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Women and migrants: *inequalities* in the labour market *of Santiago, Chile*

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Social policies aimed at reducing inequalities in the labour market need to be founded upon a solid understanding of the factors that generate disadvantageous conditions for specific segments of that market. This article describes inequalities in the occupational and income structure affecting economically active women and, in particular, economically active women migrants in Santiago, Chile, and provides some insights into the reasons why these disadvantages exist. Chile's economic growth process is seen by some as setting an example for other Latin American countries which are opening up their economies to international markets. Steps have to be taken, however, to prevent still greater concentration of wealth, the persistence of high levels of poverty, an increase in the heterogeneity of the labour market and inequalities in wage levels. This article seeks to help determine the causes of the disadvantageous conditions under which some segments of Chile's urban labour market operate. The good educational level of economically active women and women migrants in Santiago is at variance with their occupational distribution and their income levels. Upgrading the qualifications of the labour force will thus not be enough to reduce the inequities existing in Latin America's labour markets. The author argues that it is also necessary to identify and confront the gender-based constructs which influence the structure of these labour markets and lead to instances of occupational and wage discrimination that are apparently unrelated to workers' qualifications.

I

Introduction

The economic retooling measures which other Latin American countries did not begin to implement until the late 1980s were already being applied in Chile in 1975, and the effects of that initiative were therefore observable in its urban labour market during the following decade.

Because of the macroeconomic achievements associated with Chile's economic growth process, it is often regarded as a good example for the other countries of the region to follow. Concern is often voiced, however, about the increased inequality of income distribution and the lack of job security in some segments of the labour market, which may account for the country's high levels of urban poverty. Optimistic predictions have been made as to the ability of sustained growth to improve income levels and living conditions for high-productivity sectors and about the possibility of diverting resources to less fortunate sectors by means of social policies which also seek to provide these sectors with more training and improve their position within the production structure (Altimir, 1994; ECLAC, 1992). To implement these pro-equity policies successfully, however, we must identify the reasons why some groups occupy such disadvantageous positions within the labour market.

This article explores the positions of two segments of the labour market in Santiago, Chile, which are at a relative disadvantage—economically active women and women migrants—and notes a number of ways in which

a gender-based perspective could help in the analysis of economic participation and female migration in order to contribute to the design of public policies aimed at making the Latin American population's working and living conditions more equitable.

The research effort that led up to the preparation of this article focused on the labour market for women in one of Latin America's large urban centres—the city of Santiago, Chile—and on the characteristics of a specific segment of that market: economically active women migrants. This research project was sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and was conducted at the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) in 1991–1992, using documentary, bibliographic and statistical sources. Its objective was to analyse the changes taking place in the structure of the labour market for women in Santiago and in migration to that city by women between 1950 and 1990, along with the occupational status of migrant women between 1960 and 1982. The sources used for the labour-market analysis were population censuses and the National Employment Surveys carried out under the Integrated Household Survey Programme. Data on migrant women were obtained from a survey on migration to Greater Santiago conducted by CELADE in 1962 and from population census samples for 1970 and 1982 which were compiled by CELADE for what was previously the Province of Santiago and is now the Metropolitan Region. The information presented in this article comes from those sources.

II

Economic changes and the labour market in Chile in the 1980s

The sweeping social and economic changes that have taken place in Latin America as a whole and in Chile, in particular, as a consequence of the economic crisis of the early 1980s and its aftermath of adjustment policies, retrofitting and economic liberalization have

had differing effects on different segments of the labour market. A number of studies indicate that the heterogeneity of the labour market has increased, the income differentials between various sectors of workers have widened, and some portions of the labour

market have seen a progressive decline in job security (PREALC, 1991; ECLAC, 1994; García, 1993).

The labour market for women has undergone particularly striking changes. Women's participation in economic activity had been rising steadily ever since the mid-1950s as a result of such factors as urbanization, the expansion of personal, social and community services, and the gradual rise in women's educational levels. The crisis of the 1980s marked the beginning of an even faster increase in women's participation in economic activity. This has been described as counter-cyclical behaviour in view of the increased entry of women during recessions and the poorly-paid and unstable nature of many of their economic activities (ECLAC, 1994; Pollack, 1990).

During the 1980s the marital status and age distribution of the economically active female population also changed, with increases being observed in the proportion of married women with children and in the percentage of non-wage occupations.

Chile has attracted the attention of experts on this subject because of its early start on the im-

plementation of policies aimed at opening up the economy to external markets and deregulating the labour market, the severity of its recession and the harshness of the adjustment policies which the authoritarian political regime of the time imposed in its urban labour markets, and the macroeconomic successes of the subsequent process by which it has consolidated the changes made in its production patterns; it has also drawn attention, however, because of the further increase in the inequality of its income distribution, the large percentage of poor people in its population, and the decreasing job security of certain segments of its labour market (García, 1991 and 1993; Altimir, 1994).

In the following sections we will supplement this broad overview of the Chilean labour market with an examination of trends in the female labour force and the particular traits of women migrants, with the aim of helping to identify vulnerable segments of the metropolitan labour market as well as some of the factors that contribute to their vulnerability.

III

Migration by women to major Latin American cities

Ever since the start of the import-substitution phase of the industrialization process, women have made up a clear majority of internal migratory flows in Latin America. This majority has been particularly marked in rural-urban flows and in migration to the main cities.

The factors which triggered the exodus from the region's rural areas have had a selective impact on the female population; as a result, it has primarily been young rural women who have joined the pool of surplus labour. In turn, segregation by gender and by the fact of being migrants within the labour market has configured a specific demand for migrant female workers in the large cities. Thus, in the major urban centres of Latin America, migrant women have become concentrated in a small number of occupations reserved for women and have congregated, to a greater extent than non-migrant women, in the tertiary sector and in manual activities, especially do-

mestic service (Pardo, 1987; De Oliveira, 1984; Elton, 1978, Raczynski and Vergara, 1979; Elizaga, 1970; Recchini de Lattes, 1990).

Current research on internal migration in Latin America is examining the implications which the internationalization of the region's economies may have in terms of migratory movements, as well as the ways in which the positions of different members of the family group within the labour market are changing. Some studies have also contributed to our understanding of migration by focusing on new dimensions of that process, such as the influence of cultural, ideological and political forces that operate on the basis of a complex, non-economic dynamic (Lim, 1989; De Oliveira, 1984; Lattes, 1989). One of these sociocultural dimensions is the role of women in society. Segregation by gender and by the fact of being migrants within the labour market is a manifestation of values and practices that restrict women to

their reproductive role in their private lives or to socially-downgraded occupations which constitute an extension of that role in the economic sphere. The lower status assigned to jobs performed by women delineates the particular features of female migration and the occupational situation of women (García de Fanelli, 1989; Muñoz, 1988; Arriagada, 1990; Hugo, 1991).

Other cultural dimensions, such as society's control over women's sexuality, also define some of the specific traits of female migration. Women must move, work and live under conditions that cast no doubt upon the modesty of young single women or married women's faithfulness. Moves made by women for occupational reasons are linked to the development of specific segments of the labour market that are socially acceptable for women. The position occupied within the family, the distribution of chores within the household, intra-family patterns of authority and marriage customs are much more important factors in the analysis of female migratory flows than they are in the study of male migration (Hugo, 1991; De Oliveira, 1984).

In recent years, internal migration within the region has increased in variety and complexity. In addition to the factors that have traditionally been of significance in the analysis of migration by women to major cities, we must add the increase in urban poverty and in non-migrant women's participation in economic activity, the presence of urbanization processes in rural areas and the increasing proportion of wage-based employment among the rural population, the deregulation of working conditions, and the rising employment of poor women in agribusiness and the *maquila* industry. These changes, together with the increase in school enrolment among women and declining fertility rates, have altered the traditional patterns of female migration and have given rise to new types of migratory movements. The predominance of women and the proportion of adolescents in migratory flows to large cities have decreased, while temporary movements,

inter-urban migration, commuting, the combination of urban residence with rural employment, and rural-rural migration have all increased.

Despite the clearly distinct features of female migration, very few studies provide a separate description of these characteristics (Elizaga, 1970; Elton, 1978; Raczynski and Vergara, 1979; De Oliveira, 1984). The dearth of such analyses is even greater in relation to the particular features of female migration and women's occupational status which stem from the social inequality of the sexes. With the exception of a few case studies conducted in recent years, the gender dimension has not yet been incorporated as a conceptual element into the study of migration, and its absence has impaired the development of policies and programmes aimed at improving the status of Latin American women in society.

Our research project included the analysis of some aspects of gender inequality. The examination of one of these aspects –the factors causing Chilean women to emigrate from rural areas during the import-substitution phase of the industrialization process– point to the existence of different structural causes and personal motivations for migration by women and by men (Aranda, 1982; Pardo, 1987; Raczynski and Vergara, 1979; PREALC, 1979).

Based on statistical sources, we also examined other aspects of gender inequality which will be discussed in this article. One of them is the differences existing between men's and women's occupational concentration and labour incomes in the Santiago metropolitan area as of 1990. Another refers to the inequalities in occupational and income structures observed in 1982 in the Province of Santiago between economically active migrant women, on the one hand, and migrant men and non-migrant women, on the other. This comparison enabled us to hazard a number of gender-based interpretations of the disadvantages suffered by migrant women which may permit the targeting of social policies for these population groups.

IV

The labour market for women in the city of Santiago

The development of specifically female segments of the labour market at both the point of origin and the destination of migratory flows appears to be a determinant of the volume and characteristics of women's migratory movements, as well as of the employment opportunities open to migrant women. In Chile, this type of female-specific selectivity has been the strongest in migration from rural and semi-rural areas to the city of Santiago (Martínez, 1990; Raczynski and Vergara, 1979; Herold, 1979). Although the growth rate of female migration to that city has declined (probably as a result of the rising level of female employment in agribusiness), the volume of this migratory flow continues to expand and women continue to make up a majority of the migrants from areas where a large percentage of the population is rural (Martínez, 1990).

The profound changes that have occurred in Chilean labour markets over the past 20 years may be having an effect on both migratory patterns and the occupational status of migrants. Given its significance as the preferred destination for women migrating from rural areas, we will now take a look at the trends in the labour market for women in Santiago between 1952 and 1990 and will then go on to analyse the attraction which that market holds for migrant women, the typical features of such migrants, and the conditions under which they join in that city's economic activity.

In 1950, the economic participation rate for women —one third of all females aged 12 or over— was considerably higher in the Chilean capital than in other Latin American cities. Economic participation was concentrated among single women, and the participation rate was higher for women under 25 years of age. Most of these economically active women had completed fewer than seven years of schooling. More than two-thirds of them were employed in the tertiary sector, especially in personal and household services (mainly manual workers employed as domestic servants and as providers of other personal services), while a quarter of them were skilled ma-

chine operators and craftswomen (dressmakers, seamstresses and weavers).

By 1970, the participation rate had fallen from a third to a quarter of all women, with a particularly steep decrease being observed in the participation rate for women under 20 years of age. The proportion of economically active women who had completed fewer than seven years of school was no more than 35%. The percentage of women employed in personal and household services had declined and was smaller than the percentage of women engaged in social and community services and production support services. The number of female manual workers decreased proportionately, especially in the case of those classified as unskilled workers, while the increase in non-manual female workers was particularly marked in the category of office workers (Szasz, 1994).

This trend, which appears to be due to the increase in the female population's level of education and to a decrease in the economic participation rate for working-class women, was altered somewhat by the macroeconomic changes that took place in the country between 1970 and 1990. In 1990, a majority of economically active women were married and of child-bearing age. Prior to 1970, 60% of economically active women were single, but by 1990 the percentage of single women had slipped to 40% of the total. Until 1970, the age groups with the highest economic participation rates were below 25 years of age, whereas in 1990 the highest rates were found among women between 25 and 45 years of age (Szasz, 1994).

In 1990, half of all working women had completed more than 12 years of school and only a quarter of them had fewer than seven years of schooling. The proportion of women employed in personal and household services was smaller than it had been in 1970. Nearly 40% were engaged in non-manual activities, with increases being registered in the categories of office workers, professionals, technicians and executives. The main departures from earlier

trends had to do with the age and marital status of economically active women, the increase in unemployment among women (especially in lower-income sectors), and the types of occupations exhibiting the greatest growth in the city. In addition to the rise in the number of non-manual female workers seen in 1982-1990, there was an increase in unskilled female manual workers (general labourers, day labourers, servants) and in both shop assistants and peddlers during that period. And although the number of women wage-earners rose during this period, there was a much bigger increase in female own-account workers and unpaid female family workers (Szasz, 1994).

Domestic service was the occupation in which the greatest changes took place during this most recent period. This occupational category was the source of employment for one third of all economically active women in the 1950s, and 40 years later it accounted for somewhat more than a quarter of all women workers. Although the relative size of this category of female workers was smaller compared with the total, in 1990 half of all women manual workers were still working as servants. The number of such women climbed substantially, and the average annual growth rate for this group reached its highest levels, in 1982-1990.

The most striking change in this occupational group was the increase in the proportion of domestic workers who did not live at their place of work. Live-out domestic servants represented only 11% of the total in 1952, but in 1990 they were in the majority (see table 1).

This change in domestic-service occupations is related to the macroeconomic and socio-political changes that took place in the country between 1973 and 1990. In 1974, along with the political and economic changes set in motion by the military government that had seized power in 1973, there was a marked increase in the proportion of these workers; the same thing happened in 1981, when male unemployment levels climbed sharply. Part of the rise in female participation rates in the metropolitan area and of the proportionate decrease in young, single female workers was associated with an increase in the number of married working-class women who obtained employment as live-out servants because the heads of their households were unemployed and their household's income levels were dropping. Once the idea of working outside the home (chiefly as do-

TABLE 1

Santiago, Chile: Percentage of women working as live-in and as live-out domestic servants, 1957-1990

	Live-in	Live-out	Total
1957	88.9	11.1	100.0
1967	85.4	14.6	100.0
1972	85.7	14.3	100.0
1974	64.7	35.3	100.0
1975	64.9	35.1	100.0
1976	58.3	41.7	100.0
1977	57.3	42.7	100.0
1978	59.1	40.9	100.0
1979	61.5	38.5	100.0
1980	60.3	39.7	100.0
1981	49.0	51.0	100.0
1990	46.5	53.5	100.0

Source: University of Chile (1957-1977) and National Institute of Statistics (INE) (1978-1990), fourth quarter of each year.

mestic servants) had gained cultural acceptance among married working-class women in urban areas, they continued to do so even after male unemployment rates began to move back down, possibly because of the job instability and uncertainty associated with the income levels of large segments of the working population.

Participation rates for women were lower in the case of the lowest-income and least-educated groups throughout the period in question. Up to 1973, domestic service was an occupation that was performed almost exclusively by migrant women who lived in the homes of their employers; this type of job was not usually taken by urban women, especially if they were married. However, at those points during the period 1970-1990 when wage levels and employment conditions took a critical turn, an unprecedented rise was seen in domestic servants working on a live-out basis (see table 1). In 1990, a majority of the women working as domestic servants did not live in their employer's houses, most had completed more than six years of schooling, and a large percentage of them were married.

Before the 1974 and 1981 recessions, working-class women in the metropolitan area did not work after they married but instead devoted their time to raising their children. When these recessions hit the country, however, some of these women responded to the then rampant unemployment among male heads of household by finding employment as live-out domestic servants in order to support or help support

TABLE 2

Santiago, Chile: Average monthly income of economically active persons in each occupational group, by gender, 1990
(Chilean pesos at December 1990 prices and percentages)

Occupational group	Men	Women	Women's income as a percentage of men's income
Executives and managers	358 469	315 675	88.1
High-income professionals and technicians ^a	281 331	221 522	78.5
Lower-income professionals and technicians ^b	110 680	81 638	73.8
Farm owners	115 529	81 491	70.5
Office workers	92 150	64 440	69.9
Salespeople	71 855	45 450	63.3
Skilled operatives and craftsmen	52 602	32 178	61.2
Unskilled workers	33 910	32 015	94.4
Workers employed in personal and household service activities	44 274	23 595	53.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>88 862</i>	<i>54 974</i>	<i>61.9</i>

Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of special tabulations prepared by the National Institute of Statistics (INE). Based on the National Employment Survey results for the fourth quarter of 1990 (INE, 1978-1990).

^a Includes professions in which average monthly wage levels for 1990 were 190 000 pesos or over.

^b Includes professions in which average monthly wage levels for 1990 were less than 190 000 pesos.

their children. Gender-based mores –in which motherhood carries the highest priority– have thus been a factor in lower-income women's decision to work or not to work. Increases or decreases in their participation rates appear to have depended on the presence or absence of other breadwinners in the household and, hence, on male workers' unemployment levels, wages and job security.

As of 1990, Santiago's labour market was marked by gender-based forms of occupational segregation. Even though nearly 40% of economically active women were employed in non-manual activities, they were concentrated in professional and technical occupations with mid-range and low wage levels (more than 70% were teachers or nurses) and in clerical jobs. Female manual workers were chiefly employed in personal and household services and in a few manufacturing activities, especially the production of clothing. Men employed in non-manual activities were distributed more evenly among a variety of categories, including executives, managers and highly-paid professionals and technicians. Male manual workers were employed primarily in the categories of skilled craftsmen and operatives, in which few women were to be found (Muñoz, 1988; Szasz, 1994). This segregation occurred despite the fact that the educational levels of men and women in

Chile are similar and that, as a group, economically active women are more educated than economically active men.

This occupational segregation is reflected in a sizeable gap between men's and women's incomes. Although a really accurate measurement of the differences in men's and women's remunerations would require a comparison of average incomes for each occupation that took into account the number of hours worked by the employees and their levels of education, we were able to arrive at an approximate measurement of this differential by estimating the average remunerations for economically active men and women in each occupational group in the Santiago metropolitan area as of 1990. According to our estimates,¹ in 1990 women's levels of earned income were equivalent to 62% of what men earned (see table 2). The wage gap appears to be particularly wide in the personal and household services sector, where women earn about half of what men in those occupations earn, but the differentials are also large in the categories of skilled manual workers, salespersons and office workers (Szasz, 1994). Within Latin

¹ Based on special tabulations of the National Employment Survey carried out as part of the Integrated Household Survey Programme.

America as a whole, as of 1990 Chile appeared to have one of the highest degrees of gender-based wage discrimination (ECLAC, 1994), even though Chilean women's level of education is above the regional average and despite the fact that economically active women in Santiago have completed more years of schooling than their male counterparts.

The proportional difference between the average wage levels of economically active men and women makes women a disadvantaged segment in Santiago's labour market. In 1990, half of all working women were earning low incomes whereas only 14% of the economically active men had incomes in that category (see table 3).

TABLE 3

Santiago, Chile: Percentage distribution of economically active population, by monthly income level and by gender, 1990
(Chilean pesos at 1990 prices and percentages)

Average monthly income (pesos)	(Percentage distribution)		Total
	Men	Women	
Less than 35 000	14.3	51.3	28.3
35 000-76 059	53.4	35.5	46.7
76 060-229 999	21.4	9.6	16.9
230 000 or more	10.9	3.6	8.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: Estimates calculated by the author on the basis of special tabulations of the National Employment Survey results for the fourth quarter of 1990 prepared by the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 1978-1990).

V

Recent female migrants in Santiago's labour market

Because of the shortage of job opportunities for women in their original areas of residence and women migrants' strong desire to work, their participation rate was higher than the rate for women from the metropolitan area during the period 1960-1982. This differential was accounted for almost entirely by the 15-24 age group, since the participation rates for migrant and non-migrant women over 24 years of age were similar.

Prior to the 1970s, the proportion of women under 20 years of age in the migrant population was quite high, although it was declining. By 1977-1982, the proportion of adolescents among female migrants had shrunk considerably. If this trend continues, the economic participation rate for women migrants will become more similar to the rate for women from the metropolitan area.

The differences observed in 1982 between migrant and non-migrant women's unemployment rates, by occupation, suggest that, except in the case of young women entering domestic service, it is more

difficult for women migrants to find work (especially if they are professionals or technicians), and they are unemployed more often than non-migrant women are. In the domestic service category, the situation is just the opposite: unemployment levels are lower among migrant women.

An analysis of the data by occupational group indicates that between 1960 and 1982 a disproportionate number of female migrants were employed in manual activities and domestic service. However, between 1970 and 1982 their participation in domestic service fell slightly while the proportion of non-migrant women in this occupation rose as a consequence of the above-mentioned increase in live-out domestic servants.

The greater concentration of migrant women in manual activities is found only among women under 30 years of age. Above that age, the distribution between manual and non-manual activities is similar for the two groups of women. The disadvantageous

position of younger migrant women cannot, however, be attributed to a lower educational level, since female migrants and non-migrants had similar educational levels in 1970 and, by 1982, female migrants were better educated than their metropolitan counterparts. In 1982, 60% of economically active women migrants were employed in domestic service whereas only 25% of non-migrant women were in this occupational group; 60% of migrant women and 40% of non-migrant women who worked as servants had completed more than six years of school, and more than 20% of the female migrants in this type of employment had received more than 10 years of formal education (Szasz, 1994).

The differences by age group and by educational level between economically active migrants and non-migrants in 1982 were smaller. Nevertheless, the two groups of women differed noticeably in terms of their position within the household where they lived, with 80% of the women from the metropolitan area who had entered the labour market being either heads of household or wives or daughters of heads of household, whereas only 29% of female migrants were in this position. Instead, most of them were not related to anybody

else in the household where they lived. Moreover, 70% of the female migrants employed as domestic servants had no children, but 61% of the non-migrant women in that occupation did have children.

These differences between the two groups' positions within the household where they lived were the only characteristic that might account for the migrants' disadvantageous situation in terms of occupation and income levels. Whereas women from the metropolitan area worked to support or to help support their households, most of the migrant women did not have a home of their own in the city, and they were working to support themselves and in order to have a place to live.

Owing to the cultural differences between males and females, male migrants do not suffer the same occupational disadvantages as female migrants do. Between 1962 and 1982, the occupational and income distribution of male migrants in Santiago was quite similar to that of non-migrant males, whereas the greater occupational segregation of migrant women, which resulted in their concentration in personal services, caused them to have lower incomes than non-migrant women (see table 4). In 1982, female

TABLE 4

Santiago, Chile: Percentage distribution of economically active population, by income level, gender and whether or not migrants, 1962 and 1982

Income level ^a	Men		Women	
	Migrants	Non-migrants	Migrants	Non-migrants
<i>In 1962</i>				
Less than the minimum wage	8.9	6.2	45.3	23.4
Between the minimum and average wage	40.8	36.0	39.4	40.6
Between the average wage and 3.5 times the average wage	40.5	45.1	14.6	32.7
More than 3.5 times the average wage	9.8	12.7	0.7	3.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>In 1982</i>				
Less than the minimum wage	19.1	18.1	61.6	36.6
Between the minimum and average wage	53.5	55.1	26.9	46.5
Between the average wage and 3 times the average wage	19.4	18.8	7.3	11.1
More than 3 times the average wage	8.0	8.0	4.3	5.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: For 1962: Survey on immigration to Greater Santiago, CELADE, 1962 (Elizaga, 1970). For 1982: Estimates prepared by the author on the basis of the percentage distribution of the migrant and non-migrant populations by occupation, obtained from the sample for the 1982 population census and figures for the average monthly incomes for men and women in each occupation taken from the results of the National Employment Survey, fourth quarter of 1990 (INE, 1978-1990).

^a The figures for 1962 refer to migrants arriving in Greater Santiago between 1952 and 1962. The figures for 1982 refer to migrants arriving in the Metropolitan Region between 1977 and 1982.

migrants earned, on average, about 78% of the average income of non-migrant women (Szasz, 1994).

The only factor that may help to account for these differences between male and female migrants is the importance of the household environment in exerting

societal control over women's sexuality. The absence of their families does not appear to limit the occupational options for men, but it may have a great deal to do with the large extent to which the younger female migrants take jobs as live-in domestic servants.

VI

Final considerations

The relatively high educational level of working women in Santiago, Chile, as of 1990 casts doubt upon the hypothesis that some segments of the labour market are poorly paid because of their lack of skills and that this lack is the reason for their low level of productivity. Instead, it suggests that there is a strong demand, within a context of income concentration, for unskilled labour to work in personal service activities, but there is a scarcity of opportunities for the majority of educated women entering the labour market to obtain productive, skilled jobs.

Job opportunities for women who have completed 13 years or more of school—more than half of all the economically active women in Santiago—are confined to such occupations as teachers, nurses, saleswomen and secretaries. The number of women who obtain highly-paid management or professional positions is so small as to be insignificant. For female manual workers—even though they, too, have an educational level above the regional average—the options are basically limited to domestic service (a considerably larger occupational category than in the rest of Latin America), the garment industry and street peddling. Over half of all economically active women earn very low incomes, while only a minority of male workers earn such low wages. This corroborates the hypothesis that women constitute a disadvantaged segment of the labour market in Santiago.

The employment opportunities open to women who have recently migrated to the city are more limited—even though these women's levels of education are as high as or higher than those of non-migrant women—because most of them are segregated and channeled towards manual labour and domestic service. The greater lack of correspondence between the educational levels, occupational achieve-

ments and income levels of women in general is even more striking in the case of migrant women.

Conditions such as these should be carefully considered when designing social policies aimed at reducing inequities in the labour market. In a country such as Chile, which has shown solid progress in terms of the macroeconomic variables, the greater concentration of wealth and the heterogeneity of labour income that have been generated by the new development model are a cause of concern.

High hopes have been placed in the possibility of boosting the productivity and incomes of vulnerable segments of the labour market by improving their members' education and job training (Altimir, 1994; Rosenbluth, 1994; ECLAC, 1992). However, our research findings regarding one of those segments of the labour market suggest that problems relating to productivity and income do not primarily stem from a lack of education but are instead a result of the type of labour demand generated by the existing model, one of whose characteristics is the feeble demand for educated female labour.

Social policies intended to make labour markets more equitable and reduce poverty should carefully weigh gender-based variables. Our findings suggest that the occupational and wage segregation to which women workers are subject in Santiago is a form of cultural and economic discrimination that only exacerbates the country's already deficient utilization of the formal training possessed by the Chilean labour force. Migrant women's greater disadvantages in terms of occupations and wages also stem from gender inequalities, since the lack of a home and of a network of contacts affects them much more than it does in the case of male migrants.

The goal of reducing the gender-based inequalities affecting access to the labour market cannot be pursued solely through research within the home or in small groups of women. The task encompasses structural dimensions of our societies and pivotal

public policy decisions which, in the case of Chile, do not have to do with any question of women's exclusion from formal education but instead involve gender-based components of the supply and demand for labour in the nation's job markets.

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