



ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research

Vol. 14, Issue, 10, pp. 66875-66880, October, 2024

<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.28844.10.2024>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

LIFE QUALITY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS SETTLED IN CHILE: VENEZUELAN NARRATIVES

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ARTICLE INFO

ArticleHistory:

Received 11th July, 2024

Received in revised form

06th August, 2024

Accepted 08th September, 2024

Published online 30th October, 2024

Key Words:

Venezuelan migrants; resilience; social integration; foreigners in Chile; socioeconomic conditions of migrants; migrant work; migrant education; migrant housing; social discrimination; family separation.

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ABSTRACT

Local economic crisis, violence and permanent political uncertainty, especially in some developing countries, has led to a massive migration of Venezuelans, lately to other countries of South America, looking for better living conditions or mere subsistence. The total number of Venezuelans living in Chile had reached until 2022, 532.715 individuals, representing 32,8% of the migrant population in the country. Since 2014, Venezuelans have arrived in waves with different social, economic and cultural characteristics. This paper presented a qualitative analysis of the effects of selected indicators on the quality of life and social integration of ten Venezuelan migrants in Chile by gender, age and class, as narrated by themselves. Its aim was to explore their socioeconomic and cultural trajectories during settlement in Chile and show how they affected their resilience strategies and social integration. Findings showed a precarious stability in life quality, devaluation of their work and professional status, daily suffering of a variety of maltreatment forms and injustices, most especially, though not only at work. The resilient strategies they have followed involve regrouping among compatriots, certain emotional isolation from nationals, absence of or mild confrontation of ill-treatment, as well as denial of migrant discrimination as a marked social trend.

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Citation: Liliana Acero and Pablo Zuleta Pastor. 2024. "Life quality and social integration of migrants settled in Chile: Venezuelan Narratives". International Journal of Development Research, 14, (10), 66875-66880.

INTRODUCTION

Local economic crisis, violence and permanent political uncertainty and harassment, especially in developing countries, has led to a massive migration of Venezuelans, lately to other countries of South America, looking for better living conditions or mere subsistence. The total number of Venezuelans living in Chile had reached until 2022, 532.715 individuals, representing 32,8% of the migrant population in the country (INE, 2023). It includes different waves of migration, that increased since 2014, and have significant socioeconomic differences, involving a higher qualification and resource status among those in the first wave. Between 2018 and 2022, there was an increase of 55,6% Venezuelan migrants, the highest growth of foreigners in the country. However, recent government declarations estimate that a new flow of them to Chile is imminent –a potential increase to between 700.000 and 800.000- given the controversial new election of President Nicolás Maduro who ordered cutting diplomatic links with Chile that does not recognize results (Díaz, 2024). Since 2018, 444.423 Venezuelans have migrated. The last big wave; 2.6 % of the Chilean population is formed by Venezuelans and 66% say they want to settle definitively (Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement, 2024).

However, social integration of Venezuelans is low in Chile, with only 7.7% belonging to religious groups and 5% to clubs, according to the same source. With 6.6% of the overall migrant population involving irregular migrants and the predominance of men among them, 66.9% of it corresponds to Venezuelan nationals (INE, 2023). Chile was chosen by many of them to migrate as it appeared as an 'oasis' of stability and growth. In 2019, President Sebastián Piñera declared that Chile is a "true oasis with a stable democracy", favourably comparing the country to a "Latin America in turmoil" (Sommaet *et al.*, 2021). A steady economic growth led to the creation of jobs and an increase in wages (Zenteno & Salazar, 2021). This imaginary of Chile reflected an exceptionalism, the highest standard of living in the region became very appealing to Venezuelans (Gomez, 2018), a mirage that would soon fall during settlement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper presents a qualitative analysis of a few indicators of the quality of life and social integration of a small sample of Venezuelan migrants in Chile as narrated by themselves. It describes selected aspects of the: "socio-economic and cultural conditions of migrants' integration", an intervening variable related to a larger research

project – PHOENIX. The risks of the migratory journey; the precarious living conditions in transit and arrival countries; uncertainty related to legal status in Chile; difficulties in accessing education, health and housing; lack of work; and, last but not least, social isolation, are multiple stressors that affect the lives of displaced people. The loss of the original roots and cultural context are also concomitant factors that contribute to the psychic, adaptive and relational vulnerability of migrant experiences (Ciaramella *et al.*, 2021). To confront these challenges and integrate adequately in the new society, migrants develop resiliency and coping strategies meaning, specific abilities to respond to different forms of shock, risk, adversity, and disturbances in ways that enable adaptation, renewal or transformation of stressors (Ungar, 2005; Author, 2024). Socioeconomic conditions impact the formulation, implementation, effectiveness, and evolution of those strategies and are reflected on how they deal with them (Brown, 2016).

The main aim of this paper is to explore three interrelated questions:

- Which are the socioeconomic and cultural trajectories reported by Venezuelan migrant interviewees during settlement in Chile?
- How do their living conditions affect their resilience and social integration?

Appendix 1: Characterization of training and work among Venezuelan interviewees

Interviewee	Sex	Training	Work in Venezuela	Present work in Chile
Javier	M	Administrator/Accountant	Bank as promotor of credit & accounts	Communicator in religious community and shelters
Johnnys	M	Systems Engineer	Technician in informatics and communication	Administrator & attendant in coffee -shop
Milán	M	International Chef	Cook	Cooking Master
Diego	M	Industrial Administrator	Administrator in a supermarket	Intermittent jobs of plumbing/painting etc.
Ricardo	M	Technician in cooking	Chief of cooking at restaurant and coffee shop	Cook for events & restaurant
Delia	W	Graphic Designer	Owner of design shop and clothes boutique	Editorial distribution of books & event organizer
Yedselys	W	Public accountant	Account assistant	Saleswoman in food firm
Yoliver	W	Graduate degree	Fruit and vegetable stand	Saleswoman at liquor store
Xiolimar	W	Technician in informatics	Student & work for parties/banquetes	Domestic worker
Janeth	W	Holistic therapist	Ibidem	Cook at restaurant

Source: The research

Characterization of Venezuelan Migrants interviewed: To explore the questions above, ten semi-structured interviews were undertaken with Venezuelan migrants accessed through a snowballing technique. They were almost two hours long, performed face-to-face in or close to their places of work, and then taped and transcribed. Interviewees were enthusiastic about talking about their experience, especially women, that made a lot of personal comments beyond the questions asked. The ten interviewees were equally divided by gender and they represent different age-cohorts and wage quintiles. The analysis of narrative extracts will be anonymised, for reasons of confidentiality. The majority of interviewees, except for two of them, belong to the 30-45 years age-cohort, and forming part of what could be termed as a lower middle class. The average age in this small sample is higher than the one that predominates among Venezuelans living in Chile: “On average, Venezuelans are younger than Chileans and have higher educational levels. Their average age is 36, compared to 46 for Chileans, and they have higher educational levels: 14 years of schooling compared to an average of 12 for hosts. Likewise, 65% of Venezuelans reported tertiary education, contrasting with 27% among Chileans” (Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement, 2024, p.23). Most of them define themselves either as *latino* or brown/Caribbean; with only two considering themselves as white. This seems a tricky question for them that they try to avoid answering –probably given the existing prejudices in Chile about race. Most of them are non-practising Catholic or Christians and two of them simply say “I believe in God”. In general, the interviewed form part of the recent wave of Venezuelan migrants arriving between 2016 and 2020, except in one case, a woman that lives in Chile since 2009 and a female newcomer that has only settled 7 months ago. This brief description can be complemented with information in Appendix 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Family separation, relations and reunification: Family separation from their country has a strong negative impact among interviewees on their family organization, with narratives that emphasize either diaspora, nostalgia and communication difficulties or grief, most especially when sickness or death of close relatives is involved. They show the significant cultural meaning they attach to extended families: “The breaking of the family [...] given that the family is the most important institution of a society” (man). During migration, there is a recurrent repetition that there is an explosion or fragmentation of their families.

“Family separation, the series of actions and the massive exodus that there was in Venezuela [...] As I am commenting, since the beginning it was not that I left Venezuela, but that gradually everybody left. In the end, we were all on our own.” (man)

There is a feeling of loneliness expressed here and of lack of support by those whom they had always been in close interaction with, i.e. relatives.

“...of course with my family of origin there were many ‘ups and downs’, because the situation over there continues bad, with electricity and communication problems, so communication

cannot be established constantly as one would want [...]my parents feel desperate about this...” (man)

Difficulties in periodic and systematic contact due to the negative socioeconomic context of Venezuela is lived major despair.

“...to be far away from family affects one a lot, in spite that now I am concentrated in my wife because it is as if now she is my family. But the rest of the family is scattered, practically all of us are negatively affected by this” (man).

Here again there is an important reference to the extended family as the centre of life and the image that it is now scattered around the world. Strikingly, the new family formed with spouses or ‘nuclear family’ seems to occupy a secondary place in relation to the extended family, even in cases when couples have their own children.

“An impact as such is when my cousin was killed. It was a loss that hurt me a lot because we were raised together [...]. My grandmother also died recently, 4-5 months ago and unfortunately, she was waiting for me, she kept asking: When are you coming dear? When are you coming? And unfortunately, I could not say to her my last goodbye, so that has been one of the most hurtful things for me” (woman)

Losses of relatives when being far away and a distance in family life are regretted by many, for example, a female interviewee cries about this during the interview and describes the psychological impact it has had on her as the development of adpression. This type of situation has been defined by Achotegui (2022, p. 75) as one of “added family grief”: “The funeral is very important psychologically and, if it cannot

be celebrated, it usually leaves the mourner with a feeling of unreality". Some positive aspects of establishing a distance from the extended family are also mentioned, such as: self-sufficiency, union strengthening in couples or greater companionship and support between members who share housing. In the case of women, changes of gender dynamics are mentioned, as they now tend to go to work outside the home more than before and their partners or male children are forced to get involved in domestic work. The most positive view found emphasizes an opening up of new opportunities: "the impact has been positive to a certain extent, we have met good people, gentle people, we have had the possibility of working in small, medium-size and large firms, as well as of self-employment" (man). The psychological dimension of migration, at least with respect to the processes of family disaggregation, seems to move between these two polarities: those of grief and loss on the one hand and, with it, possible mental health risks and, on the other hand, experiences that can result in possible gains in the subjective, relational and gender spheres, which open up new possibilities of being in the world.

Chilean reception and Social Relations: Local reception appears as a topic strongly marked by duality. The majority of participants express they feel welcomed and supported within Chile, though mainly by those Chileans that had lived previously in Venezuela or abroad (during the Chilean dictatorship) and had had the experience of having been very well treated.

"It was something of support to get things done; What do you need? And what they can give us as support, as one is just arriving..." (man)
 "Until now it seems to me spectacular, I do not have any claims, no Chilean has told me 'to go back home.' [...]. Chileans are very gentle" (woman)

However, though they state that nationals are respectful, they mention that they also try to take advantage of migrants' vulnerability, especially in working settings (woman). Another woman comments: "Well, my relationship with Chileans has been mainly at the job I work [...], bosses are good until you 'touch their pockets', they say to me Mrs Janeth is lovely, works very well, but when you ask them for a wage raise you become their enemy [...]. and they do not value our work, at least the ones I have had."

This story speaks of a kind of positive recognition at the personal level, which, however, does not imply the recognition of the migrant as a worker - a central dimension of identity building - who is left with a feeling of devaluation.

Others attribute good reception in Chile to their own personality and capacity, as well as the disposition with which they have settled, meaning the requirement of one's own adaptation to the foreign country - voices that emphasize individual responsibility. "In this case, I do not know if I am a good reference, because wherever I arrive I can make friends, when I arrive with respect. I realize the needs of others, I am extremely empathic, sometimes I think that too much. In this sense, for me Chileans are marvellous. I like very much their personality (man). This narrative is quite an exception in terms of how the interviewees define nationals.

Many others also reveal very obscure aspects in the interaction with nationals, usually, but not always, in relation to employment. Some of their comments also reveal nationals' ignorance of the country's general socioeconomic situation, for which they 'scapegoat' migrants. The next fragment is somewhat an exception from this pattern, as the interviewee reflects upon nationals' treatment of migrants from a wider socioeconomic perspective.

"...It is something to be understood when people are not used to dealing with migrants, because one is going to get much maltreatment and negative comments. But one tries, as I said before, not to hear or pay attention. [And decides] I am not going to get worn out by this" (man)

This interviewee illustrates how nationals tend to refer negatively to migrants: "bloody foreigners that are going to leave us without work

and so on. I have had many work colleagues that also say, before the labour force in Chile was expensive. Then, when Haitian and Venezuelan migration began, and wages became much lower, they thought it was the fault of foreigners. And I tell them no, it is not like that. But well, that shows how they think". Confrontations of those kind of stereotypes are also sometimes formulated, though often mildly.

Friendships and Compatriots: Given these frequent type of miscommunication and prejudice, the majority of interviewees stick to their own compatriots for friendship, support and help in everyday life. It impacts the few interviewees that mention the establishment of deep friendships with Chileans, as well as the very few Chileans they interact with. Social applications have been mentioned as a way of meeting people in only a few cases, usually to look for company. Neighbours are also sometimes mentioned as a source of comfort and support, most especially during the COVID epidemic (woman). One of the main factors mentioned as an obstacle to socialization is lack of available free time. Araujo & Martucelli (2012) define the "labor excessiveness" found in Chile; referring both to the time and space that work occupies in the daily lives of Chileans, as well as in its psychological space. "In Chilean people work a lot, so it is sleeping and working, just sleeping and working, so that stresses one and there comes a moment in which one says what is going on here because times flies and one does not have time for anything, to get together, well only at Christmas, birthdays are celebrated on the same day [...] because free time does not match with work duties" (woman). A few others however, have strong emotional relationships with Chilean families where they work, their bosses or colleagues from work - especially women carrying out domestic work - as well as, relationships established through their children's schools. It is considered almost unanimously that the workplace facilitates integration with Chileans. Work appears as intimately related or intertwined with general socialization. In contrast with the friendship established frequently among compatriots, a few of the interviewees criticize strongly the attitudes of other Venezuelan migrants, using phrases such as, "The worse enemy of a Venezuelan is another Venezuelan." (man) "A Venezuelan bothers more than a Chilean. I do not know, it is as if they want to be 'clever', perhaps migration has been difficult for them and they are looking whom to bother others" (woman). Being let down by Venezuelan friends and family they had counted upon has also been a deep source of disappointment: "What I see is that, one is going through a rough time and they [meaning other Venezuelan migrants] run away" (woman). This type of 'crisis of solidarity', also shows competition among waves of migration of Venezuelans, those that have a longer period of settlement in Chile versus newcomers.

Ongoing social attitudes towards migrants: Changes in ongoing attitudes in Chile towards migration throughout time are commented upon as a source of conflict. These transformations from friendliness to prejudice and fear are motivated by a number of reasons. Firstly, the amount of migrants has increased exponentially, especially that of Venezuelans at a time when Chile has lost previous economic stability. Secondly, well-known drug and arm gangs, such as "Los Gallegos" - a cell from the transnational Venezuelan organized crime network "the Train from Aragua"- have recently involved Venezuelans within Chile - 34 of them were already tried for hideous forms of homicide, torture, drug and weapon tenure (Risque, 2024). Thirdly, the fact that newcomers in recent years tend to have lower qualifications and resources than those of previous waves of Venezuelan migration. Finally, media campaigns of discrimination and xenophobia have intensified and attained the wider public's imaginaries negatively - e.g. labelling all Venezuelan migrants as potential criminals. These changes are expressed in interviewees narratives as follows:

"I think that it was good but with time it has been changing [...], the first that arrived were people with studies and then people with other intentions, this has made [...] locals to be on the defensive at the moment" (man).

“Very well received by Chilean society, by any Chilean that I got to know. Maybe at that time there were not so many events announced by the press as the facts that have happened lately, that have made locals hold prejudiced positions and strong negative opinions about [...] some nationalities” (man).

Injustices: Injustices suffered by Venezuelan migrants are widespread in the sample and they predominate within relationships, health services and work. However, when these migrants describe some situation they have considered unjust, they tend not to talk in terms of discrimination. The phrase ‘difficulty in access’ attributed to school entrance or treatment for health is mentioned several times (man). They often ignore maltreatment, taking an attitude that considers it as a “learning experience and moving on [...] I concentrate in the good” (man); “my independence and individuality of character have made me overcome these situations” (same man). Very few of them really confront unjust situations and usually very mildly. Individual attributes of their own character, like independence, disposition towards sociability and optimism, as well as their desire or obligation to integrate to the new society are highly valued to overcome daily problems. In this sense, most of them address discrimination as an act performed to an individual, rather than a social problem. However, they provide anecdotes that are strikingly unjust, racist and/or xenophobic. For example, talking about a boy and a girl needing psychiatric support, one male interviewee declares emphatically:

“four hours waiting in the emergency. And it was not only us. There was even a girl on a stretcher, tied up because she had had a crisis [...] Another girl arrived handcuffed and accompanied by the Police. All of us waiting in the same room.” And he develops a criticism on how the health system is biased when it classifies hierarchies of urgency for treatment. The whole situation is considered by him as ‘inhuman’.

Often their critiques of injustice involve employment and wages and extremely long working hours, as well as the fact that they consider there is no regulatory agency engaged. The following extract discusses informal work and the arbitrariness of the definition of salaries in Chile, which renders them to be subjected to abuse.

“the only thing I claim about is about wages and wealth distribution. I think there should be a fairer regulator for everybody relating salaries, because it is difficult to find a job where you earn more than, I do not know, 500.000 or 600.000 ‘bucks’, if you are not a professional trained at University level [...], with the arrival of so many Venezuelans that need the money they offer you a job of 55 hours a week and they pay you 350.000 pesos, and as many do not have food...” (man)

These inequalities also stem from the wider socioeconomic structure of Chile. According to Fundación Sol (2023), 50% of salaried workers in Chile earn less than 503.000 Chilean pesos (= 542.98 US dollars) and on average, wages are 5% lower for migrants. The feeling of devaluation, lack of recognition and loyalty in relation to the work performed is a recurrent topic in the interviews. One experienced as a form of maltreatment:

“Well when I worked in shops, the manner, the treatment for what one offers [...] and sometimes injustice turns into abuse and non-recognition that one is giving the best of oneself - as a friendship - because one sees the employers daily and spends most of your life at work, one tries to make friends [...] One offers friendship and loyalty but often you do not receive the same” (woman). Looking for friendship with bosses is a tricky matter.

Also some interviewees comment on having openly suffered fraud: “For example, my cousin’s husband works with Uber; he had his car insured and last year he had a crash. So he turns his car over to the insurance firm, because it covered those accidents, and ended up losing the car. The insurance firm stole his car due to a minor bump

“(woman). Here the story exposes an injustice that seems to be based on the migrant’s status as an independent worker, who ends up losing his source of income. Other everyday injustices based on socially promoted prejudice towards migrants are also mentioned: “Due to my nationality, I experienced racism at Líder [a well-known supermarket] where I was working. I had problems with some Chileans, but I told them do not catalogue everybody a like [...] Also, I suffered another injustice in the month I had arrived from Peru. I had a problem with a granny that I was taking care of and loved Lya (her daughter). But then her only daughter said, ‘please leave the room at my mother’s house’, because she did not want us living there anymore as a lot had been heard about Venezuelans’ ill-doing. And perhaps one day her mother could appear dead and then I would want to keep her house (woman). This passage emphasizes the weight that press communication campaigns have had in the perception that Chileans construct of migrants, especially the Venezuelan ones. In everyday relationships it seems that, many times, Chileans relate to abstract Venezuelans as constructed by the media, instead of relating to the person they actually deal with.

“I think so, one day I had a severe problem with my niece, she cut her arms at school. I said [to my husband] take her home, but she returned to school. Then the school said we had not supported her and, through the psychologist, they called the police. The accusation was that I had violated my niece’s rights by not taking her away from school immediately because of those cuts, something for which she was receiving medical treatment as she is a transgender child. We were taken to court. We had a very difficult year with this, because as a foreigner being involved in a judicial process is terrible, because one does not know how the law works” (woman).

This interview extract focuses jointly on two cultural issues. The first refers to an experience of discrimination, in which the person interviewed is placed in a position of being negligent in the care of her niece; while the second, shows the difficulties of facing a judicial situation within a regulatory and procedural framework that is totally foreign to the migrant.

Housing Arrangements: Usually migrants arrive first to live with a friend or family member already settled in Chile. Either they never move from that first dwelling or else rent apartments or a room in an apartment shared with their spouses or other people they know. Subsequent housings are found through either friends or internet applications. None of the interviewees owned their own property. The average number of people among the interviewed living in one housing facility was between 3 and 4. We did not find crowded housing or high-rise living among these interviewees, a frequent result of other studies (Sheehan, 2022) and considered as a key social determinant of ill-health. Most of the interviewed dream of or are trying to take steps, e.g. saving income, to buy their own housing and none had received any of the financial aid available from government, except the father of one of them living away from the Metropolitan Region that had obtained a public subsidy of 25 % and financed the rest of his property through credit. Abuse in renting is demonstrated by some narratives: “payments demanded are four times the real value of the rent, so for an apartment of 500.000 pesos one has to earn 2.000.000 pesos. It is absurd” (man). In general, owners have let renters make minor modifications to their housing: “what did I do to feel it my own, I asked permission, started to decorate it, arrange it to feel that here I arrive at my home, so many of the things we have come as presents, they are second hand, I have recycled many things [...] giving everything a personal touch” (woman)

Work and Employment: Labour force participation rate in Chile for Venezuelans is high: 96% among men and 87% among women and 24% of Venezuelans mostly use mobile apps or web platforms to find work (SERMIG, 2022). On this topic, interviewees tend to expand their narratives providing substantial detail. There is a big difference between the professions/jobs the majority were developing in Venezuela and those they hold today and for which they are generally overqualified, for example, a holistic therapist now working as a cook

(woman) (Appendix 1). Only in a reduced number of cases, these migrants maintain a work standard similar to that in Venezuela: a female vendor selling fruits and vegetables at a stand in Venezuela now working at a liquor store or a male cook turned into a chef. Only two interviewees carry out a similar job to the one at home, a designer and a job as a chef. One is an owning partner at a liquor store, but at home he was involved in informatics (man). This situation of overqualification is recognized indirectly by very few of their employers. An interviewee comments that her employer said: "our boss commented that the only workers he has are Venezuelan women, we are mothers and he says, but if I give you permission, I know you have the capacity to manage more things at the same time that other people, and that can be done by women, also due to their age and high curriculum levels..." (woman). However, as we saw above, this symbolic recognition of the knowledge and better preparation of Venezuelan people for different types of jobs, is not consistent with the material recognition expressed in the salary earned in Chile. This can end up contributing to feelings of devaluation that can result eventually in a de-stabilization of identity (Dejours, 2012) or in the "grief of social status" (Achotegui, 2022),

More than half of the participants are involved in formal employment, gained after quite a long time of residency and usually accessed through contacts. For example, one man works in a civic society organization linked to the Church; a woman in a small design firm and another man at a restaurant working as chef. Courses taken usually at institutions associated to the Church or the municipalities, have also contributed significantly to those work opportunities. Most of the women interviewed work in some form of domestic assistance: caring for the elderly or children or performing domestic employment and they are usually the ones that report having had more problems with their Chilean bosses. One of them is a saleswoman who also reports high work turn over, given inadequate working conditions. Almost all of them consider work as a fundamental way of social integration, making friends and having access at least to a basic family basket for survival and in some cases, reaching a certain stability in their lives. A man describes his work situation as follows:

"[work is undoubtedly] a facilitator. Even if it may sound like dependency, because of having arrived at the congregation and obtained this job as employee- after some voluntary work I did- has helped me gain the stability that I have till now".

Schooling and Training: The majority of the interviewees who have children or their relatives have them, send their children to formal schooling, but comment that access to schooling is difficult. However, cultural differences are also expressed about schooling: "At school, I have had good experiences, no bad one; in my niece's school, due to their values, they clash with those of our culture but as they respect me and we respect each other..." (woman). The interviewee alludes to a lack of norms and restrictions that blurs figures of authority in Chile. Only two interviewees have had access to more extended training, usually with the motivation of obtaining further tools for their work e.g. a course on food manipulation (woman) or else, to finish their formal schooling: "Yes a Diploma- level course on human mobility at Santiago Archbishopric; training workshops at the same place, also on health [at SEREMI], at the Foundation 'Welcome Brother'. All of them gave me and my partner the instructions and updating of knowledge needed to pass the free certification exam for work purposes" (man). "Yes a number of them, I have taken many free courses at the municipality on enterprise spirit, about my branding and on firm image. And I have completed a Diploma-level course on marketing and sales at Adolfo Ibáñez [a prestigious private University]", all having been very useful for my work" (woman). Many of them state that they have not thought yet about this possibility or have not looked for these activities, while others have chosen a course, usually a short one e.g. bank cashier (man), but have not yet got involved, usually for financial reasons or lack of available time, given the extension of working days. In one case, the interviewee subscribed to the National Service of Training and Employment (SENCE) but lost the vacancy (woman). In short, more than half the interviewees are in one or other of these situations

regarding education. There predominates a general sense that education in Chile is very expensive, to the point that it might involve maybe 2/3 of their wages, sometimes even in courses offered by public institutions, a factor that inhibits their possibilities and/or enthusiasm to get involved,

"No. I wanted when I arrived. I research what studies to pursue because my grandparents practice alternative medicines. I found out all of this but it was too expensive[...]. Education is very expensive, my partner graduated 16 or 17 years ago and is still paying for her University credit" (man)

The contrast with Venezuelan public facilities for education is emphasized, stating that "in Venezuela everybody studies", while in Chile even public University teaching is paid for – an accurate assessment.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the socioeconomic conditions migrants are experiencing are precarious even by developing countries' standards, and they are also quite isolated, except in the cases where they have families in Chile, being their social integration with nationals extremely scarce and having access to them almost merely through work. These conditions undoubtedly affect their health and mental health as will be explored in the future in other of our studies. Resilient strategies tend to show a tendency to: (a) (group among family or other compatriots to look for warmth, help and own culture; (b) often disregard maltreatment by not framing it as discrimination or else trying an "as if", it did not reach or hurt them; (c) often avoid deeper contact with Chileans and establish a distant type of friendly contact when possible; and (d) be extremely respectful and/or subservient to Chilean's way of life. Collective organization does not rank high among this group of interviewees neither as a form of adaptive resilience or as resistance.

Acknowledgements

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), is thanked for financing the present research, and the network of the Belmont Forum international research project: "Human Mobility, Global Challenges and Resilience in an Age of Social Stress" (PHOENIX) of which the Chilean team forms a part. Our special thanks to Constanza Gana and Veronica Moya for carrying out and transcribing the interviews with care and commitment.

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