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Work, employment, and migration before
and after the COVID-19 pandemic**

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Abstract

Chile began receiving significant flows of international migrants in the late 1990s. International migrants in Chile tend to have higher employment rates and educational levels than non-migrant populations, yet are vulnerable to lower salaries, strenuous working hours, subcontracting or informal work, and intergroup hostilities. This study used a mixed methods approach to explore the relationship between migration and employment before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The study involved descriptive and regression quantitative analyses using secondary data from two national surveys, together with qualitative analysis of four interviews with experts, fifteen in-depth interviews with internal and international migrants of different nationalities, and eight participant observations in two commercial districts of Santiago and Antofagasta.

The study results show that international migrants recovered their jobs faster than Chileans during the pandemic, but that those in a vulnerable situation were more likely to lose their jobs and turn to the informal sector, a shift that exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. Women and recent international migrants in particular were left behind in the post-pandemic economic recovery and were impacted by new forms of inequality. Specifically, (i) women were particularly affected by unpaid care work which jeopardised their stable employment, and (ii) recent international migrants who entered Chile through unauthorised routes in the north of the country found themselves in a vicious circle of precarity leading to informal jobs, informal or irregular housing, and difficulties in terms of social services and regularisation of their migration status. It is found that informality is an increasing trend among migrants, especially in the northern regions of Chile and commercial districts. The paper recommends a clear communication agenda, the training of public officials, and the creation of national databases matching work vacancies with labour capacities. These recommendations should be transformed into effective national policies that promote safe, regular, and responsible migration practices in Chile.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CASEN	National Socio-Economic Characterisation Survey (Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional)
ENE	National Employment Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Empleo)
ESI	Supplementary Income Survey (Encuesta Suplementaria de Ingresos)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
INE	National Institute of Statistics in Chile (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas)
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SJM	Jesuit Migrant Service (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes).

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Introduction

Migration is a powerful force for social, cultural, and economic growth, and also embodies an essential human right (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011). Yet, migrant populations across the globe continue to confront multifaceted challenges upon arrival in their host nations. These challenges range from social integration and access to essential services such as education and healthcare, to establishing personal connections, securing suitable housing, and navigating the complexities of labour conditions (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022).

In Chile, internal and international migrants regularly suffer from issues related to labour market integration, adapting to the social nuances of their new environment, and lack of access to adequate housing and healthcare (Black, 2021). These challenges are even more complex for international migrants entering Chile via non-traditional routes (i.e., bypassing formal visa or permit sponsorship processes). These individuals often find themselves trapped in an 'informality gap' due to the challenges in attaining legal status in the host country, hampering their ability to secure employment, and earn a stable income.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions on mobility through quarantines and nationwide lockdowns abruptly disrupted migratory patterns, and intensified pre-existing structural inequalities such as gender disparities, urban segregation, and interpersonal discrimination (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2020). The pandemic has exacerbated patterns of stigmatisation, discrimination, and hate speech towards migrants, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the LGBTIQ+ community, thereby subjecting certain migrant groups to intersecting layers of prejudice (Black, 2021; ECLAC, 2020).

In this context, the primary aim of this research is to shed light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment and labour conditions facing migrants, especially international migrants, whose experiences were contrasted with those of internal migrants, who faced other obstacles in Chile.

This study explores the short, medium, and long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for migration-related inequalities and vulnerabilities, and their knock-on effect on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To achieve this, the study first examines employability profiles of internal and international migrants in 2020, identifying those most susceptible to inequality and social exclusion. It then explores the nature of work undertaken by these migrants during the pandemic, considering the socio-economic and cultural determinants that influence their labour conditions, such as gender, cultural orientations, poverty, and housing conditions. Finally, the paper analyses changes in labour and employment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and their subsequent effects on migrant workers, providing a comprehensive understanding of the pandemic's effects on this demographic.



Migration is a powerful force for social, cultural, and economic growth, and also embodies an essential human right. Yet, migrant populations across the globe globally continue to confront multifaceted challenges upon arrival in their host nations.

The study begins with a literature review of international and internal migration in Chile, and the key challenges that have emerged since the pandemic's outbreak. It then discusses the methodological design and the three stages of the mixed-methods approach developed. The third section presents the research findings, integrating qualitative and quantitative results around the following topics: (i) structural and mediating factors relating to migration processes and labour insertion, (ii) the pandemic leading to deepening inequalities among migrants, and (iii) inequalities due to specific mediating factors such as gender and place of residence. The paper concludes by revisiting the results and analysing their implications for inequalities, outlining public policy recommendations to address contemporary challenges at the intersection of migration, work, and inequality in Chile.

Literature review

Characterisation of international migration in Chile

The International Organization for Migration defines a migrant as any individual moving across an international border ('international migrants') or within a state ('internal migrants') away from their usual place of residence. The definition holds irrespective of legal status, voluntariness, cause of movement, or duration of stay (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2018, p. 13).

Internal rural-urban migration constituted the primary form of migration in Chile during the first half of the 20th century, with the urban population increasing from 48% in 1930 to 64% in 1960, with particularly intense internal migration to metropolitan areas such as Santiago, which saw population growth increase from 2.9% in 1940-1952 to 4.4% in 1952-1960 (Hurtado, 1966).

At the end of the 20th century, Chile became a prominent host country for migrants from around the world (Bravo & Norambuena, 2018; González et al., 2017; Oyarzún et al., 2021; Rojas et al., 2016), which has been associated with Chile's return to democracy and the sustained improvement of national socio-economic indicators. The surge in international migration in the 21st century has pivoted national public policy dialogues towards this critical issue (Bellolio & Valdés, 2020). A particular period of accelerated immigration inflow was observed between 2015 and 2018, marking a notable uptick in international migrants settling in Chile. In 2016, 305,212 international migrants were residing in Chile, equivalent to 1.8% of the population. This percentage increased to 6.2% in 2017 and by 2020 had reached 7.5% (Stefoni & Contreras, 2022). In 2020, there were a total of approximately 1.6 million immigrants registered in Chile, with the majority coming from Venezuela (32%), followed by Peru (15%), Haiti (14%), Colombia (11%), and Bolivia (8%) (Integral Human Development, 2022). This represents an "accumulated growth of 12.4% of foreign people residing in Chile" (National Institute of Statistics in Chile [INE], 2021). The Venezuelan humanitarian crisis, the relationship established between Chile and Haiti after the earthquake in 2010 (Bellolio & Valdés, 2020), and the rising numbers of Colombians and Bolivians arriving in the country contributed to this increase (Rojas et al., 2016).

International migrants in Chile are primarily employed in the service sector, especially in wholesale/retail trade and hospitality (Integral Human Development, 2022). However, international migrants' second most common occupation sector shows

considerable variation based on gender and nationality. For instance, construction is the second most common occupation sector among international male migrants, while household and domestic paid activities rank second for female international migrants. Furthermore, migrant women are 24% more active in the labour market compared to native Chilean women (INE, 2022). Despite this heightened involvement, the collective labour participation of women, whether international or Chilean, still lags behind the aggregate labour participation of men (INE, 2022). These observations highlight that the gender disparity in labour participation is evident and persistent, and that the workforce remains segregated with certain sectors like domestic services or caregiving—often perceived as "women's work"—further reinforcing these divisions and gender-based discrepancies (INE, 2022).

In Chile, urban segregation is influenced by economic factors such as income disparities, social aspects including cultural and racial differences, and political elements such as housing policies and urban development programs, all of which together shape a complex landscape that particularly impacts international migrants (Urban Development National Council (Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Urbano), 2015; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2019). Therefore, international migrants are generally concentrated in the same neighbourhoods, especially in large cities such as Santiago (Bellolio & Valdés, 2020). This segregation process, also referred to by some as "ghettoisation" (see Droogleever et al., 1998, in Bellolio & Valdés, 2020), creates dynamics of social exclusion in the city, since it impedes intercultural encounters that contribute to reducing levels of prejudice, xenophobia, and racism, attitudes and behaviours that in turn relate to intergroup hostilities. Consequently, territorialisation—referring to the socioeconomic confinement of migrants to certain areas—is another key factor driving inequality among migrants in Chile. This has resulted in disparities between international migrants and internal migrants in access to resources, job opportunities, and public services, further entrenching the socio-economic disadvantages international migrants face (UNDP, 2019).

Specifically, access to the labour market is more restricted for international migrants as their skills and qualifications are underused and sometimes not recognised (Apablaza et al., 2023). Notably, there is no system for validating international professional or technical degrees in Chile. This, together with a culture of discrimination against migrants, forces them to work in low-skilled jobs, generating a waste of professional and technical qualifications (Rojas et al., 2016).

Internal migration in Chile: Changes of direction in migratory flows

Demographic data from the 2017 National Census (INE, 2020a) show that approximately 6.2% of the population were inter-regional migrants, and 9.6% intra-regional migrants.¹ Since the 1990s, Santiago has become a city expelling internal migrants, with more people leaving the city than moving in, as expressed in a drop in the immigration rate (from 8.6 per thousand to 7.9 per thousand) and an increase in the emigration rate (from 9.2 per thousand to 10.6 per thousand) (Rodríguez, 2019, p. 39). On the other hand, historically expelling communities in the south of Chile have

once again become attractive to job-seeking migrants by virtue of agricultural and agro-industrial activities. In contrast, internal migration flows in the northern region of the country, known for huge internal migration of workers due to its vast deposits of copper, lithium, and other minerals, have slowed down in recent years (Rodríguez, 2019).

Migration patterns show that inter-regional migration is proportionally higher in regions furthest from the capital, such as Región de Arica y Parinacota in the north, and Región de Aysén Gral. Carlos Ibáñez del Campo and Región de Magallanes y Antártica Chilena in the south (see Figure 1 below). Large metropolitan areas with high concentrations of the total population have a higher percentage of intra-regional migration. Such areas include Tarapacá (7.6%), Valparaíso (8.0%), Biobío (7.6%) and Metropolitan (15.1%). Internal migrants in Chile tend to move to contiguous regions or cities, and the flows are concentrated in the Región Metropolitana, Región de Valparaíso and Región de Coquimbo in the north, and Región de Los Lagos in the south (INE, 2020a).

In terms of population movement resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, a study carried out by the Data Science Institute of the University of Development (Universidad del Desarrollo, 2021) estimated that 4.7% of inhabitants in the Metropolitan Region changed their place of residence during the pandemic. The regions of Valparaíso and

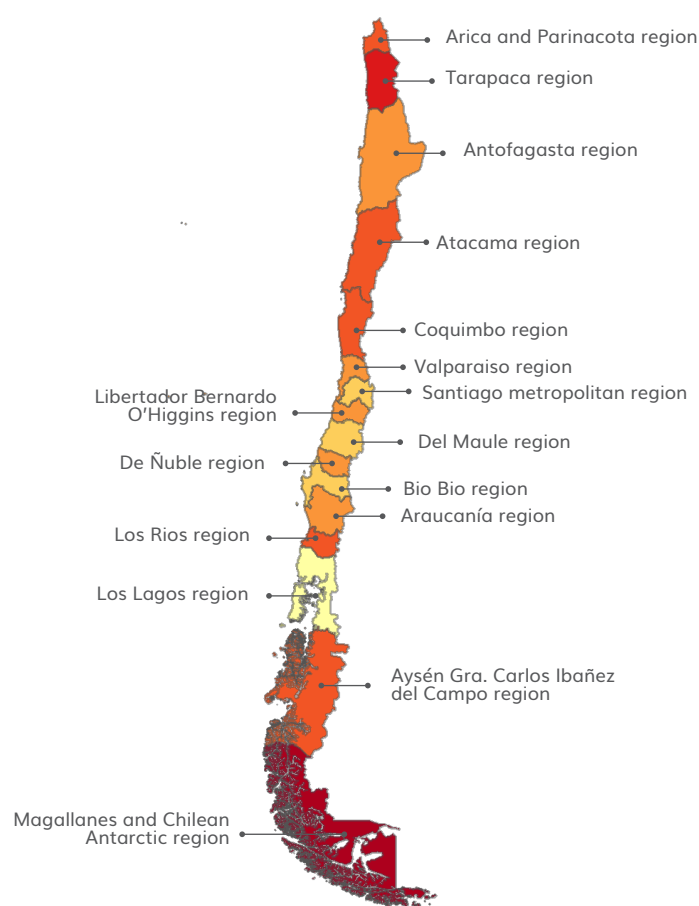


At the end of the 20th century, Chile became a prominent host country for migrants from around the world, which has been associated with Chile's return to democracy and the sustained improvement of national socioeconomic indicators.

¹ Chile's territory is divided into 16 regions from north to south, as shown in Figure 1. Intra-regional migration refers to a person moving between areas within the same region, and inter-regional migration refers to a person moving between different regions in the country.

O'Higgins were the most frequent destinations for these internal migrants, at 30% and 14% respectively, followed by Maule, La Araucanía, Coquimbo and BíoBío, each at around 8% (Universidad del Desarrollo, 2021).

Figure 1. Regions of Chile



Note. Prepared by the authors.

Migration and labour in Chile during the COVID-19 pandemic

Levels of multidimensional poverty—which spans education, health, employment, social protection, housing and infrastructure, along with social networking and cohesion—are higher among international migrants in Chile (24%) than the native population (20%) (Esnouf et al., 2023). This disparity is most acute among immigrant children and adolescents, with an alarming 26% living in poverty, compared to 15.1% of children and adolescents born in Chile, suggesting increased vulnerability among these population groups (Jesuit Migration Service [*Servicio Jesuitas a Migrante*, SJM], 2021).

In terms of employment, Chile's unemployment rate increased by 11.1% in 2020, marking a 3.9% rise from the previous year. Despite this general increase in unemployment, the relative employment rate for international migrants remained notably high at 68%. This enduring high employment rate among migrants, even in the face of a rising national unemployment rate, emphasises the role of Chile as a place of opportunity for many migrants who move to and stay in the country specifically for its job opportunities (SJM, 2021).

Regarding informality, the early phase of the pandemic saw a dip in informal employment, reaching its lowest level since 2017 at 22.6% (INE, 2020b). However, this trend reversed sharply in the last quarter of 2021, when there was a 13.3% increase in informal employment, primarily in the commerce (13.7%) and construction (21.4%) sectors (INE, 2022). This resurgence of informal jobs may be another important factor affecting poverty and unemployment dynamics among the migrant population.

The Chilean government responded to the COVID-19 crisis by enacting the Employment Protection Law in April 2020, which provided unemployment insurance for workers whose contracts were suspended due to lockdown measures (Carella et al., 2021). Additionally, the government provided a COVID-19 emergency payment to the most vulnerable families, including irregular migrants. A digital platform, '*Destino Empleado*' (destination employment), was developed to monitor employment trends across sectors, regions, and occupations (Carella et al., 2021). Moreover, to further bolster the healthcare system, special permissions were granted to Venezuelan doctors in 2021, allowing them to practise without formal diploma recognition (Carella et al., 2021).

Methodology

Qualitative data collection I: Expert interviews

A team of researchers conducted interviews with four experts drawn from international organisations, Chile's central government, and prominent non-governmental organisations (NGOs) advocating for migrants' rights within Chile. The sample was purposefully selected to encompass a diverse range of organisations, with the primary aim of gathering comprehensive data about key public policies on migration in Chile. The pool of potential interviewees was identified from the database held by the Fundación Espacio Público, the organisation spearheading this research. To maintain confidentiality and address other ethical considerations, a formal consent process was applied. Only one participant exercised their right to be explicitly recognised in the study.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, based on a pre-established set of topics:

1. Migration dynamics in Chile since the onset of the pandemic.
2. Potential sources of additional information or data.
3. The relationship between internal/international migration and employment during the pandemic.
4. Plans, policies, and programs launched to safeguard access to decent work during the COVID-19 health crisis, with a special focus on migrants.
5. Institutional obstacles and challenges in addressing the migration-employment nexus.

Quantitative data collection: Statistical analyses of secondary data

Following the expert interviews, quantitative analysis of secondary data from two national surveys, the Socio-Economic Characterisation Survey (*Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica*, [CASEN]) and the National Employment Survey (*Encuesta Nacional de Empleo*, [ENE]), and its appendix the Supplementary Income Survey (*Encuesta Suplementaria de Ingreso*, [ESI]). These datasets allowed comparisons to be made between changes in income and working hours over the period 2019-2021 among migrants (internal and international) and non-migrants. Information from the CASEN survey—which was the main survey recording social statistics in Chile—was used to measure the employment conditions of internal migrants compared to non-migrants, and international migrants compared to Chilean nationals. To identify international migrants in this instrument, the study used answers to the question, "When you were born, in what community or country did your mother live?".

The ENE survey classifies and characterises the working-age population according to their relationship to the labour market, i.e., employed, unemployed, or out of the labour market, and collects information on employment conditions such as (i) dependent or self-employed, (ii) formal or informal, (iii) full or part-time, and (iv) underemployment. In the first quarter of 2020, two questions that allowed us to identify the migrant population were incorporated: (i) in which country did you live five years ago? and (ii) when you were born, in which community or country did your mother live? Based on these two questions, migrants are classified into four categories:

1. Lifelong internal migrants: when they were born, they lived in another region of Chile.
2. Lifelong international migrants: when they were born, they lived in another country, while for the past five years, they have lived in Chile.

3. Recent internal migrants: five years ago, they lived in another region.
4. Recent international migrants: born in another country and for the past five years they have lived in another country.

However, this change in the survey made it more difficult to compare the data, so rather than 2019 data, data from the first quarter of 2020 were used for comparison.²

The study also used the data to evaluate traditional measures of labour market performance at the national level, such as participation rate,³ employment rate,⁴ unemployment rate,⁵ and informality rate;⁶ and characterised changes in employment at the individual level. To do this, a descriptive and regression analysis was run, using the statistical software Stata, applying the World Bank's purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factor⁷ to make the average monthly income comparable between countries.

Qualitative data collection II: Interviews with migrants and participant observation

Informed by the literature review, expert interviews, and the results from quantitative analysis, the sampling strategy for interviews with migrants adopted Flick's (2012) approach to determine a priori selection criteria. Four variables were used for purposive sampling and a priori selection: (i) gender; (ii) place of residence; (iii) migratory cohort, to differentiate people who arrived in Chile more than five years ago (lifelong migrants) from those who arrived less than five years ago (recent migrants); and (iv) nationality.

2 Nevertheless, in some sections of the results we use 2019 data based on the questions regarding the nationality of the respondents, only as a comparison to measure general levels of migration before the pandemic (for example, for regression analyses, where data from 2019 served as a control variable).

3 Participation rate is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force (defined as persons of working age who during the reference week meet the requirements to be included in the employed or unemployed category) in relation to the working-age population (people aged over 15 years old) (INE, 2019).

4 Employment rate is defined as the number of employed persons as a percentage of the working-age population (people over 15 years old) (INE, 2019).

5 Unemployment rate is defined as the number of people without employment, which is expressed as a percentage from the total labour force (working-age people meeting the requirements to be included as employed or unemployed (INE, 2019).

6 Informality is defined in INE (2019) as the group of economic units that lack registration with the Internal Revenue Service (Servicio de Impuestos Internos) and do not keep accounting records through which they can separate business expenses from household expenses.

7 See the indicator: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.PPP>

Due to the predominance of the international migration situation in Chile, the qualitative sample focused on international migrants, prioritising diversity in educational and labour backgrounds, but four cases of internal migration were also included for comparison (for details, see Table 1).

To reach international migrants, we contacted organisations working with international migrant populations, such as the Jesuit Migration Service and Techo Chile, as well as smaller organisations, such as churches and organisations in neighbourhoods with a large presence of international migrants. To reach internal migrants, close social networks such as relatives, places of work, and friends were used. A diverse sample was obtained by including people of different socioeconomic status and educational backgrounds.

In-depth interviews with migrants were carried out based on a script that included questions on their past and current employment situation, episodes of individual and family migration over their life course, key employment challenges during the pandemic, labour and personal/family plans, and perceptions of most relevant labour and employment policies. Each interview was preceded by an informed consent procedure to establish ethical principles for the research, including ensuring the confidentiality of participants by using pseudonyms. In two instances, interviews were held with two participants at once, at their request. The total qualitative sample consisted of 18 participants, in 15 interviews, comprising 11 interviews with international migrants (n=14) and 4 with internal migrants (n=4). Table A1 in Appendix 1 shows the final composition of the qualitative sample. Each interview lasted an average of 69 minutes for international migrants, and 60 minutes for internal migrants.

As informality among international and internal migrants appeared to be an emerging topic, eight participants were observed in two public spaces of Chile, one in Santiago and one in the northern region, in the city of Antofagasta. The objective of participant observation was to complement information about the precariousness and vulnerability of migrants that, due to its sensitive nature, migrants may not want to share during an interview. The participant observation technique is defined as "a process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities" (Kawulich, 2005, para. 2). The result is a systematic description of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen to be studied. The focus was on two public spaces (Barrio Meiggs in Santiago, four visits during the period August to September 2022, and Paseo Matta in Antofagasta, four visits during September 2022) that were comparable in terms of (i) being two prominent commercial neighbourhoods in each city, and (ii) having an important presence of informal commerce. The team conducting the participant observations was composed of a social psychologist and an anthropologist, who first identified informal

traders according to type and location in the neighbourhoods, then approached them and introduced themselves as well as the objectives of the study, and finally freely interacted and observed spontaneous activity. They did not record any interaction to maintain the natural setting and confidentiality, but they took pictures of surroundings (not interviewees) and field notes frequently. Table A1 in Appendix 1 shows the final composition of participant observations (under pseudonyms).

Data analysis of this third qualitative stage took the form of content analysis based on codification and categorisation processes following Bengtsson's (2016) guidelines. First, every interview was transcribed. Then, a coding system was developed to allow inductive content analysis. To specifically analyse data obtained from participant observations, field notes were transcribed and coded, according to analytical axes such as: informal and street work, mobility dynamics in different places and times, and the cultural composition of the city. To conclude, the study used triangulation, defined as a methodological procedure consisting in comparing different types or sources of data to explore convergences, complementarities, and dissonances, and to assure better and more realistic conclusions (Treharne & Riggs, 2015).

Table 1. Purposeful sampling for international and internal migration in Chile

Variables	International				Internal			Total
	Cohort +5 years ago (Peruvians)	Cohort after 2020 (Peruvians)	Cohort +5 years ago (Venezuelans)	Cohort after 2020 (Venezuelans)	Cohort +5 years ago (Haitians)	Cohort +5 years ago	Cohort after 2020	
Men	1 arrived in Santiago	1 arrived in Antofagasta	1 arrived Antofagasta	1 arrived in Santiago	2 arrived in Santiago	1 arrived in Santiago	1 arrived in another city	8 migrant men: 6 international, 2 internal
Women	1 arrived in Antofagasta	1 arrived in Santiago	1 arrived in Santiago	1 arrived in Antofagasta	1 arrived in Santiago	1 arrived in Santiago	1 arrived in another city	7 migrant women: 5 international, 2 internal
Total	4 Peruvian migrants		4 Venezuelan migrants		3 Haitian migrants	2 internal migrants cohort 5+ years	2 internal migrants' cohort after 2020	n=15
	11 international migrants: 7 cohort +5 years ago, 4 cohort after 2020					4 internal migrants: 2 arriving to Santiago, 2 arriving to another city		n=15

Note. Elaborated by the authors.

Findings

Structural and mediating factors impacting migration processes and labour insertion in Chile

Almost every lifelong international migrant interviewed mentioned that having a good job—with a formal contract, manageable working hours, and stability—or increasing their income were their main reasons for migrating to Chile before the pandemic.⁸ Lifelong internal migrants, on the other hand, stated educational, economic, or labour reasons for migrating to Santiago before the pandemic, or improving their quality of life during the pandemic.

Among recent international migrants, two women interviewed during the participant observations migrated to Chile for personal reasons: one for family reunification and the other to protect a child from a violent parent in the country of origin. In the case of Venezuelan and Haitian migrants who moved to Chile recently or more than five years ago, the concepts of 'crises' and 'instability' featured in their narratives as part of their motivations to emigrate:

"That is why we left Venezuela, there was a time when we had money and there was no food, or when there was food, you had no money, then, the hospitals were all closed [...]. In other words, we lived a very, very traumatic experience and that is why we decided to leave" (Josy⁹).

"[Why did you decide to travel to Chile, Franco?] Eh, because of the political instability in my country, unfortunately. Because when there is political instability, unfortunately, the country does not work well [...]" (Franco¹⁰).

Yet, most of the interviewees said the reason to migrate to Chile was for better working conditions. Searching for a good job (stable, formal, better working hours) and

8 Including participants of the in-depth interviews (n=7/7) and participant observations (n=3/6). Two did not answer the question, and one gave different reasons.

9 39 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview.

10 34 years old, lifelong migrant from Haiti: in-depth interview.

increased salaries seemed to be easier for the lifelong international migrant, and only Marco¹¹ added reasons such as having new experiences (see quote below).

Frequently, participants mentioned that having a contact in Chile before migrating (family, friends, or a more distant contact) helped them to find their first job. This is well exemplified in the cases of Irma,¹² Ana,¹³ Marco,¹⁴ Dante,¹⁵ Josy,¹⁶ Daniel,¹⁷ and Estefany,¹⁸ for example:

"Eventually I got in touch with a friend from Peru, and I realised that he was here for about two years. So, I contacted him and explained to him my desire to leave Peru, not because of economic issues, but for the experience, and to see what was happening in the future. And he got me a job in the company where he worked" (Marco¹⁹).

"Well, it was not so difficult for us to come here because I have many friends here and they made it easy for us to find our way here, they gave us a lot of support. They were very supportive, people of our nationality as well as your nationality, Chileans. [...] [Why? How] Eh, I met a person through a friend, through the internet [...]. When I arrived, I came with the idea of working with her, and I worked as the babysitter of her baby for almost a year. [...] Because arriving in a country with nothing is also quite complicated" (Josy²⁰).

Both internal and international migrants reported 'knowing someone in the country or region of arrival' as an important source of psychosocial support, as it facilitated finding a job with good conditions, as well as initiating a social network in the new country, making it a protective mediating factor. The migrants interviewed noted that social

11 49 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

12 47 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

13 63 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

14 49 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

15 26 years old, recent migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

16 39 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview.

17 45 years old, lifelong migrant from Ecuador: participant observation.

18 45 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: participant observation.

19 49 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

20 39 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview.

networks provide support in contexts of psychological and economic difficulty, facilitating access to resources such as housing, information on administrative procedures, improved employment opportunities, and, therefore, better salaries, and better savings.

Carmen's²¹ case exemplifies the impact of this mediating factor (time living in the country and conditions of entry). Despite the many difficulties that she—like many other international migrants—faced to regularise her migratory status, the years that she had spent in Chile made an important difference to her determination to stay in the country, especially because of the social network that she had built up over the years, and her expectations of family reunification. She arrived in Chile seven years ago, but her migratory status was regularised only after she obtained a formal job. However, as she started the family reunification process, she came up against public disinformation and difficulties relating to the regularisation of her children, specifically because two of them arrived in the country through unauthorised routes. She contacted an NGO and public officials to try and understand how to apply for their visas or have their passports validated, but she did not receive any clarity or support. She felt that she had to insist and would likely need to travel to Santiago to obtain an answer.

However, it is important to mention that the length of one's residency in Chile does not necessarily correlate with stability, as evidenced by Fernanda's²² case. She arrived in Chile four years ago with her 6-year-old child, and initially received a transitory residence permit for six months or less, requiring repeated requests for renewal. When the pandemic hit, she entered the informal sector, and she now works in informal commerce in Antofagasta. In Chile, employers are often reluctant to hire migrants who do not have their visas up to date, so many of them are left with no choice but to work in informal commerce.

This situation was also observed in the following case:

"When Estefany²³ arrived, it was difficult for her to get her papers up to date because they asked for a work contract and, at the same time, the jobs asked her for few months of probation before hiring her; finally, she worked six months without a contract and after that she was hired and was able to regularise her situation" (Field notes from participant observations, Barrio Meiggs Santiago, September 16th).

21 37 years old, lifelong migrant from Venezuela, currently living in Antofagasta, interviewee.

22 30 years old, recent migrant from Colombia: participant observation.

23 45 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: participant observation.

Dante's case,²⁴ on the other hand, shows it is possible to attain a degree of stability even when working informally. Dante managed stores in Antofagasta with his cousin, and reported having a satisfactory salary and working conditions, despite lacking a formal contract because of irregular migratory status. Yet he asserts that while international migrants are often hired to run stores without a formal contract, a formal working contract seems to be a reward that international migrants must earn after showing effort and consistency: "My cousin tells me 'If you see someone who is working well, constantly, is responsible, who can be given a contract, let me know and we will make him a contract'"(p. 250). Dante was hopeful that he may be given a contract, since his employer had shown that he trusted him.

In addition to labour informality, many participants could not validate their school diplomas obtained abroad and as a result were overqualified for their jobs. Paola,²⁵ for instance, is a teacher working in Chile as a cashier. Omar,²⁶ who holds a master's degree and is pursuing a doctoral degree, cleans houses, sells arepas, and grooms dogs. Josy²⁷ is a finance graduate working informally as a babysitter. Dante²⁸ is a geologist working informally as a store manager, much like Franco²⁹ who is a social worker working formally in a printing store. Finally, Roberto³⁰ who now worked as a human resources manager, had taken almost five years to find a satisfying job at a comparable level to his previous job in Venezuela. Roberto's words reflect the poor labour conditions and exploitation that international migrants face when arriving in the country, their unrecognised expertise, and the incapacity of the Chilean labour market to absorb recent migratory flows:

"I do not want to compare, but sometimes I go back to the past, to the position I had in Venezuela, all the projects that I successfully closed, that I successfully developed in my environment. I was well positioned, spiritually, emotionally, economically. [...] I felt that my life changed and since I arrived here, I feel that I went back, I feel that I started from scratch [...]. During that year I was in that company, which was my first

24 26 years old, recent migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

25 47-year-old recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview

26 41 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview

27 39 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview

28 26 years old, recent migrant from Peru: in-depth interview

29 34 years old, lifelong migrant from Haiti: in-depth interview

30 48 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview

job, I felt exploited [...]. I felt that they abused my need, my shifts were 14 hours, [of which] 12 [were] continuous [working] hours [without break]".

Likewise, several international migrants expressed concerns not just about low wages and demanding work hours, but also about experiences of stigmatisation and interpersonal animosity. This was particularly evident in the experiences shared by two black women interviewed. One woman from Haiti explicitly described enduring discrimination and racism. The other woman, from Venezuela, underscored the strain of long hours coupled with inadequate compensation, which, according to her, was related to racial discrimination.

Other cases are more nuanced, as the individuals interviewed are satisfied with their present situations, but remember very difficult times in the beginning, especially when they did not have a strong social network and initial job offers as mentioned above. Karen³¹ stated that she is lucky to be working in her field, but recalls the challenges she faced in finding a job with good labour conditions. This is similar in the cases of Franco³² and Samuel³³ who, after a period of job seeking and adapting to Chile and the Spanish language, secured formal and well-paid jobs through their participation in Haitian organisations. This highlights the importance of social networks in the integration process. Franco works in a printing store and was recently promoted to head of department, so he reports feeling confident and satisfied with his salary. Samuel has now been working in his professional field for several years, with a formal job in a public institution. However, he also remembers the instability of his work history since arriving in Chile, working in a range of unskilled jobs during his first years in the country.

Despite most participants mentioning that labour conditions were not always what they expected, it is important to note that some interviewees reported becoming satisfied with their jobs and living conditions over time. This is especially prevalent among lifelong migrants, such as Irma,³⁴ Marco,³⁵ and Ana.³⁶ All three are lifelong migrants from Peru nearing their fifties or older, who had very successful career paths thanks to their

31 42 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview.

32 34 years old, lifelong migrant from Haiti: in-depth interview.

33 40 years old, lifelong migrant from Haiti: in-depth interview.

34 47 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

35 49 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

36 63 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

social networks that supported them in finding formal jobs immediately upon arrival. This helped them to obtain Chilean residence in just a year.

In the case of internal migrants, educational level was found to be a mediating factor protecting migrants when entering the labour market in their new place of residence. These differences were especially reflected in experiences during the pandemic, which will be developed in the following section.

The pandemic deepening inequality among migrants

Descriptive analysis of the CASEN national survey shows that the international migrant population living in Chile in 2020 was younger on average than the national population and had a higher educational level, higher labour market participation and employment rates, yet also higher poverty levels and lower salaries (see Table B1 in Appendix 2).

The first quarter of 2020 started with a marginal but sustained decline in the total number of migrants in Chile according to ENE (2019-2021) measures (which might not include the total number of irregular migrants), and subsequent recovery from the fourth quarter of 2020 up to the end of 2021. During this period, there was a sustained increase in the proportion of lifelong international migrants, meaning that international migrants already in Chile remained in the country, whereas fewer migrants arrived in Chile via regular routes during this period (see Table B2 in Appendix 2). Experts interviewed mentioned that the reduction in numbers of recent migrants might be counterbalanced with the significant number of irregular migrants arriving through unauthorised routes in the northern region of the country, which is a recent phenomenon requiring attention:

"A second phenomenon in the pandemic, the closing of the Peruvian border to the entry of Venezuelan migrants, triggered the so-called northern crisis, the northern migratory crisis, or the Colchane crisis during the pandemic [in Chile] [...]. The entry of a very significant contingent in much more precarious conditions, because entering a country on foot isn't comparable to arriving at the airport [...]" (Expert from International Organization,).

"I believe that migration is constantly increasing. In fact, last week, when I went to Tarapacá and returned to Antofagasta, I could see how an enormous number of migrants continued to arrive on the highways. [...] Families arriving... They settle in the squares with tents or on the beach [...]" (Expert from NGO in Antofagasta).

Migrants also spoke of how arriving through unauthorised routes caused 'informality gaps', and they were subject to a vicious circle of informality and precarity, without the

possibility of regularisation, which limits their possibilities of finding a formal job. One informant, during the participant observation, reported that he emigrated from Venezuela with his wife with the hope of having more economic stability. However, they faced many obstacles to leaving Venezuela with the support of the embassy, so they crossed the border illegally. This meant it was impossible for them to apply for a formal job in Chile; thus, the informal market was the only way to obtain an income for their household. For this reason, many international migrants are very dependent on incomes

obtained irregularly, which is not only a drawback because it pushes away people from the formal market, but also because, in some cases, they are subject to exploitation from suppliers in the unregulated informal economy as evidenced in the following example:

“We spoke with Gabriel [Venezuelan], approximately 20 years old, who arrived at the beginning of the year from Venezuela, entering the country through irregular routes. Gabriel said that he came with his pregnant wife[...] He stayed to contribute economically to his family, for which he works informally for a supplier who gives him face masks to sell, in exchange for a 22% commission” (Field notes from participant observations, Paseo Matta Antofagasta, September 12th).

The quantitative analyses underscored a decrease in the number of formally employed migrants, both internal and international, after March 2020, with a staggering reduction of nearly half a million individuals. However, from the third quarter of the same year, a gradual resurgence in the number of employed migrants was observed, culminating in an employment rate that, by the end of 2021, almost matched the initial rate. In the early phase of the pandemic (spanning April to September 2020), the migrant unemployment rate increased by 2.3% (INE, 2021). Despite a subsequent decline in unemployment towards the end of 2020, the overall employment rate in Chile has yet to rebound to its pre-pandemic level. Table 2 presents the employment rate of internal and international migrants, defined as the percentage of employed individuals within the working-age population working in the formal and informal sectors.³⁷ The data show a transitory dip in the employment rate, followed by a recovery by the end of 2021.



Whereas the average number of hours worked per week decreased marginally for both Chileans and international migrants; therefore, it can be assumed that those migrants who kept their jobs were not economically affected by the pandemic.

³⁷ Definition of the working-age population is as follows: the population currently residing in the country aged 15 and over (INE, 2019).

Table 2. Employment status (formal or informal) for migrants, disaggregated by quarters in 2020-2021

Migrants	2020						2021					
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
Employed (formal or informal)	Freq	1,629,628	1,328,711	1,377,608	1,413,762	1,426,348	1,440,849	1,506,275	1,616,954			
	%	57.2	47.1	49.2	50.6	51.4	50.3	52.2	54.6			
Unemployed	Freq	137,861	161,684	146,020	133,159	139,225	134,414	125,524	104,282			
	%	4.8	5.7	5.2	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.3	3.5			
Labour force	Freq	1,767,489	1,490,395	1,523,628	1,546,921	1,565,573	1,575,263	1,631,799	1,721,237			
	%	62.1	52.8	54.4	55.4	56.4	55.0	56.5	58.1			
Inactive	Freq	1,080,862	1,333,634	1,279,042	1,245,549	1,209,026	1,290,364	1,254,887	1,240,828			
	%	37.9	47.2	45.6	44.6	43.6	45.0	43.5	41.9			
Working-age population	Freq	2,848,352	2,824,029	2,802,670	2,792,470	2,774,599	2,865,628	2,886,686	2,962,064			
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			
Employed (formal or informal)	Freq	982,262	779,776	813,836	952,640	981,081	992,210	1,022,973	1,054,848			
	%	74.8	58.6	60.4	68.7	70.1	70.1	72.0	74.0			
Unemployed	Freq	67,717	135,490	154,212	100,420	101,990	85,808	83,651	67,017			
	%	5.2	10.2	11.5	7.2	7.3	6.1	5.9	4.7			
Labour force	Freq	1,049,979	915,266	968,048	1,053,059	1,083,071	1,078,017	1,106,624	1,121,864			
	%	79.9	68.7	71.9	75.9	77.4	76.1	77.9	78.7			
Inactive	Freq	263,812	416,304	378,578	334,561	316,321	338,006	313,431	303,987			
	%	20.1	31.3	28.1	24.1	22.6	23.9	22.1	21.3			
Working-age Population	Freq	1,313,791	1,331,571	1,346,627	1,387,620	1,399,391	1,416,024	1,420,054	1,425,851			
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			

Note. Adapted from the 2020-2021 ENE by INE (2021).

Internal migration trends during the pandemic in some cases were related to lifestyle choices, over and above work-related factors. Two employed internal migrants who were living in Santiago before the pandemic, and who moved to other cities in 2020 and 2021, both stated that their main motivation to move to a small town near nature and without pollution or urban stress was to improve their quality of life. Notably, their labour conditions and salaries did not change.

Another important finding regarding employment status during the pandemic relates to the particular challenges faced by non-professional internal migrants. Two unemployed female interviewees had migrated internally, relocating from a mid-sized city in the southern Araucanía region and a mid-sized city in the central Valparaíso region to the capital, Santiago, more than five years ago. Diana,³⁸ a self-employed stylist who visited her clients in their homes, could not work during the pandemic due to the quarantines. She stayed at her family's house helping with domestic activities and studying online. Florencia,³⁹ who had been working as a babysitter and then under a formal contract in a call centre, saw her university studies and work interrupted due to the pandemic. For a few months, she worked online, but then decided to change from this formal job to an emerging artistic business, arguing that she earned more money and felt more motivated by that. These two cases show that non-professional internal migrants faced more changes during the pandemic than professional internal migrants, who have greater economic and work stability.

After the initial shock to employment rates at the beginning of the pandemic, both national and international migrants recovered their employment over subsequent months. While this process was faster among international migrants, they experienced worsened labour conditions compared to the Chilean population (see Table 2 above).

Whereas the average number of hours worked per week decreased marginally for both Chileans and international migrants between 2019 and 2020, the hourly wage increased for both, from 8.91 USD (PPP) to 10.18 USD (PPP), and from 6.70 USD (PPP) to 7.37 USD (PPP) respectively, (with the wage level of migrants remaining below that of Chileans). Therefore, based on this data, it can be assumed that those migrants who kept their jobs were not economically affected by the pandemic (see Table B3, Appendix 2), although it should be noted that the qualitative results reveal other issues affecting this group which exacerbated inequality.

38 30-year-old, lifelong internal migrant: in-depth interview

39 27 years old, lifelong internal migrant: in-depth interview

Results from the regression analyses⁴⁰ provide statistical evidence that:

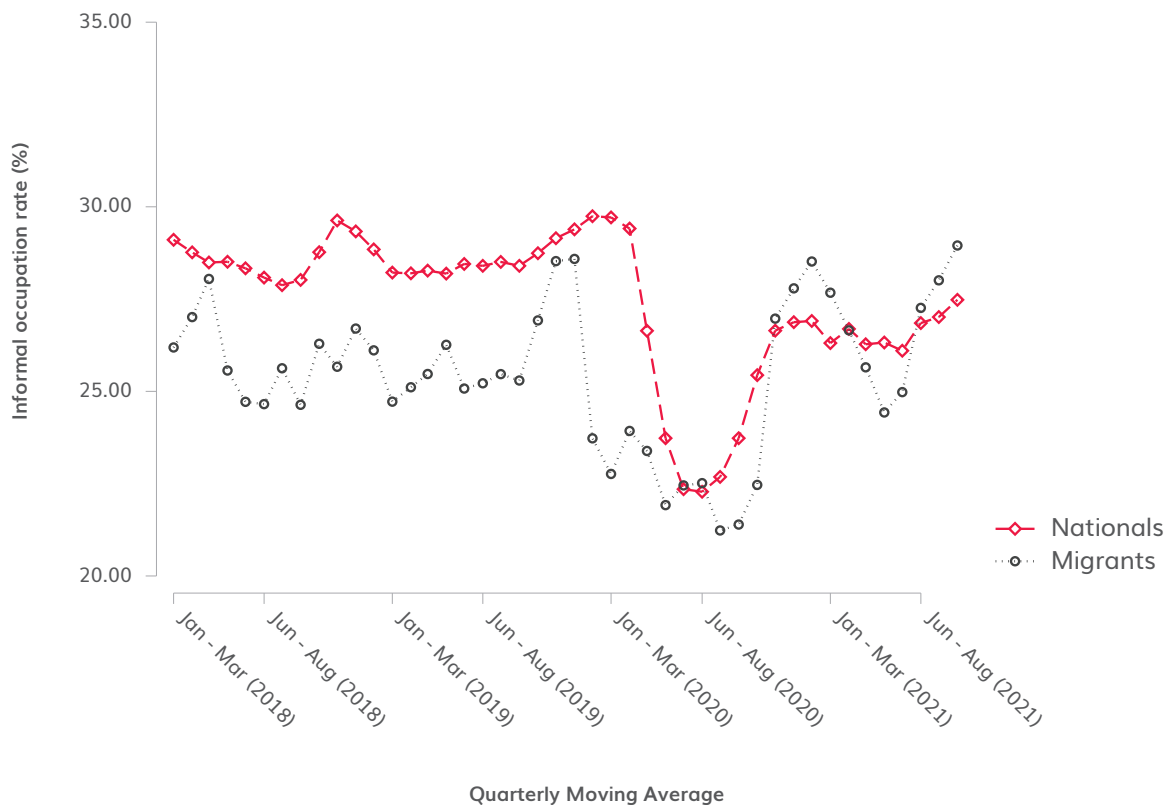
- Both migrant and non-migrant populations experienced a decline in employment and activity during the pandemic. The employment rate was most affected from March 2020 to March 2021, at -2% compared to pre-pandemic levels, while the greatest proportional decrease in activity took place during the second year of the pandemic, between March and December 2021, with a drop of 1.4%.
- Total income levels for the population as a whole slightly increased in the first year of the pandemic; however, income per hour worked decreased compared to the pre-pandemic period. Total income showed a significant increase in the second pandemic year (see Table B4 in Appendix 2 for details).
- When considering the combined effect of the pandemic and migrant status, results showed only marginal differences with respect to the previous estimation. However, when analysing the migrant variable, it should be noted that migrants participated in the labour market in greater proportion during the pandemic and worked a greater number of hours. However, the difference in activity and hours of work does not mean a higher income. On the contrary, for both total and hourly income, the effect is negative and statistically significant (see Table B5 in Appendix 2).
- Regression analyses to evaluate the interaction between being a migrant and labour market effects of the pandemic showed a sustained negative effect on employment status compared to the pre-pandemic period, but a positive effect on activity between March 2020 and March 2021, meaning that being a migrant is associated with being active during the first period of the pandemic, but likely unemployed (negative effect) (see Table B6 in Appendix 2 for details).

Experts argued that informality might be at the core of the labour trends among migrants since the pandemic, but quantitative data shows that average informality rates affected international migrants less than nationals (27.9% of international migrants informally employed vs. 23.4% of nationals). Moreover, changes in informality appear to follow a similar pattern for nationals and migrants. Figure 2 illustrates the informality rate of migrants and nationals by quarter over the period 2018-2021. Between January 2018 and February 2020, there is a consistent upward trend among the national population, which slumps from March 2020, coinciding with the start of the pandemic, reaching its lowest point in July 2020. From then, the informality rate began to increase again, although it did not reach the pre-pandemic level.

40 For further details on equation model for regression analyses, see Appendix 1

It is important to note that the difference in labour informality between migrants and nationals shows important regional variation, with higher levels of informality in the north of Chile (with 44% informality among migrants in the Arica y Parinacota region, and 40.3% in the Tarapacá region) (see Figure B1, Appendix 2).

Figure 2. Informal employment rate of migrants and nationals (2018-2021)



Note. Adapted from the 2018-2021 ENE by INE (2021).

During participant observations, there was frequent discussion of an increase in informal commerce, particularly among international migrants. Many respondents mentioned losing their jobs during the pandemic if they worked, for example, in restaurants or shops. A woman in her thirties told us she worked at an ice cream shop before the pandemic, but the company closed, and she was laid off. She had not been able to find a new job since then:

“However, although the woman was unable to work during the pandemic, she received payments from the state and made withdrawals from her pension fund, which allowed her to have money to invest in goods to sell informally. The woman acknowledged that she was aware of carrying out an illegal activity” (Field notes from participant observations, Paseo Matta Antofagasta, September 12th, 2022).

Some interviewees, especially Chileans, were concerned about the increase of informal commerce after the end of quarantine measures in late 2021, and several images taken during participant observations show the magnitude of informal commerce in these neighbourhoods, also registered in the field notes:

"The kiosk seller said he was against informal commerce because it sold cheaper products without paying commercial permission for standing in the street. [...] In addition, he refers to having seen muggings, and problems such as shootings and delinquency" (Field notes from participant observations, Barrio Meiggs Santiago, August 10th, 2022).

Yet this was not only a strategy among socioeconomically vulnerable groups who had recently lost their jobs. Some considered informal commerce to be a better alternative to formal work, where they encountered low salaries, long working hours incompatible with domestic and caregiving activities (a frequently cited concern among women), and poor communication or hostility from their superiors.

Interviewees noted that people working as formally self-employed accessed benefits during the pandemic that those in informal commerce did not receive, including bonuses, special permissions to work, or government protection through unemployment benefits during the pandemic. Informal workers, however, had to 'work anyway', often being at risk of contracting COVID-19, or of being arrested for violating the quarantine mandate, as well as seeking support through social and family networks. Samuel's⁴¹ words reflect this situation:

"I have seen migrants who a lot, perhaps the majority, who are irregular, they are risking their lives by selling as street vendors. [...]. They are people who have expenses, and as they have no papers, they have no choice but to sell on the street. [...] And when the police arrive, they have to run, crossing the street with their things [...]. And sometimes people have nowhere to sleep".

Many interviewees were thankful for government payments aimed at mitigating unemployment during the pandemic, especially the Emergency Covid Bonus, Universal Family Emergency Income, and the Basic Food Basket provided to vulnerable families in 2021. Others said that they did not receive government support, be it because of their irregular migratory status, or because they were not included in the measures due to perceived higher salaries, as in the cases of professional internal migrants. Interviews also revealed the emergence of collective actions in low-income neighbourhoods,

41 40 years old, lifelong migrant from Haiti: in-depth interview

specifically aimed at preparing and distributing food for free to people in need, commonly referred to as 'ollas comunes' or 'communal pots.'

In 2015, Chile declared universal access to healthcare for undocumented migrants. While some migrants reported a positive perception of health and educational assistance in Chile (the cases of Gloria⁴² and Dante⁴³), data show potential shortcomings in the application of this policy, as evidenced by instances where individuals did not receive public health assistance due to their irregular migratory status, such as in Rita's⁴⁴ case:

"I have been waiting almost three years for them to give me a residence permit, and I still don't have my papers. Because of that, I can't find a job, because they ask for up-to-date papers, and I don't have them. So I can't pay Fonasa, which I need to be able to be treated at the hospital."

The discrepancy between official policy and these experiences might have been related to the language gap for Haitians. Due to language differences between the Chilean and Haitian populations, it can be complicated for health officials to assist and diagnose Haitian migrants attending health centres. In other cases, according to some experts, the apathy and neglect of some medical staff impact negatively on the implementation of public policies:

"Many officials maybe do not know about the access to certain rights for the migrant population [...]. It is sometimes ignorance, sometimes it is more like they just don't want to do it, [...] arbitrariness of the person, of the official, for example [...]" (Expert working in SJM).

Inequalities among migrants during the pandemic due to gender and place of residence

In terms of gender disparity, international migrant women experienced a reduction in their working hours by approximately two hours per week during 2020, while Chilean women, including those who are internal migrants, saw an increase in their working hours of nearly an hour (Figure 3). However, the salary per hour only increased for Chilean women in the same period. Male international migrants had longer working

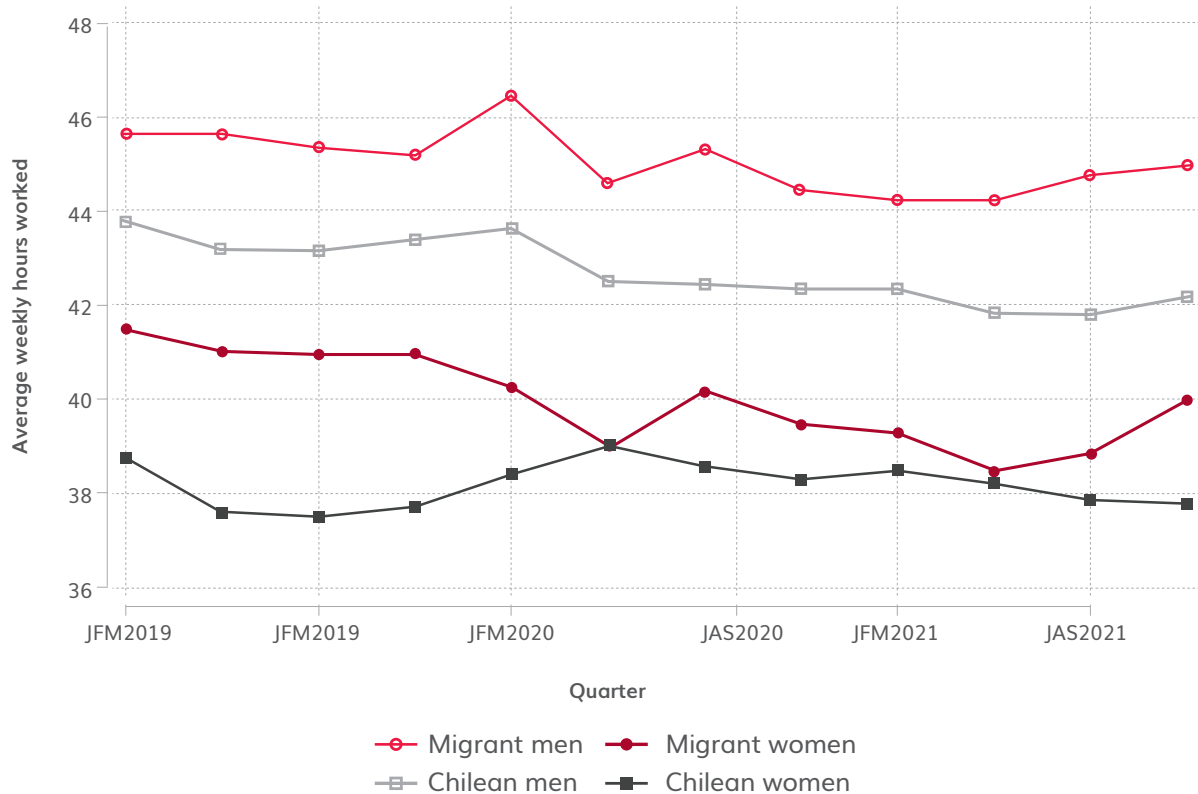
42 31 years old, a recent migrant from Peru: in-depth interview

43 26 years old, recent migrant from Peru: in-depth interview

44 40 years old, lifelong migrant from Haiti: in-depth interview

hours compared to international female migrants and Chilean males for the period between January 2019 and December 2021, as shown in Figure 3, which also shows a breakdown per quarter of the average working hours per week, by gender.

Figure 3. Hours worked per quarter by country of origin and gender



Note. Adapted from the 2018-2021 ENE by INE (2021). "JAS" stands for "January, April and September" for each year; "JFM" stands for "January, February and March".

The international migrant women who participated in this study preferred to work in the informal sector than the formal sector as they found the former offered more flexibility to accommodate their caring responsibilities, especially during the pandemic. For instance, Estefany⁴⁵, from Venezuela, explained that "her husband works full-time with a contract in a butchery, so it is also convenient for her to work informally because it allows her to see her children when they get out of school" (Field notes from participant observations, Barrio Meiggs Santiago, September 16th).

45 45 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: participant observation.

Furthermore, many women do not have enough time to work in formal jobs due to the domestic care duties they must take on, especially child care. This situation is even more pronounced for migrant women, especially those who lack sufficient social networks to share domestic chores, and who live in places perceived as dangerous. As some women fear their children could be exposed to risky situations on the streets, such as drug consumption, thefts, among others, they prefer to carry out work that allows them to receive income and watch out for their children when they are at home, which usually means picking children up from school and staying with them the rest of the day:

"To this day since I arrived here [in Chile] I have not contributed anything to my home. [...] First, because that year, that whole year of 2020 in the pandemic and some of 2021, I did not have papers to work, even though I entered legally [as a tourist] [...]. Second, because my children are very young and perhaps because of the place where my mother lives, because she lives in an informal urban settlement here in Antofagasta, which is not very safe" (Gloria⁴⁶).

Findings also show that in 10 out of the 16 regions, mainly in the centre and south of the country, the rate of informal employment among migrants is lower than for non-migrants. In northern regions, the proportion of migrants in informal employment tends to be higher than that of nationals, for example, in Antofagasta (29.4% informality among migrants versus 22.2% among nationals), Tarapacá (40.3% versus 28.3%), and Arica y Parinacota (44% versus 32.8%). The regions with the largest and smallest gaps are the Bío region (12 pp. higher among migrants) and Valparaíso (0.4 pp. higher among non-migrants), respectively (see Figure B1 in Appendix 2).

Experts concur that international migration flows present new challenges in relation to housing in the northern region of Chile. They perceive today's more urgent problems in this regard as being related to ghettoisation, informal settlements, and exclusion dynamics in the city, as the number of migrants living informally in big cities has been increasing since the pandemic. Relatedly, the data show that international migrants frequently live in overcrowded houses. For example, sharing a single apartment with other families, or living in informal settlements without access to water or electricity. This is due to the impossibility of affording, or accessing decent housing due to their irregular migratory status, so it is especially common among recently arrived international migrants. According to interviewees, the pandemic exacerbated this problem. Experts frequently referred to a growing trend in the northern region of migrants living in precarious conditions with no access to basic services such as water or electricity:

46 31 years old, recent migrant from Peru: in-depth interview.

"This problem is not only a matter of quantity [as the number of international migrants has vastly increased during the pandemic], but has to do with the quality of migration. Because they are using public spaces [to live] or are making informal urban settlements. [...] People end up as ghettoised, which has a very negative impact, it is very visible, etcetera. So, yes, we do have a ghettoisation of migration in Chile" (Central government expert, p. 68).

The third and fourth mediating factors for inequality among migrant groups appeared to be constant before, during, and after the pandemic. The nationality of international migrants appeared as an important variable mediating the relationship between the impacts of the pandemic and employment. The nationality with the highest labour market participation rate⁴⁷ is Venezuelan (83%), while Bolivian migrants have the lowest rate at 65%. This pattern is repeated for the employment rate, where Venezuelans again have the highest rate, with 77% of the working-age population employed, with Bolivians at only 58%. The situation in relation to the informal employment rate is the reverse, with Venezuelans representing the lowest number of informally employed workers (18%) and Bolivians the highest (34%).

Table 3 shows high employment rates and educational levels among international migrants, which contrasts sharply with their comparatively lower standings in terms of poverty and income. Regarding poverty and income, the findings reveal a stark disparity among different nationalities and migrant communities: while 10% of the Venezuelan migrant community lives in poverty, a striking 30% of the Haitian community in Chile live below the poverty threshold, taken as the minimum hourly wage. By contrast, in two qualitative cases, individuals reported job satisfaction after several years of residence and employment in Chile. Additionally, one Peruvian migrant informant expressed a positive sentiment towards his migrant status, attributing it to the perceived favourable impression of Peruvian workers among Chilean employers.



The difference in labour informality between migrants and nationals shows important regional variation, with higher levels of informality in the north of Chile.

47 Participation rate is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force (defined as persons of working age who during the reference week meet the requirements to be included in the employed or unemployed category) in relation to the working-age population (people aged over 15 years old) (INE, 2019).

Table 3. Characteristics of the main migrant groups living in Chile

Variables/Countries	Venezuela	Peru	Colombia	Bolivia	Haiti	Argentina
Age	35.8	38.6	36.4	35.5	33.4	40.7
Years of education	14.9	11.9	12.3	11.1	10.5	12.9
Women (%)	52.0	57.0	64.0	61.0	39.0	54.0
Participation rate (%)	83.0	72.0	73.0	65.0	76.0	70.0
employment rate (%)	77.0	63.0	63.0	58.0	62.0	62.0
Informality (%)	18.0	31.0	26.0	34.0	14.0	32.0
Poverty (%)	10.0	22.0	19.0	27.0	30.0	11.0
Salary per hour (PPP)	9.22	9.69	15.63	7.81	6.28	19.76
% of total migrants	41.10	14.40	10.71	7.71	6.40	5.29

Note. Adapted from CASEN by the Ministry of Social Development and Family (2020).

The final factors, after signalling the relevance of nationality, are stereotypes and cultural differences that lead to unexpected interpersonal hostility, prejudice, and discrimination in the country of destination. Qualitative data showed that international migrants were often subjected to stereotypes and discrimination, and some experienced hostile treatment and threats of violence from Chileans or other migrant groups. Data reported below show that some migrants perceive Chileans as close-minded, and, therefore, experienced them as hostile or exclusionary, with some interactions ending in verbal violence and threats. As Marco⁴⁸ explained:

"I once had a disagreement with a coworker, and he showed me a knife and practically threatened me. "If you continue working in the same way [referring to hard-work], I'm going to make sure you go back to your country".

Negative perceptions of other migrant groups may also lead to discrimination and prejudice:

48 49 years old, lifelong migrant from Peru: in-depth interview

"Mm, yes, I have seen... The Venezuelans, it seems to me that all the delinquency that you hear about here in Antofagasta, is because of them. Maybe because of lack of resources, or maybe they are bad people, we don't know" (Dante⁴⁹).

Episodes of racism at work were also reported:

"I go every day to work, but the Chilean women are mean to me. [Why?] They humiliate me, they say ugly things to me. [...] She told me because I have black skin. I said, "I have black skin, but it is not dirty, I take baths and everything". She did not answer" (Rita⁵⁰).

International migrants interviewed noted that discrimination, xenophobia, and racism affected their daily lives. They reported feeling they must work harder to prove "who they are" because nobody knows them in the receiving country, so they feel that they are on probation: "You bring the feeling of being, or the attitude of 'I need to be responsible' [...], because nobody knows you [here]" (Karen⁵¹).

Conclusions and implications

Work and employment conditions in Chile were particularly difficult for migrants during the pandemic and especially for international migrants. Though some maintained their salaries, the unemployment rate grew by 2.3% in the first months of the pandemic, resulting in 67,773 more international migrants and 23,823 more internal migrants being unemployed during April 2020-June 2020 compared to January 2020-March 2020 (see Table 2 above). Relatedly, non-professional internal migrants experienced a highly volatile labour and economic situation, experiencing greater vulnerability than professional internal migrants.

International migrants without regular migratory status in Chile faced precarity, falling into 'informality gaps' that affected their working conditions, housing, and access to social services. International migrants also received lower salaries and were subject to long working hours, compared to Chilean workers. Despite being more educated, international migrant women in Chile were more likely to live below the poverty line than Chilean women and men.

49 26 years old, recent migrant from Peru: in-depth interview

50 40 years old, lifelong migrant from Haiti: in-depth interview

51 42 years old, recent migrant from Venezuela: in-depth interview

The data analysed here show that the northern region of Chile has been significantly affected by an international migratory crisis during the pandemic, where higher levels of vulnerability were observed (in terms of overcrowding, informality, and insecurity) among international migrants than in other regions. The northern zone of the country has seen a surge in informal settlements and overcrowding of international migrants due to the migratory crisis that emerged since the beginning of the pandemic in the border corridors (i.e., the city of Colchane). Place of residence, therefore, emerged as an important structural factor impacting many migrants during the pandemic.

The migration context of the country's northern region also led to a prevalence of informal commerce among the international migrant population, a finding that emerged particularly through participant observations. Many informants reported that, the number of informal stalls—frequently run by international migrants—in traditionally commercial neighbourhoods significantly increased after quarantines ended at the end of 2021, filling the streets and passages of market stalls. Furthermore, new international migrants arriving in Chile both before and during the pandemic—when other borders in the Latin American region were closed and quarantines were imposed—had to pass through unauthorised routes in the north, resulting in more precarious socioeconomic and labour situations, as well as risking their lives.

Our analysis also showed that international migrants frequently face housing difficulties, and often live in precarious and overcrowded conditions. In addition, they are often victims of hostile treatment and discrimination in interpersonal relationships at work. Furthermore, the length of time of residence in Chile proved to be an important variable to reduce socioeconomic inequality among international migrants, especially because longer periods of residency resulted in strengthened social networks and favoured formal work contracts.

Four employability profiles of internal and international migrants living in Chile since the beginning of the pandemic emerged from the findings of this study:

1. International migrants who arrived in Chile more than five years ago, most with a family member or friend already in the country, were quickly provided with a first formal job. During the pandemic, they suffered similar struggles in their working status to Chilean nationals, such as being laid off because of the closure of their place of work or the impossibility of working during quarantines. Because of these scenarios, they received support from family, friends, and the government through cash transfers;
2. International and (especially non-professional) internal migrants with unstable work before the pandemic, who used personal savings, family, and friends' support, and/or government cash transfers to invest in products to sell in the

- informal sector or other self-employment projects, during and after the pandemic;
3. International migrants arriving recently in Chile through unauthorised means, having an irregular migratory status that forced them to work in informal commerce or with informal working agreements. Since the pandemic, this group is critically falling in what are called 'informality gaps', in terms of legal employment, social services, and housing;
 4. Internal migrants who had a stable and good economic and labour situation and migrated during the pandemic to increase their quality of life.

In terms of reasons for migrating, even though some participants referred to personal/family reasons as well as economic or political crises in their country of origin, it is notable that for most international migrants, getting a good job was their main goal in migrating to Chile, in line with existing literature. Nevertheless, labour informality might be a much more widespread phenomenon in recent years than is observed through national averages. More specifically, participant observations and disaggregated quantitative regional data showed a systematic process of informalisation involving the subcontracting of migrants, especially recent international migrants and people who lost their jobs because of the pandemic. In this sense, the specific migration cohort appeared to be an important mediating factor, as people who migrated in the first waves of the pandemic usually did so with previously established contacts in Chile, so they could easily find a job upon arrival. Social networks appeared to be of vital importance among the Peruvian group, as well as for the way they settled in the city and the creation of a community with strong social ties. On the other hand, due to their irregular migratory status, international migrants arriving since 2020 have more frequently faced poor working conditions, non-validation of their university degrees, and informality, thereby making it more difficult to engage in the formal labour market.

Gender appeared to be another mediating factor during COVID-19, with gender-based discrimination exacerbating pre-existing inequalities. Being a woman emerged as a key factor for understanding several issues concerning how migration and work opportunities and conditions are related. Indeed, women experienced more challenges in terms of unpaid care work that jeopardised or impeded paid employment, especially during quarantines and school closures. Gender inequalities observed in the study include the reduction of working hours for women, but also the increase in salaries exclusively among Chilean women. There also appeared to be the trend of women engaging in informal work to accommodate their caregiving tasks. Interestingly, the 'informality gap' phenomenon for women in the context of work takes on a particular dimension. Women may choose informal work to balance employment with their caregiving responsibilities. This can reveal additional inequalities rooted in the challenges and burdens associated with balancing work and family roles. These imbalances largely impact women, and further perpetuate structural inequalities in Chilean society.

Furthermore, variables such as nationality and interpersonal hostilities intertwine with work and employment in a more cultural sense, in terms of national stereotypes and intergroup hostility. This intertwining is observable through, for example, the association of specific nationalities with certain types of work, or through skewed perceptions of employment capabilities, among other factors. In this regard, nationality can favour or hinder the labour integration of international migrants in Chile, as nationalities are perceived differently based on racial/cultural stereotypes. Whereas some groups are associated with lower qualified jobs, such as Haitians, others, such as Peruvians are considered more suitable for better jobs, as they are considered to be more hard-working than other nationalities. These deeply ingrained societal biases, which become structural barriers for some groups, or structural factors, seem to have remained constant during the pandemic.

Findings show that international migrants often find themselves in informal jobs upon arrival in Chile, with salaries negotiated verbally. However, the more time they spend working and living in Chile, the better the economic and labour situation tends to be. This highlights the vulnerability of recent international migrants, particularly those who arrived in the country through unauthorised routes and lack a residence permit. Their irregular migratory status prevents them from accessing formal employment, creating what we refer to as 'informality gaps'. These gaps create a vicious circle of precarity involving employment insecurity, difficulties in accessing social services, and precarious housing, all due to a lack of regularisation upon entering Chile through unauthorised channels. Likewise, time is not always a protective factor against informality and bad work conditions, but rather increases the likelihood of having contacts on whom one can count on for support in Chile.

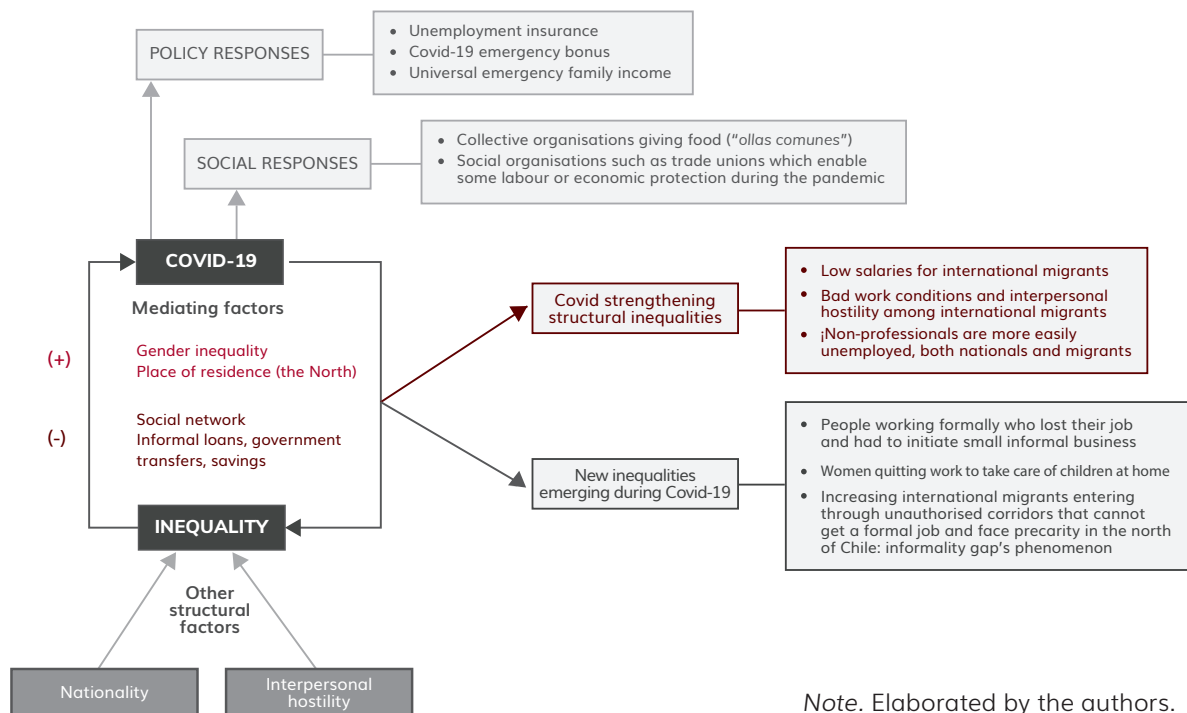
Finally, this study identified two mediating factors that served to protect migrants from informality and poor working conditions, particularly during the initial stages of their migration to Chile, thereby contributing to the reduction of labour market inequality. Firstly, the presence of a robust social network emerged as a pivotal factor in facilitating social and labour integration in this study. Chilean citizens, followed by long-standing international migrants, appeared to be less susceptible to inequality than recent, especially irregular, international migrants. Secondly, regular migrants and Chileans alike were, in some instances, beneficiaries of governmental financial aid, loans given by informal lenders, or had personal savings, which they subsequently invested in merchandise for street vending during and after the pandemic. Despite its precarious nature, informality was considered a more favourable alternative to low-wage salaried positions by many participants. On a broader scale, migrants expressed gratitude for the educational and healthcare services in Chile, particularly regular migrants who were recipients of cash transfers and other policy interventions during the pandemic. Additionally, community

organisations emerged in low-income areas and informal settlements during the pandemic, playing a crucial role in providing free meals to those in need, epitomised by the 'ollas comunes', an important phenomenon in Chile's informal urban settlements and low-income neighbourhoods.

In conclusion, the relationship between migration and employment is mediated by variables such as gender, place of residence, nationality, and intergroup hostilities between different groups of international migrants and Chileans. The impact of the first two proved to be heightened during the pandemic, while the latter two appear to be variables affecting the migrant population relatively constantly, independent of the pandemic.


Figure 4 summarises the main results in terms of the conditions and factors that mediate the relationship between employment and migration in Chile, considering the pandemic as the contextual background that brought critical aspects into this equation. The COVID-19 crisis had many negative effects for international migrants, especially because the loss of jobs decreased people's income and quarantines made it difficult to share household tasks between family and friends. Many people were forced to work informally, to increase their earnings and have a job that could be complementary to their domestic duties.

Figure 4. Summary of results



Note. Elaborated by the authors.

Firstly, as Figure 4 shows, it can be concluded that COVID-19 strengthened existing structural inequalities, especially increasing differences between international migrants and national populations. International migrants also report having lower salaries, even though they work longer hours than their Chilean counterparts. Moreover, international migrants are found to experience poor working conditions (informal contracts, exhausting hours), as well as hostility in the workplace (discrimination and/or racism) due to prejudice. This is especially evident for groups such as Haitians and Venezuelans, but also Peruvians when they first arrive in Chile. Furthermore, non-professional internal and international migrants fell more easily into unemployment during the pandemic and frequently chose to invest in informal street commerce as a self-employed alternative during hard times.



Despite being more educated, international migrant women in Chile were more likely to live below the poverty line than Chilean women and men.

Our qualitative data show that international migrants remain at a higher risk of precarious employment when arriving in the country, with their possibilities of obtaining a formal working contract being dependent on employer's perceptions of effort and 'hard work'. They frequently face long probation periods in informality, frequently leading to precarious housing conditions and difficulties in accessing social services. The 'informality gap' phenomenon further limits their possibilities to obtain regularisation. This is a contentious issue, since while recent international migrants face difficulties to regularise their migratory and work situation, their employers save on social security contributions associated with contracts.

In addition, during COVID-19 some new inequalities emerged, as many people in the formal sector lost their job and had to start working informally, where women represent a special case of structural inequality as they had to reduce their hours or quit their jobs to take care of children. Based on interviews with experts, as well as interviews and participant observations with migrants, since the pandemic the number of international migrants entering through unauthorised routes in the northern Region of Chile is increasing. These migrants, especially women, are more likely to fall into 'informality gaps'.

Policy recommendations

To facilitate political and social transformation in Chile and promote the socioeconomic integration of international and internal migrants, the following strategies could be considered:

- 1. Enhancing the understanding of the new Migration Law among public officials through a comprehensive communication agenda, along with supplementary training:** The Migration Law, introduced in April 2021, promotes a human rights approach to safe, regular, and responsible migration in Chile. This aligns with earlier decrees that provided universal healthcare for all residents in the country (2015). However, there are questions about the distinctiveness of the law and its potential to improve migrants' interactions with authorities. The study findings suggest challenges in implementation and communication of the law, especially among public health and education officials, leading to potential issues with program implementation and migrant awareness, since some public services are still denied to international migrants. A strategy for improved communication and understanding of legal changes regarding migrant rights might be beneficial, especially for public officials and workers in the public health and education sectors.
- 2. Strengthening the dissemination of information regarding supportive organisations, both public and private, in each region that can assist migrants:** The study found that irregular international migrants often lack essential information about regularisation processes upon entering the country. One potential solution could be improved coordination between the central government and civil society organisations in each region to disseminate information about migrants' benefits, rights, and responsibilities. Government can ensure that these civil society organisations are capable of meeting increased demand for benefits. Certain steps towards regularisation from migrants could also be explored, which may involve hiring additional personnel and increasing funding for these departments and organisations.
- 3. Facilitating collaboration among relevant institutions involved in migrant issues, such as the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Interior, the IOM, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) , etc., to streamline effects:** International organisations such as the ILO and IOM, as well as governmental departments such as Ministry of Interior, the National Migration Service (*Servicio Nacional de Migraciones* [SERMIG]), and the Investigations Police of Chile (*Policía de Investigaciones de Chile* [PDI]), and NGOs such as Techo Foundation, Fasic, Incami, and the SJM, among others, are already addressing

the needs of international migrants. However, there is a lack of guidance and articulation of the efforts of different institutions, both public and private. In this sense, it would be beneficial to create working groups including representatives from each organisation. This could further encourage inter-organisational and cross-issue collaboration to articulate efforts to address specific issues of the integration process.

4. **Evaluating the potential of an integrated national job vacancies system and engaging key stakeholders, including CEOs and managers:** A key factor in alleviating inequality in migrants' labour conditions identified in the study is the role of social networks. However, labour integration ideally should not rely solely on individual strategies to access privileged formal contacts. Consideration could be given to developing an integrated national system of job vacancies, coupled with curriculum vitae submissions. Existing initiatives like "*Destino Empleado*" ("Destination Work") are steps in the right direction, but these strategies might be enhanced with psychosocial interventions to bring about cultural transformations among CEOs and managers. This could be particularly valuable in addressing prejudice based on nationality and positioning Chile as an intercultural country where equal opportunities are paramount.
5. **Encouraging research that focuses on understanding the dynamics of labour market integration for internal and international migrants:** Public organisations could be established to collect, analyse, and provide updated and accurate data, and to guide specific interventions for non-professional internal migrants. These interventions could aid those in search of educational programs or employment, particularly those facing precarious trajectories. The integration of internal and international migrants into the labour market may be an important aspect of public policy discussions. Potential interventions could involve information platforms, labour mediation institutions, and cultural transformations among staff managers and recruitment staff, with the aim of reducing observed inequalities in labour conditions.
6. **Assessing the feasibility of a national day-care program to potentially enhance women's participation in paid work:** To tackle the gender gap in the migration-employment relationship, provision of caregiving services to enable women to participate in formal work could be considered. The development of public policies creating comprehensive programs to increase the availability, accessibility, and quality of affordable day care could be beneficial for all mothers, whether they are national citizens or migrants, and irrespective of their migratory status. This approach might serve as an additional measure to address the issue of gendered income disparity among migrant women, particularly those with irregular migratory status, who often bear a disproportionate burden of family care responsibilities.

7. Conducting nuanced research and interventions in the north of the country and in commercial centres in Santiago, taking regional differences into account:

When considering territorial factors, the study suggests that substantial attention needs to be placed on strategies targeting individuals residing in the north of Chile and the commercial centres in Santiago. It proposes the collection of rigorous data in the medium and small cities in the central and southern regions of Chile, to gain insights into the key issues both internal and international migrants may be facing. The proposal for public funding of mixed-methods research in these regions is emphasised, with initial intervention efforts ideally starting in the north of Chile and Santiago city, due to the high concentration of migrants in these areas. Such research could yield significant data, guiding the prioritisation and creation of social programs where they are most urgently needed, before potentially being expanded nationwide.

8. Exploring the possibility of an intervention and awareness-raising agenda to enhance interculturality and address prejudice and hostility:

Interpersonal hostility and nationality were identified as factors influencing the daily lives of migrants, regardless of the pandemic. In this way, interventions that promote labour integration in the medium term might be considered. The creation of a clear and effective awareness-raising agenda could be beneficial. Regularly disseminated through mass media, such an agenda could inform civil society about the changing dynamics of migration in Chile, and how each individual can contribute to a more inclusive, intercultural country. In line with González et al.'s (2017) recommendation, the creation of intercultural neighbourhoods or communities is also suggested. Psychosocial teams, consisting of professionals like psychologists, sociologists, and social workers, could engage with and provide interventions in these intercultural communities, particularly with community leaders and local communication channels. These community-based initiatives could play a crucial role in combating prejudice and interpersonal hostility among culturally diverse groups.

The study reveals that the ability to access a formal job or receive government transfers often depends on individual strategies, social networks, or the fortune of encountering a public official who provides clear information. In this context, narratives around personal achievement, a stronger work ethic, and adaptive capabilities are deemed fundamental within the Chilean cultural discourse, which relies on the individual efforts of each migrant. This perspective could potentially foster prejudice and discrimination. To mitigate this, public policies might aim to reduce levels of individual responsibility for social integration by designing informed and effective support programs that intervene in those contextual and sociocultural factors contributing to inequality among some vulnerable groups. Policymakers may also consider learning from spontaneous local responses to crises,

such as organisations or social networks that offer job contacts and housing options, or informal loans for investment in informal commerce. This bottom-up approach can contribute to knowledge-building and transformation.

In conclusion, the policy recommendations outlined above aim to facilitate political and social transformation in Chile, while promoting the socioeconomic integration of both international and internal migrants. By improving communication, strengthening collaboration among institutions, enhancing labour market integration, addressing gender disparities, considering regional differences, combating prejudice, and implementing effective support programs, Chile can strive to become a more inclusive and intercultural society. These policy measures, backed by rigorous research and guided by the principles of human rights and equality, have the potential to create positive change and ensure a more equitable future for all residents of Chile, regardless of their migratory status.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Methodological design for the qualitative study

Tabla A1. Demographic characteristics of participants in qualitative study⁵²

Interviewees									
N°	Name	Age	Migrant	Duration	Country of origin	Place of residence	Pre-pandemic work status	Current work status	Salary (PPP)
1	Irma	47	International	Lifelong	Peru	Antofagasta	Unemployed	Unemployed	0
2	Gloria	31	International	Recent	Peru	Antofagasta	Formal	Unemployed	0
3	Paola	47	International	Recent	Venezuela	Santiago	Formal	Unemployed	0
3	Karen	42	International	Recent	Venezuela	Santiago	Formal	Formal	929.48
3	Roberto	48	International	Recent	Venezuela	Santiago	Formal	Formal	2091.3
4	Marco	49	International	Lifelong	Peru	Santiago	Formal	Self-employed	1452.3
4	Ana	63	International	Lifelong	Peru	Santiago	Formal	Self-employed	1452.3
5	Dante	26	International	Recent	Peru	Antofagasta	Studying	Informal	1394.2
6	Carmen	37	International	Lifelong	Venezuela	Antofagasta	Unemployed	Formal	1161.8
7	Omar	41	International	Recent	Venezuela	Antofagasta	Informal	Unemployed	1161.8
8	Josy	39	International	Recent	Venezuela	Santiago	Informal	Self-employed	464.74
9	Rita	40	International	Lifelong	Haiti	Santiago	Unemployed	Informal	929.48
10	Franco	34	International	Lifelong	Haiti	Santiago	Formal	Formal	1232
11	Samuel	40	International	Lifelong	Haiti	Santiago	Formal	Formal	1627
12	Bernardita	35	Internal	Recent	Chile	Santiago	Formal	Formal	5809.2
13	Javier	37	Internal	Recent	Chile	Valdivia	Self-employed	Self-employed	7552
14	Diana	30	Internal	Lifelong	Chile	Santiago	Unemployed	Self-employed	929.48
15	Florencia	27	Internal	Lifelong	Chile	Santiago	Employed	Employed	929.48

52 In the first section of the table, the first column is assigned to the interview number. In the second section, the first column is assigned to the participant observation number, with S referring to Santiago, and A to Antofagasta.

All real names and other personal information were replaced with pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality of data.

Participant Observations									
N°	Name	Age	Migrant	Duration	Country of origin	Place of residence	Post-pandemic work status	Current work status	Daily salary app (PPP)
S2	Camilo	30	International	Recent	Ecuador	Santiago	Informal commerce	Informal commerce	n/a
A1	NA	40	International	Recent	Colombia	Antofagasta	Informal contract	Informal commerce	92.95
A2	Fernanda	30	International	Recent	Colombia	Antofagasta	Informal commerce	Informal commerce	n/i
A2	Carly	20	International	Recent	Colombia	Antofagasta	Formal	Informal commerce	34.86 - 46.47
A3	Eber	40	International	Lifelong	Colombia	Antofagasta	Formal	Informal commerce	n/a
A4	Daniel	45	International	Lifelong	Ecuador	Antofagasta	Informal commerce	Informal commerce	n/a
A4	n/i	35	International	Lifelong	Peru	Antofagasta	Formal	Informal commerce	n/a
A4	Úrsula	30	International	Recent	Peru	Antofagasta	Self-employed	Informal commerce	n/a
A4	Gabriel	20	International	Recent	Venezuela	Antofagasta	n/i	Informal commerce	n/a
A4	José	35	International	Recent	Ecuador	Antofagasta	n/i	Informal commerce	n/a
S4	Estefany	45	International	Recent	Venezuela	Santiago	Formal	Informal commerce	Max. 139.42
S4	n/i	30	International	Lifelong	Haiti	Santiago	Informal commerce	Informal commerce	n/a
S4	Marta	45	International	Lifelong	Ecuador	Santiago	Informal commerce	Informal commerce	n/a
S4	Boris	60	International	Lifelong	Ecuador	Santiago	Informal commerce	Informal commerce	n/a

Note. Elaborated by the authors.

Appendix 2. Main results from quantitative analyses of secondary data

Tabla B1. International migrant's characteristics compared to Chilean population

	International migrants	Chileans (including internal migrants)
Age	36.8	45.0
Years of education	13.3	11.6
Women (%)	54.8	55.1
Participation rate (%)	75.6	53.9
Employment rate (%)	67.8	47.0
Informality (%)	23.4	27.9
Salary per hour (PPP)	11.19	14.22
Poverty (%)	15.6	9.2

Note. Adapted from CASEN by Ministry of Social Development and family (2020).

Tabla B2. Evolution of the number of migrants residing in the country

Migrants	2020				2021				
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	
Lifelong	Internal	2,557,205	2,604,105	2,602,463	2,598,796	2,564,034	2,619,783	2,628,887	2,666,118
	International	597,269	698,643	693,395	691,983	785,120	753,473	742,667	802,080
Recent	Internal	521,472	425,108	389,884	394,936	419,282	463,348	480,093	505,132
	International	888,696	807,061	832,002	850,708	783,579	839,841	864,582	815,316
Total	4,564,642	4,534,917	4,517,744	4,536,424	4,552,015	4,676,444	4,716,229	4,788,647	
Internal migrants	3,078,677	3,029,213	2,992,347	2,993,732	2,983,316	3,083,130	3,108,980	3,171,251	
International migrants	1,485,965	1,505,704	1,525,397	1,542,692	1,568,699	1,593,314	1,607,249	1,617,397	
Lifelong migrants	3,154,474	3,302,748	3,295,859	3,290,779	3,349,154	3,373,255	3,371,554	3,468,199	
Recent migrants	1,410,168	1,232,168	1,221,885	1,245,644	1,202,861	1,303,189	1,344,675	1,320,449	

Note. Adapted from the 2020-2022 ENE by INE (2022).

Tabla B3. Number of hours worked and hourly wage rates

	Chileans (including internal migrants)		International migrants	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Hours of work per week	40.96	40.66	43.31	43.17
Salary per hour (USD - PPP)	8.91	10.18	6.70	7.38

Note. Adapted from the 2019-2021 ENE by INE (2021).

The event study proposal used in Higa et al. (2022) is adapted in order to find the effects of the pandemic on the following variables:

1. A binary variable "Employed" that takes a value of 1 when the individual is employed and 0 when he/she is unemployed.
2. A binary variable "Labour force" that takes as value 1 when the individual is active in the labour market and 0 when he/she is inactive.
3. A logarithmic variable of total labour income, in dollars.
4. A logarithmic variable of monthly hours usually worked.
5. A logarithmic variable of hourly labour income.

Given the temporal relevance of the estimation, we also created a categorical variable D_i^q which indicates whether the observation is in a pre-pandemic period (2019 to March 2020), in the first pandemic year (March 2020 to March 2021) or in the second pandemic year (March 2021 to December 2021). The division of these periods is determined in such a way that each period contains the Oct-Dec quarter, the period in which the ESI is conducted, so that each category has information regarding the income of the respondents. The vector X_i corresponding to the explanatory variables, contains information on gender, age, educational level attained, occupational category, region of residence and rurality indicator.

$$y_i = \sum_{q=1}^5 \beta_q D_i^q + \gamma X_i + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Results of regression modelling are shown in the Table below:

Tabla B4. Regression modelling equation results (1)

	Employed among active population	Active among working age Population	Labour income (PPP)	Monthly working hours	Hourly income (PPP)
March 2020 - March 2021	-0.018*** (-21.11)	-0.00758*** (-7.13)	0.0399* (2.26)	0.00527 (0.51)	-0.00750 (-0.78)
March 2021 - December 2021	-0.00993*** (-12.20)	-0.0142*** (-14.66)	0.112*** (7.23)	0.0152 (1.62)	0.000522 (0.06)
Woman	-0.0178*** (-25.00)	-0.0675*** (-69.45)	-0.351*** (-25.58)	-0.151*** (-18.05)	0.0970*** (12.39)
Self-Employed	0.724*** (247.42)	0.837*** (810.67)	-0.247*** (-5.64)	-0.492*** (-20.86)	0.311*** (13.58)
Employed	0.730*** (252.69)	0.820*** (736.08)	0.501*** (12.30)	-0.0368 (-1.84)	0.00687 (0.35)
Family member with no salary	0.731*** (252.13)	0.851*** (655.33)	-0.608*** (-3.30)	-0.232*** (-4.49)	-0.250 (-1.70)
Domestic service	0.734*** (252.56)	0.885*** (883.01)	0.168*** (3.34)	-0.338*** (-10.69)	0.233*** (8.02)
Age	0.00195*** (63.87)	-0.000515*** (-22.98)	0.0101*** (17.11)	0.00155*** (4.47)	0.0000724 (0.24)
Primary School	0.00934** (2.81)	0.0624*** (36.64)	0.275*** (3.36)	0.161** (2.70)	-0.100 (-1.61)
High School	0.0260*** (7.83)	0.0975*** (54.69)	0.619*** (7.57)	0.223*** (3.75)	-0.102 (-1.64)
Higher Technical Education	0.0373*** (10.82)	0.144*** (63.28)	0.879*** (10.53)	0.244*** (4.04)	-0.0827 (-1.31)
University Education	0.0470*** (13.81)	0.134*** (65.02)	1.378*** (16.60)	0.189** (3.14)	0.0502 (0.80)
Rural Zone	0.0106*** (12.90)	-0.00487*** (-5.45)	-0.0110 (-0.70)	-0.00180 (-0.19)	0.00313 (0.36)
Constant Variable	0.182*** (38.84)	0.122*** (39.63)	4.874*** (49.23)	4.968*** (70.79)	-3.280*** (-46.40)
Observations	485178	897250	37192	37897	35523
R ²	0.717	0.759	0.350	0.164	0.112
AR ²	0.717	0.759	0.350	0.163	0.112
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001					

Note. Adapted from the 2019-2021 ENE and ESI by INE (2021).

Additionally, a second model is created from equation (1), which considers the migrant condition, where Ch_i corresponds to the binary variable described above.

$$y_i = \sum_{q=1}^5 \beta_q D_i^q + \gamma X_i + \delta Ch_i + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

Results of regression modelling are shown in Table B5 below:

Tabla B5. Regression modelling equation results (2)

	Employed among active population	Active among working age Population	Labour Income (PPP)	Monthly working hours	Hourly income (PPP)
March 2020 - March 2021	-0.0187*** (-21.20)	-0.00791*** (-7.47)	0.0428* (2.46)	0.00219 (0.21)	-0.00445 (-0.47)
March 2021 - December 2021	-0.00998*** (-12.26)	-0.0145*** (-15.01)	0.114*** (7.44)	0.0131 (1.40)	0.00257 (0.29)
Migrant	0.00328* (2.22)	0.0306*** (12.09)	-0.111*** (-4.08)	0.113*** (8.27)	-0.120*** (-9.93)
Woman	-0.0178*** (-24.96)	-0.0676*** (-69.66)	-0.352*** (-25.87)	-0.150*** (-18.05)	0.0954*** (12.33)
Self-Employed	0.724*** (247.00)	0.836*** (789.85)	-0.246*** (-5.60)	-0.495*** (-21.06)	0.314*** (13.73)
Employed	0.730*** (252.21)	0.819*** (715.39)	0.503*** (12.38)	-0.0405* (-2.02)	0.0105 (0.53)
Family member with no salary	0.731*** (250.84)	0.849*** (618.70)	-0.587** (-3.24)	-0.243*** (-4.74)	-0.226 (-1.65)
Domestic Service	0.733*** (247.35)	0.879*** (686.04)	0.187*** (3.69)	-0.359*** (-11.56)	0.255*** (8.93)
Age	0.00196*** (63.64)	-0.000473*** (-21.23)	0.00966*** (16.36)	0.00198*** (5.72)	-0.000402 (-1.32)
Primary School	0.00940** (2.83)	0.0626*** (37.00)	0.271** (3.28)	0.165** (2.80)	-0.105 (-1.69)
High School	0.0260*** (7.84)	0.0974*** (55.05)	0.616*** (7.46)	0.226*** (3.86)	-0.106 (-1.72)
Higher Technical Education	0.0374*** (10.86)	0.145*** (63.66)	0.873*** (10.38)	0.250*** (4.20)	-0.0896 (-1.43)

University Education	0.0470*** (13.82)	0.134*** (65.31)	1.373*** (16.41)	0.193** (3.25)	0.0449 (0.72)
Rural Zone	0.0107*** (13.04)	-0.00422*** (-4.74)	-0.0154 (-0.98)	0.00253 (0.26)	-0.00171 (-0.20)
Constant Variable	0.181*** (38.93)	0.116*** (37.56)	4.921*** (49.17)	4.922*** (70.97)	-3.230*** (-46.23)
Observations	485178	897250	37192	37897	35523
R ²	0.717	0.759	0.351	0.168	0.119
AR ²	0.717	0.759	0.351	0.168	0.118
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001					

Note. Adapted from the 2019-2021 ENE and ESI by INE (2021).

Finally, equation (2) is extended to contain an interaction between this condition and the period of interest:

$$y_i = \sum_{q=1}^5 \beta_q D_i^q + \sum_{q=1}^5 \rho_q (D_i^q \times M)_i + \gamma X_i + \delta M_i + \epsilon_i \quad (3)$$

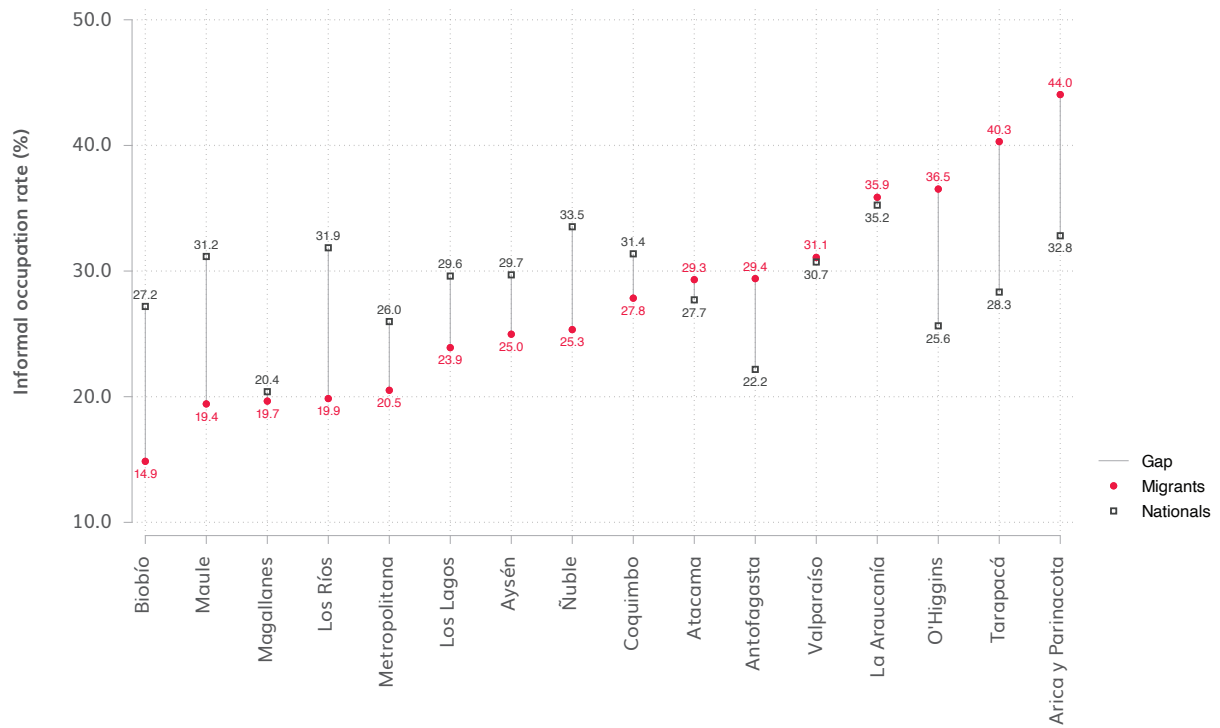
Results of regression modelling are shown in Table B6 below:

Tabla B6. Regression modelling equation results (3)

	Employed among active population	Active among working age Population	Labour Income (PPP)	Monthly working hours	Hourly income (PPP)
March 2020 - March 2021 # Migrant	-0.0182*** (-5.08)	0.0136* (2.21)	0.0130 (0.19)	0.0235 (0.75)	-0.0194 (-0.70)
March 2021 - December 2021#Migrant	-0.00587* (-2.05)	-0.00931 (-1.91)	0.160** (2.78)	0.0455 (1.63)	-0.0166 (-0.65)
Migrant	0.00188 (0.88)	0.0211*** (5.83)	-0.117* (-2.38)	0.0915*** (4.07)	-0.106*** (-5.01)
Constant	0.181*** (38.93)	0.116*** (37.91)	4.919*** (49.06)	4.924*** (70.75)	-3.232*** (-46.18)
Observations	485178	897250	37192	37897	35523
R ²	0.717	0.759	0.350	0.164	0.112
AR ²	0.717	0.759	0.350	0.163	0.112
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001					

Note. Adapted from the 2019-2021 ENE and ESI by INE (2021).

Figure B1. Gap between the informal employment rate of migrants and nationals considering region of residence



Note. Adapted from the 2018-2021 ENE by INE (2021).



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