

# Globalization and Inequality in Emerging Societies

Edited by

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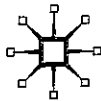
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## Global Inequalities – Local Hierarchies, Peruvian Migrants' Labor Niches and Occupational Mobility in Chile

*Claudia Mora*

Patterns of global inequality have long constituted one of the main forces behind migration. The direction of movement has traditionally been south to north, from former colonies, and toward global financial centers. This common pattern has undergone important shifts in the last few decades, however. The movement of people to Europe and the United States has given way to an increasing intraregional, south-south migration toward emerging economic powers and growing labor markets within the region. In Latin America, the current diversification of flows has followed economic and political crises but also border protection policies in the north, weighing on migration's costs and, hence, length and purpose of the entire migration project. New destinations of Latin American migrants are neighboring countries, where lower family investment, flexible entry requirements and proximity to the nation of origin make them especially attractive for migrant women, who see a possibility to diversify risk in migration while continuing to care for their family at origin.

Indeed, what we have witnessed in the last few decades is that shifts in the direction of flows have gone together with changes in the gender composition of migration north and south: males to the former and women to southern neighboring countries. The pattern evolving is tied not only to the gendered nature of family responsibilities but also to a relatively high demand for 'women's work' within the region, which has heralded the feminization and circularity of intraregional migration (Mora 2008). Niches for immigrant's work have emerged in

several Latin American labor markets, especially in the service sector and mostly in domestic service.

The concentration of labor immigrants in low-paid, low-status jobs, and the continued identification of migrants with these kinds of occupations, suggest the labor market as an important site for the reproduction of the social and economic marginalization of Latin American labor migrants. Immigrants' niches – their clustering into a limited number of occupations (Waldinger 1994) – characterize their labor market experience worldwide. Taking the case study of Peruvians in Chile, my focus in this chapter will be on the reproduction of the labor segregation of intraregional migrants, shaping migrant's labor trajectories and life chances. Paradoxically, south-to-south migration unearths similar dynamics of social exclusion as south-north flows, although Latin Americans share for the most part a common language and history. Albeit similar in the marginalization of labor migrants, the attention to the composition of south-south flows brings to light another layer of the global display of social stratification. Northern migration is tied to higher remittances, but also to higher costs for migrants. Intraregional migration is less economically rewarding but allows reentry periodically. Hence, as the direction north of immigrants' flows reflects patterns of global stratification, the gender composition, proximity of destiny and length of stay of intraregional migrants reflect also a stratification system underlying the choice of destiny. Women and immigrants with fewer material resources or human and social capital mostly migrate south, constituting the bulk of intraregional migration in Latin America. Despite this trend, south-south migration can also be understood in the framework of global migration as a step toward the north (especially for men), and as a viable alternative of risk diversification, however.

In this chapter, it is suggested that workers' immigrant status and marginal position in social hierarchies make them particularly vulnerable and profitable to employers while, at the same time, their labor market experience often reproduces and deepens their social exclusion. Immigrants' labor experiences reflect a path shaped not only by their individual skills and human capital but also by social hierarchies, since it is not only set by labor market conditions in the host society (Portes et al. 2002) but also by processes of social exclusion distinguishing a 'labor market for immigrants' (Mora 2008; 2009).

Focusing on Peruvian migration to Chile, will explore new forms of social stratification and exclusion emerging in the receiving society, suggesting that in the case of Latin American south-south migration,

global transformations of immigrants' flows, especially tied to gender and national origin, have preceded not only their labor segmentation but also other forms of social exclusion that affect them in the host society. It will propose that the possibility of diversion from occupational niches will be conditioned by migrants' strategies and tactics displayed at particular moments.

### Peruvians in Chile

In the last decade, there has been a significant increase in immigrant flows to Chile mainly composed of workers in search of better economic opportunities. While, according to the last 2002 Census, the percentage of the foreign-born population is only 1.2 percent of the total 15 million Chileans, immigration is becoming an issue of public concern. What has captured Chileans' attention is what makes this migration 'new': its origin in other Latin American countries, and its significant increase in the inter-census period from 1992 to 2002 (105,000 to 184,000 foreign residents). This south-south migration is mostly from northern Peru but also from Argentina and Ecuador (and other neighboring countries, albeit in smaller numbers). Peruvian migrants differ from the other two main flows in that there has emerged a distinct community with extensive networks in Peru and Chile residing in a bounded neighborhood in downtown Santiago. It is, by and large, a labor and individual migration at least in its initial stages, although recent trends suggest an increase in family reunification, seen in the rising number of Peruvian children in Chile.

Peruvian migrants have faced several constraints in their access to the Chilean labor market, mostly due to "selection by national origin". Most Peruvians are recruited through informal channels to work in domestic service and construction work, in conditions that do not substantially better their economic and social marginalization. Over 70 percent of women work in domestic service while over 80 percent of men do so in construction work. This concentration in precarious, low-skilled types of work, suggests a restricted and segmented access to the Chilean labor market (Martinez 2003; CASEN 2006; Solimano and Tokman, 2006).

Indeed, while employment in 'migrant jobs' may be expected at arrival, the labor segregation and the rigidity of the labor market, which maintains a similar offer to migrants regardless of their education, migration status or length of stay, suggests the presence of other elements structuring the labor segmentation of Peruvians in Chile.

Table 13.1 Peruvians' occupations (persons with Peruvian mother between 15 and 60 years old, in %)

Occupation	Men	Women
Employer	1	1
Self-employed	12	9
Public sector employee	1	
Private sector employee	83	20
Live-in Domestic Work		31
Live-out Domestic Work	3	38
Non-salaried family member		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Adapted from Survey CASEN 2006.

As Kasinitz and Vickerman (2001) propose, employment niches are not only created by migrants' use of social networks to find employment (which are intensified in the territorial enclave), but also as an effect of racial discrimination and prejudice that condition the preference of employers. This is indeed the case of Peruvians in Chile, who are able to leave migrant's niches only through the display of conscious strategies, the formalization of their networks and the awareness and demand of their labor rights (Mora and Piper 2011).

### Labor segregation of migrants

The labor market provides a particularly clear site where the stratification of migrants plays out, given that it determines the quality of access to the host society and consequent social mobility. Taking the labor market as a case study for social stratification has given relevant insights into the reproduction of inequalities. This approach has helped establish particular patterns of social mobility linked to ascriptive categories of gender, race and ethnicity via people's unequal trajectories in the labor market (Rothman 1998); patterns of labor market segregation concentrating certain racial/ethnic groups into the lower echelons of occupational hierarchies formalizing their limited opportunities; and of the recreation of forms of stratification through institutional discrimination or choices of 'preferred employees' made by employers (Rothman 1998; Hill-Maher and Staab 2005; Mora 2009). As Souza (Chapter 4) argues, the legitimization of inequality is the process of making it acceptable and its reproduction possible. In the case of Peruvian migrants, this is made possible precisely by the reduction of this group into racialized bodies, sold at a low price to deliver services that are

socially despised (Souza, this volume). Indeed, it is paradoxical that over 20 percent of live-in and 14 percent of live-out Peruvian domestic workers have at least some years of education beyond high school, be it college or vocational/professional training (CASEN 2006).

Migrants' life trajectories in receiving societies are often shaped by institutional and cultural barriers to access the labor market, scarce mobility, and the crystallization of their location into the lower echelons of the social stratification system. Despite these conditions, the continued increase in global numbers of labor migrants can be understood on the one hand, as the effect of a global chain of capital linking migrants to the north (Sassen 2003). On the other hand, developing nations have deepened a process of precarization and tertiarization of their labor markets, while competing to access global markets. The demand for precarious labor has incorporated new segments of the population, and migrants have filled in the demand, having been recruited from a floating pool of workers in search of any kind of employment. As Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) suggests, nations receiving large numbers of migrants have substantially expanded low-cost services with these workers.

In Chile, Peruvian migrants have consolidated their employment in precarious niches in the service sector, much like the labor segmentation in the north. This phenomenon is partly explained by the recruitment of workers through informal networks: it is through information and referrals given by family, friends and co-nationals that migrants find employment in Chile, which reproduces their segregation into certain kinds of occupations (Pessar and Mahler 2001). Once established, networks acquire a 'life of their own' and consolidate the profile of migrants' occupations (Pedraza 1991). In the case of migrant women, another factor contributing to their labor segregation is family

and childcare responsibilities, which often gear them toward occupations perceived as 'more flexible'. Women are also more likely to rotate jobs, with pauses between jobs, resulting in a higher concentration in informal and precarious employment (Mora 2008; 2009). Perhaps more significantly, occupational segregation into certain niches can also be understood as part of a process of naturalization of specific occupations as 'immigrants' work'. In the case of Peruvian migrants in Chile, for example, Hill-Maher and Staab (2005), have found that Peruvian domestic workers are preferred by Chilean employers and seen as naturally suited for the job because they are more submissive, caring and devoted than their Chilean counterparts, albeit "darker and backward". Thus, recruitment and directing to migrants' occupations is based on some 'natural' (biological/physical) characteristics of immigrants that are used to explain their alleged personal, intellectual or moral traits, and that suits them for a number of precarious, low-status jobs. Social resources are distributed along the lines of these perceived traits, and legitimized by the presumed racial characteristics of migrants, preventing access to social and economic capitals that would secure their chance at social mobility in the society of destiny. (For an excellent perspective on this legitimization process, see Souza this volume.)

### Racialization of immigrants in the labor market

Race has only tangentially been analyzed by Chilean scholars, mostly as part of an analysis of Chilean national identity which has – arguably – been historically anchored in a perception of an 'imagined community' as western and white, connected to the European tradition (Larrain 1996; Bengoa 2007). The suggestion that Chile distances itself from most of Latin America by the racial traits of its people helps elucidate the effects of a persistent negation of its mestizo and indigenous components, contributing to the understanding of the conditions of social and cultural marginalization of indigenous peoples, and also of the increasing singularization of certain migratory groups as racial others.

In Chile, racial categories have been ambiguously articulated as white, mestizo, indigenous. As Banton (2000) argues, race is a notion tied to a specific culture and to a particular historical time period, which offers ways of explaining physical differences, which cannot be understood as a purely ideological construct or as an objective condition. Race is not a site for the 'culture versus biology' debate because race is both, culturally anchored and biologically explained

Table 13.2 Peruvians' level of education (persons with Peruvian mother, between 15 and 60 years old, in %)

Level of education	Men	Women	Total
No formal education		1	1
Elementary school (completed/incomplete)	2.6	6.4	9
High School (completed/incomplete)	21	37	58
Beyond High School (completed/incomplete)	1.5	17	32
Total	—	—	100

Source: Adapted from Survey CASEN 2006.

(Winant 2000). The emphasis on the historical and relational processes of racial formation highlights the interplay of context and meaning intrinsic to social constructions of racial hierarchies by pointing out that, on the one hand, racial notions and hierarchies may emerge, be transformed, or disappear depending on various social, economic and cultural conditions. On the other, racial formation also refers to how individual and collective actors have to sift through incoherent and often conflicting racial meanings in the shaping of their racial identities.

Some of the contexts where, historically, processes of racial formation have occurred are those produced by migration and migrants' settlement. As scholars of migration contend, immigrant arrival to the host society often involves an encounter with different political structures and organization of the labor market, and perhaps more importantly, with new forms of social stratification that absorb and categorize migrants in unfamiliar ways (Duany 1998). The corollary of processes of racialization is suggested by Cordero-Guzmán et al. (2001), who, in their study of migration and transnationalization, depict a process of enmeshment of migration with racial stratification. They argue that immigrant (perceived) phenotype, immigrant status, ethnicity and national origin, are all elements in the creation of racializing hierarchies that positions them on the lower end of social structures, determining their life chances and trajectories. Emphasizing the importance of the 'view of the other' in the racialization of migrants, Bashi and McDaniel (1997) argue that immigrants arrive with their own conception of ethnic identity (as well as gender and class identities) but often, involuntarily, acquire a new ethnic and racial tag in the host country.

In Chile, as migration from neighboring countries becomes a new dynamic and growing trend with far-reaching economic, social, and cultural effects, recent scholarship has begun to explore the particularities of migrants' insertion into the labor market and the effect their racial othering may have on occupational segregation (Hill-Maher and Staab 2005; Mora 2008; 2009; Mora and Piper 2011). The labor market presents limited opportunities to migrants that are not always – and are, rather, rarely – tied to their human capital. The social exclusion of Peruvians based on perceived racial traits is an emerging phenomenon in Chile posing the paradox of the reproduction of the social marginalization of immigrants that propel them to migrate in the first place. The reliance on informal mechanisms of inclusion in the labor market, the formal constraints in their negotiation of labor conditions, and

their concentration into few precarious types of work are all, in part, the products of racial perceptions of Chilean employers and society. In other studies, I have argued that intraregional migration has fostered a strong view of certain categories of work as suited and appropriate for migrants, particularly domestic work (Mora 2009; Mora and Piper 2011). But further, the racialization of immigrants is interrelated with gender stratification in the conditions of labor migration and occupational segregation.

### The relevance of gender in labor migration

Migration involves dynamics deeply connected to people's gender and the inequalities derived from this form of stratification. Gender shapes the migration experience, since the order in which people migrate, their destination, and the expectations regarding economic contribution and family care are usually determined by migrants' gender (Pedraza 1991; Pessar and Mahler 2001). As Pedraza (1991) suggests, the understanding of migration as a gendered process has allowed the study of migration strategies and decision-making that often take place within families, explaining particular demographic characteristics and direction of migratory flows, and suggesting reasons behind the temporary or permanent settlement of migrants. The attention to gender and migration is due to a major shift in the gender composition of migrant flows taking place since the mid-twentieth century (Donato 1992; Gabaccia 1996). Around the world, women constitute today almost half of the mobile population and in certain areas are becoming the majority of migrants (cf. Piper and Rother in this volume).

The increasing feminization of migration has significant effects on gender relations, since it has prompted, for example, the emergence of new forms of transnational families and the transnationalization of chains of care (which happens particularly when female labor migrants leave children behind under the care of a family member or a paid nanny) and the transformation in the expectation of economic contribution of men and women (Salazar-Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004). This feminization of migrant flows has been explained by the intersection of several structural changes: in societies of settlement there has been an overall trend toward middle-class women's participation in the labor force (in both developed and many developing countries). Coupled with a lack of public policies and support to women's incorporation into the labor market and women's



enduring responsibility for childcare, this has opened an important niche for domestic work. This is the case in Latin America, and the case of Peruvian migrant women to Chile in particular. The latter has become an attractive destination for neighboring countries due to a higher demand in the service sector and also because of the possibility for migrants to keep an active participation in family care and community at origin.

For immigrants, opportunities for work and an established connection to the receiving society help determine the decision to migrate and the direction of flows (Donato 1992). Indeed, several scholars have documented how inequalities between global regions have fostered the displacement of a vast number of people who are forced to emigrate (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Salazar-Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004). New demands in precarious work have been filled primarily with immigrants from poorer nations, a large percentage of them women. Workers' immigrant status and marginal position in social hierarchies make them particularly vulnerable and profitable to employers. In Latin America's intraregional migration, some countries are 'specializing' in sending while others on receiving women migrants, primarily for domestic work. In Chile, Peruvian women are filling in the void in domestic care in a process that profits from women's migration and that draws from racial/gender images of Peruvians. Migrants are chosen precisely because of their perceived gender and racial characteristics.

### Chances for occupational mobility

I have suggested that the effects of labor segregation on the life chances of immigrants are particularly significant, considering that their labor market experience is often signed by gender, in addition to class and racial hierarchies. Migrants' vulnerability and marginalization from mainstream society are enhanced by their labor conditions and by different forms of social stratification that capture and classify them in ways unfamiliar to them. These conditions, as well as their situation in the country of origin prior to emigration, also influence their sense of entitlement and their notion of rights, and ultimately the opportunity for mobility. While most migrants consider they deserve to be treated with respect given 'their human condition', not all articulate an entitlement to human rights, and even fewer articulate an idea of rights beyond limited labor rights that they are (or think they are) not in a position to demand (Mora and Piper 2011). This precludes individual

projects of breaking free of migrants' niches and strategizing for occupational mobility.

Indeed, overcoming the directing of a segregated labor market is dependent upon the reflexive evaluation of migrants, which is in turn tied to their cultural and human capital (Archer 2009). In addition, different approaches to the occupational mobility of immigrants reveal the relevance of their social capital in their access to diversified, higher status/salary occupations. Madero and Mora (2011) argue that it is only through the use of formal social networks that immigrants can display their human and cultural capital in their mobility prospects. (See also Chapter 11) In this regard, Myers and Cranford (1998) suggest a distinction between conditions for occupational mobility based on individual traits, such as level of education or labor market experience, and a historical approach, assessing the conditions at destiny at the time of entry into the labor force.

From this perspective, in addition to immigrants capitals and location in the social stratification system, the social, economic and political context in the host society are key considerations in their possibilities for occupational mobility. Immigrants' first employment sets a baseline for steps up in the occupational hierarchy, which I have suggested is conditioned by the host country's efforts for insertion into the global market. The flight from immigrants' niches is also tied to their legal status, length of stay in the society of destiny, social status at origin (not only social class, but region where they come from), family responsibilities, labor market experience at origin, and age (Cobo et al, 2009; Myers and Cranford, 1998). As Piper and Rother argue (in this volume), social exclusion faced by migrants is shaped by the intersection of inequalities in the sending and receiving countries, and among migrants themselves. Incorporating a subjective dimension, occupational mobility has also been linked to immigrants' knowledge and strategic use of the host society's cultural codes (Madero and Mora 2011).

In this latter sense, migrants themselves break out of institutional constraints creating new possibilities for occupational mobility through the deployment of tactics or strategies to overcome the barriers presented by the organization of the labor market. As De Certeau (1990) argues, the use of one or the other varies depending on the power held over a specific social space. Tactics used by Peruvian migrants in Chile in their precarious insertion in the labor market reveal the limits to act according to their own deliberation. They include: taking advantage of Chileans 'good disposition' for employment purposes; emphasizing

the 'dignity' of work of any kind; creating a distance with other immigrants to demonstrate the seriousness of their migration project; exhibiting tolerance and resilience to conflicts; fostering employers' trust; incorporating Chilean linguistic codes, among others. In short, tactics are reactions to elude barriers to formal inclusion in the labor market (Madero and Mora 2011).

Strategies, on the other hand, are organized on the basis of calculus and a capacity to maneuver force relations (De Certeau 1990). They presume the possibility for observation and definition of the 'other', thanks to which it is possible to establish a space from which migrants can anticipate and, hence, plan from their own place the use of their accomplishments. Strategies deployed by Peruvian migrants in Chile who have achieved upward occupational mobility have included aiming at a new educational degree in Chile; professionalization of services offered (as the establishment of by-the-hour cleaning services); or taking loans to invest in commercial projects. For immigrants, the capacity to deploy strategies is dependent upon the widening of formal social networks, that is, networks of individuals with resources and capitals relevant to the field, and the possibility of access to formal mechanisms of inclusion in the labor market.

### Conclusions

The movement of people around the globe is part of a larger economic, transnational and geopolitical trend, given that migrant flows are part of the global exchange not only of people, but also of capital, goods and intangibles (Sassen 2003). As has been argued, inequalities among different global regions have fostered the displacement of large numbers of people in search of work. And as long as regional economies go through adjustments with effects on the labor market, the alternative of diversification of family income through migration becomes more attractive and necessary (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Salazar Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004).

This chapter suggests that the direction and composition of migrants' flows reveal patterns of inequality in material and social resources that people can invest in their migration projects. Intra-regional migrants tend to be women, reflecting regional patterns of social stratification. Interestingly, Peruvian migrants in Chile are not lacking in human capital but are, nevertheless, segregated into a few niches of migrants' work. The concentration in precarious occupations give evidence to a

social exclusion conditioned by their material resources (strongly linking social class and integration); by gender responsibilities (ennmeshed in the decision over society of destiny, length of stay and migrants' type of access to the labor market); and by perceptions of racial traits tied to migrants' national origin, regarding them as naturally qualified for low-skilled work.

The emergence of racialization as a form of stratification reproduced by the Chilean labor market is particularly relevant considering that in the context of migration to the northern hemisphere, racial formation has gone hand-in-hand with nationalist discourses and the attribution of personal traits to certain groups that, through time, have translated into patterns of exclusion affecting the social integration and life chances of migrants. The concentration of Peruvian immigrants into labor niches reflects this pattern. Their access to the labor market is signed by their gender, class, nationality and racialization, and shaped by their individual capitals and other macro-social conditions such as the political or economic context at destiny.

The focus in this chapter on the possibilities for diversification of migrants' occupations refers to the actual capacity for agency. Most migrants are conscious of the vulnerability that is behind their accepting just any job at any wage. At the same time, most reveal a rising awareness of workers' rights in the context of their migratory experience and those who can attain occupational mobility do so through the deployment of personal capitals through tactics and strategies enacted at the right time, allowing them to navigate an adverse labor market. Occupational mobility may happen when these actions and reactions are displayed within opportunity structures opened in the intersection of objective and subjective conditions. Indeed, objective conditions, such as capitals, networks, socio-demographic characteristics and migrants' labor market insertion; and subjective dimensions, such as the perception of opportunities, capacity for maneuver and innovation and the widening of cultural codes, are juxtaposed to migrants' locations in different axes of social stratification, including novel forms of hierarchies, as their racialization in Chilean society.

As migration becomes a clearer and wider example of global inequalities, the focus on the direction and characteristics of flows suggests the workings of overlapping patterns of stratification and inequality. In this framework, the necessary question relates to the strategies developed by immigrants to overcome the limited opportunities for economic and social integration in the society of destiny.

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