	4.2	22
	2	0.2	<b>5.1</b>	0.2	1.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	8.1	43
	3	0.2	0.2	<b>1.1</b>	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	5.1	27
	4	0.2	0.0	0.2	<b>3.4</b>	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	9.6	51
	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	<b>19.2</b>	0.0	1.1	1.1	12.5	34.7	184
	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	<b>0.0</b>	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.8	4
	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	<b>3.6</b>	0.6	1.7	7.2	38
	8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.4	0.6	<b>0.4</b>	1.7	4.7	25
	9	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.6	0.6	<b>21.3</b>	25.7	136
	%	3	5.5	1.7	6	31.1	0.4	6	2.8	43.4	100	
N	16	29	9	32	165	2	32	15	230		530	

Note: International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88), single-digit version (see Methodology section). The diagonal line of numbers from the upper left corner to the lower right corner of the table (in bold) shows the proportion of immigrants who experienced immobility; numbers above these show upward mobility, and the numbers below, downward mobility.

SOURCE: Relative data calculated using a weighted sample. 2015 Survey of South American Immigrants in Santiago de Chile.

Concerning the second occupational transition (Table 6), 78.4% of surveyed immigrants remained in the same occupational group, 4.8% moved downward, and 16.8% experienced upward mobility. The dominant pattern of absolute mobility is invariance; among those who experienced mobility, whether upward or downward, 90% did so within their own segment, which confirms the hypothesis of discontinuity between social positions in the social structure (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002, 1992), expressed as labor segments (Doeringer & Piore, 1985; Piore, 1979).



Table 6. Absolute Occupational Mobility (Percentage Distributions) of South American Immigrants Between First Occupation in Santiago and Current Occupation

		Last occupation in Santiago										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	%	N
First occupation in Santiago	1	<b>2.6</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	14
	2	0.4	<b>4.4</b>	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	30
	3	0.0	0.0	<b>1.8</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	10
	4	0.0	0.2	0.0	<b>5.9</b>	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8	37
	5	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.9	<b>29.0</b>	0.0	0.0	0.2	2.2	33.8	183
	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	<b>0.0</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
	7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	<b>4.2</b>	0.6	0.2	5.9	32
	8	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.5	0.2	2.8	15
	9	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.1	7.9	0.2	0.6	0.9	<b>29.0</b>	40.8	221
	%	4.1	5.5	3	8.5	38.4	0.2	5.7	3.1	31.6	100	
N	22	30	16	46	208	1	31	17	171		542	

*Note:* International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88), single-digit version (see Methodology section). The diagonal line of numbers from the upper left corner to the lower right corner of the table (in bold) shows the proportion of immigrants who experienced immobility; numbers above these show upward mobility, and the numbers below, downward mobility.

SOURCE: Relative data calculated using a weighted sample. 2015 Survey of South American Immigrants in Santiago de Chile.

A coarse analysis of the primary and secondary labor markets shows that 27% of immigrants were employed in the primary market and 73% in the secondary market in their original countries; in Santiago, these percentages changed to 16.8% and 83.2%, respectively. That is, the occupational status of immigrants moved downward from the first to the second segment (Table 5). The causes of this structural decline are related to exogenous factors (Goldthorpe, 2010): the predominance of low-wage jobs in the labor market (commerce, construction, domestic services), and an entry context marked by discrimination and racism (Tijoux, 2016; Mora & Undurraga, 2013). Table 6 shows that the percentages of immigrants employed in the primary and secondary segments at the

time of responding to the survey were 21% and 79%, respectively; this result suggests a condition of counter-mobility, although not to the levels of the original countries.

When comparing both transitions in aggregate terms, South American immigrants were found to experience a partial recovery from the downward movement associated with the first transition. Both transitions indicate the existence of a u-shaped occupational mobility pattern (Chiswick et al., 2005; Chiswick, 1978): downward mobility in the first transition and upward counter-mobility in the second transition (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón, 2013a, 2013b).

### *Relative Occupational Mobility*

The natural logarithms of the odds ratios obtained for the two occupational transitions shown in tables 5 and 6 were used to analyze the relative occupational mobility patterns, which were found to be irregular in both cases. Firstly, occupational mobility occurs within each segment and is marginal outside the segment. Fluidity can be observed in both transitions within segments, as well as social closure. Secondly, mobility is downward in the first transition and upward in the second, and it occurs mostly within individual labor segments.

Both phenomena reflect the U-shaped occupational mobility pattern, although its character is segmented, that is, it presents downward mobility in the first occupational transition and upward counter-mobility in the second occupational transition within each labor segment; this is an example of social fluidity (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002, 1992), which occurs within labor segments and scarcely between segments. This finding reflects similar results in other studies (Simón, Ramos & Sanromá, 2014; Aysa-Lastra & Cachón, 2013a, 2013b) and echoes the theory of segmented assimilation (Zhou, 1997; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Table 7. Relative Occupational Mobility of South American Immigrants in Santiago  
 (Natural Logarithms of Odds Ratios) for Two Transitions Between Primary and  
 Secondary Labor Segments

First transition				
First occupation in Santiago				
		Primary	Secondary	N (%)
Last occupation in country of origin	Primary	4.1	-1.1	113 (40%)
	Secondary	-*	2.6	170 (60%)
	N (%)	82 (29%)	201 (71%)	283 (100%)
Second transition				
Last occupation in Santiago				
		Primary	Secondary	N (%)
First occupation in Santiago	Primary	5	**	87 (28%)
	Secondary	0.9	7.3	221 (72%)
	N (%)	101 (33%)	207 (67%)	308 (100%)

*Note:* Unweighted average of the natural logarithms of the odds ratios of the 16 squares in each segment of tables 5 and 6. Reference category: 5. A value of 0.01 was used in squares without data to make the calculation of odds ratios possible.

\* No calculation available as there is only one subject in the square.

\*\* No calculation available as there are not subjects in the square.

SOURCE: Relative data calculated using a weighted sample. 2015 Survey of South American Immigrants in Santiago de Chile.

## CONCLUSIONS

The presence of South American immigrants in Santiago de Chile has become a characteristic feature of the city. Their incorporation into the labor market was found to be more intense than that of the Chilean population in terms of participation, employment, and unemployment. The economic literature has explained this trend using the concept of self-selection (Chiswick, 2008, 1979, 1978), which states that, given the same demographic characteristics (age, education, sex), immigrants are more significantly oriented toward the labor market than the population in the host country.

There are two remarkable characteristics of South American immigrants. Firstly, their higher levels of formal education; in general terms, they have completed 1.4 more years of schooling than native Chileans in the same age range. Secondly, the percentage of female immigrants is higher, close to 60% in some national groups. This is a clear example of what Sassen (2003) has termed feminization of survival, highlighting the leading role of women in migration trajectories and decision-making processes.

The present article has presented an empirical account of the key role of social capital, expressed as migration networks, in the incorporation of South American immigrants to economic activities in Santiago de Chile. In general terms, 85% of South American immigrants relied on networks (family, immigrant friends, Chilean friends, and contacts or acquaintances) for support upon their arrival and over the first few months in the city. Networks served as buffering mechanisms for newcomers, helping them to reduce the economic, emotional, and social costs of the migration process (Tilly, 2007, 1990; Massey, *et al.*, 2006; Gurak & Caces, 1992). The construction of this social, economic, and symbolic fabric, constantly growing in size and complexity as it establishes interrelationships between migrants in the host country and non-migrants in their home country, demonstrates what Portes and Rumbaut (2010) have described as the microstructural function of migrations.

Results on the initial entry into the labor market show how family members are less relevant than contacts and acquaintances when it comes to finding a first job in Santiago. This higher effectiveness of weak ties in comparison with strong ties (Granovetter, 1983, 1973) highlights the complex and diverse nature of migration networks, which provide resources, such as job opportunities, unavailable to immigrants in closed networks. The present study identified differences among the five studied national groups: Argentinian immigrants have higher educational levels and their presence in the city is longer than immigrants from the rest of the national groups; they rely less on networks than in using their own credentials, and their networks are the most open (Chiswick, 1997). Bolivian immigrants reported the lowest educational levels and the shortest times living in the city; their opportunities depend to a great extent on help from other groups, mainly from Peruvians. Colombian and Ecuadorian immigrants present similar patterns, although the networks in the latter case are more closed and mainly composed of relatives. For their part, Peruvian immigration, which accounts for 50% of total immigration in the city of Santiago, has formed the strongest network of relatives and immigrant friends, as well as contacts and acquaintances, and the percentage of people who reported not having received support in obtaining their first job in the city was the highest in this group. These data confirm qualitative research findings pointing out the presence of an economically, socioculturally, and politically strong Peruvian community (Garcés, 2014a, 2014b; Margarit & Bijit, 2014; Ducci & Rojas, 2010; Luque, 2007; Stefoni, 2005).

The present study has also described incorporation dynamics among South American immigrants in connection with the theory of dual labor markets (Piore, 1979) to analyze the immigrant's first occupational transition. International migration is due to a permanent and chronic demand for labor in developed societies because local workers disregard precarious and unstable jobs requiring low skills (Massey *et al.*, 2006; Arango, 2003; Piore, 1979).

Our analysis of absolute occupational mobility in the first and second labor transitions of South American immigrants, showed downward mobility trajectories in the first transition and upward counter-mobility trajectories in the second, indicating the presence of a u-shaped occupational mobility pattern (Chiswick *et al.*, 2005; Chiswick, 1978). However, immobility is the prevailing trend; that is, immigrants tend to maintain the occupational status that they had in their countries of origin. Thus, upward and downward trajectories take place within individual labor segments (primary or secondary).

The analysis of relative mobility, or social fluidity (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002, 1992), confirmed this conclusion. Fluid mobility can be observed within the segments but scarcely between them, in other words, openness within segments and closure between them, as well as discontinuities between the positions and a tendency toward the reproduction of the social structure (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002 and 1992). At the same time, the U-shaped mobility pattern is presented in a segmented manner, that is, within the primary and secondary segment of the labor market, and not undifferentiated throughout occupational positions.

This overview of the incorporation of immigrants into the labor market of Santiago reveals that immigrants follow different paths and trajectories according to the characteristics of their national migratory group, both its demographic configuration (education, age, sex) and its social dynamics (social capital and use of networks), and the social space where this incorporation takes place —the city of Santiago and its socioeconomic structure. The present study sought to clarify some of the key aspects of the labor market incorporation process by analyzing data obtained from an ad-hoc survey; the results of this analysis were similar to those reported by other authors. The present study poses new research questions concerning the determinants for the different occupational mobility patterns associated with job transitions, such as those associated with human capital, social capital, sex and gender, migratory experience, and national origins, among others.

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