

Chapter 1

Comparing Labour Market among Spain, Italy, Argentina and Chile

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Abstract

The chapter, elaborated in the context of the INCASI European project, deals with the issue of social and employment inequalities seen from the dynamics of labour market segmentation. The study uses a specific analytical model to identify a range of segments that differentiate the employment positions hierarchically, in correspondence with the individual characteristics and professional profiles. The transnational comparison between two European countries and two in Latin America, which share the belonging to the Southern part of the world, allowed us to demonstrate that there are unexpected similarities between the contexts considered, both in the trends and in the configuration of the occupational segmentation. Despite significant differences in both socio-economic contexts and institutional regulation of labour, the structure of inequalities is reproduced through its intrinsic logic, functional to the needs of global capitalism.

1. Introduction⁵

The chapter has a dual purpose. The first is to investigate on labour market segmentation, as a peculiar characteristic of contemporary economies. We follow the hypothesis - well known in the socio-economic literature and in contrast with the neo-classical economics - that there is no single labour market based on the pure exchange between supply and demand. On the contrary, we can identify a range of segments that differentiate the employment positions hierarchically, in correspondence with their individual characteristics and professional profiles. In order to structure and measure different types of labour market segmentations, multivariate techniques (combining multiple correspondence analysis and cluster analysis) were adopted, and applied to multidimensional socio-economic indicators.

The second objective is to verify, by adopting a comparative perspective, to what extent the dynamics of labour market segmentation and the social basis of inequality are similar or dissimilar in different national contexts. The comparative analysis connects Europe and Latin America, and in particular Italy and Spain with Argentina and Chile, countries that have in common the belonging to the South of the world (Mediterranean and South Cone countries).

The interest of this chapter therefore lies precisely in the twofold objectives, theoretical and methodological, of shedding light on the structure of occupational inequalities. In this context, the transnational comparative analysis has allowed us to demonstrate that there are strong and unexpected similarities between the contexts considered, both in the trends and in the configuration of the occupational segmentation. This means that, despite the presence of somewhat different levels of socio-economic development, with a different conformation and weight of the activity sectors and in

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⁵ This chapter was elaborated in the context of INCASI Network, a European project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie GA, No. 691004, and coordinated by Dr. Pedro López-Roldán. This article reflects only the author's view and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains. This text is a reformulation and expansion of two previous publications (López-Roldán & Fachelli 2019; López-Roldán, Semenza & Salvia 2020).

the presence of different models of labour regulation, the structure of inequalities is reproduced through its intrinsic logic, functional to the needs of global capitalism.

This first conclusion is even more valid if we consider that the labour market structures in Latin American countries and their social models are not only different from that of advanced economies, but also different from each other. As we will see, the concept of "structural heterogeneity" applies to Latin America to indicate essentially the distinction between formal and informal employment or activities (associated with low-productivity, and where subsistence activities prevail).

The chapter, which has been developed in the context of the European Horizon 2020 project INCASI (International Network for Comparative Analysis of Social Inequalities between Europe and Latin America), is divided into five parts. The second paragraph focuses on the hypotheses and the theoretical background within which labour market segmentation and the dynamics of social inequalities are framed. The third paragraph contextualises the analysis, referring to the socio-economic models that distinguish the various countries considered (Spain, Italy, Argentina and Chile). The fourth paragraph illustrates the layout of the analysis model and the research methods adopted. The fifth paragraph presents the results of the statistical analysis, while the final paragraph illustrates the main conclusions reached, and outlines the tracks that would be further investigated.

2. Theoretical perspective of labour market segmentation

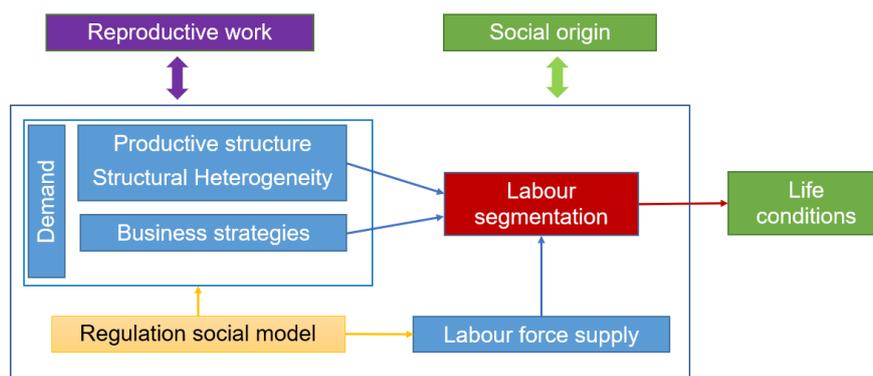
To explain how the labour market works and the persistent labour inequalities that arise from it, we take the theoretical perspective of segmentation. Whereby it is argued that the adjustment between supply and demand - as a result of competitive allocation based on wage productivity, technological changes and trends in economic growth - is an insufficient explanatory mechanism to account for differences in wages and career paths, and the unequal positions that are generated in terms of labour conditions and job quality. From this perspective, we stress the need to consider the institutional aspects that affect labour market: the strategies of the parties involved taking into account the system of labour relations, with its regulatory framework and collective bargaining, different social and welfare policies, the social characteristics of the workforce, the sexual division of labour, as well as contextual elements of national production structures, of the global economy and of economic cycles, in a capitalist system dominated by neoliberal policies.

These different elements affect the configuration of common general dynamics regarding the division of labour and employment in terms of segmentation, beyond specific local or national configurations. Following Grimshaw et al. (2017) we propose the adoption of a multidimensional perspective involving factors that explain how the labour market works and how labour inequalities are generated. This proposal combines three theoretical traditions to account for inequalities in work and employment: labour market segmentation, comparative institutionalism and the feminist socioeconomic approach. Based on this approach, we propose a specific analysis model adapted to the study of employment as illustrated schematically in Figure 1.

First, from the perspective of segmentation, and in contrast with the traditional postulates of neoclassical economics, the demand side must be viewed as fundamental. At the centre of the analysis are found the business strategies for the organisation of production and labour (especially flexibilization, outsourcing and subcontracting) that, seeking to maximise profits by minimising costs and controlling the workforce, generate unequal labour conditions and opportunities for the salaried working population, and consequently for their career paths. However, inequalities are also reproduced and arise in interaction with the supply side. Certain social characteristics of workers hired both formally and informally, such as class, gender, age, immigrant origin or race, are unevenly distributed and overlapped according to the configuration of segmented jobs, thus favouring the ultimate goals of employers. Inequalities are thus constructed, creating hierarchical employment

segments and career paths, of greater or lesser quality, filled by people from different social profiles, which the segmentation literature has identified in terms of the duality of the labour market, differentiating between a primary and a secondary segment. This idea has been raised, in general terms, in numerous contributions since the 1970s, including among many others Doeringer & Piore (1971), Rubery (1978), Gordon, Edwards & Reich (1982), Wilkinson (1981), Craig et al. (1982), Recio (1991), Grimshaw & Rubery (2005), Rubery (2005, 2007), Gibert (2011) and López-Roldán & Fachelli (2019).

Figure 1. Labour market segmentation. Analysis model



Source: Authors

Secondly, from comparative institutionalist theory, the societal effect derived from the role of institutions and the power relations between stakeholders is considered a fundamental issue for explaining the configuration and workings of the labour market. In this regard, we may speak of varieties of capitalism. In particular, the regulatory regime of each nation state establishes a specific framework for modulating the labour market and its effects in terms of labour inequalities. Studies along such lines include those by Esping-Andersen (2000), Hall & Soskice (2001), Menz (2008), Vaughan-Whitehead (2015), Burroni (2016), Del Pino & Rubio (2016) and Doellgast, Lillie & Pulignano (2018).

Thirdly, the tradition of feminist socioeconomics has focused the study of segmentation processes in terms of gender inequality, broadening the perspective and breaking away from androcentric views focused on the productive sphere. From this perspective, a broad vision of the concept of work - taking into account the interaction between productive and reproductive spheres, and revealing the segregation and discrimination of women in the labour market - serves to explain the different career paths of men and women (Bettio & Verashchagina 2009; Bettio & Plantenga 2004; Simonazzi 2009; Borrás et al. 2012; Torns et al. 2013; Carrasquer & Amaral 2019; Rubery 2014).

These three core areas of the segmentation theory can also be framed in an analysis of the patterns and trends in changes in the global economy, as well as in the specific context of a territory's productive structure and level of economic development. It is particularly in this regard that we also contemplate the perspective of structural heterogeneity (Prebisch 1949; Pinto 1970; PREALC 1978; CEPAL 2012). This approach takes the perspective of historical structuralism to understand the economic and social workings of Latin American countries. According to this theory, in capitalist economies subject to an unequal, combined and dependent development model (the dominant one in Latin America), we can differentiate two kinds of sectors. Modern, high productivity production sectors, integrated into world markets, with similar labour organisations and relations to those of the most developed countries coexist alongside very low productivity production sectors that are mainly focused on the domestic market, linked to social subsistence needs and involving informal economic

units or activities. The existence of an absolute surplus of labour and labour segmentation would be a consequence of these productive constraints whose corollary would be the segmentation of jobs in the labour market into subsistence activities typical of the secondary segment and formal jobs in the formal private and public sectors typical of the primary segment, and hence inequalities in living conditions that are persistent over time (Salvia 2012).

3. The contexts of the labour markets

In order to contextualise the four countries we will typify them in terms of the concept of social model developed in Martín-Artiles, Chávez-Molina and Semenza (2020) where the labour relations model and the welfare model were interrelated as regulatory institutions to correct social inequalities from the pre-distributive or post-distributive point of view. This conceptualization and analysis show different models for the analysed countries.

Spain and Italy's are that of a mixed or semi-coordinated economy, characteristic of Mediterranean countries. Both labour markets, characterized by a large underground economy, are crossed by deep sectoral divisions, as well as significant regional differences between the more developed northern regions and the more underdeveloped Southern ones (although the territorial duality is more striking in Italy). These two countries have also undergone labour market deregulation since eighties (Adam & Canziani 1998; Cebrián, Moreno, Samek, Semenza & Toharia 2003), and dual labour market structures tended to develop, most notably in Spain, through the extensive use of temporary contracts, that affects youths and workers entering into the labour market. Spain is often referred to as a clear-cut example of labour market segmentation between fixed-term workers and open-ended contracts (Berton, Richiardi & Sacchi 2009). Further elements of similarity are youth unemployment and their contractual insecurity, also explained in the light of education systems, little professionalizing and poorly integrated to the production system. Signals of devaluation of qualification and lower return on education are additional factors of comparability between the two countries.

Both countries share a social model with systems for coordinating wage policy through collective bargaining at the macroeconomic or sectorial level, but with major incoordination and disorganisation in certain segments of the microeconomic, territorial or company level, where the high proportion of small businesses is characteristic. Trade unions hold political influence and capacity for mobilisation, and although this representation is fragmented it does help to obtain better results and to generate mechanisms of state '*complementarity*' (Molina & Rhodes 2007). Business organisations are fragmented, although the coverage rate of collective bargaining is nevertheless high. The state plays an important role in correcting dysfunctions of coordination mechanisms between the macro and micro levels with such instruments as the regulation of the minimum wage and the general efficacy of collective agreements that acquire the force of law. In Spain and Italy, the volume of informal employment is a certain burden that hinders the coordination of collective bargaining, the treatment of wages and the taxation of labour. But unemployment benefits and social expenditure are slightly higher than the average of the set of European and Latin American countries.

Argentina's is typical of Latin America, namely an informal uncoordinated economy which is characterised by the phenomenon of structural heterogeneity. Four aspects can be underlined: a low level of social expenditure; the number of workers with unemployment benefits is very low; the inequality rates in the pre-distributive and post-distributive Gini indexes are very high; and a very high rate of informal employment which hinders coordination between pre and post-distributive policies. Informal employment makes it difficult to govern wages through collective bargaining, so structural heterogeneity leads to inequality in Latin American countries acting in a similar way to the way it does in liberal countries, despite the fact that these three countries have intermediate systems between coordinating wages at the sector level and collective bargaining. In fact, Argentina, has certain sector-

type neo-corporatist elements (Marticorena 2014), with a system of collective bargaining at the sector level combined with a large amount of informal employment and very low coverage of unemployment. Then there are major labour inequalities between the formal and informal sectors. Is a model that has led to the construction of fragmented, stratified protection systems (OIT 2018) and can be classified as uncoordinated economy. Martinez-Fronzoni & Sánchez-Ancochea (2018) define the trend among Latin American regimes as a struggle between universalisation and segmentation: universalisation due to the increase in welfare policies and segmentation because of the formal/informal (and therefore protected and unprotected) dualization of the labour market.

Chile is a peculiar case, because it has gone from a state protection model to the radically liberal capitalisation regime that was instated in 1980, with liberal labour relations, with a decentralised collective bargaining system at the company level and low coverage of collective bargaining, which influences inequality in the labour and post-distributive Gini indexes. The unemployment protection rate is also low, and informal employment has a more moderate volume. Chile has low social expenditure. Is liberal country that usually have micro-economic type policies and have weak unions with little political influence for pre and post-distributive coordination. Both the decentralisation of collective bargaining at the company level (typical of uncoordinated economies), and informal employment (widespread in Latin America) generate strong dualized segmentation of labour relations, with a clear difference between protected (insiders) and unprotected (outsiders) workers. In this sense, Latin American countries have very similar results to liberal ones due to the large amount of informal employment and weak institution of social protection.

4. Analysis model and methodology

In the comparative analysis of Spain, Italy, Argentina and Chile from the perspective of labour market segmentation and structural heterogeneity, we establish the general hypothesis that, on the one hand, there is no single market that adjusts supply and demand, but that different and hierarchized segments are configured, which depending on job quality are placed in two main groups. The primary segment and the secondary segment, where people are positioned unequally according to the job conditions and social characteristics such as gender, age, nationality (immigrant origin) and education, as a result of the interaction between factors of supply and demand side and a regulatory social model. On the other hand, we expect to find a similar structuring of labour markets in all countries in terms of employment, in crystallization of labour inequalities resulting from structural and institutional processes that act as specific mechanisms in each social model, but which lead to similar general results in terms of the structure of inequalities in the labour market.

To test our hypothesis, we designed an analysis with a quantitative methodology that we present below. First of all, it is a static comparative study of the four countries with data for the years 2014 (Chile), 2015 (Spain and Italy) and 2016 (Argentina) for the entire wage-earning population (72% of the employed population in Argentina, 74% in Chile, 74% in Italy and 84% in Spain). Labour survey data is used to examine the labour market from an employment perspective⁶ and to obtain a macro-social snapshot of an aggregate structuring of the segmentation of employment. This is a measure of the phenomenon that is expressed in terms of the results or effects of segmentation processes. Other factors are involved, such as institutional aspects, activity sector patterns, the framework of labour relations, the link with the reproductive sphere and other meso-social matters, as we explained in the theoretical perspective, but these are not explicitly measured here. Those elements of our model are captured partially or indirectly.

⁶ I.e. contract conditions and the quality thereof, and we do not specifically capture the characteristics of labour from the demand side contextualised in an organisation of production and labour, with effective functions and qualifications that are observable in the micro-social realities of jobs.

Our model of labour segmentation and its operationalisation are conditioned by the information available in the sources and by the need for comparable data between the four countries. Following the proposal formulated in López-Roldán (1996a) and López-Roldán & Fachelli (2019) indicators are distinguished from the points of view of both demand and supply, with a set of 8 dimensions that give rise to a total of 13 variables (Table 1). The dimensions that define the demand side are: security, as a dimension of job stability and instability; qualification, which differentiates formal occupational levels or professional categories; the wage dimension, as an indicator of job quality; and, finally, various characteristics of companies that contextualise the framework of social and organisational relations in which jobs are offered: company size, sector and ownership. From the supply side, four dimensions of the workforce are considered: gender, age, immigration and education.

Data for Spain and Italy are taken from the 2015 European Union's EU-LFS, considering a total of 32,353 for Spain and 151,546 for Italy wage-earning workers. For Argentina we use the fourth quarter of the *Encuesta Permanente de Hogares* (Permanent Survey of Homes) published in 2016 by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos* (INDEC), with a sample of 17,798 members of the wage-earning population. The data from Chile come from the 2014 *Encuesta Nacional de Empleo*, with a sample of 34,664 individuals.

Table 1 Dimensions and indicators of the employment segmentation model (*)

Dimension	Indicators/variables
Labour market demand	
1. Security	Type of contract and duration: <i>Open-ended, >6 months, <6 months, Informal</i> Type of workday: <i>Full-time, Part-time</i> Seniority in the company: <i>aggregation in months-years</i>
2. Qualification	Occupation: <i>Managers and professionals, Technicians and administrative staff, Skilled workers, Unskilled workers</i> Supervision: <i>Management, Middle management, Person in charge, Employee</i>
3. Salary	Salary deciles: <i>Decile 1 to Decile 10</i>
4. Characterization of the company	Sector: <i>Primary, 3 Industries, Construction, Retail, Transportation-communications, Financial-professional, Public administration, Other services</i> Ownership of the company: <i>Public, Private</i> Size: <i><5, 6-10, 11-49, 50-250, >250 workers</i>
Labour market supply	
5. Gender	Sex: <i>Male, Female</i>
6. Age	Age: <i>16-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, >59 years</i>
7. Immigration	Nationality: <i>National, Foreign</i>
8. Education	Educational level: <i>Primary, Secondary, University</i>

(*) For some variables, the categorization will differ slightly depending on the source of information in each country.

Source: Authors

From the methodological point of view, we pursue a dual objective. On the one hand, we seek to compare the factors that structure inequalities in the labour markets of Spain and Argentina and to determine the degree of similarity or dissimilarity of labour segmentation between the two countries. On the other, we seek to obtain a variable for the segmentation of the labour market in each country and thus compare the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between the labour segments that emerge from the analysis. Formally, the idea is to obtain a typology of employment segments defined in the form of 13 original variables and 74 associated categories. To this end, we apply a typology-building methodology that we call structural and articulated (López-Roldán 1996b) which principally involves sequentially combining two multivariable analysis techniques: multiple correspondence factor analysis, to analyse the relationship between the variables and synthesise them in a reduced set of factors of differentiation that define the factors that structure the labour market, and classification analysis, to group individuals into a number of employment groups or segments, the most internally

homogeneous and the most heterogeneous from each other. In this process, the main factors obtained, synthetic and measured on a quantitative scale, are then used as classification criteria in the cluster analysis where a mixed method has been applied that combines Ward's method of ascending hierarchical clustering with an optimisation of the initial classification applying the mobile centres method (Lebart et al. 1997; López-Roldán & Fachelli 2015).

5. Results of the comparative analysis

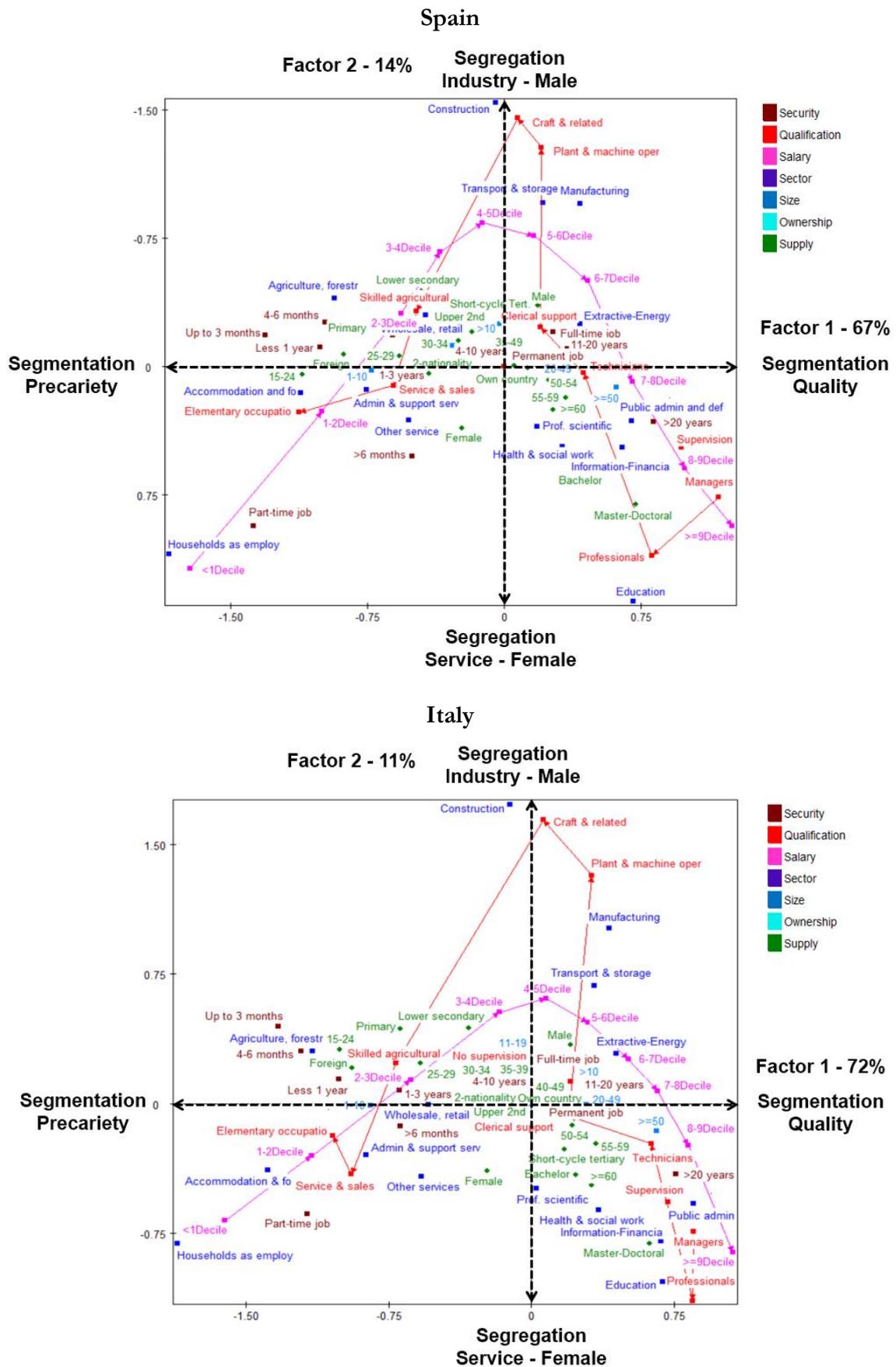
The results stemming from the analysis show a main finding, that is the very similar structuration of labour market among the four considered countries.

Figure 2 presents the correspondence analysis for Spain, Italy, Argentina and Chile. In all cases, with small variations, we find the same pattern of differentiation of positions in the labour market. The first factor explains among the 62%-72% of the variance, meanwhile the second explains the among the 11-15%. It should be noted that the first factor accumulates the most important amount of variance that reveals a important unidimensional reality. On the basis of the positions of the variables in the Cartesian plan it is possible to label the x-axis as characterizing the quality of occupation: the first factor is a dimension of employment quality. It expresses the opposition between bad and good jobs in terms of instability (on the left temporary employment and part-time contracts), associated with low qualification, low wages, and lower-size companies. On the other side, the profile is related to permanent contracts, seniority, higher qualifications, well-paid jobs, particularly in the public sector. It is a general segmentation factor which accumulates, in a single component, all the considered variables.

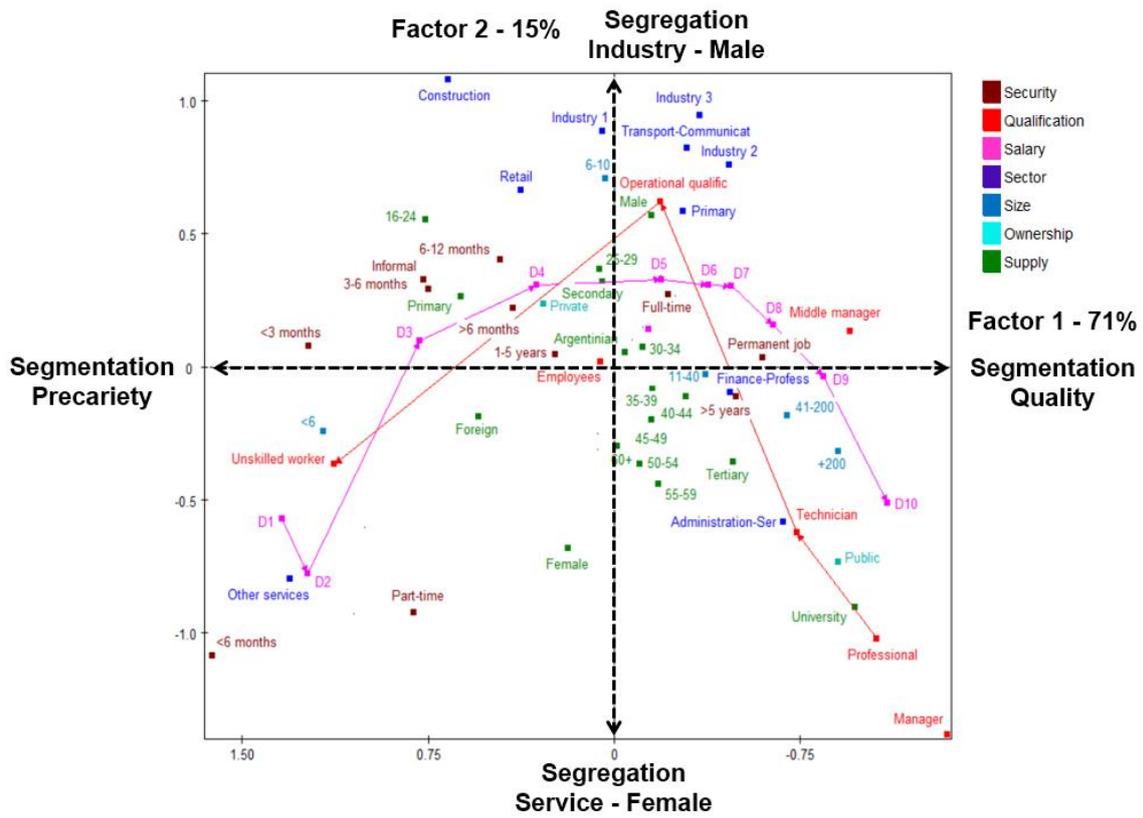
A second element in second factor differentiates mainly the industrial and construction activity sectors from the service sector, characterized by intermediate qualifications and mediums wages, full time and permanent contracts. It is a factor that differentiates the intermediate positions from the extreme poles, distinguishes the male dominated traditional sectors from the service sectors, where women are the majority. It is a dimension of occupational segregation, which contributes to establish a division between Lower and Upper Primary sector.

If we look at the social profiles (gender, age, immigration and education), we can associate young people, immigrant workers and the lower educated with the social space of Secondary segment on the left side. The right side is the space of Primary sector associated with higher education, older people and national origin. Women instead, are distributed in both segments, both precarious and of quality, and men are mainly associated to the profile of the Primary segment.

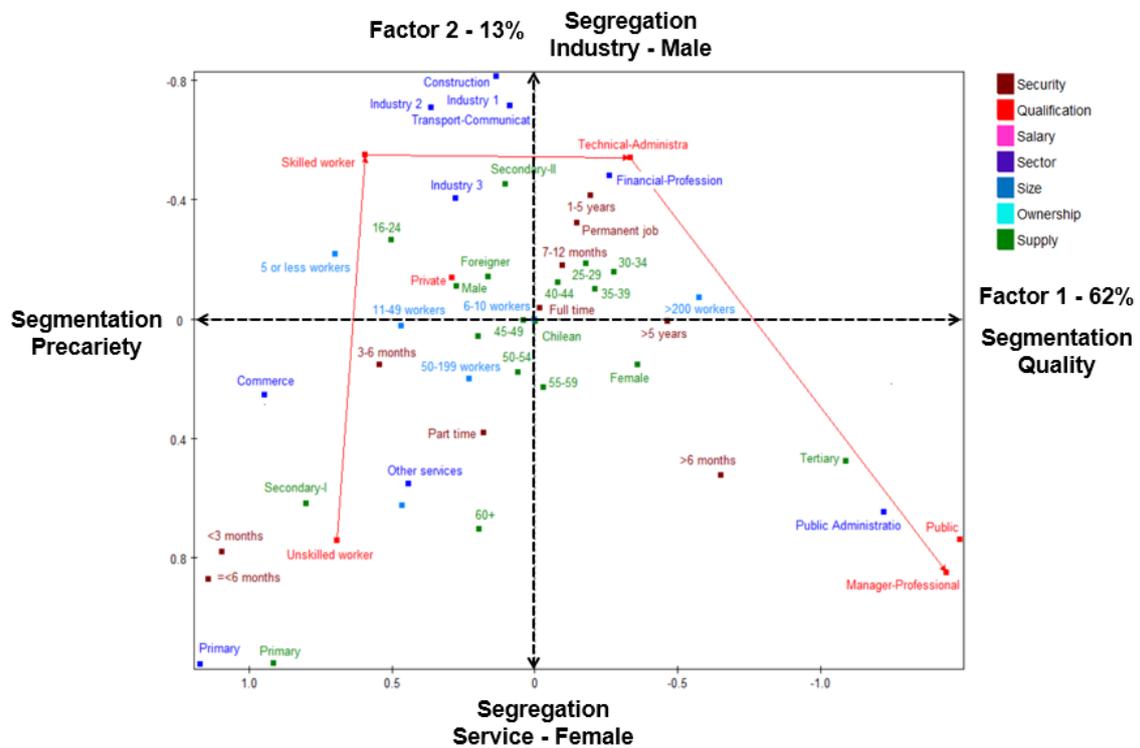
Figure 2. The social space of labour market segmentation



Argentina



Chile



The findings on the typological segmentation, based on the cluster analysis, are shown in Figure 3. Taking into account both factors and classifying employees we obtain three main clusters in four analysis made, with similar general profiles. We identify these clusters as segments of the labour market and we label them as “Secondary”, “Lower primary” and “Upper primary” segments. Then, crossing the occupational characteristics with the clusters, we can profile them.

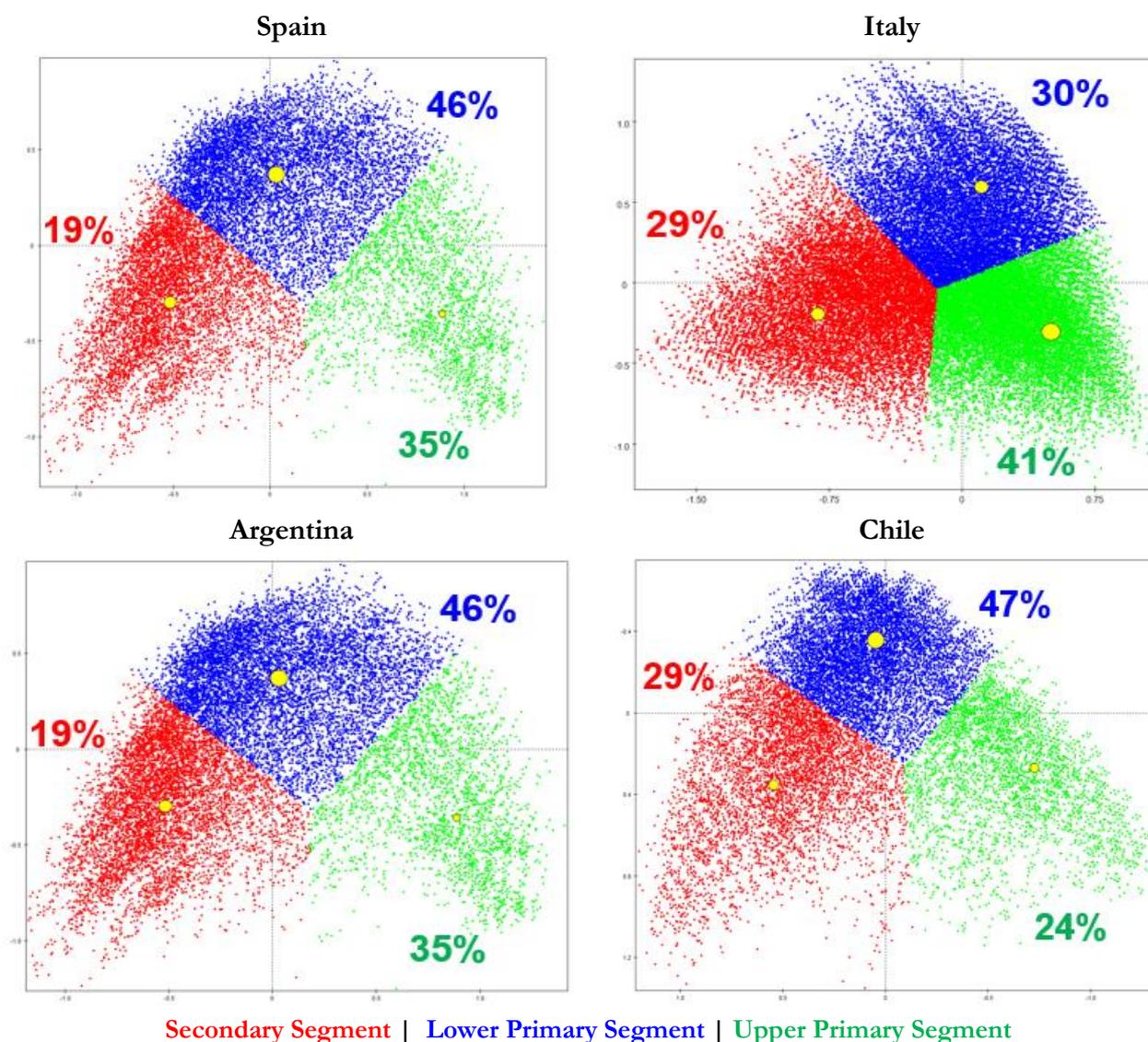
The secondary segment is larger in Italy and Chile (both 29%) and smaller in Spain and Argentina (both 19%). It is characterized by non-standard employment (part-time jobs, short and recent contracts), elementary occupations, households as employer, and lower educational levels. In this segment, the more frequent occupational categories are service and sales workers without supervision. The economic sectors are more frequently accommodation and food services, administration and support, primary sector, other service activities, wholesale, retail and repair of vehicles. The companies are of small size and the job incomes are low. The proportion of immigrants, youth and women is higher.

The lower primary segment is larger in Spain, Argentina and Chile (46% in the two first countries and 47% in Chile) and smaller in Italy (30%). This segment is characterized by permanent full-time job and seniority. The type of occupation concerns craft and related trade, plant and machine operators without supervision and short-cycle. Those employed in this segment have generally different levels of education (from tertiary to secondary or less). The characterizing activity sectors are manufacturing, construction, transport and storage, wholesale, retail and repair of vehicles. The enterprises have medium size. Incomes are intermediate. The proportion of natives is high, the more frequent class of age is from 30 to 44 years old, and men are more present than women.

The superior primary segment is larger in Italy (41%), less in Spain and Argentina (35%) and smaller in Chile (24%). The contracts in this segment are more frequently permanent full-time jobs and seniority. The typical occupational positions concern professionals and managers, technicians and associate professionals, with supervision and high educational levels. The sectors of activity the more involved are education, public administration, information-financial sectors, health and social works, professional area, scientific and technical activities. Here there are large companies. Incomes are higher. Workers are more frequently natives, older than 45 years, without significant gender differences.

Despite some differences, the profile of the clusters are very similar among the four countries, the different size of the three segments in the four countries could suggest both different levels of inequalities in the salaried labour market and different social models. In Spain and Argentina, the secondary segment is lower than in Italy and Chile. Moreover, Italy presents the superior primary segment particularly large. This could suggest the presence of a more homogeneous labour market in the Italian case, with an important part of workers employed in higher quality jobs (more remunerated and protected). In Chile, on the contrary, the most advantaged segment is smaller than in the other countries.

Figure 3. Employment Segmentation Typology



Source: Authors

6. Conclusions

The theoretical perspective from which the chapter started, is to consider the segmentation of the labour market, and therefore the structure of social inequalities, as a set of market factors (the characteristics of the demand-side and supply-side) and extra-market, such as the role of institutions, the social model and employment relations.

The study has presented the main results of the labour market comparison among four countries, Spain and Italy in Europe and Argentina and Chile in Latin America.

The two Southern European countries have been classified from the literature as mixed or semi-coordinated economies, with an important and historical role of trade unions, a large number of small companies and the coexistence of a minor part of informal employment. Italy has a more developed

industrialized sector, although it has decreased in last decades. Argentina, as a typical Latin America country, is characterized by a large informal uncoordinated economy, with important economic problems of public balance, a relevant role of trade unions and a weak industrial sector. Chile, instead, represents a radical neo-liberal regime since 1980; an un-coordinated economy with liberal labour relations, with a decentralised collective bargaining system at the company level and low coverage of collective bargaining, which influences inequalities in the labour market.

Empirical evidence has shown that, despite the specific institutional configuration of each country, it is possible to trace a similar picture in terms of structuring the segmentation of the labour market, coherently with other comparative studies conducted within the INCASI project. In other words, the hypothesis is confirmed that there is no single labour market, but that at least three major segments can be outlined according to the quality of the work and the distribution of material (wages) and symbolic (status) resources. Secondly, the analysis showed substantial similarities among countries, given the proper proportions. The results support that Spain, Italy, Argentina and Chile share a quite similar configuration, in relation to two main aspects: the relationship quality-precarioussness, and the service-industry dimension. These two factors explain around the eighty per cent of the variance in the most important variables describing the labour market (employees only). The cluster analysis of workers shows similar proportions. In particular, three segments have been identified: a “secondary segment”, representing the disadvantaged work; an “lower primary segment” characterized by the intermediate quality of work; and a “upper primary segment”, connected to the more advantaged work. The distribution of these groups is slightly different in the four countries. While Spain and Argentina present the same proportions, in Chile the percentage of superior primary is the lowest, meanwhile in Italy is the highest. Despite the limitations of this study, in particular the non-presence of self-employment in the analysis, the results show some robust similarities among the four countries. These results therefore also tend to confirm the second hypothesis, which prefigures similar mechanisms of social stratification, associated with employment positions. The crystallization of inequalities in the labour market therefore seems to be favoured by institutions and the social model, even in very distant and different socio-economic contexts.

Further analysis and data are needed to better understand and validate more accurately employment segmentation. Additionally, we would like to extend our model and analysis by including all workers (e.g. self-employed and informal workers) and integrate productive and reproductive work. Furthermore, we can add new countries from Europe and Latin America and introducing a long-term perspective and trajectory analysis.

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