Exploring the new North of the South?

*A qualitative study of Venezuelans migrating to Chile since 2013 and the push
and pull factors influencing South-South Migration in Latin America*

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ABSTRACT

With the wide-ranging crisis in Venezuela exacerbating since 2014 and Chile consolidating its leading economic position within Latin America, the number of Venezuelan immigrants in Chile has significantly grown. This paper aims to understand the push and pull factors of Venezuelans migrating to Chile and their perceived integration. The broader purpose is to better understand the push and pull factors influencing South-South migration, specifically within Latin America. The research design took the form of a qualitative case study and the primary data was collected in 2017 in Santiago de Chile, consisting of nineteen interviews with Venezuelan immigrants from different sectors and two expert interviews. The subsequent transcription and thematic coding of the interviews on NVivo helped quantify and analyze some of the findings. Insecurity, inflation and economic instability represented the main push factors for the respondents to leave Venezuela. Chile's economic stability, legal facilities and employment opportunities were their main pull factors. Chile's advanced regional position, cultural/linguistic proximity, security levels, stability and opportunities for immigrants contributed to their decision to stay within Latin America. With the 'North' increasingly closing its borders and intraregional migration growing, Chile appears to be perceived as the 'new North' of the South in Latin America.

Key words: South-South migration, intraregional migration, push and pull factors, Venezuela, Chile, Latin America, South America, North of the South

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Special thanks, of course, to all the participants in my fieldwork that took the time and interest in sharing their stories and perspectives. To all the Venezuelans, I really wish all the best for your country and your people in the future, you have been wonderful to me. May the world open up more to migrants and become a better one:

"If everyone migrated, we would be more humane, there would be more tolerance, more opportunities to meet other cultures, and the people would open their minds. Really, if the people had the opportunity to migrate and step on foreign soil and leave their comfort zone, the world would be a different one…a much better one."[1]

R13[2], 22.10.2018, Santiago de Chile

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[1] Quote from one of the interviews recorded for the paper, as translated by the author from Spanish.
[2] R13 = Respondent 13 (names kept confidential). For the full list of respondents and their background, see appendix I.

TABLE OF CONTENT

FIGURES, TABLES AND PHOTOS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ECLAC   United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

EU   European Union

HDI   Human Development Index

ILO   International Labour Organization

INE   *Instituto Nacional de Estadísiticas* (Chilean National Statistics Institute)

IOM   International Organization for Migration

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GNI   Gross National Income

MERCOSUR   *Mercado Común del Sur* (Southern Common Market)

NNM   North-North migration

NSM   North-South migration

OECD   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

RUT   *Rol Único Tributario* (Tax payer number in Chile)

SNM   South-North migration

SSM   South-South migration

UN   United Nations

UNDESA   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP   United Nations Development Program

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

USA   United States of America

USD   United States Dollar

WB   World Bank

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the return to democracy in 1990, Chile has experienced a rapid and continuous economic growth alongside political stability, ultimately becoming one of the leading economies in Latin America with the highest GDP[3] per capita (World Bank Group, 2016b)[4]. Its international reputation has thereby attracted increasing numbers of immigrants to the country, hosting the fastest growing immigrant population in Latin America with a 4,9% annual increase in immigration between 2010 and 2015 (ECLAC[5] and ILO[6], 2017: 13). According to the official censuses (*Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas[7]* (INE), 2018: 20), the share of immigrants grew from 1,27% in 2002 to 4,35% in 2017. Not used to this many immigrants, this trend has not gone unnoticed within Chilean society, sparking a reaction that has been criticized as allegedly discriminatory and xenophobic (Rojas Pedemonte *et al*., 2015: 2).

Simultaneously, Venezuela has experienced for the last years an extremely acute socioeconomic and political crisis resulting in wide-spread violence and an economy that's shrunk by over 40% between 2013 and 2017 (Hausmann, 2017). Fleeing violence in the streets, sky-rocketing inflation, scarcity of basic commodities and the lack of economic prospects in the country, over a million Venezuelans have emigrated since (UNHCR[8], 2017). The number of Venezuelans in Chile has thereby mushroomed from 4.452 in 2002 to over 80.000[9] in 2017, becoming the third largest immigration group and representing 11,2% of all immigrants in Chile (INE, 2018: 22). This paper aims to better understand the push and pull factors behind their decision to move to Chile and not to other neighboring or more developed countries by exploring the perceptions of their migratory experience.

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[3] Gross Domestic Product.
[4] And fourth highest if the Caribbean is included.
[5] United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
[6] International Labour Organization.
[7] Chilean National Statistics Institute, henceforth referred to as INE.
[8] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
[9] A precise number is not available yet, as the results of the latest census of 2017 have only been partially published in the form of reports at the time of writing this paper.

1.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, PURPOSE AND RELEVANCE

Academic literature in the field of migration studies usually refers to the global North and South as the more developed and less developed regions and then differentiates between South-North migration (SNM), South-South migration (SSM), North-North migration (NNM) and North-South migration (NSM)[10]. While a large share of migration studies focuses on SNM, many scholars have repeatedly emphasized how unrepresented the field of SSM is, despite constituting between one third and half of all global migration[11]. SSM has specially received little attention in Latin America, where SNM has traditionally prevailed. However, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2017: 80–81), intraregional migration is growing in recent years with around 70% of the immigrants in Latin America and the Caribbean originating from within the region. The ECLAC and ILO (2017: 13) highlight the need to focus more on intraregional immigration in Latin America:

> Despite the fact that immigration, particularly intraregional immigration, has become relatively more important for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean compared with other destinations, few studies have looked at the integration of these immigrants into the labour force.

This paper aims to contribute to closing this research gap in the field of SSM in Latin America by exploring the specific case of Venezuelans migrating to Chile and answering the following research questions:

1) *What are the push and pull factors motivating Venezuelans to migrate to Chile since 2013?*
2) *What are their perceptions of the obstacles and opportunities for their social and labor integration in Chile?*
3) *And how can the answers to the previous questions help understand some of the push and pull factors in SSM, specifically within Latin America?*

The particular case of contemporary Venezuelan migration to Chile is relevant in portraying the obstacles to and opportunities for the socioeconomic integration of migrants from a country in an acute crisis into one of stability and growth. Of particular interest is why Chile has become

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[10] Further explanations to be found in section 3.1.
[11] Depending on the classification. See section 3.1. for further details.

the chosen destination of so many Venezuelans, as opposed to similarly stable and prosperous but geographically closer nations like Brazil, Panama and Colombia.

Additionally, I also aim to better understand the shifting geopolitical role of Chile in Latin America and, as the title of the paper suggests, whether Chile is perceived as the 'new North' of the South. The definitions of what the global North or South represent can significantly differ according to the classification system, as explained in section 3.1., and from the social constructivist perspective[12], the subjective perception of the individuals should also be accounted for in what they perceive as the global North or South. Since Chile joined the OECD[13] in 2010 and the World Bank (WB) high-income list in 2012, it is a relevant matter to investigate whether Chile is perceived by intraregional migrants in Latin America as the new North of the South. And as the global North, and particularly the United States of America (USA), tightens restrictions on immigrants while Southern Europe's economies continue to struggle, it is of particular relevance to assess Latin America's potential shift towards more intraregional migration and its implications.

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[12] As adopted in this research process, see 4.2. for more details about the philosophical stance.
[13] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, an intergovernmental economic organization comprised by 35 member countries worldwide, usually of high-income and high development.

II. CONTEXTUALIZATION

2.1. THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS AND GROWING EMIGRATION

Since 2014, one year after president Nicolás Maduro took power as a successor of Hugo Chávez, Venezuela has spiraled into its most acute politico-economic crisis in decades as the internal political dispute has turned violent, homicide rates have risen, and the economic situation is in free-fall. From an economic perspective, the significant drop of the global oil prices, illustrated in figure 1, has greatly exacerbated the already fragile economy, especially as the government had made most social expenditures dependent on oil revenues (Antonopoulos and Cottle, 2018: 56).

Figure 1. Global oil prices from 1960 to 2017
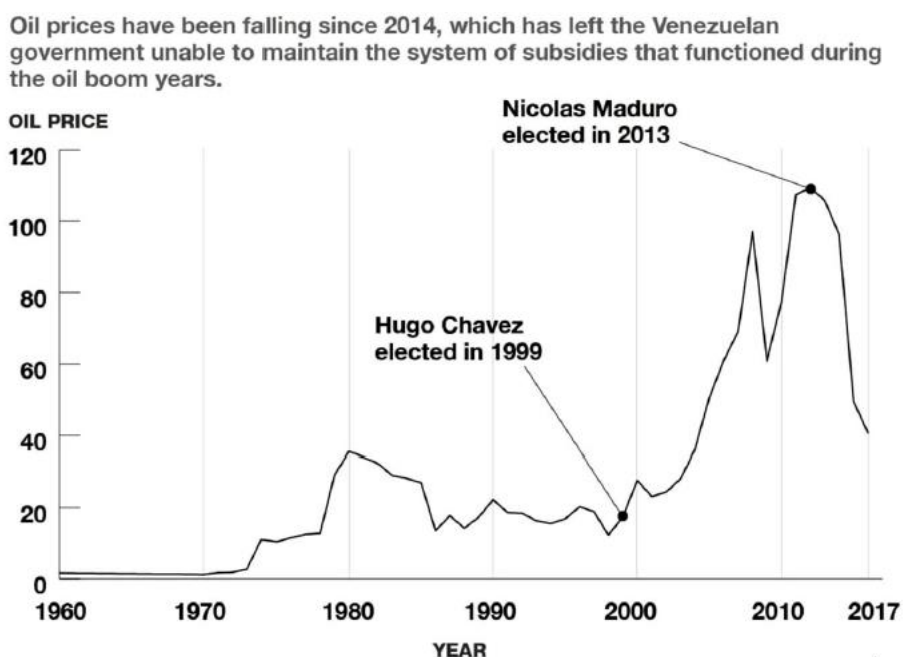
Source. Antonopoulos and Cottle (2018: 56)

Additionally, most experts agree that one of the root causes of the economic crisis was the government's mismanagement of the currency, subsequently leading to tremendous inflation rates, black currency markets and to a shortage of food imports, medicine and other basic goods (Cannon and Brown, 2017: 618–620). The inflation levels have dramatically risen since 2015, illustrated in figure 2. The Venezuelan central bank, reluctant to admit the depth of the crisis, has scarcely provided data since mid-2016, when the inter-annual rate was already at around 180%. By January

2017 the rate had balooned up to 800% and one year later up to 8.900% (Trading Economics, n.d.).
One consequence has been the dramatic rise in poverty levels from 48,4% of the population in 2014
to 87% in 2017, 56% of the poverty being recent (España and Ponce, 2018: 3) [14].

Figure 2. Venezuela's inflation rate from July 2015 to January 2018
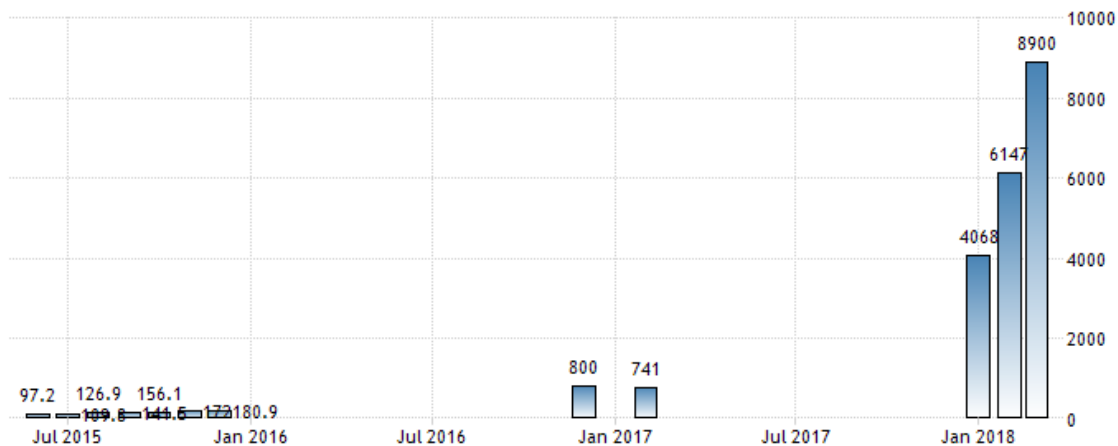
Source. Venezuelan Central Bank according to Trading Economics (n.d.)

Unsurprisingly, the crisis is far from limited to the economic sphere. Venezuelan doctor
associations have called for international channels for aid, classifying it as a humanitarian crisis
due to the extreme deterioration of the health system with a worrying decrease in service
coverage and lack of medicines, vaccines and doctors to provide these health services
(Mattiuzzi *et al.*, 2017; Roa, 2018: 12). Additionally, Venezuela's homicide count had risen
from 9.719 in 2004 to 19.030 in 2014, the homicide rate (per 100.000 people) thereby rising
from 37 to 62 and becoming the highest in the world (Igarapé Institute, n.d.)[15]. Despite the
humanitarian crisis, the Venezuelan government has rejected any kind of foreign aid, including
food and medicinal supplies, with the aim of denying the existence of such humanitarian crisis
in the first place, which could erode Maduro's legitimacy as president (McCarthy, 2017: 132–
133). Though the events are complex and difficult to assess due to the embedded ideological
battle, it is clear the crisis has produced a large wave of Venezuelans emigrating in the years
since 2014, at least one million according to government data (UNHCR, 2017). The migration
wave has been felt not only in Venezuela, where highly educated professionals are leaving in

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[14] According to the multidimensional poverty index (España and Ponce, 2018: 6).
[15] In 2014, the homicide rate reached its peak and was illustrated to highlight its rapid growth.
According to the latest data in 2017, Venezuela currently has a homicide rate of 53,7, the third highest
one in the world after El Salvador and Jamaica.

record numbers, but also in destination countries such as Colombia, Panama, Brazil, Chile and the USA, where arrivals have multiplied in recent years (McCarthy, 2017; Ramoni Perazzi *et al*., 2017; Roa, 2018; Sánchez Urribarrí, 2016).

2.2. CHILEAN ECONOMY, IMMIGRATION AND XENOPHOBIA

Recent years have seen Chile witness a major wave in immigration. Since the return to democracy in 1990, Chile has experienced rapid and continuous economic growth and political stability while at the same time the number of immigrants in Chile has soared with around 75% of them originating from other South American[16] countries (Rojas Pedemonte and Silva Dittborn, 2016: 11). Moreover, Chile has established itself as the leading economy in South America, in 2010 becoming the first South American country to join the OECD, or as the Economist (2017: para. 3) refers to it, "…a club of mainly rich countries." Subsequently, in 2012, it became the first to classify as a high-income country[17]. Precisely between 2010 and 2015 Chile had the fastest growing influx of immigrants in all of Latin America with an annual increase of 4,9% (ECLAC and ILO, 2017: 13). Previously, Chile had been unaccustomed to immigration. According to official census data[18], the proportion of immigrants living in Chile represented only 1,27% of the population in 2002 with 197.929 immigrants, growing up to 4,35% in 2017 with 746.465 (INE, 2018: 20). By far, most immigrants, 66,7% of them, have arrived between 2010 and 2017, as illustrated in figure 3. Venezuelans have established themselves as the third largest immigration community with over 80.000 of them registered, representing 11,2% of all immigrants, after Peruvians (25,3%) and Colombians (14,2%) (*ibid.*: 22). The size of the Venezuelan community is especially striking if compared with the previous census in 2002, when there were only 4.452 of them registered (*ibid.*, n.d.).

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[16] For clarification, this paper does not use the terms 'Latin America' and 'South America' interchangeably. The former includes South America as well as Central America and parts of North America and the Caribbean.
[17] According to the WB classification, see section 3.1.
[18] The last two official censuses available are from 2002 and 2017. The immigrants accounted for in the censuses are only those who indicated to reside in Chile.

Figure 3. Number and percentage of international immigrants according to their period of arrival to Chile
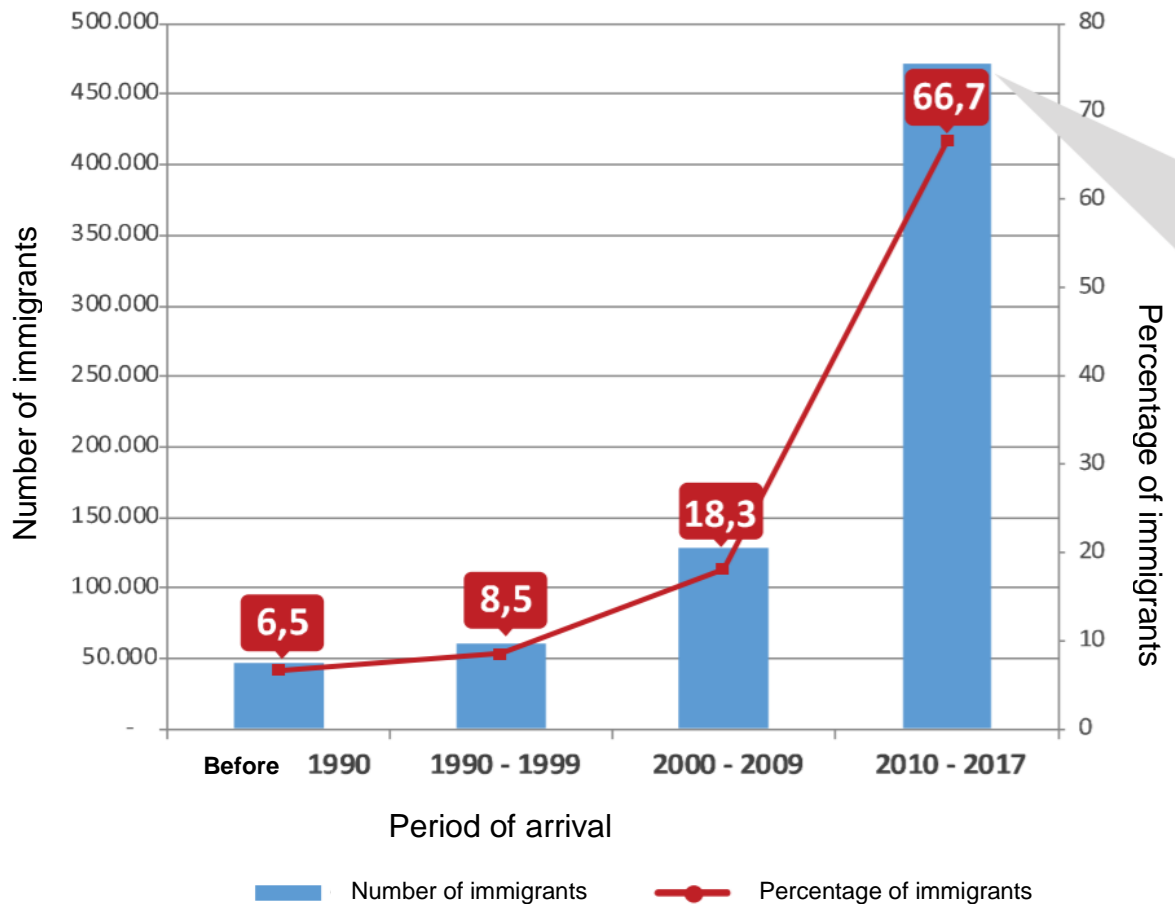
Note. Excluding individuals who have not indicated their place of birth, residence or year of arrival. Text in the figure translated by the author from Spanish

As a response to the growing wave of immigrants, the Chilean government implemented new and comprehensive policies to adopt internationally recognized immigration rights and facilitate the legal work and integration into the labor market, for example eliminating a legal clause by which employers had to pay for the flight back home for a foreign employee, or a clause that forbade an immigrant from changing employer without losing their residence permit (Rojas Pedemonte and Silva Dittborn, 2016: 8–9). This was interpreted as a welcoming sign for immigrants in a country with little experience receiving them. The other side of the coin, however, has been the discriminatory and racist reactions in a society where the Chilean identity was traditionally linked to whiteness, Catholic conservatism, eurocentrism and neoliberalism (Rojas Pedemonte *et al*., 2015: 2). While multiculturalism is usually discussed in contexts of significant cultural differences, in Chile there is a high level of rejection towards other Latin

American immigrants despite the sharing of strong cultural, linguistic, religious and historic ties (Sirlopú and Van Oudenhoven, 2013: 740). It is thus not surprising that the arrival of thousands of Haitians has sparked even more debate on the xenophobic sentiments found in the society at the hands of the novel Afro-descendent immigrants (Tijoux Merino and Córdova Rivera, 2015). Immigration had gained enough attention to become a part of the political agenda as elections approached in November 2017, when the conservative candidate Sebastián Piñera won the presidency despite previously generating controversy by calling for the closing of borders to illegal immigrants and the deporting of those who have committed crimes (Ulloa, 2016).

2.3. REGIONAL MIGRATION TRENDS

Latin America had historically been a major immigrant recipient until the first half of the 20th century, integrating the socio-cultural diversity of the mainly European immigrants into their societies. Later, however, extra-regional emigration became more common than immigration in most countries in the region, though this trend is changing again as some countries, notably Costa Rica and Chile have recently witnessed a significant rise in immigration (Reboiras Finardi, 2015: 12–13). According to the IOM (2017: 80–81), intraregional migration in South America has intensified with an increase of 11% between 2010 and 2015, which coincides with the global trend of migration policies and management to adopt less of a national and more of a regional focus. Regional blocs are forming worldwide for commercial, political and/or social integration, often promoting the intraregional mobility of their citizens (Nawyn, 2016: 84). The high levels of intraregional migration in Latin America, representing approximately 70% of all immigrants, can be explained by the economic inequalities within South America; the southern cone countries of Argentina, Chile and Brazil have witnessed a major increase in immigrants, while the integration of sub-regional blocs such as MERCOSUR[19] and the Andean Community of Nations also help to account for the increase (IOM, 2017: 80–81). Gabaccia (2012: 73), however, points out how the opening of borders for commercial means in the Americas has not been matched with a freer movement of people across borders, leading to a "…disjuncture between neo-liberal economic plans and national restrictions on migration policies", which has nonetheless not stemmed intraregional mobility, often illicit, from growing.

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[19] Also known as *Mercado Común del Sur*, Southern Common Market, a South American bloc comprised by Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, Venezuela being suspended since 2016.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH

From first and third world countries during the cold war and developed and developing countries at the United Nations (UN), the terms global North and South have emerged recently from postcolonial studies with a similar connotation, shifting the focus towards geopolitical relations. Ultimately, however, these terms are found in the literature as a convenient way of differentiating between developed and developing countries (Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008; Ratha and Shaw, 2007). As the terms have entered common use in academic literature, Bakewell *et al*. (2009) criticize the traditional view as inappropriate to understand the social, political and economic factors influencing migration patterns between developing countries and outlines three different approaches to identify the 'South'. The traditional categorization by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) classifies countries as more developed, less developed and least developed. The latter two categories match the traditional Western map of the South: Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia excluding Japan and Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand (*ibid.*: 2–3). Further, the traditional Western-centric view has been perpetuated by the UNDESA where the designation of 'developed' and 'developing' have been used since 1996 and, though supposedly "…not express[ing] a judgement about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process", continue to be used for country or area codes under the excuse of 'statistical convenience' (UN Statistics Division, n.d.).

The WB introduced four categories according to income, differentiating between low, lower middle, higher middle and high-income countries. With the first three categories falling into the 'developing' label, this approach significantly changes the map as there are many countries traditionally designated South which entered the high-income category such as some oil-rich Gulf states, Singapore and South Korea, amongst others (Bakewell *et al*., 2009: 3). In fact, Chile and Uruguay would, under this system, currently qualify as the only developed countries in South America. Chile is however the only one in South America that is simultaneously a member of the OECD[20].

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[20] Considering the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico is the only other country that is also a member of the OECD.

Lastly, the UN Development Program (UNDP) offers yet another approach by measuring the Human Development Index (HDI), which differentiates between low, medium, high and very high HDI. In this case, all countries with a very high HDI would classify as 'developed', which coincides to a certain extent with the WB list as GNI[21] is one of the indicators together with life expectancy and the expected/mean years of schooling (UNDP, 2016: 3). This classification includes even more countries as developed, in South America for example Argentina and Chile (*ibid.*: 198).

3.2. SOUTH-SOUTH VERSUS SOUTH-NORTH MIGRATION

Having reviewed the three different classification systems, Bakewell *et al*. (2009: 6) illustrate in table 1 how the described differences have important implications when measuring SSM. Under the traditional UN view, only one third (33%) of global migration classifies as SSM, while it is 42% according to the WB model and almost half of global migration (45%) under the UNDP definition. In other words, according to the two latter approaches, SSM outweighs SNM (*ibid.*). As Campillo-Carrete (2013: 9) criticizes, "SSM research takes or quotes data corresponding to one or more of these categorizations and skips discussing the implications." This paper does not adopt any specific definition of these blurry terms but rather aims to inquire and analyze the subjective perceptions of the migrants in order to better understand whether they perceive Chile as the (new) North of the South and if so, why.

Table 1. Proportion of global migration according to the different definitions

Definition	Direction of migration (% of global migrant stock)			
	S-S	N-S	N-N	S-N
Development status	33%	7%	26%	34%
Income level	42%`	4%	16%	39%
UNDP HDI	45%	4%	14%	37%

Source. Bakewell *et al*. (2009: 6)

The field of migration studies has been predominantly focused on the drivers and dynamics of SNM, even though SSM may numerically outweigh SNM. Many scholars in the field of SSM criticize the disproportionate focus on SNM and the dominating Northern perspective, arguing

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[21] Gross National Income.

that such a theoretical and empirical understanding of international migration is not suitable to fully explain the drivers and dynamics of SSM (Bakewell *et al.*, 2009; Campillo-Carrete, 2013; Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008; Nawyn, 2016; Ponce, 2016; Ratha and Shaw, 2007; Villarreal Villamar, 2017). By researching further into SSM, Nawyn (2016: 83) argues that one can not only contribute to migration theory as such but also "…provide evidence of theoretical continuity across South and North migration dynamics." Acknowledging the important role of macro factors, the theoretical framework in this paper focuses on the micro factors motivating individuals to engage in SSM, given the qualitative nature of the research process.

3.3. PUSH FACTORS IN SOUTH-SOUTH MIGRATION

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

Within the global South, conflict and violence have been a major push factor for intraregional migration. In Latin America, the Colombians were until recently the main emigrants due to the armed guerillas in the country, but currently it is mainly Venezuelans who are emigrating due to increased violence and insecurity (IOM, 2017: 81). Though the migratory effects of conflict seem obvious, Ponce (2016: 100) explains how SNM has largely ignored the real effects of conflict in migration because conflicts in the country of origin have its strongest effects in SSM with 58 to 246% increase in migration depending on the degree of the conflict.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

More specifically, political crises, unrest and conflicts strongly contribute to the resettlement of certain population groups. Though leading to SNM too, this push factor is especially characteristic of SSM where political changes, usually more drastic, lead to the exodus of a very large amount of migrants fleeing to neighboring countries (Bakewell *et al.*, 2009: 33–34). According to the latest world report by the IOM (2017), political instability has been an important component in fueling migration waves in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Middle East.

LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION

While the focus has frequently been on wage differentials as a pull factor, what is often overlooked is how the precarious living standards and relative deprivation represent the push factors in the first place (de Haas, 2009: 25–27). Migration, often for seasonal jobs or petty trade, thereby becomes a livelihood strategy for individual households, not necessarily seeking income differentials but a diversification of livelihood strategies. This leads to complex

migration patterns challenging the Western norms of a sedentary lifestyle and is seldomly captured in statistical records (Bakewell *et al*., 2009: 31–33). Environmental degradation induced by climate change and taking the form of droughts, floods and land degradation, amongst others, has been pointed out as a threat to the livelihood of the poor especially in the global South, often forcing them to migrate to survive (*ibid*.: 38–39; IOM, 2017: 52–63). In a nutshell, the cause "…is not the invidious comparison of salaries with those paid in the developed world, but the inability to access remunerations that make possible a decent lifestyle in their own countries" (Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008: 26).

3.4. PULL FACTORS IN SOUTH-SOUTH MIGRATION

WAGE DIFFERENTIALS

Despite the wide-spread critique against the centrality of wage differentials in migration, scholars nonetheless generally agree that wage differentials in SSM still has some influence. As Ratha and Shaw (2007: 33) conclude in their analysis, many South-South migrants are likely to have escaped poverty, war or ecological disaster, such that "…even small increases in income can have very substantial welfare implications for people in such circumstances." It is therefore useful to examine the very frequent intraregional migration from low- to medium-income countries within the South rather than looking at the South as a homogenous group of countries.

EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond economic reasons, another critical pull factor to explain SSM is the relative lack of educational opportunities or the inability to exert one's profession in the country of origin, which has a pull effect on migrants towards places where they have the possibilities to develop academically and professionally (Bakewell *et al*., 2009: 34–35). Though commonly the most prestigious educational and professional opportunities are found in the global North, attracting many students from the South, myriad hotspots within the global South increasingly attract migrants from sub-regions, a phenomenon especially remarkable in East Asia (IOM, 2017: 59).

PROXIMITY AND CULTURAL TIES

According to Ratha and Shaw (2007: 15–17), proximity is one of the main pull factors in SSM as approximately 80% of all South-South migrants move to neighboring bordering countries while, inversely, approximately 80% of South-North migrants move to countries with no common border. Nonetheless, they also point out that the "…lack of resources, limited access

to travel documents…, and the location of networks may limit migrants' ability to travel far beyond neighboring countries, where income differences are often low" (*ibid.*: 19).

Moreover, some authors point out the cultural factors influencing the migratory destination, although these are only mentioned as secondary factors. In particular, historical relations, often of colonial background, influence migratory passages (Villarreal Villamar, 2017: 193). Basing his analysis on a global and extensive quantitative dataset on migratory patterns, Ponce (2016: 100) concludes that wage differentials do shape SSM flows but also identifies cultural variables and linguistic familiarity to be highly influential in such flows.

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND NETWORKS

Ponce (*ibid.*: 86–87) further criticizes the traditional 'gravity model' where migrants are pushed and pulled by macro-structural factors only. Instead, he emphasizes the role of social connectedness, whereas migrant networks create a migration passage between their host and their home country, subsequently generating a self-perpetuating flow of migrants, stimulated by modern communication technologies (*ibid.*). Ratha and Shaw (2007: 16–17) also consider family and community or ethnic networks created by diasporas abroad to magnify the migratory patterns between two countries as both costs and uncertainties are significantly reduced, regardless of whether it is SNM or SSM.

From a different perspective, Krissman (2005: 34–37) argues that the 'migrant network' fails to fully explain international migration because it is exclusively focused on the 'supply side' (of migrants to enter the destination country). He argues that the 'demand side' (for migrants to enter the host country) is at least just as important since the demand, e.g. by employers, to allow more migrants in also represents a pull factor. Employers are more likely to demand immigrant workers if they or other actors in the industry have used their labor previously. And those employers who seek to hire at substandard conditions or salaries also create demand or even dependence for immigrant workers, ultimately encouraging more international migration to take place (*ibid.*).

MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Bakewell *et al*. (2009: 20–21) also perceive that increasing access to communication technologies and media sources has increased mobility by facilitating easier networking possibilities and communication with the home country. However, increased communication

and information about the potential destination country has proven to affect the decision to migrate, but can both encourage the migration or, to the contrary, stabilize the situation in the country of origin thanks to a faster transfer of resources and real-time communication (IOM, 2017: 155–156).

LEGAL FACTORS

From a critical perspective on the inherent exclusivity of the concept of citizenship, Truong *et al*. (2014: 9–11) emphasize that the frequent lack of institutional integration of the non-citizen often leaves migrants in a state of legal ambiguity, with constant uncertainty. They are then unsure whether they will be able to build a stable future in the host country and are often deprived the access to basic health and education services. It is therefore not surprising that studies on migrants' decisions also show a strong preference for valid visas and generally for regular migratory pathways, whenever possible, in an effort to gain more legitimacy, protection and legal facilities in the host country. This has shown to be a key factor in deciding which destination country to choose (IOM, 2017: 178–179).

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

I considered a qualitative case study to be a suitable research design by defining a particular and demarcated case (Venezuelan immigration in Chile) as part of a wider phenomenon (SSM in Latin America) for which I want to provide a deeper understanding primarily through in-depth interviews. More specifically, the research design took the form of a single instrumental case study as I picked one specific target group and case (instead of multiple ones) which, studied in depth, is meant to shed light on the issue (Creswell, 2007: 74). Regarding the qualitative approach, migration studies is a field where researchers have commonly analyzed from a quantitative macro-perspective, but where qualitative research and case studies have a great potential in helping to understand the underlying reasons behind the decision of why they chose to migrate in the first place and based on what reasons they chose where to migrate to.

4.2. PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE

Being in close contact with the realities and stories of other people, I have followed a social constructivist approach. In ontological terms, what the nature of reality is, this means that reality is not fixed but is constructed through interaction with the social surroundings and can therefore change from person to person and from context to context. In epistemological terms, how knowledge is conceived, this means that the researcher needs to interact and carefully listen to the people involved and consciously observe the setting (Creswell, 2007: 20–21), hence the interviews and field notes and photos (see appendix IV). For qualitative analysis, this implies a predominantly inductive approach, deriving theory from the data instead of deductively testing a hypothesis. Mikkelsen (2005b: 168–169), however, points out how researchers often alternate between the two approaches. While some questions in my interview guide had a more deductive tone (e.g. do you perceive Chile to be a developed or developing country?), most of them followed an inductive approach by asking open-ended questions (e.g. Why did you chose to migrate to Chile?). After all, social constructivism is frequently referred to as interpretivism as a strong element of it relates to interpreting, making sense of and giving meaning to the data concerning other people's realities (Creswell, 2007: 21).

4.3. FIELDWORK

DATA COLLECTION

Fieldwork took place in Santiago, Chile's capital, from July through December 2017, parallel to an internship at the ECLAC. I worked from Monday to Thursday 'full-time' at my internship and used the long weekends to conduct a 'part-time' fieldwork. The research topic was clear from the beginning, but was narrowed and further specified as I was able to talk to locals and immigrants for a better understanding of what to focus on. The data collection for this thesis took place during those five months in forms of interviews and field observations. I ultimately conducted interviews of 19 Venezuelan respondents (henceforth referred to as 'respondents' collectively or individually as 'R1', 'R2', 'R3'[22], and so on). Additionally, I interviewed two experts on the topic: Piotr Kozak, a journalist for the Guardian who writes on immigration in Chile, and Jürgen Weller, director of the Employment Studies Unit at the ECLAC. Two of the interviews were made, by request of the interviewees, with two respondents together, R6 and R7 being friends and working in the same sector and R16 and R17 being a married couple. The full list of respondents can be seen in appendix I.

I opted for semi-structured in-depth interviews in order to follow up on relevant comments by the respondents. I prepared a comprehensive interview guide with 30 questions in total (see appendix II), including basic questions such as age, hometown, date of arrival, etc. as well as more profound questions, for example how their perception of a Latin American identity changed since their arrival. In addition, in order to better recreate and illustrate the context in the final paper, I made sure to continuously write field notes and observations in addition to field photos (see appendix IV). For the subsequent analysis of the findings, I have collected, mostly online, secondary data, including academic papers of case studies, theories and statistics.

SAMPLING STRATEGY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Seeking to collect the stories and perceptions from a variety of backgrounds, I applied a purposeful maximum variation type of sampling. I avoided interviewing two people with similar jobs and consciously aimed for as many different sectors as possible, from bartenders to accountants, salesmen, architects, cooks, domestic workers, etc. Due to the lack of recent

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[22] Short for Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3 and so on.

official data[23], I used as a proxy reference a Chilean report from 2016 by Lafortune and Tessada[24] (2016) on the labor integration of South American immigrants in Chile in order to identify the potential average labor, gender and age distribution among my sample. For instance, I identified the most common sectors among South American workers in Chile (see figure 4). Subsequently, I first asked the potential interviewees about their occupation in order to assess whether I had already covered sufficiently the indicated sector and whether such an interview would help diversify my sample. Table 2 outlines the final distribution of the sample by sex and sector, which coincides to a large extent with the preceding figure on the actual distribution. The manufacturing and agricultural sectors, two of the least represented sectors, could not be covered, the agricultural one due to the urban setting of the fieldwork in Santiago.

My sampling strategy consisted to a certain extent of snowball sampling by picking up on the advices of interviewees who recommended other people suitable for my research. Additionally, with the aim of reaching respondents beyond the same (socio-economic) circles, I made an active effort to diversify the sample by informally approaching unknown potential interviewees myself, for example a street vendor and a wholesale distributor at the central market (R14, R15), a bartender at a restaurant (R2), a barista at a café (R5), and an Uber driver during a car ride (R8).

Figure 4. Labor distribution of South American immigrants in Chile by sector, relative to the country of origin
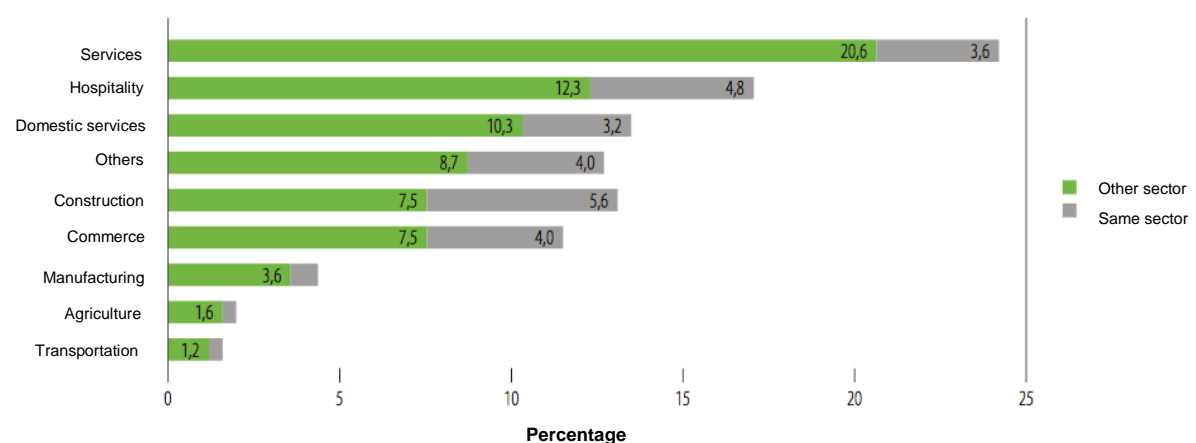
Source. Lafortune and Tessada (2016: 9), modified by the author to translate the text

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[23] The official census of 2017 has not made any databases publicly available by the time of writing this paper.
[24] The report is based on a sample of 581 South American immigrants with residence in Santiago de Chile, interviewed in late 2015 and early 2016. It is not meant to be representative, but indicative about their labor and social integration.

Table 2. Sample distribution by sex and sector

Productive sector	Men	Women	Total	Total in % (~)
Services (financial, business, sales)	2	4	**6**	**32**
Hospitality (Restaurants and hotels)	4	-	**4**	**21**
Domestic services	1	2	**3**	**16**
Others	1	1	**2**	**11**
Construction	-	1	**1**	**5**
Commerce	-	1	**1**	**5**
Manufacturing	-	-	**-**	**-**
Agriculture	-	-	**-**	**-**
Transportation	1	-	**1**	**5**
Unemployed	1	-	**1**	**5**
Total	10	9	**19**	**100**

I consciously diversified my sample not only to meet the sector distribution, but also to maintain an accurate gender ratio and age distribution of the actual immigrant population. The gender ratio (see table 3) amounts to 10 men and 9 women interviewed[25], 53% and 47% respectively, corresponding exactly to the average as indicated in Lafortune and Tessada's (*ibid.*: 5) report. The age distribution was also taken into account, but was harder to control when selecting respondents. In Lafortune and Tessada's (*ibid.*: 5–6) sample, the age distribution is focused in age groups between 20 and 44 years with an average age of 34,4 years. In my sample, in contrast, the age distribution ranges from 23 to 42 years with an average age of 26,6 years, as shown in table 3 in more detail. This low average age may be partially explained by the higher predisposition of younger Venezuelans to start from scratch somewhere else, as argued by some respondents.

Table 3. Age and gender distribution of the sample

Age group	Men	Women
20-24	4	1
25-29	4	6
30+	2	2
Total	**10 (53%)**	**9 (47%)**
Average age	**26,6 years**	

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[25] Excluding the two expert interviews.

Regarding the appropriate amount of interviews, I used Namey's (2017) rule of thumb to continue until you reach a so-called saturation point, when new data generates little or no new insights. This point is usually reached at 6-12 interviews in relatively homogenous samples. As I was aiming for a relatively heterogenous sample in terms of occupational and educational background, I continued until I had reached my saturation point at nineteen interviews with Venezuelan immigrants. Appendix I gives an overview of the background of all the respondents, their names kept confidential, and an overview of the two experts, whose analysis can be found in appendix III.

4.4. EIGHT 'BIG CRITERIA' FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Regarding the quality of the research performed during my fieldwork and its reliability and validity, I have used Tracy's (2010) eight 'big criteria' for qualitative research as guiding principles[26]. The (1) **worthiness of the topic** and (2) its **academic contributions** are already mentioned in the introduction and the (3) **meaningful coherence** between the data, literature and stated research objective is presented in the concluding section, though that is for the readers to judge.

CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

For qualitative research to gain (4) **credibility** and trustworthiness, Tracy (*ibid.*: 842–843) recommends thick descriptions, providing enough details for the reader to imagine and understand the cultural context. Thick descriptions would be the equivalent in qualitative research to a "…database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other milieux" (Bryman, 2012: 392). During my fieldwork, I methodically wrote down my thoughts and observations in the moment to describe the context, which helped me recreate the scenarios through a richer description. Additionally, I took several field photos to better recreate the context for the readers, for example one of a Venezuelan street stand in the central market with a big Venezuelan and Chilean flag on top with the phrase (in Spanish): 'Here we talk trash about Chavez'[27]. More photos and the summarized field notes are included in appendix IV. Furthermore, for increased credibility I make use of the triangulation technique in the analysis section, meaning that I cross-check some of the findings of my own (primary) data with other sources from secondary data (*ibid.*; Tracy, 2010: 843), e.g. confirming the high insecurity levels in Venezuela through the respondents' stories and official statistics on homicide rates.

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[26] As listed throughout this subsection, highlighted in **bold** and numbered (in brackets from 1 to 8).
[27] See cover photo. In Spanish, the phrase states: "*Aquí se habla mal de Chávez".*

Following Bryman's (2012: 392) advice for ensuring the accountability and trustworthiness of the data (or 'dependability'), I will keep all the interview recordings and transcripts (with all names kept confidential) for future academic review (or 'audit') in case the data ever needs to be double checked for proof. And to guarantee the intended objectivity of the researcher within the possible boundaries, or the 'confirmability' (*ibid.*: 392–393), I have added a disclosure statement in appendix V.

GENERALIZABILITY AND VALIDITY

Regarding the external validity and generalizability of the findings, Flyvbjerg (2006: 221–228) argues that, in contrast to a common misunderstanding about case study research, context-specific knowledge can sometimes be even more valuable than general, theoretical knowledge as individual cases can very well contribute to the generalization of results, especially as they accumulate. The analysis section therefore includes related academic material on the topic that can back up the generalizability of some of the conclusions. In other words, this case study can represent a 'snapshot' of more general dynamics.

Internal validity, moreover, can be assured due to the prolonged immersion in the field (five months) and appreciation of the complexity of the context, as I was able to take the time and effort to ensure a (5) **rich rigor** in gathering the data. Meticulously, I picked the appropriate strategy and sources, as explained above, and applied the appropriate procedures. Before starting the interviews, for instance, I took enough time to get acquainted in Santiago and with its people. Subsequently, I drafted a comprehensive interview guide, as found in appendix II, estimating the appropriate length of the interviews, which on average lasted around 30 minutes. The rich rigor was also applied during data analysis through a literal transcription and thematic coding, as explained in section 4.5.

REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

Additionally, I aim to gain the readers' trust through (6) **sincerity** by explaining the research processes in a transparent manner throughout this methodology section and highlighting the crucial moments of self-reflexivity regarding my own role as a researcher, my relation to the interviewees and my own biases (Tracy, 2010: 841–842). Notably, I had to pay special attention to my positionality with respect to the frequently unequal power relations between researchers and interviewees in fieldwork taking place in the global South, especially if the researcher comes from the global North like I do (Sultana, 2007: 382–383). Conscious of the potential

cultural differences and power imbalances, I have reflected on my positionality to approach my respondents not as 'objects' of research to write 'about' but as fellow global citizens to relate 'with' to learn about their stories. Though my privileged position as an educated researcher from the global North may have influenced my relationship with the respondents, there were two factors that facilitated an interaction on a more equal level with them. Firstly, sixteen of the nineteen interviewees had completed higher education and three of them secondary, so that there were little or no educational differences between they and myself. Second, thanks to my Spanish background, the linguistic barriers[28] were minimal and the cultural similarities helped me to connect with the respondents.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Regarding the (7) **ethical considerations**, before the start of the interview as well as during my initial request to interview the person, I asked for consent to record the interview, emphasized the confidentiality of the interviewee, meaning that his/her name would not be revealed, and pointed out that the recording would be used exclusively for the purposes of this research, as recommended by Mikkelsen (2005a: 342–343). I emphasized confidentiality and the possibility to interrupt the interview at any point and delete the recording if wanted. In the case of the two expert interviews, they agreed to disclose their names to bolster the value of their analysis thanks to their reputation. For the safety of the data, which will be kept after the publication of the paper, I have stored all interview recordings and transcripts in a privately encrypted online cloud.

Writing during the interview can be "off-putting" (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 58), so I opted for audio recording the conversations for later transcription. Allowing for certain informality and flexibility made it feel almost more of a natural conversation than a rigid interview, which is another reason why I chose not to prepare a consent form to sign but indicated verbally all the ethical considerations mentioned above for the interviewee to feel more comfortable, more of a conversation partner than a subject of research. It was, after all, not a sensitive topic (as in they would not hide their views from the rest of society) or one that would expose them to danger, especially given the confidential nature of the interview.

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[28] Though there is always some diversion in vocabulary and slang in the different Spanish-speaking parts of the world, I was able to understand virtually all of the conversation and could ask for clarification in case of doubt. Hence, all quotes in this paper were translated by myself.

Participants were always eager to share their story with me, even more so knowing that the result would contribute to an academic paper that could raise awareness of their situation. Particularly on a topic like immigration where opinions tend to rely on an emotional basis, the ability to promote empathy and identification among the audience, (8) **'resonance,'** is a criterion Tracy (2010: 845) praises for "…the potential of research to transform the emotional dispositions of people and promote greater mutual regard." This is very much in line with my own intentions and aspirations.

4.5. DATA ANALYSIS

NVIVO THEMATIC CODING

After the interviews were concluded, I found myself with 11,5 hours of recordings to deal with. Aiming for a thorough and transversal analysis of the interviews, I decided to transcribe[29] and subsequently code them. Digital voice-to-text technology was not an option due to the often informal environments of the interviews with background noises and the speed and informality of the conversational style. Transcribing, however, helped me familiarize myself with the primary data and was especially useful later for a thematic analysis through coding. For this, I used NVivo's software. Figure 5 offers an overview of the various steps that I have followed for my data analysis from data collection (interviews) to data organization (transcription, indexing), data coding (thematic ordering, pattern identification, etc.) and developing theory (contrasting codes, comparing with literature, etc.). In the end, I had a total of 162 different codes and sub-codes to classify my data into themes for a subsequent thematic analysis, comparing and contrasting codes, and to a certain extent also quantify the findings.

Figure 5. Data analysis stages in qualitative research
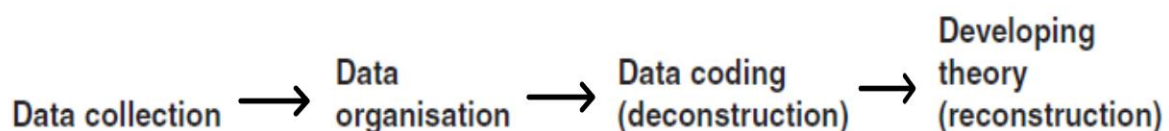
Source. Stewart-Withers *et al*. (2014: 76), modified by the author

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[29] According to Bryman (2012: 484), one should calculate around 5 to 6 hours of transcribing for every hour of recording, which in this case meant around 57,5 to 69 hours of transcribing.

QUANTIFYING QUALITATIVE DATA

Though the traditional association in the quantitative/qualitative research divide is that of 'numbers versus words', the quantification of qualitative findings can sometimes help generalize certain results (Bryman, 2012: 613–625). A thematic analysis of the transcripts, for instance, is way of quantifying qualitative data by highlighting the frequency of some themes over others. Moreover, in qualitative studies it can often be in the researcher's interest to engage in limited quantification in order to combat 'anecdotalism', meaning that you highlight an anecdote from a specific interview without clarifying whether it is an isolated case or a representation of a more frequent phenomenon. Hence, according to Bryman (*ibid.*: 624–625), it is recommended to engage in limited quantification for a sense of relative prevalence and thereby avoid quasi-quantification (e.g. 'some' or 'many' respondents). As a result, for example, I can point out that, in quantitative terms, fifteen of the nineteen interviewees had a first job in Chile on an informal basis and then analyze, in qualitative terms, what the reasons were, e.g. long waiting times for a working visa. I am aware, however, that my sample is too small to draw any statistical or generalizable conclusions. Instead, I seek for more robust analytical conclusions about potentially generalizable patterns.

FURTHER ANALYSIS AND SECONDARY DATA

After the analysis of the primary data in the findings (V) section, the concluding analysis (VI) relates these findings to the theoretical framework (III), additionally incorporating secondary data from academic journals, databases and other sources to back up these conclusions.

4.6. LIMITATIONS

There are certainly a series of limitations that I have been aware of regarding the generalizability or transferability of this research. By seeking Venezuelan migrants active in the workforce, for instance, I might be missing the perspective of those who fared worse. I did manage to approximate the average age, gender and labor distribution as indicated in Lafortune and Tessada's (2016) report. However, the report also mentions that 35% of their sample[30] were unemployed (*ibid.*: 13–14), while I only managed to interview one unemployed respondent (R17), representing approximately 5% of my sample. Finding unemployed respondents through the snowball sampling or independently was, admittedly, a difficult task.

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[30] Sample composed of 581 South American immigrants in Chile.

It is important to bear in mind though that most Venezuelan migrants are likely to be professionals and have arrived with a certain purchasing power, needed to get to Chile in the first place. Hence, their socio-economic and labor distribution is likely to diverge from that of the 'average' South American immigrant that is studied in this report. Due to the lacking data, though, this served only as a proxy guideline. As the Venezuelan migration wave continues to grow in Chile and the informality rate in their first months of stay is high, the number of Venezuelans in Chile and their average socio-economic profile to the date is highly uncertain. Moreover, regarding the geographical distribution of the sample, I only interviewed one migrant working somewhere else than Santiago de Chile[31], where 61,5% of all migrants live (Rojas Pedemonte and Silva Dittborn, 2016: 12) as opposed to the 95% in my sample due to the limited mobility during my fieldwork.

Furthermore, my educational and social background, as reflected upon previously[32], may have led to a 'middle-class bias'. As an expatriate abroad, I was more likely to be in contact with other educated middle- or upper-class people. Hence, finding 'gatekeepers' who could get me in touch with potential interviewees outside of these social circles was admittedly harder. In order to mitigate the middle-class bias and diversify my sample, however, I did approach unknown individuals without an intermediary, for example street vendors, waiters, Uber driver, etc.

Lastly, my findings touch upon some important topics recurring in several interviews without being part of the interview guide, meaning that the representativeness of these statements may be more limited. Some respondents were simply more talkative and went into great detail while others gave very succinct answers, the shortest interview lasting 14 minutes and the longest one 53. Hence, the short answers may have skipped important aspects of their perception as opposed to the eloquent ones. This means that when I argue, for instance, that only one respondent of the sample mentioned political stability as a reason to move to Chile, the number could be much higher since some respondents might have pointed out only one major reason, e.g. economic stability, while others might have mentioned many secondary ones. The qualitative approach may therefore limit the representativeness of the statements but gives more freedom for more elaborate in-depth answers.

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[31] Metropolitan area, including surroundings.
[32] Under the subsection on reflexivity and positionality under 4.4.

V. FINDINGS

5.1. BACKGROUND

The average age of the participants was 26,6 years and all of them were between 23 and 34 years old, except for one 42-year-old woman. Seven respondents mentioned that it is mostly the younger people who dared to emigrate and start a new life from scratch. They originated from 6 of the 23 states in Venezuela (Zulia, Lara, Trujillo, Aragua, Miranda and Sucre) and the capital district, all of them from cities: Maracaibo (7) [33], Caracas (4), Barquisimeto (2), Maracay (2), Carrizal (1), Cunamá (1), Trujillo (1) and Teques (1). Urban settings in the country of origin therefore seems to be a point of departure as none of the respondents originates from a rural area. Two respondents had double nationality, R1 also being Colombian and R7 Spanish, which aided their legal processes.

Most respondents (16) are professionals and come from a variety of sectors. Only three of them do not have tertiary educational qualifications. Several respondents explained to me the education system in Venezuela, where tertiary education is public and free and has been so for decades, even prior to Chavez, so that many Venezuelans are well educated and highly skilled. R5 even argued that people received university titles too easily, which made them less valuable. One of the three respondents without such a qualification, R8, mentioned that he didn't go to university because he started working and they had cancelled night classes due to rising crime levels. Regarding their educational background, four respondents studied law, two political sciences, two international commerce, two engineering, two architecture, one finance and accountability, one economics, one nursing and one medicine, hence the profile of the Venezuelan immigrant is one of a highly skilled professional in commonly highly demanded fields. Many did, however, have difficulties in validating their qualifications in Chile, especially lawyers, as is mentioned later.

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[33] The numbers shown in brackets indicate the number interviewees referred to, of the total of nineteen Venezuelan interviewees in the sample. If not in brackets, the number is shown in regular text.

5.2. Reasons for emigrating from Venezuela

All respondents in my sample have arrived, incidentally, between 2013 and 2017, one in 2013, one in 2014, twelve in 2016 and five in 2017. This recent surge of immigrants coincides with the escalation of the crisis in Venezuela after 2014. The most cited reason for leaving the country was the escalating insecurity and crime levels in Venezuela (16). Some shared some impacting stories, such as being assaulted at gunpoint to rob their car or even shot at. In essence, though, it was the day-to-day sensation of insecurity where you couldn't walk in the streets without the fear, as stated by respondents, of having your phone stolen (R2 had his nose broken to steal his phone), your dog kidnapped (for later blackmailing), being kidnapped yourself (R15 had close friends kidnapped) or being killed. R12 explained that people applied a personal curfew before night broke to stay safe, which was still not a guarantee. Some respondents even claimed that the police and military forces were among those to distrust most as they would confiscate deliberately whatever valuable possession you have. R17 described how the national police broke into her family's house, stole everything they could, and blackmailed her father to pay a large sum of money for this not to occur again as they kept a copy of their keys.

Inflation in particular (14), the economic instability in general (9) and the subsequent scarcity in basic goods such as food and medicine (8) were the next most cited reasons. Interestingly, some respondents talked about their salaries in reference to the minimum income, e.g. "*I was earning 6 times the minimum income but was still struggling*"[34] (R2, 09.2017). Some said they had a comfortable life and decent income but couldn't sustain it anymore due to the declining value of their salaries. R17 specified some numbers to illustrate the inflation by mentioning how her mom put her house up for rent before leaving Venezuela in February 2017, signing a contract worth 6.000 USD[35] a month at the beginning, which six months later amounted to just 400 USD. R12 explained how dire the situation was with the food rationing in the supermarkets. His aunt, who worked at a supermarket, used to save some food aside when it arrived for him to secretly pick it up. He claimed that "*...food turned into a smuggling item*" (R12, 10.2017).

The future political panorama of the country was expressed as a matter of concern by eight respondents, mentioning the dictatorial behavior of president Maduro, the persecution of the opposition, the manipulation of elections and the crack-down on dissident citizens. R1 and R18

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[34] All quotes in this paper are translated from Spanish to English by the author.
[35] United States Dollar

shared their stories of political persecution due to their political engagement and activism, the police threatening them or even breaking into their house to steal documents and intimidate. Moreover, the lack of opportunities for personal development (3), the general day-to-day stress (3) and a divided society (4) were additional drivers mentioned for emigration. But most made it clear that they needed to leave though they did not want to. Figure 6 illustrates the different push factors according to the number of interviewees mentioning them.

Figure 6. Reasons mentioned for leaving Venezuela
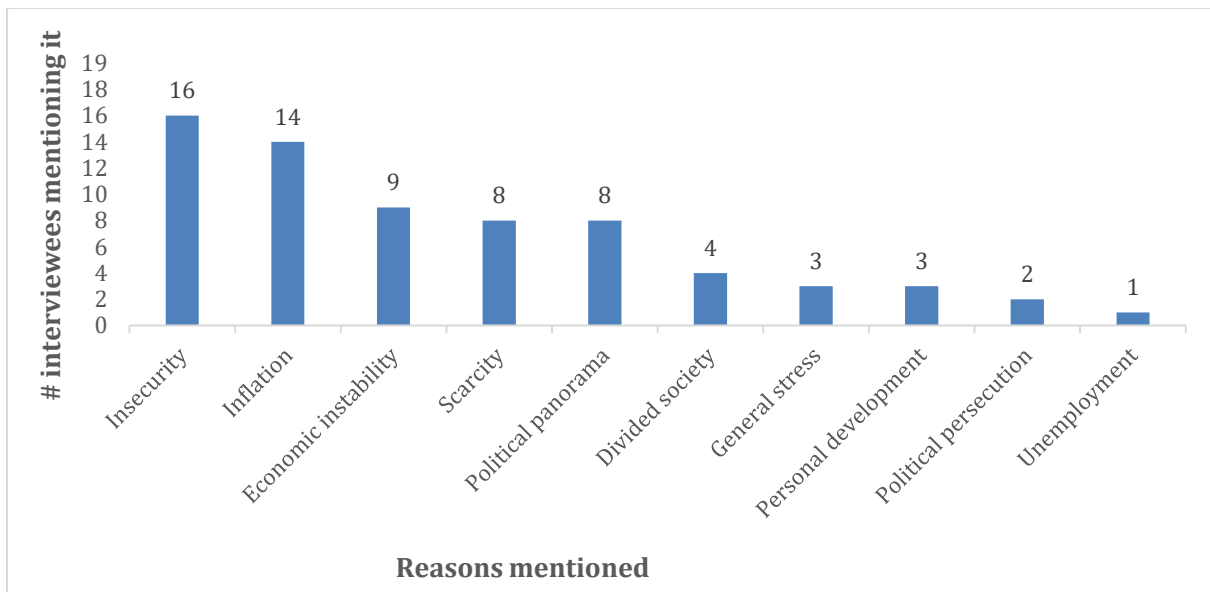
Source. Designed by the author based on the interview transcripts

Note. Reasons are abstracted from the interviews after thematically coding them on NVivo

5.3. TRANSITION TO CHILE

While ten respondents moved by themselves, seven with a family member or partner and two with friends, most of them (16) indicated they had some form of contact in Chile before coming. Usually a family member or a friend recommended the move and helped with the migration process, but sometimes even a more distant acquaintance helped out and hosted upon arrival. R8's story highlights the central role of the support waiting upon arrival: Together with his girlfriend, he temporarily moved to the apartment of the sister-in-law of his brother's ex-spouse. There they lived with five people cramped in one room with just one bed until they managed to move out. This appears to be a pull factor as Venezuelans in Chile seem to be inclined to help other Venezuelans immigrate, even if they are not closely related or befriended.

The respondents usually sold their possessions to purchase their transfer, though this was often just about enough for a flight ticket. While five respondents depended on external financial support for the transition, usually for flight tickets or initial rent, another five had to travel the cheaper way, by land, to Chile, taking around ten days. Two of which stopped to work for six to nine months in Colombia to save more money for their intended transition to Chile, a common practice among those migrants with lower purchasing power (R5). Another common practice, according to the respondents, is for one family member to travel first to Chile who then saves up some money to help other family members to migrate too. Seven respondents have already had more family members migrate to Chile. There are also those members left behind, as explained by nine respondents, who are deliberately opposed to emigration, especially among the older generations. This is reflected in the low average age of the sample, 26,6 years.

5.4. REASONS FOR MIGRATING TO CHILE

In answering the question of why they chose Chile, there were two interviewees who replied that the goal, in the first place, was to move anywhere away from Venezuela. Most respondents, however, had previously done thorough research on their preferred destination country. Respondents typically asked various family members or friends in different places for advices and/or did some online research, reading about the good economic and social statistics in Chile. In some cases, they even had the chance to get a first impression of the potential destinations before the definite decision. R11, for instance, suspecting that the situation would exacerbate in Venezuela, had been for five years prior to his migration in 2016 studying his options by travelling to Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Chile. After his five years of research he decided Chile had the best opportunities for immigrants and the best economy in Latin America.

The most frequent reasons mentioned for choosing Chile clustered around the themes of economic stability (11), legal facilities to work there (10), employment opportunities (9), and Chile's advanced development and position within the region (7), often cited as '...*the most advanced.*' Family members (4) or friends (2) also figure amongst the main reasons for their choice as well as some socio-cultural aspects for being culturally closer (3) than European or North American countries, speaking the same language (1), or having a higher tolerance towards migrants in Chile (3), at least towards Venezuelan migrants. Other less mentioned reasons include the geographic proximity (1), political stability (1), the level of organization

(1), quality of life (1), security (1), and scholarship (1). Figure 7 illustrates the different pull factors according to the number of interviewees mentioning them.

Figure 7. Reasons mentioned for choosing Chile
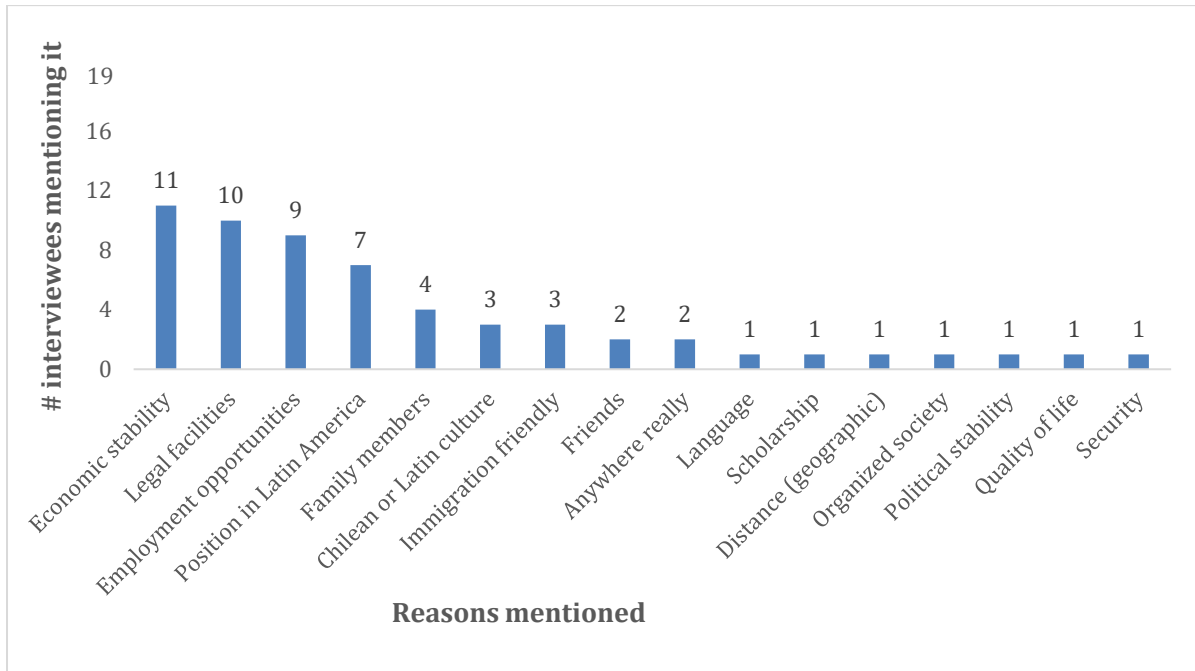
Source. Designed by the author based on the interview transcripts

Note. Reasons are abstracted from the interviews after thematically coding them on NVivo

WHY NOT NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES OR OTHERS IN THE REGION?

An additional approach to understanding why Venezuelan migrants chose Chile is to understand why they did not choose other neighboring or Latin American countries. Respondents were asked this question without specifying which countries and they usually specified the reasons they did not move to those countries they had also considered moving to. Though several respondents have relatives from Colombia, it was the most mentioned country (10), partially due to the high levels of insecurity (2), the bad treatment towards Venezuelans (2), political instability (1) and legal obstacles (1), but mostly due to the lack of jobs for professionals (4). Panama followed (6) due to the societal and institutional discrimination against Venezuelans, since so many of them had already moved there, up to a frequently-called *'point of saturation.'* Respondents shared stories of the unpleasant experience of friends or relatives in Panama, where, according to R5, their entry is actively prevented by the government by increasing the visa costs to over 1.000 USD. Argentina (4) was actually mentioned as a semi-attractive option within the region, but that was not politically or

economically stable enough. Brazil (3) was discarded due to the linguistic barrier, the political crisis and the high violence levels. Peru (2) was also mentioned as an attractive option, but the respondents stated family reasons or lack of jobs in one's field for their choice. Ecuador (2) and Bolivia (1) discouraged some respondents due to their respective political instability or ideology. R12 offered a thorough analysis of the region and explained that he had discarded Argentina, Ecuador and Bolivia due to their socialist model under Kirchner, Correa and Morales[36], respectively, who sympathized with the Venezuelan 'Chavismo', the associated political cause for the respondents to leave. Hence, despite the economic opportunities found in some of them, the political model and stability influenced their choices, seeking a political ground where such events could not happen again. Chile, known for its free-market friendly capitalism, therefore offers a contrast to the Venezuelan model.

Lastly, some respondents went further and also specified reasons they did not leave Latin America. Spain was discarded by R13 due to the legal difficulties to get established there and R6, who even holds an EU passport[37], did not move to Ireland, where her brothers had moved, due to her poor English skills, whereas in Chile she did not have such a linguistic barrier. The USA (4), the most popular destination country for Latin Americans, was said to have too many legal obstacles to obtain the visa, to integrate into the labor market or to validate their professional certificates to work there. The following excerpt describes well the wide-spread concerns on moving to the USA among the respondents, fearing the obstacles for integration:

> *You have the fear that as soon as you step on US soil, they are already sniffing all over you. I don't know, you smoked one cigarette when you were 10 and oh my god… I don't know, I feel super persecuted. So I said to myself: how can it be possible that it's so easy here [in Chile], you know?* (R19, 12.2017)

5.5. LEGAL INTEGRATION

Though legal facilities[38] for immigrants in Chile was the second most cited reason to move there, there have also been many complaints about the legal limbos and obstacles upon arrival. With no exception, everyone entered as a tourist to Chile and managed their work permits from

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[36] At the moment the respondent took the decision to migrate.
[37] EU = European Union. R6 holds a Spanish passport due to her grandparents' country of origin, though she has never been to Spain.
[38] By 'legal facilities' for immigrants, this paper does not refer to legal institutions or infrastructures but to how easy, convenient or simple the legal system is made for immigrants.

there (or in R1's case, a student visa). Of the nineteen respondents, one is on a student visa, four on a tourist visa arranging their work permits and thirteen on a temporary visa, of which six are arranging or waiting for their permanent visa. Only the two respondents who arrived before 2015 have stated to have a permanent visa. According to the respondents who took the effort to explain the system, there are three types of relevant visas[39]: the tourist visa which lasts up to three months (or three more, if prolonged), the professional visa which you can apply for with a job offer and your diploma, and the contract visa which is granted upon receiving a contract. It seems to be much harder to receive the last one, because employers usually ask for a visa to be hired, but the immigrant first needs a contract to apply for such visa. This appears to have two effects: first, it makes employers reluctant to hire immigrants and second, many of them are forced to start working informally and worry about legal documentation later.

Another factor pushing them into informality upon arrival are the long waiting times to get all papers in order, a matter of several months and increasingly more with the growing immigration wave. This leaves recently arrived immigrants in a bureaucratic and legal limbo they have to endure in the meantime. In Chile, many services and permissions can only be accessed with an identity number, aka RUT[40]. In the meantime, this legal grey area is argued to make it hard to find affordable and legal housing and forces the migrants to enter the labor market informally, thereby usually taking low-paid jobs, often in areas completely unrelated to their background and below their educational levels. However, once the papers and the recognition of their professional diplomas are in order, the labor integration into the formal market and into desired jobs generally went smooth for the respondents. Nonetheless, there are legal obstacles at later stages too, some respondents experiencing legal limbos in between the temporary and the permanent[41] visa. R18, for instance, had to wait eight months during which he was legally undocumented and could not change jobs. An additional obstacle facing many respondents with professional background was the legal revalidation of their studies in Venezuela, needed for the professional visa in Chile.

R19, who arrived in November 2013, the earliest of all respondents, shared how much more difficult the labor integration for immigrants was before 2015, when the law stipulated that the

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[39] Besides the student visa
[40] Standing for *Rol Único Tributario* (RUT), being the tax payer number / ID in Chile. Anyone living in Chile, including foreigners, needs to apply for one to access public services.
[41] A permanent visa is not in fact permanent but valid for five years of residency, after which period one can apply for the Chilean nationality. The temporary visa is valid for one year.

employer was responsible to pay for the flights back of the previously hired and later fired immigrant and his/her family. In addition, one needed to stay under the same contract for at least two years to request a permanent residency and if the period was interrupted, one had to start from zero again. Chile's new immigration laws since 2015 have discarded these clauses and facilitated the integration of migrants. In a public presentation held in November 2017, the Chilean vice-director for international migration[42] (ministry of external relations) emphasized Chile's recent efforts to adhere to and protect the internationally stipulated Human Rights for migrants, as can be seen in appendix IV[43]. Nevertheless, R6, who had been particularly frustrated in her job search, complained that many Chilean employers are not aware of how the current immigration laws work, possibly still with the old laws in mind, making them reluctant to hire foreigners even when all papers are in order.

Despite the complaints, the respondents generally did appreciate the legal facilities: "*The process is long, but easy. They explain to you all that you have to do and if you do it like that, then obviously you'll get the papers in order*" (R8, 10.2017). Another facility mentioned was the affordable price: According to R5, all bureaucratic costs involved sum up to around 100 USD, in contrast to the 1.000 USD required in Panama. When asked whether they perceived any institutional discrimination in Chile, most (13) responded that they perceived none and actually find Chile very open and supportive to immigrants. Two respondents pointed out that it is rather the private sector that should open up more to immigrants. R13 felt institutionally integrated but feared the upcoming elections[44] and the implications that a victory by the conservatives would have for immigrants in the future.

The most important institutional critique, however, relates to the access of health services for immigrants. Once again, there is a legal limbo inflicted upon the migrant during the long waiting time from the moment he/she receives a contract or job offer, applies for a visa, receives it four to six months later, subsequently applies for a RUT and finally receives it two to four weeks later. Only then can the migrant inscribe to the public health system. In the meantime, even though he/she is already paying into social security, he/she cannot access public health services yet without the RUT. R13 shared the story of how she was recently rejected from a public hospital

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[42] Part of the Ministry of external relations.
[43] Public presentation held at the ECLAC on the 8th of November 2017, representing the government previous to the general elections that month. See appendix IV. for more about the presentation.
[44] At the time of the interview, the elections did not take place yet.

because she was in one of those legal limbos where her ID was being renewed but she was still working and paying into the public fund. Frustrated, she expressed her discontent of such unequal access: "*This institutional gap is catastrophic. If it were an emergency, they would let me die in an emergency room because I don't have a valid ID*" (R13, 10.2017).

5.6. LABOR INTEGRATION

Employment opportunities were the third most cited reason for the respondents to move to Chile and the reality, though not always easy, proved to be a mostly positive experience for most. R6 and R17 were some of the few expressing their disappointment as the former had a background as a lawyer but still couldn't find a job related to her field after a year and therefore had to continue working as a domestic worker, while the latter has remained unemployed since his arrival for over a year. Most, nonetheless, have claimed progress in their professional lives and believe they can achieve (even) more in the future.

Most respondents (15) had to start working informally in low-paid blue-collar jobs. In fact, only three respondents started working under formal terms, as an English teacher, a domestic worker and a doctor. The hospitality sector was the most common point of informal entry into the labor market where eight respondents worked, half of them as bartenders or baristas and the other half in the kitchen. Distribution and mining companies offered a first job to two respondents each, while the remaining three respondents began in retail, construction, or as an Uber driver. Five respondents remained in their first job at the time of the interview, mostly because of their recent arrival, while thirteen had already changed jobs. Once the legal paperwork was resolved, they managed to integrate into the formal labor market successfully. One prime example amongst the respondents is R9 who arrived in November 2016, started working in a kitchen below minimum salary, then got a better-paid job as a cafeteria barista and recently got hired as a professional consultant at the ECLAC working in her field of expertise as an engineer. Most respondents therefore seemed satisfied in how they could make use of their educational background or were confident that they would be able to do so in the near future.

Regarding the labor integration in Chile, eight respondents criticized the abuse of the employers in terms of exploiting the financial needs and lack of documents of the recently arrived immigrants in order to hire them at a very low pay which documented Chileans would not accept. Respondents argued that immigrants are frequently unaware of what a fair remuneration would

be upon arrival and that the employer, aware of the mostly highly skilled Venezuelan workforce, makes use of this. Venezuelans are, according to R13 (10.2017), "*...paid 40% less the salary of a regular Chilean for doing four times the job.*" Although this might be an exaggeration, it does seem to indicate that Venezuelans are overworked and underpaid. R19 was not even paid for her first month of hard work at a mining factory. Hard working conditions were in fact another complaint by five respondents, from working at two restaurants at once, to carrying heavy loads, constructing under hazardous conditions and working very long hours. R11 admitted that it was a hard blow for him to engage in hard physical work[45] after being the head of a law firm. The other two major obstacles, mentioned by four respondents each, were the employer's reluctance to hire professionals and the tough competition in the labor market, especially in Santiago. R14, a street food vendor at the *Mercado de la Vega*[46] in the mornings and cook at a restaurant at night, expressed his confidence of the employment opportunities in Chile:

> *...here those [Venezuelans] who arrive and say they don't find a job is simply because they do not really look for it or have...If the Venezuelan is an engineer, he wants a position as an engineer immediately. But hey, you are not in your land, here you have to start from the bottom and step by step climb up.* (R14, 11.2017)

His statement resonates with the findings in this section as the respondents had indeed usually started in informal, low paid jobs but have climbed their way up into formal, better paid jobs, often even in their profession.

5.7. SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND CULTURAL TIES

To the question whether they felt welcomed in Chile, the answer was overwhelmingly positive with seventeen respondents saying how well they were received, treated and respected by the Chileans or how nice they were in general. Three respondents even mentioned that the immigration-friendly society in Chile, as they had heard from their contacts, was an important reason to choose Chile ahead of other attractive destinations. One respondent, however, said she felt welcomed, but only because she is a white woman. Another respondent did not really answer and talked about the xenophobia in the country and one other respondent said that some Chileans were very nice but her experience was not that good. Though most had a positive experience with

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[45] Carrying heavy food loads, frequently in containers under 30 degrees Celsius.
[46] See appendix IV for more details about and photos of this market, the biggest one in Chile.

13 respondents not having experienced any discrimination against them, the phrase '*I heard of other stories*' was very common. Meanwhile, six respondents have felt discriminated against, either by comments on why they did not move somewhere else or regarding the dark skin color, by being constantly reminded of the terrible the situation in their home country and their privilege to be in Chile, or being accused of taking jobs or resources away. R19, for instance, who worked her way up to become a store manager at a GAP store, highlighted the labor discrimination towards immigrants that can be found within a company's hierarchy. The perceived threat due to the increased competition leads some locals to view them with suspicion: "*Why does this foreigner that is just arriving have a better position than I do?*" (R19, 12.2017)

These findings are not transferable to the experience of other immigrants in Chile, though, as most respondents point out how there are highly varying perceptions towards immigrants depending on their nationality and skin color. Venezuelans have been particularly well received for various reasons. First, the Venezuelan community was very small until recently and continues to be so even after the current immigration wave in proportion to other immigration groups, hence the Chileans could not form as much of an opinion relative to the other groups. The negative prejudices they hear are mostly directed at the larger immigration groups, Peruvians and Colombians, the latter often labeled as criminals and drug dealers by Chileans. Many respondents have actually expressed their concern that other newly arriving Venezuelans may negatively affect their image in society. Second, the Venezuelans that arrive usually have a higher purchasing power than the average Venezuelan, which is required in the first place to travel so far from their home country, and are also highly educated and skilled and therefore more appreciated for their contributions. Third, Chileans were not used to much immigration in general, but the recent surge in black immigrants, mainly from Haiti, has caught their attention the most, being the main victims of racism in the country currently, while the other white, indigenous or mestizo immigrants from other South American countries are not a novelty and generally blend in better, especially linguistically since Haitians speak French/Creole natively and have that additional barrier to integrate (see appendix III to read more about the perspectives from the expert interviews). Fourth, many respondents highlighted a very particular historical tie that bond both countries as many Chileans have moved to exile during Pinochet's dictatorship to Venezuela where they were kindly received at the time. Five respondents shared some of their various encounters with Chileans who expressed their gratitude towards Venezuela for welcoming so many Chileans back then and that it is time for Chile to return the favor to Venezuelans now.

In answering the question on how their perception of a 'common Latin American identity' has changed since arrival, many needed a while to fully process the question and usually replied by listing the common factors such as the language, history, cultural practices, and '*latin vibe*' as well as the differences, sometimes unexpected, such as the colder interpersonal approach, the higher degree of individualism, the more progressive views on some topics (e.g. the widely tolerated marijuana use in Chile) and other aspects resembling more of a Western culture, as some have put it. Nonetheless, everyone did state that they (still) feel Latin American or even more so by now and that the cultural ties have made their integration easy. All claim to socialize and work with many Chileans in their daily lives. Though cultural ties were not one of the major reasons cited for choosing Chile[47], the findings suggest it was still determining, in other words, a choice of "*...as developed as a culturally closer country can get*" (R14, 11.2017), which is why Chile's position within Latin America was a major reason for seven respondents.

5.8. PERCEPTIONS OF CHILE: A COUNTRY OF OPPORTUNITIES?

Questions regarding their subjective perception of Chile in terms of economic and political development, opportunities and culture are aimed to get a better understanding of why they chose Chile. When asked, for instance, to decide whether they perceive Chile more as a developed or rather as a developing country, the answers were varied. One person replied 'developed', though most answers were rather nuanced as most (10) respondents assessed Chile to be well advanced and with significant potential to develop further, but not 'there' yet. Nine respondents further highlighted how within Latin America it is probably the most developed country. Eight respondents, nonetheless, thought there was still much to be done to be developed. Among the mentioned issues to be addressed are the great inequality, the poor public health services, the limited reach of free public education (currently predominantly expensive and/or private), the general disorder and the insufficient environmentally friendly culture. Comments like the following were common: "*I think that for Chile to be a fully developed country, there needs to be a more accessible education for the lower classes*" (R2, 09.2017). In fact, most respondents expressed their concern for the great inequality in Chile, where in some areas in Santiago (e.g. *Providencia* and *Las Condes*) one may have the impression to be in a Western city while in other parts of the same city people live under precarious conditions "*...in small plots with scrap metal roofs and horses, pigs and chicken in the house*", as R16 (11.2017) described. According to her, one can literally draw a line on

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[47] Mentioned by three respondents

Santiago's map almost through the middle to divide between the upper and lower classes, "*...from Plaza de Italia[48] up and Plaza de Italia down*" (R18, 12.207). R19 (12.2017) went further and argued that equal rights are not possible "*...in a country where the minimum salary[49] is not even enough to get by.*"

Nonetheless, most participants (16) agreed that Chile may be perceived as the North of the South[50], at least to a certain extent, if not fully. They perceived the connotations of Chile being the richer, more developed, stable and most Western country in Latin America. R10 (10.2017), for instance, argued: "*In the capitalist aspect and the opportunities for immigrants, I would say yes.*" Some answers resembled the ones from the previous question on the level of development, though this time many referred to the USA in order to draw direct comparisons to what is traditionally considered the 'North' for Latin Americans. Many point out that Chile seems to copy the US in many aspects, especially in their liberal capitalistic system, their individualistic culture and the high levels of indebtedness for high consumption and spending habits. One respondent explicitly stated: "*I think they are more 'gringo'[51] than Latin Americans in their personalities*" (R16, 11.2017). R19 (12.2017) was actually planning to move to the USA but decided to move to Chile instead thanks to its legal facilities and for resembling the North in some cultural aspects she deemed important for her choice: "*Wow, you can actually be organized in the South and not only in the USA or above.*" For a further analysis by the experts on why Chile may be perceived as the North of the South, see appendix III.

Furthermore, every single respondent believed Chile is a country of opportunities for immigrants, some confirming enthusiastically and pointing out how everywhere in Latin America migrants were going to Chile. Only two respondents carefully added that it is a country of opportunities for professionals in the first place, not so much for others. The three interviewees without higher education background, nonetheless, also perceived it as a country of opportunities for immigrants and were grateful for it. Interestingly, while talking about Chile's current development, four respondents drew parallels between Chile's current situation with Venezuela's development up to the 1990s, prior to Chavez' rise to power, when Venezuela

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[48] An important central square in the center of Santiago.
[49] The minimum salary in Chile, during the second half of 2017, was 270.000 Chilean pesos, an equivalent of 413 USD at the day of the interview (07/12/2017). R12, in contrast, argued that it was just enough for him to get by.
[50] Most respondents understood the connotations right away and the rest quickly understood upon a brief explanation.
[51] Slang in Latin America usually used to refer to North Americans from the USA.

was economically at the forefront of South America and represented the country of opportunities for millions of migrants from Europe and Latin America. R3 also drew a parallel to the great inequality and the resulting societal resentment and class struggle. R1 (09.2017) analyzed this parallel even further and, with great concern, said that if the left decides to "*…retaliate against the past domination of the right…*" in a vengeful manner by reversing all of their policies, Chile may become instead the "*…Venezuela of the South.*"

5.9. FUTURE PROSPECTS

Finally, the respondents were asked whether they see themselves staying in Chile in the long term or returning to Venezuela under any circumstances, for example if the situation improved. While five respondents were completely unsure about their future, most (11) did imagine staying in Chile in the long term. Four interviewees found it highly unlikely to return to Venezuela, two fully rejected such an idea under any circumstances, and another four excluded both Chile and Venezuela from their future, instead planning to leave Latin America. Two respondents mentioned they would like to invest in Venezuela as soon as the situation improves in order to help their country, but did not see themselves returning to live there. In fact, only one respondent, R18, was really convinced he would return to Venezuela as soon as the situation allows for it, because he felt he needed to give back to his home country that had paid for his (higher) education and, as a political scientist, he hopes to help reconstruct the country with his knowledge.

Furthermore, "*even if the government resigns tomorrow…*" (R12, 10.2017), respondents predict many years, some claiming up to 10 and 20 years, for the country to recover. In the meantime, they may have formed a family already and established their lives in Chile, which makes it harder to return. In fact, R15 already has formed a family in Chile and expressed no doubt she would stay there with her wife and child and four other respondents had already moved most, if not all, of their family to Chile. One more person was also working on it. All in all, it has become clear that their migration is not of temporary nature but has a long-term outlook as the options to return, even if the wish is there, are painted grim.

VI. Concluding analysis

## 6.1. Push and pull factors in South-South Migration in Latin America

Thanks to the extensive findings extracted from the interviews, this case study can give us a better understanding of some of the push and pull factors influencing SSM within Latin America. They coincide to a large extent with those found in the literature, but also offer new expansions and complementary explanations. The following headings are not ordered by push and pull factors as they are not as easy to demarcate as in the theoretical framework.

Legal employment and integration opportunities

Due to the predominant focus on SNM in Latin America, wage differentials are usually mentioned as a core reason in shaping migration. As inflation figures amongst the main push factors for leaving Venezuela, where one struggles to get by even with a good salary, wage differentials do implicitly affect their choice. Explicitly, however, the respondents did not cite this as a reason and instead highlighted legal facilities and employment opportunities to work in Chile as two of the major pull factors. Though other countries such as the USA offered attractive salaries, the legal barriers and difficulty of the labor market for foreigners dissuaded some respondents, and while other countries were also perceived as economically stable and as good places to work and live, such as Colombia and Panama, their labor market was difficult to enter or made harder for Venezuelans as a reaction to their large migration wave.

This coincides with the theory presented on the legal pull factors as migrants prefer to migrate somewhere where they can establish themselves legally (IOM, 2017: 178–179) and have the opportunity to develop professionally (Bakewell *et al*., 2009: 34–35). Having heard from others about the legal facilities, this became the second most mentioned reason to move to Chile. Once in Chile, their bureaucratic processes were slow and they were often left in a legal limbo, making their access to formal jobs, housing and health services difficult and/or expensive. Despite all, the respondents generally expressed their gratitude for the legal facilities that Chile offered to immigrants with few conditions and under affordable costs.

Figure 8. Homicide map in Latin America for the year 2017 (or latest available data)
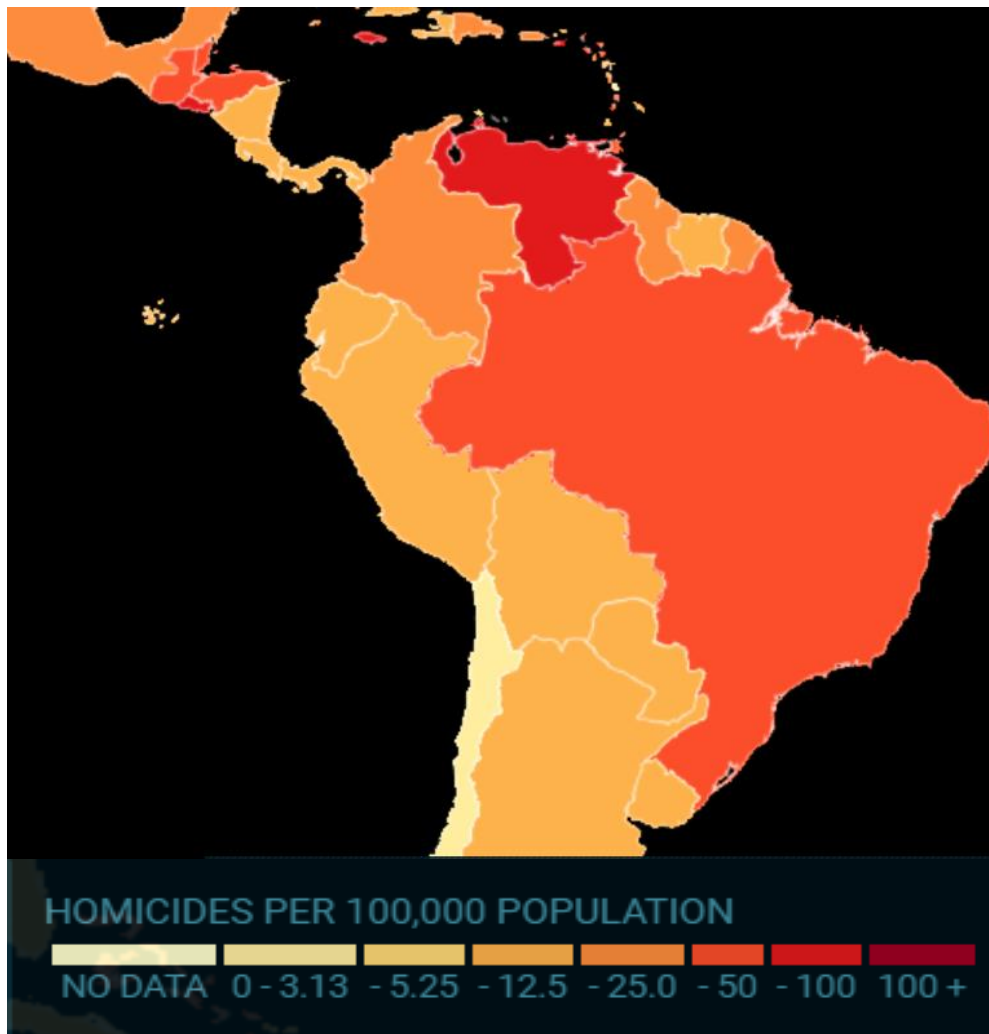
Source. Map extracted from the website designed by the Igarapé Institute (n.d.)

Note. For each country, the latest available data applies

SECURITY LEVELS

The extremely high insecurity levels represented the main push factor for the respondents to leave Venezuela, as suggested in the literature. After El Salvador and Jamaica, Venezuela currently has the highest homicide rate in the Americas and the world, 53,7 per 100.000 inhabitants[52] (Igarapé Institute, n.d.). The map in figure 8 illustrates the varying degrees of homicide rates in Latin America, where Chile stands for its low homicide rate of 2,7[53], the lowest one in all of the Americas after Canada[54] Though security was not mentioned as one of the major reasons to choose Chile, it was explicitly mentioned for not choosing neighboring

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[52] Latest data from 2017.
[53] Latest data from 2016.
[54] Canada had a homicide rate of 1,7 in 2016.

countries such as Colombia and Brazil. Hence, it is not just important to look at the conflicts and violence that displaces people, as the literature usually does, but also at the levels of (in)security in the country of destination. Security levels therefore appear to be an implicit pull factor. The following excerpt highlights why this is an important factor to help explain migratory decisions:

> *…in Brazil the violence is terrible…so I obviously saw a mirror, for what I fled from in Venezuela was basically the issue of insecurity and violence, so going to Colombia or Brazil was never even an option.* (R18, 12.2017)

POLITICAL RESEMBLANCE

The same 'mirror effect', avoiding places that may resemble in certain aspects the place you are migrating away from, can be applied to the political factors as well. Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina were all mentioned as examples of countries with socialist leaders who sympathized with Chavez and were therefore excluded as options. Though they were aware that the latter two would have offered economic stability and job opportunities, two important pull factors, the fear that such leadership may lead down the same path that it did in Venezuela scared them away. In contrast, it appears in the interviews that Chile has a regional reputation for being the most capitalist and liberalist free-marketeer country in South America, the political opposite of Venezuela one could argue.

Political instability, as indicated in the literature, is a frequent push factor for SSM (Bakewell *et al*., 2009: 33–34). More than half of the respondents had left Venezuela due to the grim political panorama, or even political persecution. Though not stressed in the literature, the lack of political resemblances, as found in Chile, may be considered an additional pull factor. The fear of political resemblance even goes as far as worrying, as one respondent did, that Chile may take a sharp political shift to the left and turn into the Venezuela of the South. Contemporary Chile, in fact, reminded several respondents of the Venezuela of the 1990s in terms of its advanced development and growing share of immigrants. This historic parallel might also be the reason why most respondents worried so much about Chile's socio-economic inequality (see 5.8.), possibly reminding them of Venezuela's divided society.

STABILITY

The general stability that the country of destination had to offer to the respondents was, in abstract terms, an overarching pull factor related to all of the previous factors mentioned, from economic, political to legal stability. Economic stability was in fact the most mentioned reason to choose Chile among the respondents. Considering the acute crisis and extreme instability Venezuela is suffering, it seems plausible that migrants seek a place where they can find stability to establish themselves, not having to worry about the economic or political future of their new environment. This resonates with Truong *et al*.'s (2014: 9–11) analysis of the immigrants' frustration with the constant uncertainty they frequently have to deal with in developed countries. One respondent replied the following to whether he considers Chile to be a country of opportunities for immigrants:

> *There are immigrants who come with the expectation of buying an Audi, the latest iPhone model and a two-flat house on their second month in Chile, and there is the immigrant who wants an average quality of life with a calm and aspirational future. If the latter is your vision of life, to have employment stability, visa stability, future stability, Chile is a good option, a country of opportunities.* (R18, 12.2017)

This statement sums up the argument very well. While there are economically more attractive options, Chile seems to offer more long-term stability for immigrants to settle.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL TIES

During the Pinochet dictatorship, many Chileans fled to Venezuela where they were well received. According to several interviewees, Chileans remember this historic bond and have expressed their gratitude towards Venezuelans and their disposition to return the favor by receiving them. Literature does consider historical ties, but mostly that of former colonial ties (Villarreal Villamar, 2017: 193). Historic migratory bonds in general appear to positively influence integration but may not have been perceived as pull factors by the respondents.

Cultural and linguistic ties, however, were clearly a pull factor for the respondents as most of them highlighted how Chile's position within Latin America determined their decision, indicating their preference to stay within the region if possible. One respondent even had a Spanish passport but preferred to stay in Latin America. This backs up Ponce's (2016) quantitative findings on the role of cultural and linguistic familiarity in shaping migratory

flows. Culturally and linguistically more distant Haitian immigrants were often mentioned for being discriminated against and having a much harder time integrating into Chilean culture in contrast to Latin American immigrants, according to some respondents and the expert interviews[55] and as highlighted in recent literature (Rojas Pedemonte *et al*., 2015). Nonetheless, other Latin American and/or Indigenous immigrants still suffer discrimination through prejudice by Chilean society, e.g. Colombians being labeled as drug dealers and Peruvians as criminals, whereas Venezuelans, being until recently such a small proportion of the immigrants, have managed not to build a negative image in Chile. Many respondents are worried, though, that this may change with the large influx of more Venezuelans. All in all, cultural ties seem to be an important pull factor but not a guarantee for a successful integration like for Venezuelans.

IMMIGRATION FRIENDLY CULTURE

An additional pull factor seems to be the reputation of the destination country for being immigration friendly. Possibly overshadowed by the legal and cultural factors, it is generally not something mentioned in the mainstream literature on migration. Other economically attractive options were excluded precisely for their bad reputation in welcoming immigrants. The USA, one of the alternative favorite options for several respondents, is the prime example of this, while Panama, a neighboring economic hotspot, was also criticized for its hostility towards Venezuelans. This reputation is constructed by the feedback given by family, friends or acquaintances in the potential destination country, which leads to the next argument.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Though family members and friends, even if not closely related, have been stated as reasons to choose Chile, several respondents explained that despite having closer family ties elsewhere, for example in Colombia as many do, they chose Chile instead because of other more important reasons. Family ties, therefore, do not appear to be a determining pull factor, but rather a 'tipping factor' in cases of insecurity. Families or households, as Gjokaj *et al*. argue (2012: 292), are hence not always useful units of analysis, since individual agency often prevails in the decision making. Respondents recurred to their social networks, including relatives but also further acquaintances, in the various potential destination countries to receive reliable advice and take an informed decision. In the end, contacts upon arrival also appeared to be a pull factor

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[55] See expert interviews in appendix III.

as they ensured the migrant a smoother transition and an emergency contact to refer to in a new environment. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, modern communication technologies have significantly shaped modern migration (IOM, 2017: 155–156), the findings also suggesting that through their close and distant connections migrants are able to receive real-time feedback from the various places they consider moving to. This helps them make an informed decision.

6.2. CHILE: THE NEW NORTH OF THE SOUTH?

According to the traditional perspective as perpetuated by the UNDESA, Chile is not part of the global North, though according to the WB income classification and UNDP's human development index, Chile may classify as such. Bearing in mind the blurry and changing boundaries of what is considered the global North or South and the social construction of their connotations and meaning, the findings in this paper suggest that Chile may indeed be perceived as the (new) North of the South, at least within the Latin American context. Their perceptions of Chile highlight several similarities to the USA, the traditional 'North' for Latin Americans. The association was not only made in economic terms for being a relatively developed and capitalistic country, but also in cultural terms for being a more individualistic and consumerist[56] society and, moreover, for being a country of opportunities for immigrants. Even its ageing society and low fertility rates[57] were mentioned to resemble that of the North, which offers the opportunity for young immigrants to fill the growing demographic gap.

As the global North, especially the USA, is increasingly closing its borders and growing its populist racist discourses, the findings suggests that migrants in the South are increasingly looking for a 'new North' within the South where the socio-cultural integration is easier and regional agreements facilitate their integration. Deepening regional agreements such as MERCOSUR and *Alianza del Pacifico*[58], for instance, have also been a sign of increasing intraregional integration and human mobility between South American countries (Hyland and Munck, 2015). Though SNM continues to be prevalent, the immigration statistics on Chile also

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[56] Such was the perception of several respondents. Statistically, the household debt to GDP level is a good indicator of the consumerist culture, Chile having the highest one in Latin America with 43,7% household debt to GDP (Trading Economics, n.d.)

[57] In 2016, the population ages 65 and above representing 10,7% in Chile and 16,5% in OECD countries (World Bank Group, 2016c) and the fertility rate being 1,774 in Chile and 1,726 in OECD countries (World Bank Group, 2016a).

[58] The *Pacific Alliance* is a Latin American trade bloc comprised by Chile, Peru, Colombia and Mexico.

suggest a shift towards increased intraregional integration with the proportion of foreign-born population growing from 1,27% in 2002 to 4,35% in 2017 (INE, 2018: 20) and the proportion of South American immigrants growing from 67,7% in 2005 to 74,9% in 2014 (Rojas Pedemonte and Silva Dittborn, 2016: 11–12). Recent publications on immigration in Chile have even coined the term of 'the Chilean dream' (Cárdenas, 2015; Ryburn, 2016). All in all, Chile's advanced position within Latin America represented a major pull factor for the respondents, becoming for them, as R14 (11.2017) put it, "*...as developed as a culturally closer country can get*", suggesting that Chile may be perceived by increasingly more Latin Americans as the best alternative to the 'old North'.

6.3. FURTHER RESEARCH

All in all, the findings in this paper confirm many of the theories found in the literature, but also highlight complementary expansions of such factors to better understand SSM in Latin America, a region traditionally focused in SNM. Further research could either study more Venezuelan samples in other Latin American countries to contrast their experience and decision-making process with this sample or focus on other immigrant groups, since the findings highlight that the Venezuelan case is not representative for all migrants. An additional approach to test the findings would be to perform a similar case study but of quantitative nature, with a large sample, and basing the survey on the findings in this paper. As an example, figures 6 and 7 on the mentioned reasons for leaving Venezuela and choosing Chile, respectively, could be used to ask in the survey whether one agrees to each of these reasons and to what extent, e.g. asking: "How important was it to you how immigration friendly the country of destination would be?" Finally, further research may also explore the related macro-factors, from the changing dynamics between the traditional 'North' and 'South' to the role of the demographic transitions to an ageing society in emerging economies and the (potentially) increasing importance of regional integration between Latin American countries.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Name	Age	Gender	Date of arrival	Hometown (State)	Educational level	Current job	Date of interview
R1	26	Male	March 2016	Maracaibo (Zulia)	Tertiary - political sciences	Student / informal sales jobs	13 Sep. 2017
R2	29	Male	Aug. 2017	Caracas (capital)	Tertiary - finance and accountability	Waiter at a restaurant	29 Sep. 2017
R3	23	Female	Dec. 2015	Maracaibo (Zulia)	Tertiary - architecture	Architect assistant	6 Oct. 2017
R4	26	Female	May 2016	Carrizal (Miranda)	Tertiary - international commerce	Sales executive at a bank	7 Oct. 2017
R5	24	Male	July 2017	Maracaibo (Zulia)	Tertiary - gas service engineer	Barista at a cafe	14 Oct. 2017
R6	31	Female	Nov. 2016	Maracay (Aragua)	Tertiary - lawyer	Domestic worker	15 Oct. 2017 (together)
R7	26	Female	Aug. 2017	Maracay (Aragua)	Tertiary - lawyer	Domestic worker	
R8	24	Male	July 2017	Caracas (capital)	Secondary	Uber driver	19 Oct. 2017
R9	29	Female	Nov. 2016	Cumaná (Sucre)	Tertiary - telecom engineer	Consultant at ECLAC	19 Oct. 2017
R10	29	Male	April 2016	Trujillo (Trujillo)	Tertiary - economics	Assistant manager at a restaurant	19 Oct. 2017
R11	33	Male	May 2016	Barquisimeto (Lara)	Tertiary - lawyer	Concierge on weekends	20 Oct. 2017
R12	34	Male	Jan. 2016	Teques (Miranda)	Tertiary - nurse	Optical advisor and salesman	22 Oct. 2017
R13	29	Female	Feb. 2016	Caracas (capital)	Tertiary - international commerce	Sales executive at international customs	22 Oct. 2017

R14	24	Male	April 2017	Barquisimeto (Lara)	Secondary	Street food vendor and cook at a restaurant	3 Nov. 2017
R15	42	Female	June 2016	Caracas (capital)	Secondary	Wholesale distributor	3 Nov. 2017
R16	27	Female	Oct. 2016	Maracaibo (Zulia)	Tertiary - doctor	Doctor	5 Nov. 2017 (together)
R17	24	Male	Oct. 2016	Maracaibo (Zulia)	Tertiary - architecture	Unemployed	
R18	27	Male	Dec. 2014	Maracaibo (Zulia)	Tertiary - political sciences	Communications officer at a political party	11 Dec. 2017
R19	27	Female	Nov. 2013	Maracaibo (Zulia)	Tertiary - lawyer	Store manager at a clothes store	12 Dec. 2017

Expert's name	Gender	Nationality	Profession	Date of interview
Jürgen Weller	Male	German	Head of the Unit of Employment Studies at the ECLAC	7 Nov. 2017
Piotr Kozak	Male	British/Polish	Journalist for the Guardian	13 Nov. 2017

APPENDIX II. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VENEZUELANS

Background

- When did you move to Chile?
- Where from Venezuela are you from and what did you use to do there before emigrating?
- Why did you emigrate from Venezuela? What were your main reasons?
  - If implicitly answered already, then just ask what other reasons there were to leave
- Did you come by yourself or with other family members? Or friends?
  - Follow up: Were there some who were left behind because it was not possible to bring them along for some reason?

Choosing Chile

- And why did you choose Chile?
  - As a follow up, though, why Chile and not a neighboring or some other country?
  - Were personal connections such as family or friends involved in choosing Chile? How?
- What would you say makes Chile an attractive place to work?
- What were your expectations of your life in Chile before arriving?

Labor integration

- What type of visa / work permission did you come with? Or did you get one after arrival?
- What type of visa / work permission do you have now and what are the prospects of prolonging your stay here, if that is your intention?
  - Follow up, if necessary: So on a temporary / permanent basis?
- Did you have any difficulties in getting all the permissions in order?
- What was your first job here and would you say you advanced professionally or that you found a better job afterwards?

- What is your educational background, and do you feel like you were able to find an appropriate job to your skill level or not?
- What were or are your main obstacles to find a job here?

Social integration and discrimination

- How welcomed have you felt here in Chile?
- In general, how much do you work and socialize with Chileans and how much with Venezuelans or other immigrants?
- After some time here in Chile, has your notion of a common Latin American identity evolved or do you not feel identified enough to Chilean culture?
- In general, do you feel discriminated against? If so, in what ways?
    - Do you feel Venezuelans in general are discriminated against?
- Do you believe there is some kind of institutional discrimination? Are there any rights you feel are not respected?
    - Follow up: are there any rights for immigrants in particular you would demand from the government?

Contribution to development

- Would you say that the contribution of Venezuelans and other immigrants to the employment, economic growth and development of Chile is generally recognized here or not?
- In what ways, if at all, do you think that the Venezuelan diaspora (here in Chile) can contribute somehow to the development in your home country?
    - For example remittances?

Perceptions of Chile

- In your perception, when you think of Chilean society, politics and economy, would you consider it as a developing country or a developed one? Why?
- In general, would you say Chile has been more a land of opportunities than of obstacles?
- With the connotations in mind, would you perceive Chile to be the new North of the South? For what reasons or aspects?

Conclusion

- Do you see yourself staying in Chile in the long term or returning to Venezuela as soon as the opportunity allows?
- Is there anything else you would like to comment on the topic that I haven't asked about yet?

APPENDIX III. EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Piotr Kozak, journalist for the Guardian on topics like immigration, and Jürgen Weller, head of the employment studies unit at the ECLAC, offered some additional input to understand some of the dynamics of immigration and their integration in Chile from an expert perspective. The latter co-authored a recent publication together with the ILO about labor migration in Latin America (2017) and argued that Chile, where the proportion of immigrants has grown the most in Latin America since 2010, has created an image within Latin America of political and economic stability, of opportunities, and "*...more organized, more respectful towards the law, of less corruption, with a relatively more developed infrastructure that works*" (Weller, 11.2017). This image, he explains, has been amplified since Chile joined the OECD, despite remaining at the bottom of the various lists. Hence, many Latin American migrants may perceive Chile to be the North of the South and hold high expectations, only to realize that the reality can be very frustrating as, according to Weller, the labor market cannot offer enough new attractive opportunities for the large influx of immigrants, forcing them to work below their capacities despite the average immigrant coming with a high educational background. Venezuelans in particular are generally highly educated and have integrated easily in Chilean society and g*et al*ong very well with Chileans. However, he endorses the respondents' view on the legal obstacles they need to face, at least initially, to integrate into the labor market, for instance in revalidating their professional titles. Weller also highlighted how labor markets in the USA and Europe have been making it harder and/or less attractive for Latin American migrants to enter, which has contributed to increased intra-regional migration, and turned Chile, which had until recently been a country of emigration, into an important country of immigration. In contrast, "*Venezuela has traditionally not been a country of emigration but of immigration and many of these people would have stayed in their country had it not been for the necessity of the moment*" (Weller, 11.2017).

Piotr Kozak, from the more critical perspective of a journalist, shared several stories of xenophobic behavior and rejection of immigrants, especially Afro-Caribbeans and Peruvians, a topic on which he published several articles (2017a, 2017b). He argues that racism in Chile is especially visible towards Haitians and other Afro-Caribbean due to their dark complexion to which Chileans are not used to, and that discrimination towards indigenous peoples, including the local *mapuches*, is also prevalent. barriers toward successful integration he mentions are the formation of ghettos where certain migration groups tend to move to,

depending on their nationality, and the precarious living standards within frequently over-crowded housing. Regarding Venezuelans, Kozak observed how they usually integrate well into the middle-classes and tend to be professionals or open a business. On Chile's image internationally, he boldly commented: "*Yeah, I would say it is global South pretentiously North, pretending to be a developed nation*" (Kozak, 11.2017). His subsequent critiques resembled that of the respondents in highlighting the great inequalities between the different sectors in society, which determine your access to quality education and health services. When reflecting on future developments, he expresses the concern he has observed among immigrants in Chile of Piñera's election for president due to his anti-immigration discourses, believing he will make the entry much harder. Weller, on the other hand, more cautiously, analyzed that the political range of the migration debate is not very wide and with no extreme positions, except for some 'slip of the tongue'. Kozak further added that Chile will continue to need more immigration as the fertility rate is at 1,7[59], below replacement rate, eventually leading to a shrinking population.

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[59] According to the WB (2016a), in 2016 the fertility rate in Chile was 1,774. According to the latest census in 2017, though, the average fertility rate in Chile was actually of 1,3 children per woman between 15 and 49 years old (INE, 2018: 14).

APPENDIX IV. SUMMARIZED FIELD OBSERVATIONS AND PHOTOS

The increasing presence of Venezuelans is quite visible. Locals have mentioned it in conversations, Venezuelans themselves have said so as well as and usually mention how many more friends or family members are preparing to join soon too. Increasingly more Venezuelan small enterprises are opening up like the barbershop in photo 1. In '*La Vega*' market one can see Venezuelan flags in several stands. Photo 2 and photo 3 show a wholesale stand and a food stand selling the typical Venezuelan *arepas*, respectively, where I performed two of my interviews. In photo 2 there is even a sign with political statements against the political situation in their country: "*Aqui se habla mal de Chavez*", translated informally to: "Here we talk trash (negatively) about Chavez". Photo 4 illustrates a case of an informal job ad on a street post offering cleaning service for homes or offices. As discovered during my stay and thanks to the interviews, most recently arrived Venezuelans enter the labor market informally while they are stuck in a legal limbo.

Photo 1. Venezuelan barbershop in the center of Santiago de Chile

Photo 2. Venezuelan food store in 'La Vega' market in Santiago de Chile (Cover photo)

Photo 3. Venezuelan food stand in 'La Vega' market, selling the typical Venezuelan 'arepas'

Photo 4. Job ad on a street post by a Venezuelan offering home or office cleaning services

Translation. I am a Venezuelan [woman] and I do cleaning in apartments/house/office. Phone number crossed off for privacy purposes

One morning I approached the Venezuelan embassy around its opening hour, at 9am, to seek for an interview with someone working there. However, the queue was extremely long, around 500 meters long, filling two streets, and I did not have the time to wait all day, which is how long some people in the queue claimed it would take. Photo 5 captures a fraction of the long line, yet another sign of the quickly growing Venezuelan community in Chile. In photo 6, one can see the walls of the embassy with the words *fraude* (fraud) and *corruptos* (corrupt) graffitied on them, expressing their discontent with the politics in their home country and the obstacles their government creates for Venezuelans who emigrate.

Photo 5. The long waiting line (a fraction of it) in front of the Venezuelan embassy

Photo 6. Entrance to the Venezuelan embassy, with a 'corrupto' (corrupt) graphiti

At the regional conference on the implementation of the Consensus of Montevideo on population and development, which took place at the headquarters of the ECLAC where I did my internship, a representative of the Chilean ministry of external relations, Pedro Hernandez González, gave a presentation on Chile's experiences and policies on international immigration. Photo 7 shows the first slide of his presentation, including details about the

narrator. The presentation exposed the focus that Bachelet's government put on a Human Rights approach. Photo 8 presents the 10th slide, which summarizes the government's outlook on the migrant as a subject of rights in a context of international commitment to Human Rights. The presentation in general gave a message of openness and support towards migrants. The interviewees do indeed appear to be grateful for the legal facilities in Chile, despite the long waiting times and legal limbos. The presentation was held on the 8th of November 2017, prior to the general elections, which took place during my fieldwork in Santiago. Many immigrants feared a potential future under Piñera's presidency due to some of his anti-immigration statements. The elections took place in November 2017, when Chile took a turn back to the right with the clear victory of Piñera. In December I finished my fieldwork and left Chile, which was too early for any changes to become apparent.

Photo 7. Presentation on international migration by the Chilean government at the ECLAC, 1st slide (8th November 2017)

Translation. Title: "International migration and the protection of the Human Rights of all migrant people" Presented by: Pedro O. Hernández Gonzáles, Vice-director of International Migration, Consular policies administration, General administration of consular issues and of immigration, Ministry of External Relations

Photo 8. Presentation on international migration by the Chilean government at the ECLAC, 10th slide (8th November 2017)
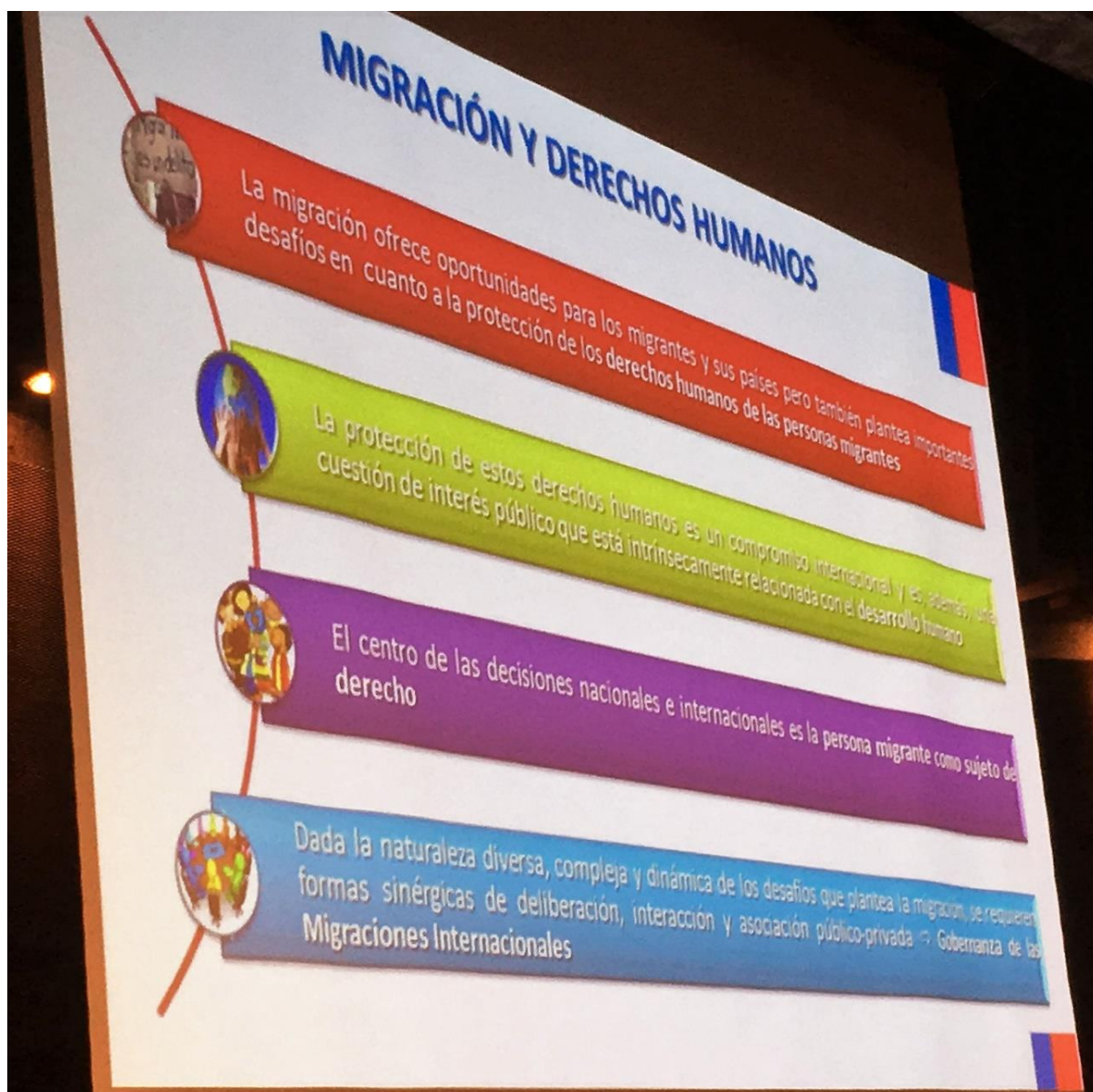
Translation. Title: Migration and Human Rights (HR). First box: Migration offers opportunities for the migrants and their countries but also raise important challenges regarding the protection of HR for the migrants. Second box: The protection of these HR is an international commitment and is also a matter of public interest that is intrinsically related to the human development. Third box: The core of national and international decisions is the migrant as a subject of rights. Fourth box: Given the diverse, complex and dynamic nature of the challenges that migration brings, there needs to be a deliberation, interaction and association in the form of public-private synergies → Governance of International Migration

Appendix V. Disclosure Statement

I hereby give an oath to the readers that I have acted in good faith and that, acknowledging that absolute objectivity is impossible in social sciences, I have strived not to let my personal values or ideological views affect the research processes.

With no potential conflict of interest in this topic or in any related industry, I aimed to give the most accurate possible representation of what I have witnessed and of other people's stories shared in this paper.

My internship at the ECLAC parallel to my fieldwork had put me very close in touch with the organization's ideas and people, ultimately conducting an interview with a Venezuelan employee there and my supervisor who was one of the two experts. Nonetheless, I carried out my research independently as it was performed exclusively for my Master's thesis and had no connection to the ECLAC.