

HIGHLY-SKILLED LATIN AMERICAN MIGRANTS, INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND THE NEGOTIATION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL IN GERMANY AND CHILE

ABSTRACT

Research on highly-skilled migration mostly focuses on receiving countries in the Global North. The PhD project compares Germany and Chile, two countries with different positions in the world scale, and thereby sheds light on the institutional context shaping high skilled migration. Based on Bourdieu's social theory, this research focuses on the ability that immigrants have to negotiate their domestically acquired capital and how institutional frameworks regulate and shape highly-skilled immigrants' strategies and outcomes in the host country's labor market. The study will focus on highly-skilled Latin American migrants in the health and IT sectors and uses Germany and Chile as contrasting contexts. Labor market sectors are understood as fields where specific forms of capital are more valued than others. During the transition into host countries' labor markets, highly-skilled immigrants are confronted with a new set of norms and roles that may not value their already acquired capital. The strategies immigrants develop in their transition help to uncover discrimination processes based, on the one hand, on socially constructed categories such as gender, class and ethnicity and, on the other hand, on stratification systems, which are nationally institutionalized. It is expected that in regulated markets, such as the German market, institutional frameworks will foster specific forms of capital and knowledge, especially for highly regulated professions, such as medicine. In other sectors, such as IT, almost no regulation takes place and capital could adopt a transnational value.