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Racialisation of Immigrants at Work: Labour Mobility and Segmentation of Peruvian Migrants in Chile

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This article explores the emergent racialisation of Peruvian migrants as one element conditioning the labour segregation that characterises Peruvian insertion in Chile. We understand racialisation as a process of construction of categories in which both individual and collective actors participate, and whose expression is demonstrated by the differentiation and inequality that affects the racialised group. We tackle the articulation of racial differences among individual actors, both Chilean employers and Peruvian migrant workers, to suggest that the attribution of naturalised characteristics to migrants is related to segregation, mobility, and specific trajectories in the labour market.

Keywords: immigration, inequality, labour market, racialisation, social stratification, south–south migration.

Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the flow of migrants to Chile, particularly of migrant workers seeking better economic opportunities. The migrant population has continually increased since the early 1990s accompanied by a change in the countries of origin. In the 1960s, migrants to Chile were largely from Europe, but currently the flow has shifted towards a fundamentally Latin American immigration (Martínez, 2003). The foreign-born population represents a small percentage of the total population in Chile (less than 2 percent according to the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas de Chile (INE), 2002 census). However, immigration has been framed as a problem of public interest, partly because it predominantly originates in neighbouring countries. The immigration of Peruvian citizens is noteworthy for largely being a flow of workers, mostly feminine at its outset, who face significant labour segmentation towards low-skilled jobs.

In this article, we focus on the emergent racialisation of Peruvian migrants in Chile, one element that influences the labour market segregation faced by migrants. We suggest that Peruvian migrants are characterised as phenotypically different from Chileans, and are perceived to have personal characteristics that make them 'naturally' apt for jobs at the lowest end of the social hierarchy. Hence, we posit racialisation, a process that

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generates a multidimensional system of social stratification hierarchies (class, gender and race), as a key dimension in the understanding of migratory experiences. We suggest that migrants' work trajectories as well as their living conditions cannot be explained solely by exclusion based on social class and gender, neither are they only a consequence of cultural essentialism or limitations to citizenship (Caggiano, 2008). The work trajectories and living conditions of migrants also respond to emerging racial categorisations in the society of destination. These emerging racial categories position migrants so that they experience differentiated access to resources and opportunities. Here, we explore the racialisation process in the labour market, considering both Chilean employers' and Peruvian workers' perceptions of differences. We approach this phenomenon as a process of construction of categories (Tilly, 2000), in which both individual and collective actors participate, and whose presence is seen in the differentiation and inequality that affect racialised groups.

Peruvian Migration in Chile

Peruvian migration has specific characteristics that differentiate it from other intra-regional migrant groups in Chile (Stefoni, 2002; Martínez, 2003; Mora, 2011). First, it is a flow that is predominantly based on labour immigration of individual workers (although recent data suggests increasing numbers of family reunifications). This is suggested by the high rates of employment (83 percent for men and 72 percent for women, more than double the employment rates of Chilean women) (Martínez, 2003), and by the predominance of working-age migrants. Second, it is a *feminised* migration, given the possibility of maintaining family care responsibilities because of geographic proximity. Third, most Peruvian immigrants live in specific neighbourhoods in downtown Santiago, highlighting their visibility. Finally, and most importantly, Peruvian migration shows high levels of occupational concentration in low-skilled jobs, *largely independent of human capital considerations*. After Peruvian migrants (who account for 37 per cent of the total number of immigrants in the country according to the Departamento de Extranjería y Migración de Chile, 2010), the most important flow of intra-regional migrants in Chile comes from Argentina (17.2 per cent). Argentinean migration, however, is not feminised, is not geographically bounded, has not received as much attention from the press, and is not occupationally segregated.

The majority of the 131,000 Peruvian migrants living in Chile in 2009 have been hired in precarious and low-skilled jobs. Migrants' educational backgrounds do not coincide with their concentration in domestic service, construction and commerce. On average, Peruvian workers in these occupational niches have higher educational levels than their Chilean counterparts (Martínez, 2003; Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación (MIDEPLAN), 2006). This labour market segmentation is partly determined by the existence of informal structures for hiring workers, and by migration networks that direct employment offers towards specific occupational niches. In this way, migratory networks, which channel the migration process itself, contribute to the labour segmentation by acting as informal employment agencies (Massey et al., 1993; Cortés and Groisman, 2004; Mora and Piper, 2011).

In addition to these informal hiring structures and migratory networks, we argue that racial categorisations are a key element explaining the occupational segmentation that Peruvian migrants face in Chile, conditioning both the employers' hiring preferences and migrants' opportunities for job mobility (Conway, Bailey and Ellis, 2001; Kasinitz

and Vickerman, 2001). Employment niches are expected during the initial stages of the migratory process. However, the rigidity of this labour demand, which has been virtually static and independent of variables such as human capital and age, suggests the existence of other elements that structure employment niches for Peruvians in Chile. We argue that the concentration of migrants in specific low-skilled occupational niches can be framed as a product – and cause – of the perception of certain occupational categories as being apt for specific migrant groups, based on the naturalisation of migrants' personal skills, character and abilities. Also, the perceived characteristics of Peruvian migrants in Chile present a barrier to labour mobility for the small percentage of migrants with employment trajectories leading to skilled or semi-skilled occupations. Upward labour market mobility is commonly attributed, by both employers and migrants, to Peruvians' unquestioning loyalty and unconditional willingness to work, in addition to accumulated cultural capital. The naturalised abilities, character, and personality dispositions commonly attributed to migrants contribute to reproducing occupational segmentation and to hindering upward labour trajectories, as work assessments are based on differentiated criteria.

Methodology

Data for our analysis comes from in-depth interviews that took place in 2008 and 2011. We interviewed fourteen employers (thirteen Chilean and one Peruvian) of Peruvian migrants in Santiago. These employers hired Peruvian migrants for low-skilled jobs–construction, domestic labour – and for skilled and semi-skilled jobs (Table 1). Additionally, we interviewed 21 Peruvian workers hired for low-skilled and skilled jobs (Table 2). The first round of interviews was done in 2008 ($n = 16$), and the second in 2011 ($n = 19$). We selected migrants using a snowball method of sampling. We took into consideration their occupational status, gender, and educational level, recruiting participants in numbers roughly proportional to their distribution in the workforce, although by no means representative of the entire population. The research design was geographically restricted to Santiago (where 80 percent of Peruvian immigrants live; INE, 2002). In-depth interviews were confidential and voluntary. We obtained informed consent from all participants before each interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, took place at a location selected by the participant and lasted a maximum of 120 minutes. The analysis was done using manual coding for the following sixteen categories: migrant characterisation; labour trajectory; migration-related issues; perception of the company; organisational culture; labour conditions and access; upward mobility; perception of performance criteria; comparison of Chilean and Peruvian workers; appraisal of migrant labour; occupational barriers and their negotiation; relationships with other migrants; perceptions of personal trajectories; relationships with institutions; links with Peru; future projections.

Racialisation and Labour Market

The historical construction of racial categories stresses that race not only refers to people's physical characteristics but is also related to a specific cultural and historical context, thus offering a *way of interpreting physical differences* (Banton, 2000). There is a tendency to objectify race as something that a person is (Omi, 2001). However, racial meaning emerges, and is transformed, through relations between individuals in

Table 1. Characteristics of Interviewed Chilean Employers

No.	Gender	Age	Business type	Position
1	M	48	Construction	Supervisor
2	F	34	Department of employment services	Director
3	F	53	Household	Household head[a]
4	F	54	Household	Household head[b]
5	F	31	Household	Household head[c]
6	F	56	Household	Household head
7	M	–	Restaurant	Manager
8	M	35	Household	Household head[d]
9	M	–	Logistics	Supervisor
10	M	49	Gas distribution	Administration
11	F	35	Municipal Department of Education	Director
12	M	>55	Insurance company	Administration
13	M	67	Cleaning subcontractor	Human resources
14	M	–	Tailoring	Director[e]

[a]Works at a research institute.
[b]Works in construction engineering.
[c]Works as administrative staff.
[d]Works in consulting.
[e]Peruvian employer.

Table 2. Characteristics of Interviewed Peruvian Workers

No.	Gender	Age	Schooling	Current work or field
1	F	38	Incomplete college	Domestic worker
2	F	31	Incomplete college	Janitor (custodian)
3	F	28	High school degree	Domestic worker
4	F	46	High school degree	Domestic worker
5	M	37	Incomplete high school	Construction worker
6	M	43	Incomplete high school	Stonemason
7	M	47	Incomplete college	Storage clerk
8	M	27	Incomplete college	Gardener and construction
9	M	32	Incomplete vocational education	Sales assistant
10	M	42	Incomplete college	Sales assistant
11	M	48	Vocational education	Gardener and cleaning
12	M	<40	College degree	Waiter and courier
13	F	36	College degree	Administration
14	M	52	High school degree	Sales assistant
15	M	45	High school degree	Supervisor
16	M	30	Vocational education	Storage clerk
17	F	30	High school	Tailoring
18	M	27	College degree	Systems consultant
19	M	–	Incomplete college	Barman
20	M	22	High school degree	Waiter and supervisor
21	F	52	College degree	Administrative staff

a specific institutional context (Omi and Winant, 2002). The notion of racialisation, which considers group-specific representations as unstable and changing, underscores this relational and evolving approach of the socio-historical constitution of meanings

and racial categories (Winant, 2000: 185). Racialisation includes everyday mechanisms of the reproduction of racial categories, which produce social effects and specific ways of understanding oneself and one's life projects (Appiah, 2000). Among the institutions involved in this process, the labour market and its logics of hiring and job mobility stand out in the construction of the *otherness* of migrants. This is evident in the case of Peruvian migrants in Chile, as their migratory project is focused on 'labour success'.

Racism – which is not synonymous with racialisation – emerges in the association between racial categories and structures of domination (Omi and Winant, 2002). As Todorov (2000) suggests, moral judgment and political ideals legitimise domination, which emerges from an affirmation of hierarchically organised racial categories reflected in the naturalisation of low-status positions. Several authors in Latin America have referred to racial formation processes as patterns of discrimination, racism, otherness, or xenophobia experienced by intra-regional migrants, most of whom are from neighbouring countries with cultural and historical backgrounds similar to those of the host countries. Caggiano (2008) distinguishes between racism, discrimination, and cultural essentialism as related but independent phenomena, and not as convergent spheres for the production and attribution of specific racial categories (racialisation) to migrant groups. The author defines racism as the essentialisation of specific moral characteristics in Bolivian migrants in Argentina, associated with phenotypic perception and national origin. Similarly, Stefoni and Fernández (2011) as well as Tijoux (2011) consider the *otherness* and xenophobia that affect Peruvian migrants in Chile to be racist. Conversely, Jelin (2006) identifies the association of migrants' stoicism about their precarious life conditions with the 'Bolivian character' as cultural essentialism.

We suggest that all these processes are part of racial formation, but different from racism. This distinction between racialisation and racism, i.e. between the creation of racial categories and the effects of their association with group subordination, allows us to highlight the institutional logics and practices immersed in these logics. Although not necessarily racist, these institutional logics contribute to the production and reproduction of social boundaries underlying not only racism but also other hierarchies and forms of subordination. Phenotypes are as heterogeneous *within* Latin-American societies as *between* them, as these societies are equally *mestizo* (mixed race of both European and indigenous ancestry) and indigenous. Thus, we argue that racial formation is not based on migrants' phenotypical difference, but on a distinction between natives and migrants based on culture and origin, oriented to perceive physical differences as 'evident'. In the case of Chile, Peruvian migrants are perceived as having a more predominant indigenous ancestry.

This distinction explains why in studies of migration, migrants' differential access to the labour market and their corresponding labour trajectories have been examined as part of the racialisation process that migrants experience, thus hindering their participation in the host country (Bashi and McDaniel, 1997; Duany, 1998; Cordero-Guzmán, Smith and Grosfoguel, 2001; Kasinitz and Vickerman, 2001; Salazar Parreñas, 2001; Solé and Parella, 2003). Both individual and collective actors participate in this process, reproducing a category of differentiation (Tilly, 2000). Subsequently, this process produces experiences of inequality beyond those of the labour market that affect migrant social relations, even though the labour context is given primary importance.

Labour relations are also shaped by the intersection of social hierarchies (social class and gender) and by the types of capital that are accumulated and displayed at key moments in labour trajectories (Mora and Piper, 2011). The opportunities for access,

working conditions, and potential mobility in the labour market are linked not only to these accumulated types of capital and to the intersection of social hierarchies but also to the attribution of natural characteristics based on migrants' national origin. These essentialist perceptions of migrants' capabilities and characteristics influence their experiences in the Chilean labour market, pushing them into 'migrant occupations' and hindering their opportunities for labour mobility.

Even though the labour market is only one of the institutions whose regulatory framework and patterns of social relations contribute to the racialisation process, it is, nevertheless, among the most decisive in determining migrants' living conditions. Other social relations that reproduce hierarchies and racial differences include, for example, everyday experiences of discrimination (several of them making explicit references to historic territorial and political disputes between Chile and Peru), stereotyped images used by mass media, and hostile migratory legislation. The racialisation process of Peruvian migrants in Chile can therefore be framed as the convergence in the production of a specific category based on racial differences, and the individual and collective meanings ascribed to this category. This categorical organisation is the foundation for a specific interpretation of differences that generates inequality, and its diffusion and acceptance is decisive in determining migrants' living conditions and trajectories in the host country (Tilly, 2000).

The Emergence of the Other: Naturalisation and Essentialism

The arrival of Peruvian migrants, seen as an 'other' with different habits, traditions and ideas, and the construction of immigration as a problem of public interest, facilitate the use of practices of differentiation to define and reaffirm what is 'truly' Chilean. Through a process of opposition, Peruvian migrants' characteristics and ways of life are presented as if they were not present in the Chilean national community. In this context, differences tend to be exaggerated, highlighting a contrast with Chilean society. The Chilean employers interviewed refer to cultural and physical traits to explain the perceived differences of Peruvian workers, who are portrayed as 'backward and indigenous', in opposition to presumably 'modern and white' employers. There are explicit references to the civilisation–barbarism prototypical opposition in Chilean employers' perceptions, revealed in statements such as:

> I have gone to Tacna [Peru], I've been there … I think they [Peruvians] are much more indigenous than us. [Interviewer (I): Indigenous in what sense?] Like Indians, that is, you see a lot more Indians. [I: In terms of physical features?] Physical features, yes. [I: What about cultural traits?] I have no idea. One does not … one does not really interact with them, unless they serve you. But in terms of appearances, like there is no city here in Chile where you could encounter a full *Mapuche* population … Even the *Mapuche*, you see them with mobile phones here … I mean, no, they are light-years away. [I: Do you think they are more backward?] Apparently. I would say that it is a large percentage. Say, if you go to a place, a city in Peru, I mean, it catches your attention, it is as it was 100 years ago.
>
> (Table 1, no. 4)

References to an indigenous world, related to the past and contrasted with the encounter of 'civilisation' entailed in working in a Chilean household, are raised by a Chilean employer in the following way:

> This is what I am telling you. It is that when they [Peruvian domestic workers] are too much, too much from the mountains, contact with civilisation, arriving at a house where they can find everything, the cultural shock. . . . You cannot teach them overnight. Physically, the truth is that she is a person. . . , physically she has a pleasant face. I wouldn't have hired a Peruvian who looked as if she was coming down from the mountains because there is the issue of image one has to polish a little. She is small, dark, with a pleasant face, delicate features. She has good looks I would say. When the Peruvian arrived, she told me that everybody was white in Chile.
> (Table 1, no. 4)

The construction of phenotypical differentiation between Chileans and Peruvians facilitates Peruvians being seen as indigenous and pre-modern, in contrast with an idealised image of white and modern Chileans. The interaction of Peruvian migrants with Chilean society also produces a resignification of the migrant's racial identity. Although their experiences of discrimination and exclusion in Chile are often interpreted as a consequence of socio-historical differences between the nations, references to phenotypical features are common. Peruvian migrants see themselves as 'visibly *mestizo*', darker, and less 'European' than Chileans:

> There is a lot of racism in Chile. There is more racism than in Argentina. I don't know whether it is just with us Peruvians, but they [Chileans] have a lot of anger towards Peruvians. [. . .] Maybe it is in the face that you have. Well, in my country, for example, there are also white people, with light eyes, green eyes; we look like the United States itself. [. . .] But there is also an indigenous part. There is a mixture of races, and therefore, there are some lucky ones that have a nice face, nice eyes.
> (Table 2, no. 7)

> [I: Would you say that there is racial discrimination in Chile?] Yes, there is discrimination. And there is a lot here in Chile. People, because of the colour of . . . the race. I think that because . . . didn't the Italians arrive here? The Spaniards arrived here, who knows. There are countless races; you [Chileans] are lighter than we are. You have nicer faces than we do. And that has to be acknowledged. One cannot block the sun with a finger.
> (Table 2, no. 7)

> [I: Do you think that Peruvians are different?] Well, I am a little dark. And here, in general, the majority are white. [. . .] there is a lot of discrimination.
> (Table 2, no. 9)

The explicit references to physical differences by both, Chileans and migrants, reveal the level of institutionalisation of the Chilean-Peruvian categorical distinctions based on *perceptions* of differences in socio-cultural development and phenotype (Tilly, 2000). The fact that this opposition appears between two largely *mestizo* populations with substantial cultural, historical, and political homogeneity, such as Peru and Chile, demonstrates that the creation of racial categories comes from more profound social

conflicts (Banton, 2000), such as those related to national identity and to Chile's insertion in the global market. In this context, Peruvians would be *mestizos* in an imaginary that locates Chile as European despite its *mestizaje* (Larraín, 2000).

The Construction of Differences in the Labour Market

As we have suggested, the flow of Peruvian migration is characterised by its concentration in low-skilled jobs. However, 17 percent of Peruvian migrants are employed in skilled jobs, including migrants with upward labour trajectories (MIDEPLAN, 2006). These mobile trajectories reveal different job paths, facilitated by the strategic mobilisation of individual capitals – social, cultural, and economic – in a context of social exclusion; and also resulting from, macro-social elements, such as first employment or labour market conditions (Casal, García, Merino and Quesada, 2006; Jiménez Vásquez, 2009).

The literature on migrants' occupational mobility reveals the importance of cultural and social capital in obtaining and maintaining job opportunities (Aguilera, 2003; Aguilera and Massey, 2003; Fernández-Kelly, 2008). Objective dimensions, such as capitals, networks, socio-demographic characteristics, and the national and labour market contexts, and subjective dimensions, such as perception of opportunities, ability to innovate, craftsmanship, and transformations of *habitus*, juxtapose migrants' position in different axes of social stratification that they face in Chilean society (Mora, 2009).

Both the labour segmentation of Peruvian migrants in Chile as well as their limited upward mobility are linked to the available opportunities contingent upon the employers' evaluation of migrants' abilities, in consideration of Chilean–Peruvian opposition. It is in the employer–worker relationship where the construction of racial difference (with considerable effects on work trajectories) settles. The construction of racial difference directs migrants towards certain jobs based on specific work performance evaluation criteria for Peruvian migrants, thus defining upward mobility patterns. The classification of specific jobs as 'appropriate for Peruvian migrants' is clearly shown in the remarks of two Chilean employers, who explain why Peruvian women are employed as domestic workers:

> Even if she [a Peruvian woman] studied nursing or some other profession, it is very likely that she would end up working as a nanny anyway, because it's, that's just the way we think of them. [I: How come?] It's like, I think that one is used to the fact that the person, the Peruvian woman who arrives here, low-income, comes to work in a house. It would be weird if she studied nursing to work at the Las Condes Clinic [a private health clinic], for example. (Table 1, no. 5)

> A nurse can come here [to Chile], and work as a nanny. [. . .] Maybe the salary that a nurse has there [in Peru] is the same as what a nanny has here. (Table 1, no. 6)

A municipal employee states:

> I believe that, generally, the relationship . . . , when they mention a 'Peruvian nanny', it makes sense to people. Because of what I was telling you about,

> it's that people understand that they [Peruvians] come . . . that they are more related to that field. (Table 1, no. 2)

An employer from the construction industry adds a nuance about the low skill-level, even in a low-skilled field, of migrants:

> The majority of Peruvians do the hardest work, nothing else. There are no, as one would say, specialised labourers. The trained workforce is usually Chilean. The Peruvians who come here [to the construction site] are usually not specialised workers. There are very few [skilled labourers]. (Table 1, no. 1)

In this narrative, the possibility of working at a private health clinic is not related with the level of education, but instead, with the naturalisation of migrants' work in a specific place in the occupational scale. This association of Peruvian migrants with specific jobs and tasks exemplifies difference and constitutes an important source of differentiation and inequality. On the one hand, it lowers migrants' chances of working during labour market contractions, and on the other hand, it has a negative impact on their opportunities for upward mobility, crystallising migrants' trajectories in low-income and low-status positions.

Limitations to Upward Mobility: The Good Worker

The possibility of arranging strategies of upward mobility is closely related with migrants' social and cultural capital. But even when academic credentials are the starting point, *recognition* is essential to generating opportunities. It is the interplay between good educational credentials, learning capabilities, and actionable social bonds, together with a performance adapted to the Chilean labour market's criteria for legitimacy, that facilitates the recognition needed to afford upward labour mobility (Sir, 2012: in preparation). The valued Peruvian worker stands out for their sincerity, honesty, availability, responsibility, and positive attitude towards work. This performance is rewarded with what might be considered enforceable working conditions for Chilean workers, and is a prerequisite for a promotion mediated by the employer's trust.

The perception of submissiveness as a criterion for job legitimacy is captured by the assessment of a Peruvian domestic worker by a Chilean employer:

> I would say that the Peruvian [worker] comes [to Chile] out of a necessity to work. [. . .] they are very compliant, tremendously helpful. Like it almost scares you that they are that way. [I: In what sense are they helpful?] They have a smile until the very last moment, with good manners, never a bad attitude, nothing. (Table 1, no. 3)

Another employer adds the following:

> I could come home at ten at night, and she would be awake, waiting to ask me whether I would like to drink something or if I wanted her to serve me dinner. And that is after spending the whole day playing with my children, do you know what I mean? She is very helpful, she is like very welcoming. [I: she is helpful?] Yes, very helpful. It is like she knows how to keep you happy. (Table 1, no. 5)

Employers of Peruvian domestic workers define them as 'protective', 'good cooks', 'grateful', 'polite', 'gentle', 'submissive', 'with greater willingness' [than Chileans], 'responsible'. These characteristics would make them ideal domestic workers, in contrast to Chilean domestic workers who are defined by their employers as 'cheeky', 'irresponsible', 'they conceal everything', and 'are deceiving' (Table 1, numbers 1–13).

Besides defining and legitimising their working trajectories and conditions, the characterisation of Peruvian migrants as compliant, attentive, and committed to their jobs contributes to disciplining Chilean workers. From the perspective of Chilean employers, Chilean and Peruvian workers are perceived differently in terms of their knowledge and demand for Chilean labour rights:

> [Peruvian domestic workers] value their jobs more [than Chilean workers]. [...] They value that their Social Security contributions are paid, or that they are treated well. They value that you pay them a good salary; they value many things that Chilean domestic workers take for granted. They notice everything, I mean, the fact that you pay them well, pay their Social Security contribution, worry about their health, give them clothes. They are much more grateful. They like everything. And here, for the domestic workers from here [Chile], everything seems scanty. (Table 1, no. 4)

> [Chileans] are demanding. They are always complaining about this or that, or about something else. The Peruvian is not like that. He just accepts. I don't know whether they have suffered more than us in terms of ... stuff, but they are calmer. I mean, they live with less and live more calmly. The Chilean may have more, but still complains. (Table 1, no. 6)

In skilled labour, the contrast between Chilean and Peruvian migrant workers lies in migrants' high capacity for work, which is perceived as a personal attribute of Peruvians rather than as a result of the migratory context. Paradoxically, the criteria that legitimise migrants in the labour market are equal parts the 'Peruvian essence' of absolute willingness to work and the assessment of soft capitals as a substantial aspect defining opportunities for labour mobility. In this way, Peruvian migrants' work trajectories in Chile occur in two dimensions: one formal, where evaluation criteria include human capital and performance in a more or less explicit mobility ladder; and one informal, with an *invisible ladder*, where evaluation criteria include soft capitals and a measure of the effort expended to obtain legitimacy in the labour market – total availability for work and the ability of 'gaining the trust' of the employers.

A Chilean employer's positive evaluation of a semi-skilled Peruvian worker is meaningful with respect to this:

> [The Peruvian worker is] responsible, super responsible, and besides being responsible is very ... how can I say this? He is very loyal to his workmates. I have come across other people, and they're nothing like that. He [the Peruvian worker] takes his job very seriously and ... at least I have had a good experience with him. He has worked very well. One day we might work until, for example, the evening, but the next day we need to be there again at four or five in the morning. Considerable commitment is

> needed to stay. But with him, there has never been any problem, I mean, he is always ready for action – every single day – I have no trouble with him. (Table 1, no. 9)

A Peruvian employer, with almost twenty years of residence in Chile, adds the following:

> What happens is because of culture, or maybe, it could be said in this way, because of the fact that Peruvians who come here [to Chile] come exclusively for work, they are difficult people to . . . , I mean, they are easy to mould in the organisation. Meaning that, for example, I tell them to do something and they do it. I tell them to stay a little longer and they stay. I tell them to come early, and they will. Therefore, as a manager, this type of person is useful to me, since I know I can always count [on them]. [. . .] if you don't have teams of workers that perform for you, you are not going to be able to meet the client's expectations. (Table 1, no. 14)

The 'good worker' underscores criteria that are generally applicable in the labour market, but particularly in the assessment of Peruvian migrants (Sir, 2012: in preparation). We could argue, however, that it acts in the same way in other unrecognised groups (Fraser, 2003). In this way, the migrant's legitimacy is acquired through practices that express their subjection to the job and their trustfulness; that is to say, their types of capital need to be expressed and displayed as soft skills that constitute the invisible ladder of upward labour mobility. A skilled worker (engineer), with positive evaluations due to her total availability for work and good promotion possibilities (according to an interview with her employer), says:

> They know how I work . . . according to me, I work well, I am responsible, organised, structured, and independent when I work on my topics and make decisions. Obviously, I ask for help when I really need it. I don't like going to my boss to ask her anything. I am the person who has to look after it and resolve it. [They value] more than anything the independence I have when making decisions and controlling projects. (Table 2, no. 13)

The precarious labour conditions, the naturalisation of Peruvian migrants as low-skilled workers, and the limitations they face in accessing higher income and higher status jobs, reveal the tensions and interests that are characteristic of *otherness* in the process of racialisation. These factors are also partly founded on the emergent tensions from the recognition and implementation of labour rights in Chile. Following Bakan and Stasiulis (1995: 310), 'the racial stereotypes predominate in the perceived and socially constructed needs of employers, and the characteristics projected on the employees'. The construction of beliefs that generalise Peruvian migrants' characteristics as if they were 'all the same' conditions their opportunities and trajectories, locating them on the lower end of social structures.

The Problematic Immigrant

In opposition to the 'good worker' is the 'problematic immigrant', a widely shared view in Chilean society that stigmatises the Peruvian migrant while praising those who differ

from this norm. Tijoux (2011), argues that when faced with this opposition, Peruvian migrants experience identity tensions that bring about adjustment processes to 'racial stigma'. Embarrassment at the actions of 'other' Peruvians that 'show disrespect' and 'lack manners' implies resignation not without ambivalence. The negative characterisation of Peruvian migrants as a problem is reflected in the following description by a Chilean employer:

> [Peruvians] like acid. Maybe it is more notorious in them [than in Chileans]. [I: What is acid? Drinking?] Alcohol. They are better at going out on the town. And they frequently fight at parties, not at work. When they party, who knows, they fight amongst themselves. (Table 1, no. 1)

The assessments that Peruvian migrants make about the categorisations they face in Chilean society reveal diffusion in the production of differences. A Peruvian worker maintains:

> Most people generalise that all Peruvians are the same, and this and that. [I: Like what, for example?] That the Peruvian is a drunkard, quarrelsome, a troublemaker. Because of the reports that they show [in the media]. That Peruvians are starving. They think we're all the same. (Table 2, no. 9)

Another Peruvian worker adds:

> Peruvians are catalogued as good for partying, for going out on the town, good for drinking, good for fighting. Not everyone is like that. [Chileans say] that many come here to do evil things, to steal. Not everyone is like that. There are also hardworking people, who make every effort. There are all kinds [of people], all kinds. (Table 2, no. 2)

Although they identify Chile as a non-inclusive society, most Peruvian workers with upward mobility, those who are currently working in semi-skilled and skilled jobs, deny having experienced situations of personal offence in which they faced lack of recognition or stigmatisation. Paradoxically, they do recognise that these situations happen to *other* Peruvians. A professional Peruvian woman who administers a retail company responds to the question of whether being a Chilean matters or not for success at work:

> I understand that there are many people, my compatriots, who have felt marginalised, or for whom national origin has been an obstacle. For me it has never been an issue; it has really never been an issue. Not even when I was looking for work, nor ever [...] I don't give it any emphasis on my CV. I put what I have to put, and if they want to see whether I am Peruvian or not, it is their problem. I never mention it. (Table 2, no. 13)

The emphasis that 'the successful' give to not having experienced lack of recognition or discrimination is paired with the development of strategies of conscious invisibility: not saying one is Peruvian, social isolation, or the use of behavioural strategies that conceal their national origin. Another Peruvian worker, manager of a manufacturing firm who has lived in Chile for almost twenty years, notes:

> The Chilean is very indifferent. In Lima, you move in to an apartment and the next day you already have a close friend. Here, I have lived in the same place for five years, and I haven't met anyone. The fear [that I had] before arriving here [in Chile] was the treatment. How would people treat us? If we would be harassed, [this fear] I never had. The information that reaches here from Lima is always negative, there are no good images. That is why I think Chileans sometimes look down on us, feel superior to us … I [have not felt] directly [rejected], but comments, on the bus, comments saying that we are filthy. But in general I have not [felt discriminated against]. I tell my [Peruvian] workers, when I have sent them to do paperwork, I tell them that they should go with personality. (Table 1, no. 14)

The Chilean dual discourse, which simultaneously describes Peruvian migrants as good workers and as a menace to order, is described by Staab and Maher (2006) as fulfilling a double function. It resolves the conflict with local workers who do not have a compliant attitude, while at the same time it characterises Chileans as relatively modern, in contrast to their Peruvians neighbours. Nevertheless, the alleged characteristics of Peruvian migrants in Chile, which influence their everyday experiences, structure their opportunities and situate them in a vulnerable position, are sustained by the specific political, social, and legal circumstances of migration.

Vulnerability and Citizenship

The category of 'immigrant' is defined by virtue of and in opposition to the category of 'citizen', in which migrants generally do not participate in the political community in the same terms. In this sense, citizenship is as much an indicator of inclusion as it is of exclusion. It also contributes to the migrants' racial otherness and limits access to social benefits only to those considered to be part of the political community. The limitation to citizenship, which identifies who can and who cannot legitimately access resources, operates here in the form of racialising language.

However, the relevance of citizenship for migrants varies according to their migratory trajectories. In the initial stages, the search for employment and successful attainment of a job take precedence over the possibility of access and the demand for rights and other social benefits (Mora and Piper, 2011). During this early stage of migration, the possibility of being fired or stigmatised as a 'problematic immigrant' place migrants in a vulnerable position, compared to those further along in their trajectories (Mora and Piper, 2011). The lack of work and residency documents also significantly influences Peruvian migrants, who face exploitative situations in the labour market. The migratory phase in which Peruvians find themselves intensifies their vulnerability in the labour market.

The legal requirements necessitating a work contract and employer sponsorship in order to obtain a temporary working visa, and requiring two years of uninterrupted work with the same employer for a definitive residence visa, in addition to the paucity of social networks, often force migrants to seek and accept precarious jobs and working conditions. An employer from the construction field explains:

> It is always an economic issue, because, I mean, these guys [Peruvian workers] want to earn more money. And also, to say it in a nice way,

> they [the employers] require more from them [the immigrants]. To avoid saying that they [migrants] are exploited more, in reality. They make them work longer shifts, [work] on Saturdays. That is why they prefer them. [I: Do immigrant workers put up with more?] They put up with it. *The Peruvian puts up with it*. Whether he is Peruvian, Ecuadorian, Colombian, he endures. [I: Why do you think they endure more?] Because he has more needs, he's alone. He has to send money to his family. He has fewer networks. I mean, 'if I am already working here, I'll take good care of this job'. And he puts up with it and holds on. A Peruvian, an assistant worker, you pay him $20 per day and he works flawlessly, no complaints. (Table 1, no. 1)

Staab and Maher (2006) suggest that Chilean employers legitimise abusive treatment and exploitative working conditions, following the logic that a bad job is still better than not having any job. A Peruvian worker in the landscaping business narrates:

> [I: Have you ever experienced differential treatment because you are Peruvian?] Yes, in the sense that I once overheard my boss saying that 'Peruvians are my slaves'. Thirty people worked [there], and there were six Chileans. [I: And the other 24?] They were all Peruvians. The Chileans had their schedule, and then they left. When we wanted to leave, they [our employers] would tell us, 'no, you cannot leave, you are getting paid'. They offered you some money and stuff, which in the end they wouldn't give you. (Table 2, no. 8)

In this way, the citizen–migrant opposition contributes to the lack of acknowledgement of Peruvian migrants in Chile, hinders migrant inclusion in the labour market, facilitates the transgression of minimum working standards and constitutes a barrier to upward mobility. Additionally, it is an opposition that intersects with migrants' social class and gender in both the perception of *racial otherness* and in the attribution of criteria for labour legitimacy.

Conclusions

The migratory experience of Peruvians in Chile, their trajectories, and their daily encounters with Chilean society reveal a different reality from that of other migrant groups. A process of naturalisation of traits and abilities as racial characteristics attributed to Peruvian migrants who are *perceived* as phenotypically different from Chileans contributes to the reproduction of migrant labour segmentation and limited job mobility. The racialisation of Peruvian migrants reflects emergent tensions in Chilean society, particularly in the labour market (related to demands by Chilean workers for labour rights). Racialisation also reflects the production of a national project that represents Chile as a racially homogeneous, white, and modern society in opposition to the *mestizo*-indigenous Peruvian.

Our analysis suggests that migrants are *depicted* as phenotypically different from Chileans and are characterised on the one hand as helpful, attentive, and compliant, and on the other hand as troublesome and backward. Demonstrating this dynamic, upward labour trajectories towards skilled or semi-skilled occupations are attributed

to Peruvian migrants' perceived characteristics, namely, their work availability and unquestioning loyalty.

The study of Peruvian migrants' daily encounters, their trajectories in the labour market, and the dynamics of access to jobs in Chile allows us to illuminate the institutionalisation of the production of categories of racial differences in the labour market. This contributes to understanding the considerable labour segmentation and the limited labour mobility of this migratory flow. The construction of a racial category and the association of phenotypical characteristics to social and intellectual attributes or specific abilities limit the possibilities of relative success and upward trajectories of Peruvian migrants in Chile and legitimise their precarious labour conditions. Concurrently, the growing precariousness of migrants' work reifies their lower capabilities and training, thus contributing to reproducing racial borders that not only operate in the labour market, but are also constitutive of the institutional and individual experience and trajectories of Peruvians in Chile.

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