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The background of the page is a complex geometric design. It features a large, stylized hand shape composed of numerous parallel lines in shades of blue, teal, and red. The lines are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, with some lines appearing to recede into the distance. The overall effect is a modern, abstract representation of human labor and industry.

▶ **Forced Labour in
Argentina's Garment
Sector: Key Prevalence
Survey Insights**

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First published 2024



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Title: **Forced labour in Argentina's garment sector: Key prevalence survey insights**

ISBN: 9789220411674 (web PDF)

Also available in Spanish: Estudio sobre la prevalencia del trabajo forzoso en el sector de la confección en Argentina: Resultados clave de una encuesta, ISBN: 9789220411698 (PDF web)

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Acknowledgements

Funding for this ILO publication is provided by the United States Department of Labor under cooperative agreement number IL-34208-19-75-K, of the project "Evidence to Action: Increasing the impact of research to mobilize efforts against forced labour" (EVA) (GLO/19/17/USA). One hundred percent of the total costs of the project is financed with Federal funds, for a total of 3 725 000 US dollars.

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► Table of Contents

Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Executive Summary	xi
Introduction	1
Background and Context	1
Study Purpose and Objectives	2
Research Methods	3
Adapting the ICLS Guidelines to the Argentine Context	3
Measuring Forced Labour	3
Indicator-based approach following the ICLS Guidelines	3
Survey Measurement	4
Measuring forced labour in home-based work settings	5
Sampling Methodology	5
Data Collection, Preparation, and Management	7
Instrument Pre-Test, Enumerator Training, and Data Collection	7
Data Management	8
Research Ethics and Study Authorization	8
IRB	8
Study Limitations	9
Forced Labour Estimates Apply Only to The Workers' Current Job	9
Populations Excluded from the Reach of Our Data Collection Activities	9
Statistical Limitations	9
Findings	11
Demographic Characteristics of the RDS Sample	11
Demographic Characteristics	11
Forced Labour Prevalence Among the Workshop/Factory Workers	15
Demographic Characteristics of Home-based Study Sample	20
Forced Labour Prevalence Among Home-Based Workers	24
Additional Exploratory Analysis	27

Conclusions and recommendations	31
Bibliography	33
Annexes	35
Annex 1: Additional Analysis	35
Annex 2: Forced Labour Indicator Crosswalk	37
Annex 3: Weighting Methodology	42

► List of Exhibits

Figure 1: Do you have an Argentine National ID?	12
Figure 2: How did you obtain this job? (N = 1,159)	14
Figure 3: Key forced labour indicators by age group	19
Figure 4: Key Forced Labour Indicators by Birth Country	20
Figure 5: Respondent highest level of education completed	21
Figure 6: How did you obtain your job?	22
Figure 7: Do you get your customers, clients, or buyers through someone else?	24
Figure 8: Primary challenges reported by home-based workers regarding payment (n = 330)	25
Figure 9: Do you often work overtime (i.e. exceeding the working hours initially agreed upon?) (n = 705)	26
Figure 10: Number of referrals, nominations, and self-reported network size	42
Figure 11: Self-reported network size based on winsorisation at the 95th percentile	44
Figure 12: RDS network graph of factory/workshop worker survey ample	44
Figure 13: RDS+ network graph of factory/workshop worker sample	45
Figure 14: Sample weights for factory/workshop worker respondents based on RDS+ data set and resampling procedure	45
Figure 15: Approximated final selection probabilities of the probability sample respondents	46
Figure 16: Comparing selection probabilities of the probability sample and imputed pseudo-selection probabilities of the nonprobability sample	47
Figure 17: Final sample weights: probability sample in blue and nonprobability sample in red	47
Figure 18: Final sample weights for home-based workers sample after trimming	48

► List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of indicators based on the ICLS Guidelines	4
Table 2: Summary of final home-based worker study sample	6
Table 3: Respondent Demographics	11
Table 4: Respondent country of origin	12
Table 5: Respondent highest level of education and marital status	13
Table 6: How is your wage payment calculated?***	4
Table 7: Employment characteristics by formality	15
Table 8: Summary of “menace of any penalty” sub-indicators	16
Table 9: Summary of “involuntary work” sub-indicators	17
Table 10: Summary of key forced labour indicators*	18
Table 11: Distribution of positive sub-indicators within positive “menace of any penalty” cases (n = 267)	18
Table 12: Distribution of positive sub-indicators within positive “involuntary work” cases (n = 399)	18
Table 13: Respondent demographics (proportions)	21
Table 14: Respondent employment characteristics	22
Table 15: How was your payment calculated?	23
Table 16: In the last 12 months, did most of your income from the home-based work come from multiple clients or one client?	23
Table 17: Summary of “menace of any penalty” sub-indicators	24
Table 18: Summary of “involuntary work” sub-indicators	26
Table 19: Summary of key forced labour indicators	27
Table 20: Sensitivity of forced labour indicator: The role of “work with very low or no wages”	28
Table 21: Sensitivity of forced labour indicator for home-based workers: Role of “work with very low or no wages” and “hazardous working conditions without consent”	29
Table 22: Correlation between violation related to a given sub-indicator and overall exposure to Forced Labour	35

► Preface

This publication is produced by the project *Evidence to Action: Increasing the impact of research to mobilize efforts against forced labour in the garment sector of Madagascar and Argentina ("EvA Project")*. Led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in partnership with NORC and Verité, and funded by the United States Department of Labour, this initiative aims to promote greater use of research in policy and programme decision-making to eliminate forced labour worldwide. By conducting comprehensive and robust research in the garment sector of Argentina, the project seeks to increase knowledge and mobilize decision-makers and stakeholders to act against forced labour and rights violations.

This report presents estimates of the prevalence of forced labour in the garment sector of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. It aims to deliver critical information to aid in preventing labour exploitation and addressing issues related to decent work gaps in Argentina. Furthermore, the report serves to empirically test the guidelines concerning the measurement of forced labour from a sector-specific perspective.

The global garment industry is characterized by its geographically dispersed production and swift market driven changes. It provides work and employment opportunities to millions of workers, particularly young women, and offers enormous potential to boost economic development and promote social justice, given the large and diverse workforce it encompasses.

Despite these opportunities, high volatility and unpredictability, as well as generally minimal profit margins, bring significant challenges to the industry. Production is often outsourced to suppliers in various countries, leading to fierce competition that drives down prices, and consequently, wages and working conditions. Moreover, the sector remains one of the most labour-intensive, even amidst technological advancements and improvements in working practices.

The ILO actively promotes decent work in the garment sector by facilitating social dialogue to identify and tackle the sector's main challenges and opportunities. This involves building consensus among governments, workers' organizations, and employers on implementing effective strategies. Key initiatives are aimed at deepening understanding of recent industry trends and developments, ensuring compliance with international labour standards, and strengthening the capabilities of stakeholders in critical areas such as health and safety, training, minimum wage, and others. Additionally, the ILO aims to strengthen partnerships and align policies among various actors at the global, regional, and national levels.

Access to information and reliable evidence on specific industries and regions is crucial for crafting effective policies and actions for preventing and eradicating violations of fundamental workplace rights and principles. This is particularly important when the evidence is based on the firsthand experiences of populations severely impacted by informality, poverty, and inequality.

The insights generated through this work supports the efforts of governments, employers, and unions to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and eliminate child labour. This contribution aligns with the objectives of *Alliance 8.7*, for which Argentina is a recognized *Pathfinder Country*.

► Acknowledgements

This study was conducted by NORC as part of the EvA Project. The ILO extends its gratitude to the NORC team, led by Shanto Sadhu, Kareem Kysia, Carlos Fierro, Xiran Liu, and consultant Kyle Vincent, for their leadership, dedication, and technical contributions. Additionally, the ILO appreciates the insightful comments from Andrea Gálvez, Erin Klett, and Max Travers of Verité, which enhanced this publication. Special thanks are also due to the Gino Germani Research Institute, particularly Pablo Molina, for their crucial role in data collection and technical support, as well as to Paula Salgado for her feedback and suggestions.

The project extends its gratitude to the Ministry of Labour of Argentina for its invaluable support in the implementation of the EvA Project, and to the representatives of the garment industry for their willingness to collaborate in developing the knowledge and tools necessary to identify and respond to forced labour risks. This cooperation was crucial in developing relevant products and fostering productive dialogue. We also acknowledge the significant contributions of individuals and institutions, including the members of the Executive Committee to Fight Human Trafficking and Exploitation and for the protection and assistance to its victims, of the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI, for its acronym in Spanish), the Prosecution Office for Human Trafficking and Exploitation (PROTEX), and various companies and industry chambers. These partnerships have been instrumental in advancing our goals.

We also extend our gratitude to the administrative and financial teams of the ILO offices in Geneva and Buenos Aires for their assistance, especially to Michaelle De Cock, Francesca Francavilla, Gady Saiovici, and consultant Farhad Mehran from the ILO Geneva, who provided critical guidance and technical support.

Finally, special thanks are due to the garment sector workers in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area who willingly participated in this study, sharing their perceptions and feelings about their working and living conditions.

► Executive Summary

The EvA Project addresses the need to increase the application of research on forced labour in policy and programme decision-making aimed at eradicating forced labour. This requires broadening our understanding and awareness about the prevalence and dynamics of forced labour through both qualitative and quantitative research.

A key part of this initiative is contributing to the harmonization of data collection methodologies in accordance with the ICLS Guidelines to ensure consistency and accuracy across studies. For this purpose, NORC collaborated with the ILO to implement the ICLS Guidelines and conduct a study to establish a prevalence estimate of forced labour in the garment sector of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. This report details the research methods utilized to operationalize the *Guidelines Concerning the Measurement of Forced Labour*, adopted by the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (“ICLS Guidelines”)¹ in Argentina. It also presents the findings and recommendations based on the final prevalence estimates.

This study adopted an indicator-based approach to operationalize the definition of forced labour. The indicators were developed in accordance with the ICLS Guidelines. These are grouped and analysed through two main *lenses* as per the ICLS guidelines: “menace of any penalty” and “involuntary work,” which help define individuals in forced labour situations from a statistical perspective. A summary of the survey characteristics and results is presented in Table 1 below:

Location	Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area
Target population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Garment workers ► Home-based garment workers
Survey methodology and sampling	<p>Indicator-based approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Garment workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respondent driven sampling (RDS) ▪ Sample size N = 1,159 ► Home-based garment workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A hybrid two-staged approach designed through key informant interviews, commencing with a non-probability sampling of areas for identifying home-based workers, which then informed a random probability sampling of households and respondents based on a sampling frame comprising all streets in the study areas ▪ Sample size N = 705
Data collection dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Garment workers: 15 May 2023 to 28 June 2023 ► Home-based garment workers: 28 July 2023 to 21 October 2023
Prevalence estimates results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Garment workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 18.51% overall CI [14.82%, 22.21%] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8.10% formal - 21.29% informal ► Home-based garment workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 14.17% CI [10.54%, 17.80%]

¹ ILO, ICLS/20/2018/Guidelines: Guidelines concerning the measurement of forced labour (Geneva: International Labour Office, Department of Statistics, 10-19 October 2018).

► Introduction

Background and Context

Background. Substantial progress has been made in terms of measuring forced labour and building the evidence base on the issue. The *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery* report offers a comprehensive overview of the current scale and geographic distribution of forced labour. However, these estimates also highlight the need for targeted, sector and country-specific data that can inform effective policy making and stakeholders' actions to combat forced labour.²

The ICLS Guidelines³, represent a significant advancement in measuring forced labour and establishing a foundation for informed policy making. The ICLS Guidelines respond to the need for accurate statistics to support national efforts to prevent and eliminate forced labour. They streamline the process for measuring forced labour in various contexts and *"provide recommendations for the collection and analysis of forced labour statistics, and to facilitate the international comparability of forced labour statistics by minimizing definitional and methodological differences across countries."* Additionally, the ICLS Guidelines emphasize the importance of collecting targeted quantitative and qualitative data on forced labour, particularly in vulnerable sectors and population groups, to aid in the development of effective interventions.

Country Context. At present, there are no estimates of forced labour in the garment sector in Argentina. Nevertheless, academic studies, news reports, judicial cases and labour inspection reports indicate the presence of forced labour in the garment sector, particularly in informal and clandestine workshops.

Numerous studies have collected worker testimonies detailing the living and working conditions in informal workshops.⁴ These testimonies consistently reveal substandard working conditions, such as cramped spaces, inadequate ventilation, lack of personal protective equipment, limited access to basic amenities and sanitation, and poor nutrition. They also highlight serious safety concerns. In 2006, six Bolivian workers died in a fire at a sewing workshop on Calle Luis Viale in Buenos Aires. Similarly, in April 2015, a fire in an unauthorized textile workshop in Buenos Aires's Flores neighborhood resulted in the deaths of two Bolivian children. This workshop operated without the necessary inspections or approvals, despite prior reports from civil organizations and government agencies. A Rapid Sector Appraisal (RSA) conducted by Verité under the EvA Project, identified that informal workshops, often small to medium in size and located primarily in Buenos Aires and its greater suburban area, are particularly vulnerable

² ILO, "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage," (2017).

³ ILO, ICLS/20/2018/Guidelines: Guidelines concerning the measurement of forced labour (Geneva: International Labour Office, Department of Statistics, 10-19 October 2018).

⁴ A.M. Arcos, " Vivir en el trabajo. Procesos de trabajo y reproducción cotidiana de talleres textiles en Buenos Aires," (Tesis de Licenciatura, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2012); María Ayelén Arcos, "'Talleres clandestinos': el traspatio de las 'grandes marcas': organización del trabajo dentro de la industria de la indumentaria," Cuadernos de Antropología, (2013); María Ayelén Arcos, "'Cultura del trabajo'. Representaciones acerca de la organización del trabajo migrante en talleres de costura," Cuadernos de Antropología, (2014); Ariel Lieutier, Esclavos: los trabajadores costureros en la ciudad de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires: Retorica Ediciones, 2010); J. Montero, " Neoliberal fashion: The political economy of sweatshops in Europe and Latin America," (doctoral dissertation, University of Durham, 2011); Jerónimo Montero, "La moda neoliberal: El retorno de los talleres clandestinos de costura," Geograficando, no. 8 (2012): 19; Jerónimo Montero, "La crisis de los distritos industriales italianos: Los talleres clandestinos de Prato como reflejo de un cambio de época," Revista de Geografía Meridiano, no.1 (2012); Jerónimo Montero, "Discursos de moda ¿Cómo justificar la explotación de inmigrantes en talleres de costura?," Trabajo y Sociedad, no.23 (2014); Alicia Szmukler, "Inserción laboral de los inmigrantes bolivianos y condiciones de trabajo en la rama textil," Organización Internacional del trabajo, (2015); ILO, "Migraciones laborales en Argentina. Protección social, informalidad y heterogeneidades sectoriales, (Buenos Aires: International Labour Office, 2015).

to labour exploitation. This area houses approximately 88% of the industry's workforce, significantly elevating the risk of exploitation.⁵

A report by PROTEX⁶ indicates that most denunciations (164 out of 563 denunciations) for trafficking and labour exploitation are linked to garment workshops. A report on labour inspections in garment workshops in Buenos Aires reveals that approximately 70% of the workers identified are non-nationals, 13% are Argentines and the remaining workers lack identification documents.⁷ Among the workshops that showed irregularities, PROTEX reported 34 cases related to human trafficking, servitude or related crimes. Furthermore, the private sector acknowledged that 70% of workers in the garment industry are employed under informal conditions.⁸

Argentina has demonstrated a renewed commitment to addressing forced labour by strengthening its legislative framework,⁹ improving forced labour detection mechanisms,¹⁰ and incorporating forced labour considerations into standard labour inspection protocols.¹¹ Moreover, the country has a robust institutional network focused on forced labour and human trafficking, and civil society and multi-stakeholder initiatives are active in the garment sector, which is crucial for incorporating research findings into effective policies.

Study Purpose and Objectives

Study Purpose and Objectives. The EvA Project addresses the need to increase the application of research on forced labour in policy and programme decision making aimed at eradicating forced labour. This requires broadening our understanding and awareness about the prevalence and dynamics of forced labour through both qualitative and quantitative research. The EvA Project also contributes to the global effort to harmonize data collection methodologies by adhering to the definitions and methodologies in the ICLS Guidelines. This requires engaging relevant stakeholders to both inform the development of interventions and strengthen their capabilities to tackle forced labour.

For this purpose, NORC collaborated with the ILO to implement the ICLS Guidelines and conduct a study that establishes a baseline prevalence estimate of forced labour in the garment sector of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. This report outlines the research methods used in applying the ICLS guidelines in Argentina and presents the findings and prevalence estimates of forced labour in the garment sector. Additionally, the report offers key insights derived from analyzing the prevalence and characteristics of forced labour.

⁵ Summary of Findings from Argentina Garment Sector Desk Research Internal Report, Verité, 2022.

⁶ Denuncias recibidas a través de la línea 145 sobre trata de personas, Procuraduría de Trata y Explotación de Personas, PROTEX, 2018.

⁷ Talleres textiles denunciados en la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Análisis de las denuncias presentadas ante la Procuraduría de Trata y Explotación de Personas, PROTEX, 2016.

⁸ A.M. Arcos, " Vivir en el trabajo. Procesos de trabajo y reproducción cotidiana de talleres textiles en Buenos Aires," (Tesis de Licenciatura, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2012).

⁹ 2019: The creation of an assistance fund was provided for in Law 26,364, on the Prevention and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to its Victims, enacted in 2012. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, together with the Federal Council for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons, supported its creation and the treatment of the project, which last May had a half sanction in the Senate. 2015: Decree No. 111 regulated Law 26,842 and Resolution 1280 of the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Single Articulation Protocol prepared by the Executive Committee for the Fight against Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and for the Protection and Assistance to Victims.

¹⁰ Informe de Gestión. Plan Nacional Bienal para la Lucha contra la Trata y Explotación de Personas 2022 – 2024, Comité Ejecutivo de Lucha contra de la Trata y Explotación de Personas y para la protección y asistencia a sus víctimas (2023).

¹¹ Fondo de Capacitación y Recalificación Laboral (FOPECAP), "Plan de formación integral para una inspección del trabajo moderna y eficiente," International Labour Office, <https://www.ilo.org/es/projects-and-partnerships/projects/plan-de-formacion-para-inspeccion-del-trabajo-moderna-y-eficiente>.

► Research Methods

Adapting the ICLS Guidelines to the Argentine Context

In implementing the ICLS guidelines for assessing the current state of forced labour, a comprehensive approach was adopted to develop and customize an instrument tailored to the specific needs of the country and industry. This process involved a detailed examination of the indicators specified in the ICLS Guidelines, categorically falling under “menace of a penalty” and “involuntary work”. The aim was to convert these indicators into measurable survey items, while considering the specific characteristics of the garment industry in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. A key output of this process was the creation of a crosswalk linking the ICLS Guidelines indicators to the survey questions and their corresponding criteria for violations of fair labour practices. This exercise ensured a clear alignment between the ICLS Guidelines and the actual survey questions, guaranteeing that the measures incorporated into the survey comply fully with the ICLS Guidelines.

Measuring Forced Labour

Indicator-based approach following the ICLS Guidelines

This study adopted an indicator-based approach to operationalize the definition of forced labour. The indicators were developed following ILO guidelines on the measurement of forced labour. They are grouped and analysed from two main perspectives emphasized by the ICLS Guidelines: “menace of any penalty” and “involuntary work”, which help identify individuals in forced labour situations.

According to the ICLS Guidelines, for statistical purposes, *“a person is classified as being in forced labour if engaged during a specified reference period in any work that is both under the threat of menace of a penalty and involuntary. Both conditions must exist for this to be statistically regarded as forced labour.”*¹²

The term “menace of any penalty” refers to coercion or threats used to compel individuals to work against their will. “Involuntary work”, is defined as any work undertaken without free and informed consent. We detail the specific coercive techniques and conditions associated with each indicator in Table 1 below, in accordance with the ICLS Guidelines.

¹² ILO, “Guidelines concerning the measurement of forced labour,” 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, (Geneva, 10-19 October 2018).

► **Table 1: Summary of indicators based on the ICLS Guidelines**

ICLS Dimension	Indicators
Threat and menace of any penalty	Threats or violence against workers or workers' families and relatives
	Restriction on workers' movement
	Debt bondage or manipulation of debt
	Withholding of wages or other promised benefits
	Withholding of valuable documents
	Abuse of workers' vulnerability through the denial of rights or privileges
	Threats of dismissal or deportation
Involuntary work	Unfree recruitment at birth or through transaction such as slavery or bonded labour
	Situations in which the worker must perform a job of different nature from that specified during recruitment without a person's consent
	Abusive requirements for overtime or on-call work that were not previously agreed with the employer
	Work in hazardous conditions to which the worker has not consented, with or without compensation or protective equipment
	Work with very low or no wages
	Degrading living conditions imposed by the employer, recruiter, or other third-party
	Work for other employers than agreed
	Work for longer period of time than agreed
Work with no or limited freedom to terminate work contract	

Survey Measurement

The survey instrument for this study was designed to operationalize the ICLS Guidelines through an indicator-based approach. In shaping this tool, we drew upon NORC's prior research,¹³ existing literature on human trafficking research, and insights from the EvA Project. The survey encompasses most, if not all, common measurement items found in current prevalence studies within the field.

The survey instrument encompasses the following key sections: (a) demographic details such as age, gender, country of birth, ethnicity, and educational attainment; (b) employment specifics including type of employer, contracting mechanisms, types of tasks, and payment terms; (c) various forms of abuses perpetrated by employers; and (d) indicators of freedom of association within the workplace.

¹³ ILO, [Behind the Seams. Understanding labour conditions in the Argentine garment sector through worker experiences](#) (Argentina: ILO, 2024); ILO, [Intertwined. Opportunities and challenges to strengthen the fundamental principles and rights at work in the value chain of the garment industry in Argentina](#) (Argentina: ILO, 2024).

After finalizing the instrument, the research team conducted a crosswalk exercise to align the forced labour indicators specified in the ICLS Guidelines with the corresponding questions in the data collection instrument. Refer to Annex 2 for a detailed crosswalk between the sets of indicators.

Measuring forced labour in home-based work settings

For the study involving home-based workers, the Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) instrument was modified to better suit the unique characteristics and environment of home-based work. It is important to recognize that certain dimensions of violations of fair labour practices are not applicable to home-based workers; the research team meticulously identified and removed those dimensions that are not relevant.

Firstly, indicators specific to factory or workshop settings were removed, such as those that might be linked to deception, like location and work hours, since these are not relevant to home-based workers. Additionally, the scope of certain indicators was narrowed to respondents in employer-provided housing,¹⁴ reflecting the supervision dynamics that characterize home-based work. Modifications also included removing or adjusting questions about deprivation of basic needs, threats regarding working conditions, confiscation of identity documents, and inquiries regarding living conditions and housing choices.

Furthermore, the complexities of measuring overtime in home-based work were acknowledged. The instrument now specifically evaluates overtime for workers paid by the hour. Additional questions were introduced to delve into the reasons for overtime work and payment-related challenges faced by home-based workers.

Sampling Methodology

This study seeks to understand the experiences of individuals employed in the garment sector in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. Potential participants were asked if they have ever been employed in the garment sector. If they were currently employed in the garment sector or have been employed in the sector within the last 3 years, they were considered for study. To be included, participants must also be at least 18 years old, and be willing to participate in an interview according to the guidelines described to them during the consent process.

The sampling methodology adopted by the research team used methods that are applicable to the type of workers targeted:

- ▶ To identify formal and informal workers who work in factories and workshops, the RDS method was adopted.
- ▶ To identify home-based workers, a hybrid approach was adopted. Initially, key informant driven sampling (non-probability sampling) was used to enumerate all the neighborhoods and streets with high concentration of home-based workers. Subsequently, probability sampling was used to randomly select respondent households from the 378 identified streets.

Factory/Workshop workers

The study relied on the RDS method to recruit factory and workshop-based garment workers for the survey. Initially, areas within the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area known for a high density of garment factory and workshop employment were strategically selected. Field researchers utilized existing

¹⁴ Employer-provided housing was defined as cases where respondents were either living in housing provided by their employer and/or recruiter or paying rent to their employer and/or recruiter to live somewhere.

network ties with local community organizations, NGOs, and labour unions that support garment workers, particularly migrants, to contact potential participants. Additionally, researchers approached workers in public places that are not monitored by employers or labour brokers, such as open-air clinics, shopping centers, restaurants, parks, and banks or money transfer businesses. No written recruitment materials were used. Interviews were conducted in private venues or designated private areas within public spaces to ensure confidentiality and prevent the conversations from being observed or overheard.

These initial respondents acted as “*seeds*” from which all other study participants were identified. A soft quota was set, and the distribution of *seeds* was monitored across enumeration area, gender, age group, and migration status to increase the likelihood that the final sample would accurately represent the target population.

At the end of each survey, respondents would be asked if they knew and would be willing to share contact information for up to seven garment sector workers who met the study criteria (working in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, not family members, aged 18 or older, and not the individual who provided them with the current survey coupon if they were also a wave respondent). Respondents were compensated for each recruit they successfully referred to the study. If a respondent nominated more than three individuals, three were randomly chosen to be invited to participate. If three or fewer were nominated, all were invited. Each *seed* was given up to three coupons, each bearing a unique QR code to match *waves* with their recruiter. This process was repeated through successive waves of respondents until the target sample size of 1,200 was reached.

Home-based workers

For the home-based worker study, there were two waves of data collection, described as follows. The first wave employed a nonprobability sampling design, targeting areas suspected to have a high concentration of household workers, based on key informant interviews. The second wave implemented a probability sampling design to enable extrapolation of estimates across the full study area. This involved visiting all streets in the area and systematically approaching households for interviews. This process was repeated using the same design, with specific instructions to avoid revisiting any households previously selected. This approach ensured that the desired sample size was achieved solely through probability sampling.

Ultimately, a total of 378 streets were visited for observational purposes. On some streets, there were no successful interviews. In these instances, first-stage selection probabilities, which dictate the choice of households to approach for interviews, were modeled as a simple random sample applied to all eligible households from the corresponding (aggregate) districts.

Table 2 below outlines aggregate district level information, including the total household count, number of successful interviews, and number of ineligible households.

► **Table 2: Summary of final home-based worker study sample**

(Aggregate) Districts	Total Number of Households	Number of Successful Interviews	Observed Number of Ineligible Households
Villa 31, Barracas, Balvanera, Constitución and Mataderos	1,403	28	9
Villa 1-11-14 and Lugano	939	37	12
Flores	3,910	106	61
Floresta, Pque Avellaneda, Villa Soldati y Villa del Parque	3,538	122	58
José León Suarez	178	16	5

(Aggregate) Districts	Total Number of Households	Number of Successful Interviews	Observed Number of Ineligible Households
Sarandi	2,087	96	29
Quilmes	1,041	36	30
Ing Budge and Villa Fiorito	1,490	69	38
San Justo	2,243	58	27
Villa Celina and La Tablada	1,387	77	14
Merlo	1,153	60	1
Total	19,369	705	284

Data Collection, Preparation, and Management

Instrument Pre-Test, Enumerator Training, and Data Collection

To improve the survey instrument, the research team conducted cognitive interviews with target respondents from 25 to 29 April 2023. NORC's local research partner, the *Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani* (IIGG), conducted five cognitive interviews with garment workers in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. The survey instrument was revised to incorporate the findings from these interviews.

Following the preliminary test, limited supervisor and in-depth enumerator training sessions were conducted from 4 to 12 May 2024, in Buenos Aires. These sessions aimed to familiarize the field team with the study's objectives, data collection methods, sampling techniques, logistics, and administrative tools. The training featured participation from national stakeholders and included two sessions on conducting trauma-informed research. These were developed in collaboration with a trauma-informed expert and covered four key modules: (i) human trafficking and trauma, (ii) practical steps for conducting trauma-informed research, (iii) risk and response protocols, and (iv) vicarious trauma and self-care, with a focus on understanding the physiological response to trauma and providing tools to minimize re-traumatization of respondents.

Additionally, the training included a classroom review and a field test of the data collection instrument. The classroom review leveraged the team's extensive research experience in Argentina to refine the survey questions for better comprehension and contextual relevance, ensure that response options were clear, exhaustive, and mutually exclusive, and provide additional guidance for enumerators on how to clarify or probe ambiguous questions.

The survey instrument was updated based on the classroom review and underwent a field test in Buenos Aires with participants similar to the study's target demographic but outside the sampling frame. This test aimed to evaluate respondents' understanding, comprehension, and recall, assess the effectiveness of various tools and approaches, check for potential response biases or sensitivities, and identify any unforeseen challenges. Following the field test, NORC and IIGG held extensive debriefing sessions with the field teams to make any final adjustments to the instruments before commencing the main data collection phase.

The fieldwork was launched on 15 May 2023, and concluded on 21 October 2023. This period included two phases of data collection: the RDS data collection from 15 May to 28 June 2023, followed by the home-based worker study from 28 July to 21 October 2023.

Data Management

Standard data cleaning procedures were employed by the survey team, which involved flagging and reviewing outliers and potentially erroneous entries. Logical rules were systematically applied for cleaning and validation to coupon passing/redemption, indicators of forced labour, personal network size, and others.

Coupons were mapped according to the entries made in the mobile data collection platform.¹⁵ For post-data linking and constructing the Link Tracing System (LTS) dataset, the process involved matching the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents with those of their nominees. The matching criteria included combinations of name, gender, age, ethnic origin, marital status, educational level, and number of children.

Ultimately, the result was a final dataset comprising 1,159 unique, complete cases (329 seeds and 830 referrals). The team conducted a linking process based on coupon redemptions and nominations to generate an adjacency matrix, which is the main input for constructing the sampling weights.

Research Ethics and Study Authorization

IRB

This study was conducted in line with human subject research guidelines in both the United States and Argentina. NORC adheres to strict protocols to gather informed consent, protect anonymity, and ensure ethical data collection, particularly for vulnerable groups. To ensure compliance with our high ethical standards, all research involving vulnerable populations undergoes formal review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before commencing. Additionally, our research staff must complete a certified course in Protecting Human Research Participants, offered by either the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI).

Enumerators were extensively trained in research ethics, including confidentiality and informed consent procedures. Consent was verbally attained from all study participants but was not documented to further protect the confidentiality of respondents. NORC also provided enumerators with contextually grounded training on psychological first aid and trauma-informed research with vulnerable populations, adapted from materials by NORC's consultant Dr. Elizabeth Hopper, a clinical psychologist specializing in trauma among trafficking survivors.

NORC received approval from its internal IRB, which ensures all research is conducted in accordance with the U.S. Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. NORC's IRB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Human Research Protection and has a Federal-Wide Assurance (FWA 00000142). NORC's IRB requires that research protocols provide sufficient detail to ensure that (a) the selection of subjects is equitable, subjects' privacy is protected, and data confidentiality is maintained; (b) informed consent is written in a language that study participants can understand and is obtained without coercion or undue influence; and (c) appropriate safeguards to protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable subjects. In collaboration with the IIGG, NORC determined that no additional local ethics approval was required in Argentina for this study.

¹⁵ SurveyCTO.

Study Limitations

This study utilized an innovative sampling method that, despite its cutting-edge nature, has certain methodological limitations. These limitations are discussed below to inform the interpretation of the study's findings.

Forced Labour Estimates Apply Only to The Workers' Current Job

Individual workers were only asked about their current job, in which they may have been employed for a relatively short or long period of time. For example, if a respondent has held multiple positions within the garment sector and reports no experience of forced labour in their current job, this does not necessarily imply they have never encountered forced labour in previous roles.

Populations Excluded from the Reach of Our Data Collection Activities

Estimates of forced labour may not fully account for the most difficult-to-reach populations. These individuals often include: (1) workers whose jobs restrict their movement or communication, (2) workers who, due to distrust of authorities or fear of stigma, may not disclose experiences of deception or coercion, and (3) individuals who fear retaliation from traffickers or local recruiters. Additionally, those exploited under especially irregular conditions may be harder to reach and less likely to disclose their experiences.

Statistical Limitations

A primary limitation of the RDS approach is the potential bias related to implementation errors. As mentioned above, since initial seeds form the basis of the sampling design, achieving a moderately-sized and representative initial sample is essential for accurate population-level estimates. However, obtaining such a sample can be challenging, especially for marginalized or elusive populations within a short period of time. Moreover, even when an adequate initial seed sample is obtained, not all seed respondents may be capable of identifying additional respondents eligible for the survey. This variability in the ability to refer others can lead to differential effects on different respondent types, a phenomenon that is not well understood and can inhibit network expansion for certain subgroups, leading to reduced representation of one group in relation to others.

Furthermore, RDS studies rely on respondents' self-reported network sizes to adjust for the potential oversampling of highly connected individuals. Despite incorporating several questions to help respondents accurately determine their network size, difficulties in providing precise responses persist, introducing further bias into the estimates.

► Findings

Demographic Characteristics of the RDS Sample

Demographic Characteristics

The survey encompassed 1,159 unique respondents. As illustrated in Table 3, the gender distribution was predominantly female, with approximately two-thirds of the respondents being women (64.37%), in contrast to nearly one-third being men (35.20%). The age distribution showed that the largest group of respondents (32.90%) were aged between 31 and 40 years. This was followed by those aged 18 to 30 years (26.68%), 41 to 50 years (24.78%), 51 to 60 years (12.78%), and the smallest group, those 61 years or older, comprising only 2.85%.

► **Table 3: Respondent Demographics**

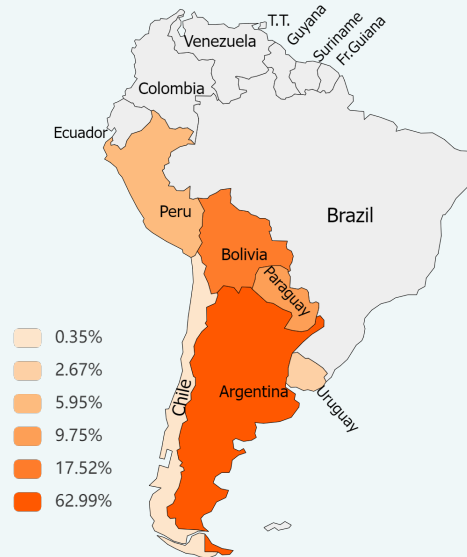
	Total Sample	
	Positive N*	Sample Statistic**
Sex		
Male	408	35.20%
Female	746	64.37%
Age		
18-30	309	26.68%
31-40	381	32.90%
41-50	287	24.78%
51-60	148	12.78%
61+	33	2.85%

Notes: * Number of respondents identified under this category. **Sample statistics reflect the percentage of those under this category based on the total sample size (N=1,159).

Regarding birth country, a majority of the respondents (62.99%) were born in Argentina. Significant proportions also from Bolivia (17.52%), Paraguay (9.75%), and Peru (5.95%). Fewer than 4% came from Uruguay, Chile, or other countries. This indicates a demographically diverse study population, reflecting migration trends between Argentina and its neighboring countries. Notably, the vast majority (96.20%) reported possessing an Argentine DNI (National Identification Document), suggesting a largely regularized status among the surveyed population, even with a considerable number of migrant workers.

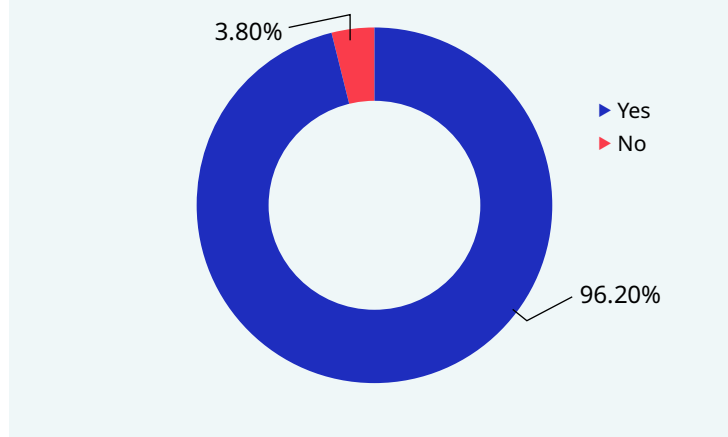
► **Table 4: Respondent country of origin**

Birth Country	Positive N*	Sample Statistics**
Argentina	730	62.99%
Bolivia	203	17.52%
Perú	69	5.95%
Uruguay	31	2.67%
Chile	4	0.35%
Paraguay	113	9.75%
Other***	9	0.78%



Notes: * Number of respondents identified under this category. **Sample statistics reflect the percentage of those under this category based on the total sample size (N=1,159); *** Categories reported by fewer than 2 percent of respondents were combined into "other".

► **Figure 1: Do you have an Argentine National ID?**



As seen in Table 5, the highest proportion of respondents (38.69%) reported secondary school as their highest level of education, followed closely by those with incomplete secondary education (31.95%) and those who completed primary (18.74%). Only 8.29% of respondents reported having incomplete higher education as their highest level of education, and 1.99% reported having either no education or incomplete primary education.

In terms of marital status, nearly equal proportions of respondents were either married or in a civil union (45.5%) or never married (41.61%). The remaining 12.89% were divorced, widowed, or separated.

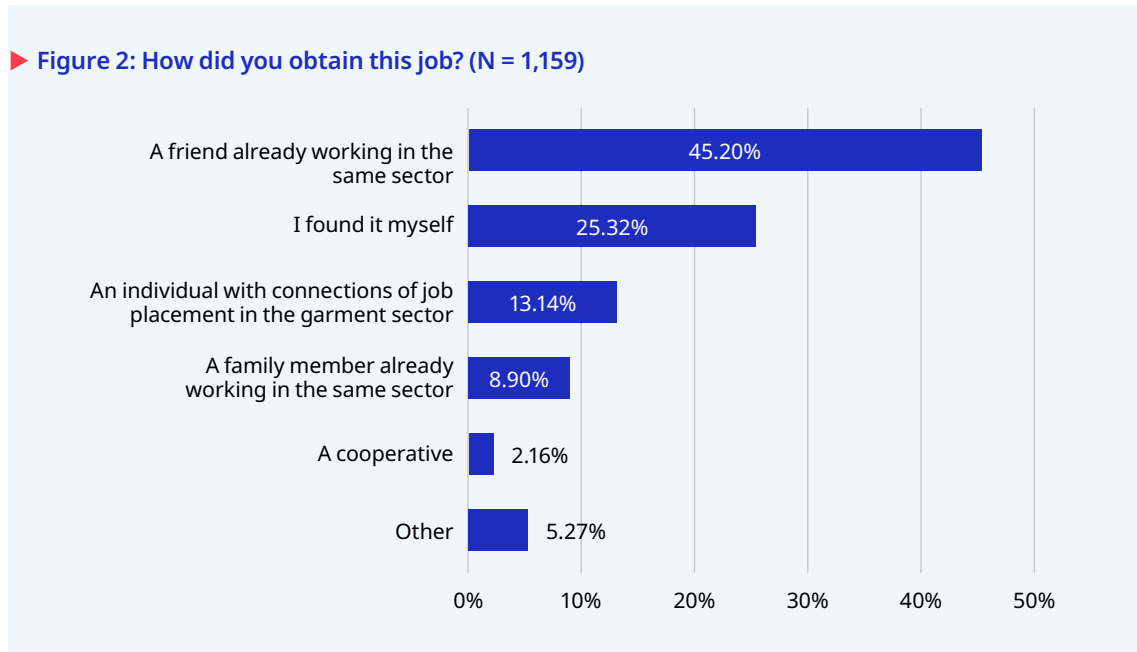
► **Table 5: Respondent highest level of education and marital status**

	Positive N*	Sample Statistic**
Education		
No education/Pre-Primary/ Incomplete Primary	23	1.99%
Completed Primary	217	18.74%
Incomplete secondary	370	31.95%
Completed secondary	448	38.69%
Incomplete higher education	96	8.29%
Other	4	0.35%
Marital status		
Never married	481	41.61%
Married/Civil Union	526	45.50%
Divorced/widowed/ separated	149	12.89%

Note: * Number of respondents identified under this category. **Sample statistics reflect the percentage of those under this category based on the total sample size (N=1,159).

Employment Characteristics

As shown in Figure 2, nearly half of respondents (45.20%) secured their job through a friend already working in the same sector. The next highest proportion of respondents (25.32%) reported finding their job on their own, while 13.14% of respondents reported obtaining their job from an individual with connections of job placement in the garment sector and 8.90% reported obtaining their job from a family member already working in the same sector.



The majority of respondents (53.07%) reported receiving payment based on the amount of time worked (hourly, daily, etc.), while a close 46.15% were paid per piece of work completed. Less than 3% received payment through fees for services, commissions, tips, or other methods.

► **Table 6: How is your wage payment calculated?*****

	Positive N*	Sample Statistic**
Amount of time worked (hourly, daily, etc.)	614	53.07%
By piece of work completed	534	46.15%
Commissions	17	1.47%
Tips	4	0.35%
Fees for services provided	28	2.42%
Other	26	2.25%

Note: * Number of respondents identified under this category. **Sample statistics reflect the percentage of those under this category based on the total sample size (N=1,159).***The responses are multi-select, so response options will not necessarily add up to 100 percent.

Workplace Formality

The classification of workers into formal and informal categories also offers valuable insights into the dynamics of the sector. This study used the employer’s contribution to pensions as a proxy to determine workplace formality, identifying 80.5% of respondents as informal workers and 19.5% as formal workers.

To validate the reliability of this proxy, Table 7 offers a comparative analysis of additional employment characteristics for these groups. Among formal workers, 71.6% received a fixed salary, compared to only 46.8% of informal workers. Furthermore, there were significant disparities in benefits: 88.3% of formal

workers had access to paid annual leave and 86.6% to paid sick leave, markedly higher than the 10.8% and 13.1%, respectively, among informal workers.

Additionally, most formal workers (79.6%) reported their production units were registered with the government, in stark contrast to just 11.9% of informal workers reporting the same. Informal workers also tended to work in smaller units, with 66.4% operating in units of 12 workers or fewer, compared to 47.7% of formal workers reporting the same. This distinction highlights notable differences in work environment and job security between the two groups.

► **Table 7: Employment characteristics by formality**

	“Formal” (n = 188)	“Informal” (n = 971)
“Salary” as remuneration	71.6%	46.8%
Paid annual leave	88.3%	10.8%
Paid sick leave	86.6%	13.1%
12 workers or fewer in the productive unit	47.7%	66.4%
Productive unit registered	79.6%	11.9%

The stark contrast in percentages (80.5% informal vs. 19.5% formal) highlights the high level of informality within Argentina’s garment industry. This disparity suggests significant vulnerabilities concerning job security, social protection, and access to formal labour rights for a substantial portion of workers in this sector. Recognizing the importance of this aspect within the study group, the subsequent findings section will not only present the overall prevalence rate but will also include detailed breakdowns based on formality.

Forced Labour Prevalence Among the Workshop/Factory Workers

Patterns of fair labour practices violations

Menace of any penalty

Table 8 presents estimates of the dimension of “menace of any penalty”, revealing that a fifth of respondents (20.62%) had experienced at least one form of such violation. The incidence of these experiences varied significantly between employment types: 10.38% among formally employed individuals versus 23.35% among their informally employed counterparts.

The most prevalent form of coercion reported was threats of dismissal used to compel workers to act against their will, affecting 10.36% of respondents. Other common tactics included threats to worsen working conditions (9.32%), deprivation of food or water (7.85%), and exclusion from future employment or overtime opportunities (5.19%).

Less common forms of coercion included isolation, confinement, or surveillance (5.15%), imposing excessive taxes or fees (4.36%), and compulsory overtime work as punishment (3.46%).

Further analysis by breaking down employment status reveals nuanced differences. Among formally employed respondents, while prevalence was lower, a significant 6.51% faced dismissal threats, and 5.70%

were threatened with worsened working conditions. Notably, 2.31% reported employer manipulations over hiring practices, which was slightly higher than the occurrence of this form among informal workers.

On the other hand, informal workers revealed higher rates of various forms of coercion. In addition to the higher overall prevalence, 11.38% endured dismissal threats, and 10.27% faced worsening working conditions. Alarming, 9.92% reported experiencing deprivation of basic needs like food or water as a coercive tactic. Furthermore, 6.43% reported experiencing, or being threatened with, isolation, confinement, or surveillance, highlighting their increased exposure to such tactics.

► **Table 8: Summary of “menace of any penalty” sub-indicators**

Question	Overall	Formally employed	Informally employed
Any of the below	20.62%	10.38%	23.35%
Your employer ever threatened to dismiss you [to make you do something you did not want to do]?	10.36%	6.51%	11.38%
Employer threatened to make your working conditions worse to make you do something you did not want to do.	9.32%	5.70%	10.27%
Has your employer ever deprived you of food or water [to make you do something you did not want to do]?	7.85%	0.00%	9.92%
Employer excluded you from future employment or overtime opportunities to make you do something you did not want to, or threatened to do so.	5.19%	0.58%	6.41%
Employer isolated, confined, or surveilled you or threatened to do so [to make you do something you did not want to do]?	5.15%	0.29%	6.43%
Employer imposed excessive taxes or fees on you to make you do something you did not want to or threatened to do so.	4.36%	0.28%	5.44%
Employer made you work extra hours as punishment.	3.46%	0.00%	4.37%
After your shift is over, employer does not allow you to move around freely in the community.	3.19%	0.82%	3.82%
Employer unfairly withheld due wages, including overtime wages, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do.	2.69%	0.42%	3.29%
Employer convinced other employers in your area to boycott hiring you or your family, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do.	2.31%	2.45%	2.27%

Involuntary work

The report investigates a broad spectrum of abuses classified as «involuntary work» within the garment industry. It reveals that 34.92% of workers have encountered at least one type of abuse. The incidence is lower among formally employed workers, with only 9.91% reporting such experiences, contrasting sharply with the 41.51% of informally employed workers who face higher abuse rates.

Regarding wages, approximately one out of five respondents (19.99%) report earnings below Argentina's legal minimum wage. Additionally, 15.79% of workers are subjected to hazardous conditions without their consent, and 13.33% find their actual job conditions – including duties, wages, hours, housing, or location – to be inferior to those promised by recruiters. Moreover, 12.09% of respondents receive no additional compensation for overtime work beyond what is required by law.

Less common within the category of “involuntary work”, 3.40% of workers must work for other employers who are not specified in their contracts, and 3.11% face severe financial, legal, or reputational consequences if they resign before their contract’s termination.

When analyzing the prevalence of “involuntary work” victimization based on formal employment status, workers under formal employment consistently reported either no instances or significantly lower rates compared to informally employed workers. Among formal workers, deceptive labour practices and non-consensual hazardous working conditions are reported by 5.97% and 5.63%, respectively. On the other hand, informally employed workers experience higher exploitation, with 24.07% earning below the minimum wage, 18.38% working in non-consensual hazardous conditions, 15.39% facing deceptive labour practices, and 15.23% not receiving overtime pay.

► **Table 9: Summary of “involuntary work” sub-indicators**

Question	Overall	Formally employed	Informally employed
Any of the below	34.92%	9.91%	41.51%
Paid no wages or wages below the minimum wage	19.99%	4.76%	24.07%
Work in hazardous conditions to which the worker has not consented, with or without compensation or protective equipment	15.79%	5.97%	18.38%
Some aspect of the job situations (duties, wages, hours, housing, or location) was worse than was promised by the recruiter.	13.33%	5.63%	15.39%
No extra pay for working overtime beyond the legal limit	12.09%	0.17%	15.23%
Work for other employers than agreed	3.40%	0.00%	4.30%
Significant consequences if one quits before his/her contract is finished.	3.11%	2.06%	3.38%

Summary of Forced Labour Violations

To summarize the two primary dimensions defined by the ICLS Guidelines: 20.62% of respondents reported experiencing at least one instance of coercion under “**menace of any penalty**” measures. Additionally, 34.92% encountered at least one of the violations classified as “**involuntary work**”. When these two categories are combined according to the ICLS Guideline’s criteria for forced labour, 18.51% of respondents qualify as potential victims of forced labour. This percentage breaks down into 8.10% of formally employed workers and 21.29% of informally employed workers. This data clearly shows that forced labour practices are significantly more common among workers in informal settings than in formal factories or workshops.

► **Table 10: Summary of key forced labour indicators***

Indicator	Population Estimation	Formal	Informal
Threat and menace of any penalty	20.62% [16.80%, 24.44%]	10.38%	23.35%
Involuntary work	34.92% [30.23%, 39.62%]	9.91%	41.51%
ILO Forced Labour Indicator Prevalence	18.51% [14.82%, 22.21%]	8.10%	21.29%

*95% Confidence Intervals reported in parentheses

Beyond categorization, additional analysis was conducted to determine the frequency of individuals experiencing multiple labour violations across each dimension. As shown in Table 11 and Table 12, among the respondents identified as *positive* under the “menace of any penalty” dimension (n = 267), 60.52% reported experiencing more than one sub-indicator within this category, with 31.00% enduring four or more coercive abuses. Similarly, among the respondents identified as *positive* under the “involuntary work” dimension, 56.01% reported marking more than one sub-indicator, with 11.79% facing four or more instances of involuntary work. Considering the small sample sizes when breaking down by formality, no disaggregated results were discussed in this case.

These findings reveal the prevalence of multiple labour violations within each dimension, indicating that individuals often endure several forms of abuse simultaneously rather than in isolated instances.

► **Table 11: Distribution of positive sub-indicators within positive “menace of any penalty” cases (n = 267)**

Number of positive sub-indicators	Percentage
1	39.48%
2 or more	60.52%
3 or more	47.83%
4 or more	31.00%

► **Table 12: Distribution of positive sub-indicators within positive “involuntary work” cases (n = 399)**

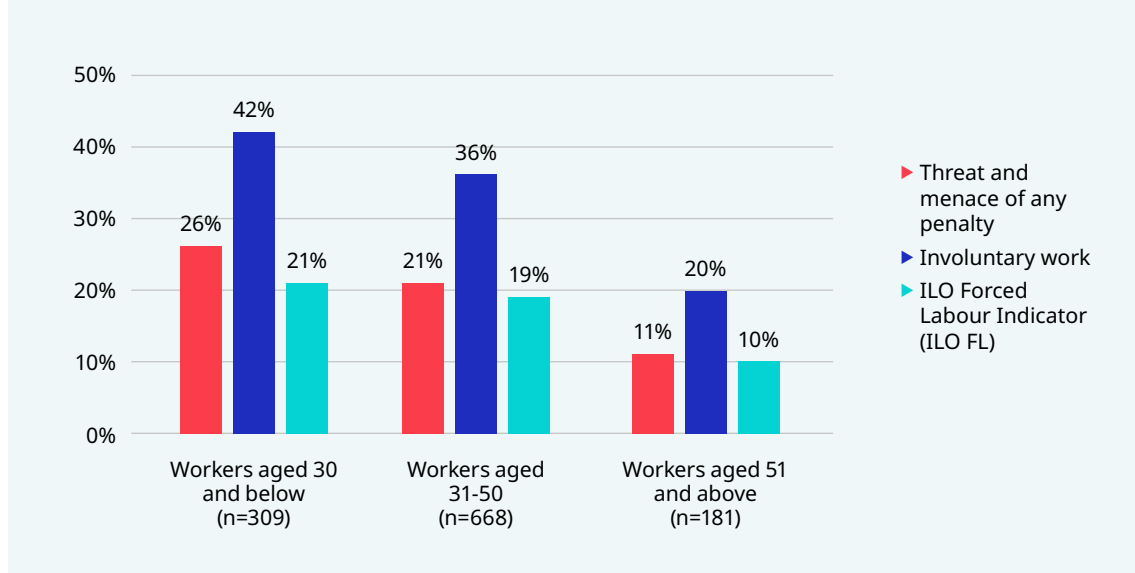
Number of positive sub-indicators	Percentage
1	43.99%
2 or more	56.01%
3 or more	30.23%
4 or more	11.79%

Disaggregated results by key demographics

In addition to examining employment status, variations were observed when comparing findings across different age groups and nationalities of workers.

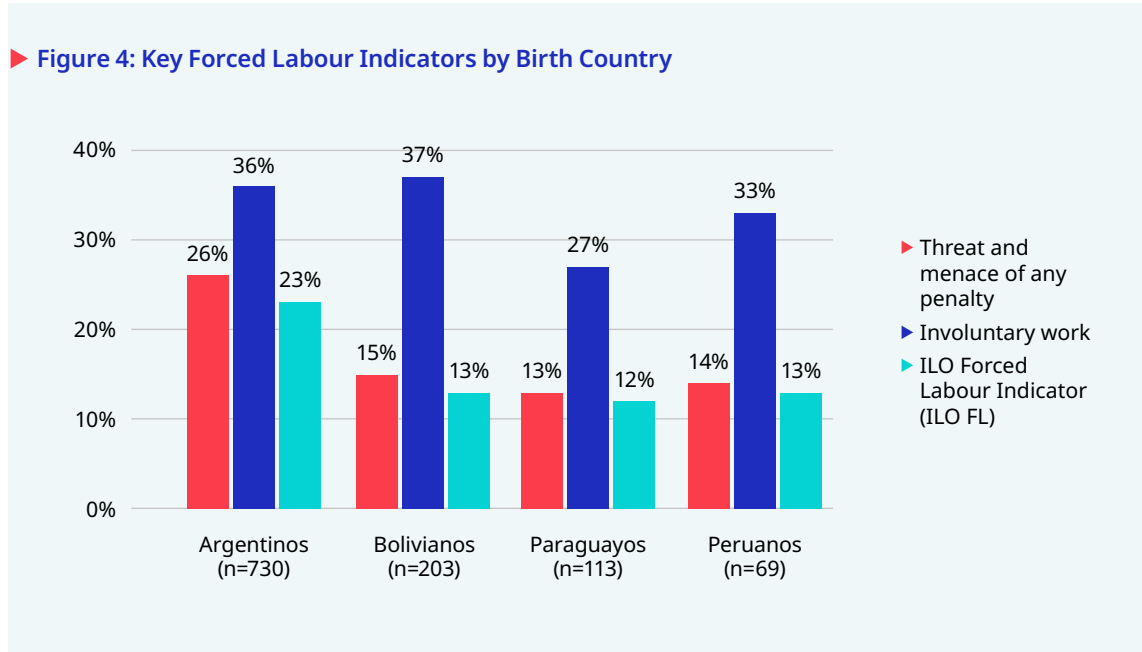
The percentage of garment workers classified as experiencing forced labour by the ICLS definition was higher among those aged 18 to 30 and between 31 and 50, at 21% and 19% respectively, while it was notably lower among those aged 51 and above, at 10%. Taking a closer look at both dimensions, a notable trend was identified, namely, individuals within the younger age bracket had the highest victimization rate (threat and menace of any penalty: 26%; involuntary work: 42%), while the older age bracket had the lowest rates (threat and menace of any penalty: 11%; involuntary work: 20%). This suggests that workers with more accumulated work experience may be less susceptible to experiencing forced labour.

► **Figure 3: Key forced labour indicators by age group**



The results also exhibit an intriguing variation by nationality, as is shown in Figure 4. In terms of the «menace of any penalty» indicator, Argentinian workers reported the highest degree of victimization at 26%, followed by Bolivian workers at 15%. Peruvian and Paraguayan workers display slightly lower percentages, with 14% and 13% respectively. In terms of «involuntary work,» Bolivian workers experienced the highest level of these abuses at 37%, followed closely by Argentinian workers at 36%. Peruvian and Paraguayan workers indicated lower rates, with 33% and 27%, respectively.

Under the ICLS definition of 'Forced Labour', the prevalence rates were similar across different nationalities. Argentinian workers maintain the highest victimization rate at 23%, followed by Bolivian workers at 13%. Peruvian and Paraguayan workers report lower rates, at 13% and 12%, respectively. The interpretation of the findings would benefit from further research to understand the different aspects of migrant workers' experiences compared to domestic workers in Argentina. While migration status itself does not directly increase the risk of labour exploitation, the estimates may be associated with dynamic factors such as the respondents' work category, community and social networks, and other aspects not covered in this study.



Demographic Characteristics of Home-based Study Sample

A total of 705 responses were collected for the home-based worker survey: 293 from Buenos Aires City and 412 from the Metropolitan Area. All summary statistics and findings presented in the following sections are weighted averages, using the sample weights described in Annex 3.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 13 shows a gender distribution skewed towards females, with women comprising two-thirds of the respondents (66.89%) compared to one-third of men (33.11%). The largest proportion of respondents (30.85%) were aged 31–40, followed by those aged 41–50 (27.48%), 18–30 (24.21%), 51–60 (14.72%), and only 2.75% were 61 years or older.

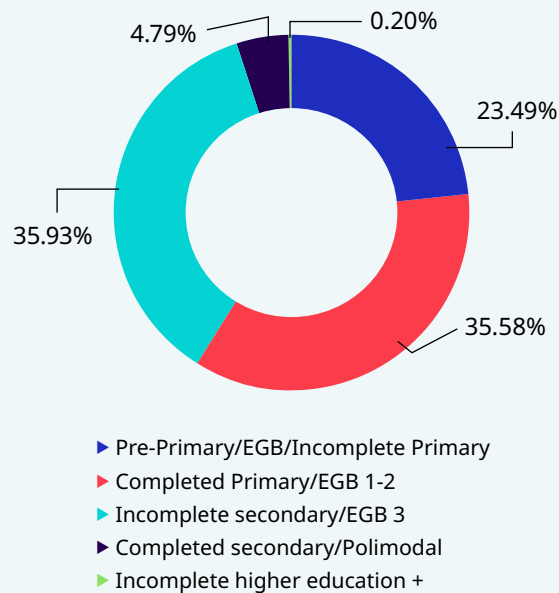
Regarding birthplace, the majority of respondents (62.29%) were born in Argentina, with notable percentages from Bolivia (23.30%), Peru (7.54%), and Uruguay (4.63%). Less than 3% were born in other countries. This distribution reflects that of workshop and factory workers, suggesting a study population closely aligned with migration patterns between Argentina and its neighboring countries. Additionally, 90.90% of respondents reported holding an Argentine DNI.

► **Table 13: Respondent demographics (proportions)**

Total Sample	
Sex	
Male	33.11%
Female	66.89%
Age	
18-30	24.21%
31-40	30.85%
41-50	27.48%
51-60	14.72%
61+	2.75%
Birth country	
Argentina	62.29%
Bolivia	23.30%
Peru	7.54%
Uruguay	4.63%
Other	2.24%
Argentina DNI	
Yes	90.90%
No	9.10%

In terms of education (Figure 5), nearly equal proportions of respondents reported completing secondary school as their highest level of education (35.93%) and having incomplete secondary education as their highest level (35.58%). A small proportion (23.49%) completed primary education and only 4.79% of respondents reported received some post-secondary training as their highest level of education, while 0.20% reported having no education/incomplete primary education.

► **Figure 5: Respondent highest level of education completed**



Employment Characteristics

As shown in Table 14, the majority of respondents (67.24%) were employed in small garment workshops, followed by 29.25% in large garment workshops, and 11.97% who worked for independent fashion designers or brands. Only 5.65% were employed by intermediaries or contractors, and less than 2% worked for online retail platforms.

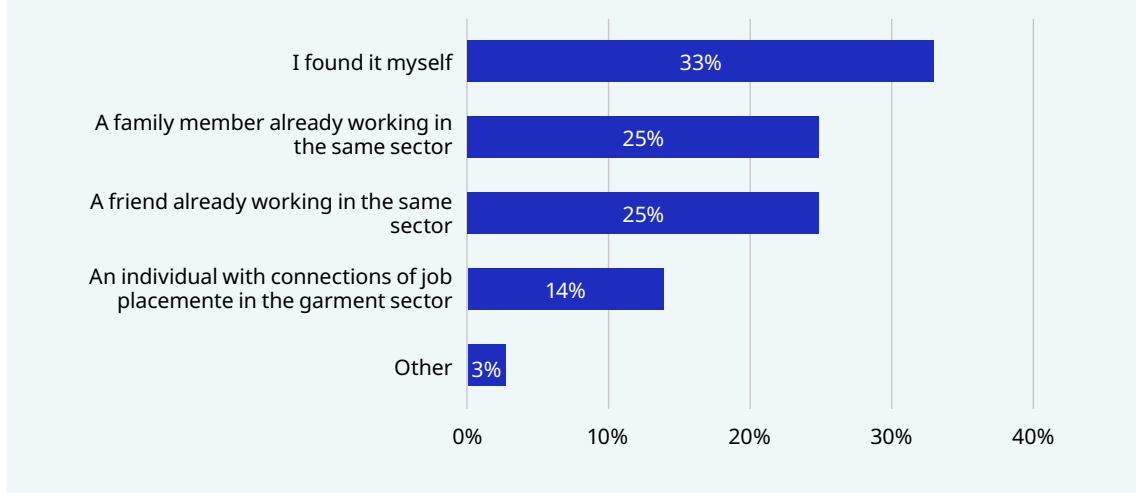
Approximately two-thirds of the home-based workers (65.45%) were regular full-time employees (working over 35 hours per week), while nearly one third (32.43%) reported working part-time (less than 35 hours a week), and just over 2% reported working seasonal shifts.

► **Table 14: Respondent employment characteristics**

Total Sample	
Employer type	
Large garment factory	29.25%
Small garment workshop	67.24%
Independent fashion designer or brand	11.97%
Online retail platform	1.99%
Intermediaries or contractors	5.65%
Type of work	
Regular Full-time (working over 35 hours per week)	65.45%
Regular Part-time (working less than 35 hours per week)	32.43%
Seasonal (work available only during specific seasons or periods)	2.12%

Respondents secured home-based work in the garment industry through different channels, mainly either on their own or with assistance from their socio-familial networks. Approximately one-third of respondents (32.68%) obtained their job independently. Nearly equal proportions of respondents found their job through family members (25.50%) or friends (24.88%) already working in the same sector. Just under 15% of respondents (13.93%) reported obtaining their job through other individuals with job connections in the sector. An additional 3% of respondents reported obtaining their jobs through other channels, including cooperatives, government-registered recruitment agencies, private recruitment agencies, or other recruitment services.

► **Figure 6: How did you obtain your job?**



► **Table 15: How was your payment calculated?**

	Total Sample
How was your payment calculated?	
Amount of time worked (hourly, daily, etc.)	39.43%
By workpiece completed	73.24%
Commissions	5.08%
Tips	1.23%
Fees for services provided	2.68%
Other	0.12%

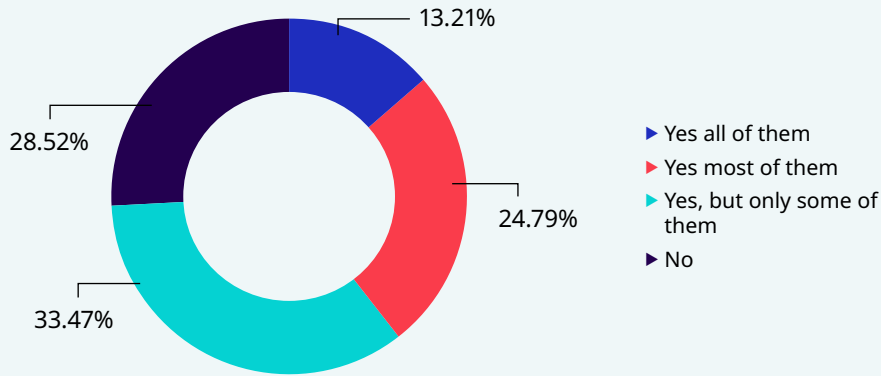
Note: This is a multiple-choice answer question therefore sum of all answers will not add up to 100 %.

Respondents were nearly evenly divided, with 50.70% working for more than one client and 49.30% working for just one. A significant number reported obtaining customers, clients, or buyers through intermediaries, such as other companies or individuals. Specifically, 13.21% said all their work came through others, 24.79% received most of their work this way, and 33.47% obtained some of their work through others. In contrast, 28.52% of respondents found clients and buyers independently.

► **Table 16: In the last 12 months, did most of your income from the home-based work come from multiple clients or one client?**

Fuente de ingresos	Porcentaje
Principalmente de un cliente	49.30%
De dos o más clientes	50.70%

► Figure 7: Do you get your customers, clients, or buyers through someone else?



Forced Labour Prevalence Among Home-Based Workers

Patterns of fair labour practice violations

Menace of any penalty

Table 17 displays the victimization rates for different abusive labour practices classified under the ‘threat and menace of any penalty’ category among home-based workers. Overall, 17.79% of respondents reported experiencing at least one of the listed abuses in their home-based work environments.

The most common forms of abuse reported were employers using threats of dismissal (8.40%) and threats of exclusion from future employment or overtime opportunities (8.25%) as methods of coercion.

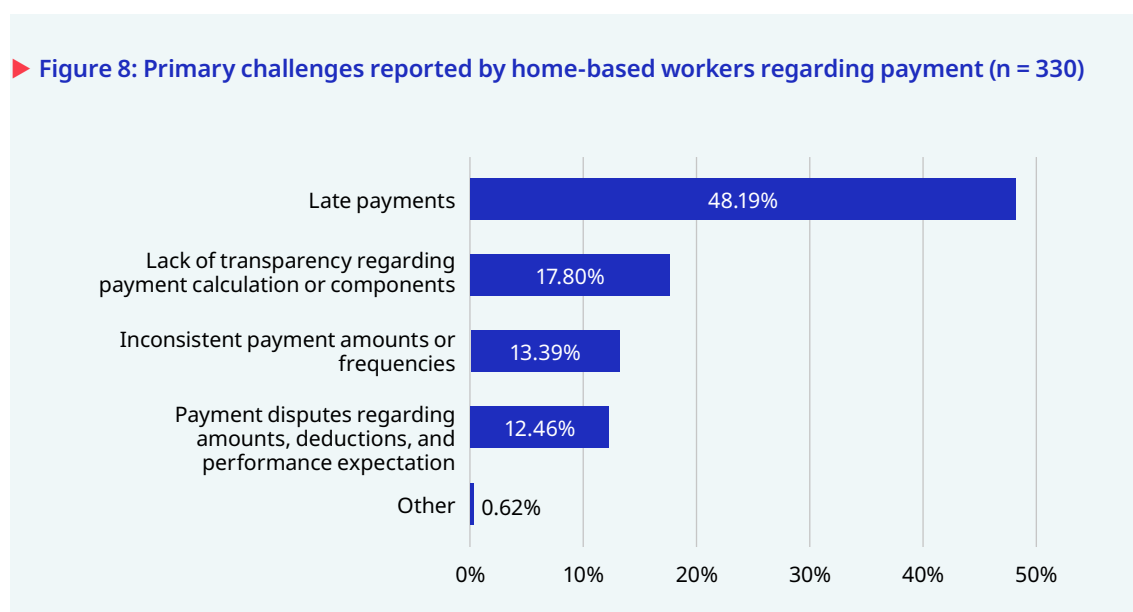
Next, the most common coercion techniques involved employers withholding or threatening to withhold rightful wages, including overtime pay (3.91%), and delaying payments to extend workers’ tenure beyond agreed terms (3.11%). Other coercion tactics reported at similar rates (2.81%) included threats to worsen working conditions for respondents living in employer-provided housing and attempts to persuade (or threaten to persuade) other employers in the area to boycott hiring them or their family members.

► Table 17: Summary of “menace of any penalty” sub-indicators

Question	Population Estimation
Any of the below	17.79%
Employer threatened to dismiss you to make you do something you did not want to do.	8.40%
Employer excluded you from future employment or overtime opportunities to make you do something you did not want to or threatened to do so.	8.25%
Employer unfairly withheld due wages, including overtime wages, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do.	3.94%
You were not paid on time as your employer wants to keep you working longer than agreed.	3.11%

Question	Population Estimation
(For respondents living in employer-provided housing) Employers threatened to make your working conditions worse to make you do something you did not want to do.	2.81%
Employer convinced other employers in your area to boycott hiring you or your family, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do.	2.81%
Employer imposed excessive taxes or fees on you to make you do something you did not want to or threatened to do so.	2.61%

In addition to the frequently mentioned threats of dismissal and exclusion from employment opportunities, respondents commonly identified payment issues as a significant challenge. Notably, 54% of respondents reported facing payment difficulties. Within this group, 48.2% experienced payment delays, 17.8% encountered issues with transparency regarding payment calculations or components, 13.39% faced inconsistencies in payment amounts or frequencies, and 12.46% dealt with disputes over payment amounts, deductions, and performance expectations.



Involuntary work

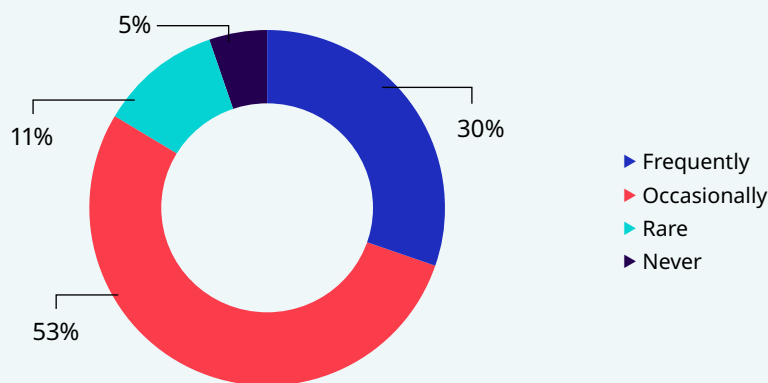
As shown in Table 18, involuntary labour abuses among home-based workers were quite pervasive, with 45.95% of respondents reporting experiences in this category. Specifically, more than one in four home-based workers (26.81%) reported earning wages below Argentina's legally mandated minimum wage. The next most reported issue was deceptive recruitment tactics, with 15.58% of respondents claiming to have been misled about some aspects of the job, such as the nature of the work, wages, and hours, which turned out to be worse than initially promised. Additionally, 9.75% of home-based workers, which corresponds to 24.71% of those paid based on the amount of time worked, stated that they received no extra pay for overtime. Furthermore, 7.04% of respondents reported facing significant financial, legal, and reputational costs if they quit before their contract was finished.

► **Table 18: Summary of “involuntary work” sub-indicators**

Question	Population Estimation
Any of the below	45.94%
Work with very low or no wages	26.81%
Some aspect of the job situations (duties, wages, hours, length) was worse than was promised by the recruiter.	15.58%
No extra pay for working overtime (for hourly based workers).	9.75%
Significant consequences if one quits before his/her contract is finished.	7.04%

While not all home-based workers are compensated based on the amount of time worked (hourly, daily, or monthly), the following question was asked to all respondents to gain additional insights into the overtime situation among this group: “Do you often work overtime (i.e. exceeding the working hours initially agreed upon)?” As shown in Figure 9, a majority of workers reported that they frequently or occasionally work beyond the expected hours (30% and 53%, respectively). These respondents were asked a follow-up question regarding the reasons contributing to their need or decision to work overtime. The most cited factors were a high workload (51.20%) and tight deadlines (40.18%). Additionally, 17.98% of these workers mentioned working overtime as a personal choice, while 10.58% chose to do so for additional financial incentives¹⁶.

► **Figure 9: Do you often work overtime (i.e. exceeding the working hours initially agreed upon?) (n = 705)**



Among respondents who reported frequent or occasional overtime work, when asked whether they were paid for their overtime hours, only 35.85% responded affirmatively. The primary reasons for not being paid included a lack of explicit agreements with employers or contracts regarding compensation for additional hours (34.03%), employers or contractors refusing to pay for overtime hours (22.24%), and difficulty in tracking overtime hours (13.60%). Less common reasons included respondents being paid by piece regardless of time commitment (5.05%) and employers or contractors misrepresenting compensation terms for overtime work (1.77%).

¹⁶ Since the choices are for multiple selections, the percentages may not add up to 100%.

Summary of forced labour violations

Using the two primary indicators of forced labour as defined by the ICLS guidelines, 14.17% of home-based workers in the garment industry in Argentina would qualify for the forced labour statistical definition under the ICLS guideline. With regards to measures of **menace of any penalty**, an estimated 17.79% of the home-based workers reported having experienced at least one form of the types of abuse listed. For measures of **involuntary work**, the estimated rate of victimization among home-based workers was 45.94%.

► **Table 19: Summary of key forced labour indicators**

Indicator	Population Estimation	95% Confidence Intervals	
		Lower	Upper
Threat and menace of any penalty	17.79%	13.97%	21.61%
Involuntary work	45.94%	40.75%	51.12%
ILO Forced Labour Indicator Prevalence	14.17%	10.54%	17.80%

Additional Exploratory Analysis

To gain better insights into workers' exposure to various exploitative labour practices and their effect on the overall estimates of forced labour prevalence, the research team undertook some additional exploratory analyses. The following section presents this analysis:

Stability of forced labour prevalence estimates

According to the ICLS guidelines, the construction of the forced labour indicator relies on multiple sub-indicators categorized under the "menace of any penalty" and "involuntary work" dimensions. It is important to assess whether the forced labour indicator, as operationalized by the research team using these guidelines, was sensitive to any specific sub-indicator(s). Table 22 (*see Annex 1*) presents changes in the prevalence estimates when a given sub-indicator is removed from the construction of the forced labour indicator. If the removal of a given sub-indicator leads to a significant reduction in the prevalence estimate, it indicates that the forced labour indicator is highly sensitive to that sub-indicator. The results show that the constructed measure of the forced labour indicator was not sensitive to any specific sub-indicator, as the removal of any sub-indicator resulted in a maximum reduction in the prevalence rate of only 1.5 percentage points. This finding reveals that forced labour prevalence estimates were relatively stable.

The finding clearly indicates that most victims faced multiple violations of fair labour practices. Therefore, to achieve a significant reduction in the forced labour prevalence rate, it is crucial to develop a strategy that simultaneously targets the reduction of different types of violations.

Variation in Specification

RDS Survey Result: Role of "low or no wage" indicator

For this study, garment workers were not directly asked about their specific salary rates in the survey due to findings from the cognitive review. Instead, information on the minimum wage was presented, and respondents were asked to assess their earnings in comparison and report on their own. Cases where respondents indicated their earnings fell short of the mandated minimum wage were classified as a violation under this sub-indicator. However, because this method of constructing the violation

is self-reported and subjective, it is prone to reporting bias. Therefore, additional analyses were conducted to assess the sensitivity of the “work with very low or no wages” sub-indicator in determining the prevalence of forced labour across various specifications, that is, inclusion and exclusion of this component. As shown in Table 20, removing the sub-indicator led to a 6.84% decrease in the incidence of violations related to involuntary work. However, the overall prevalence of forced labour decreased only marginally by 1.5%.

This analysis suggests that the «work with very low or no wages» indicator does not solely account for instances of forced labour and may be associated with other types of labour violations. The stability of the estimates, when accounting for variations in indicator inclusion, reenforces the credibility of the findings.

► Table 20: Sensitivity of forced labour indicator: The role of “work with very low or no wages”

	(1) Results	(2) Results If excluding “work with very low or no wages”
ILO Forced Labour Indicators (Population Estimation, % positive)		
Threat and menace of any penalty	20.62%	20.62%
Involuntary work	34.92%	28.08% (↓ 6.84%)
ILO Forced Labour Indicator Prevalence	18.51%	17.03% (↓ 1.48%)

Home-based worker survey result: Role of “low or no wage” indicator and implication of inclusion of “hazardous work conditions not consented”

Low or no wage

In the home-based worker survey, the research team also refrained from directly asking respondents about their specific salary rates. Following the sensitivity analysis conducted with factory/workshop workers, a table demonstrating the sensitivity of the forced labour prevalence to the inclusion and exclusion of the same indicator, “low or no wage”, among home-based workers is presented. The findings in Table 21 indicate that removing the sub-indicator “work with very low or no wages” resulted in an 18.12% reduction in violations related to involuntariness, while the overall prevalence of forced labour decreased only marginally, by 2.29%.

Hazardous working conditions without consent

Although not directly factored into the construction of the forced labour indicator for the home-based worker study as presented in previous sections, unconsented hazardous conditions are generally considered an important aspect of involuntary work.

Identifying and measuring hazardous work conditions not consented to by home-based workers can be challenging for several reasons. Unlike traditional workplaces, where health and safety standards are more rigorously enforced, home-based work environments are more informal and may not be subject to the same level of scrutiny. This challenge is further compounded by the fact that most home-based workplaces are private and not accessible to external inspectors. Additionally, hazardous work conditions in the home environment may be less visible or recognizable compared to traditional workplaces. Home-based workers may receive fewer educational campaigns on safety and lack awareness of potential dangers, so they may not always perceive certain hazards as significant risks. Furthermore, since many of these workers are not affiliated with a single employer or contractor, there may be a lack of accountability

regarding workplace safety. Additionally, as home-based workplaces are sometimes inherently linked to their living space, and many workers rely on their work for their livelihood, speaking out about unsafe conditions may risk losing their source of income due to clients' regulatory or safety concerns.

Acknowledging these challenges, the research still evaluated this aspect using the instrument. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the common hazards faced by workers performing home-based work and their awareness of the risks involved. Although these counts are not directly included in the calculations for forced labour prevalence measurement, these insights may provide valuable input for future discussions on labour protection for home-based workers.

A sensitivity test was conducted to assess how including or excluding the indicator related to unconsented hazardous working conditions would affect the overall prevalence estimates of forced labour. The last column in Table 21 illustrates the changes in exposure to "involuntary work" and "overall forced labour prevalence" when unconsented hazardous work exposure was incorporated into the construction of the indicator. The results indicate a 9.2% increase in exposure to involuntary work and a negligible (<0.5%) rise in the overall forced labour prevalence when this component was included.

This analysis suggests that, following a conservative approach, incorporating violations of hazardous working conditions into the forced labour indicator construction for home-based workers—similar to the approach used in the factory/workshop worker study—would result in only minimal changes to the overall prevalence of forced labour. This indicates that the decision not to include this indicator, due to methodological challenges related to operationalizing the definition of hazardous work in a home-based setting, had a negligible impact.

► **Table 21: Sensitivity of forced labour indicator for home-based workers: Role of "work with very low or no wages" and "hazardous working conditions without consent"**

	(1) Results	(2) Results - excluding "work with very low or no wages"	(3) Results - including "work in haz- ardous work conditions not consented" indicator
ILO Forced Labour Indicators (Population Estimation, % positive)			
Menace of Penalty	17.79%	17.79%	17.79%
Involuntariness	45.94%	27.82% (↓ 18.12%)	55.14% (↑ 9.2%)
ILO Forced Labour Indicator Prevalence	14.17%	11.88% (↓ 2.29%)	14.59% (↑ 0.42%)

► Conclusions and recommendations

One key objective of this study was to operationalize the ICLS Guidelines for measuring forced labour in the garment industry by developing and administering a forced labour prevalence survey. To achieve this, a collaborative approach was employed to contextualize the definition of indicators proposed by the ICLS Guidelines. The research team constructed indicators by drawing on experiences and lessons from previous studies that used similar sets of indicators. Additionally, the team carried out a consultative process to develop a framework for identifying survey questions that capture the different sets of indicators as proposed in the ICLS guidelines. Through this consultative process, the research team tailored questions to the Argentine regulatory framework and adapted them to the local context.

The research team then developed appropriate sampling methodologies for conducting the prevalence surveys and presented the survey to garment sector workers. These included factory or workshop workers, as well as those home-based workers working within the garment supply chain.

The research team analysed the survey data to identify violations of various forms of fair labour practices and descriptive information about other aspects of the participants' current work experience in the industry. The study generated an estimate of the prevalence of forced labour in the garment sector of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area.

The prevalence estimates suggest that violations of fair labour practices exist among workers in factory or workshop premises, with a particularly high degree of violations observed among those working in the informal garment sector. Moreover, the sensitivity analysis indicated that the ICLS-based prevalence estimates generated by this study were relatively stable and not sensitive to any specific sub-indicator. The results also highlight that labour practice violations are a complex, intertwined issue, as most victims faced multiple types of labour practice violations.

The solution to such a problem is equally complex and challenging. The results allow for the definition of a specific profile of right holders who can be prioritized in terms of prevention and protection. For example, this might include workers aged 30 and below, Bolivians and Argentinians, women in terms of coercive practices, and men with regards to involuntary work. Similarly, this profile can inform labour inspections, in conjunction with the characteristics of identified productive units.

The disaggregation of menace of any penalty and involuntary work also sheds some light on possible policy responses. Due diligence tools can be tailor-made to address the common threats identified from an employer's perspective, allowing for proper management of risks. On the other hand, workers can be trained on how to identify these threats and how to approach unions to make complaints and ensure proper support. Findings from other countries indicate that effective union representation can help protect workers from various exploitative and unfair labour practices,¹⁷ and therefore, strengthening union presence can also be helpful in mitigating risks of violations of fair labour practices.

In terms of "involuntary work", it became clear that focusing on a few sub-indicators can generate a positive impact in terms of reducing forced labour prevalence. Monitoring wages should be a priority as it is clearly correlated with labour exploitation, along with no extra pay for working overtime beyond the legal limit. The existence of hazardous working conditions without consent is another significant issue that was identified. Wages and hazardous working conditions are also matters of interest for the

¹⁷ ILO, *Forced Labour in the Garment Sector: Results from Workshop and Factory-Based Workers in Madagascar* (Geneva: ILO, 2024).

productive sector as they impact any efforts to develop and maintain a dedicated and skilled workforce and enhance productivity.

More importantly, the study strongly suggests that a sustainable and effective solution towards the elimination of forced labour in Argentina is directly linked to the formalization of the workforce, especially at the SME level, with clear impacts on social protection and access to human and labour rights.

Additionally, the results indicate that home-based workers also face restrictive labour practices imposed by specific actors in the garment value chain. However, the prevalence rate was found to be lower among home-based workers compared to factory/workshop-based workers. This indicates that home-based workers might be more protected; therefore, a policy for this modality of work, historically recognized in Argentine legislation, could have positive impacts on reducing forced labour.

It is also important to discuss how payments are calculated for home-based workers as it appears that some modalities, such as payment by piece of work completed, are more likely to generate a higher dependency on contractors. It is equally important to create mechanisms to reduce threats related to dismissal and exclusion from future employment, which appear to be practiced as a form of coercion.

Finally, the study identified that potential victims of forced labour in the garment sector faced multiple types of labour practice violations, highlighting the importance of strengthening monitoring activities of fair labour standards in the garment sector of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan area.

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► Annexes

Annex 1: Additional Analysis

► **Table 22: Correlation between violation related to a given sub-indicator and overall exposure to Forced Labour**

Threat and menace of any penalty

Question	Population estimates (% of respondents who faced violation)	Reduction in Forced labour prevalence removing this specific sub-indicator component
Employer threatened to dismiss you to make you do something you did not want to do	10.36%	1.68%
Employer threatened to make your working conditions worse to make you do something you did not want to do.	9.32%	1.54%
Employer deprived you of food or water to make you do something you did not want to do	7.85%	1.15%
Employer excluded you from future employment or overtime opportunities to make you do something you did not want to or threatened to do so.	5.19%	0.8%
Employer isolated, confined, or surveilled you or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do	5.15%	0.06%
Employer imposed excessive taxes or fees on you to make you do something you did not want to or threatened to do so.	4.36%	0.03%

Involuntary work

Question	Population estimates (% of respondents who faced violation)	Reduction in Forced labour prevalence removing this specific sub-indicator component
Paid no wages or wages below the minimum wage	19.99%	1.48%
Work in hazardous conditions to which the worker has not consented, with or without compensation or protective equipment	15.79%	1.43%

Question	Population estimates (% of respondents who faced violation)	Reduction in Forced labour prevalence removing this specific sub-indicator compo- nent
Some aspects of the job (duties, wages, hours, housing, or location) were worse than was promised by the recruiter	13.33%	0.87%
No extra pay for working overtime beyond the legal limit	12.09%	0.35%
Significant consequences if one quits before his/her contract is finished	3.40%	0.02%

Annex 2: Forced Labour Indicator Crosswalk

The survey instrument used an indicator-based approach to develop its questionnaire design. The following Indicator Map for Forced Labour of Adults describes the crosswalk (“counting rule”) between the ILO Forced labour indicators (20th International Conference of Labour Statistics, 2018) and the Forced Labour Assessment Survey (Apparel Workers’ Questionnaire) used in the ILO Apparel Worker Forced Labour Situation Analysis in Argentina.

ICLS Guideline Description	ILO FL Conditions **		Mapped Survey Question(s)	
	Threat and menace of penalty	Involuntariness	Question	Response criteria
Abuse of workers’ vulnerability through the denial of rights or privileges	X		Has your employer ever deprived you of food or water to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_nofood=1 (Yes)
	X		(For respondents living in employer-provided housing) Has your employer ever deprived you of sleep to make you do something you did not want to do?	(lc_rent_who == 1 OR lc_rent_who == 2 OR lc_norent_who == 1 OR lc_norent_who == 2) (Respondents living in employer-provided housing) AND mp_coercion_nosleep=1 (Yes)
	X		Has your employer ever isolated, confined, or surveilled you, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_isolation=1 (Yes)
	X		Were you forced to work in the factory for little or no pay to repay a loan to your employer/ recruiter/ friend/family member who helped you get this job?	screen_loan=1
Threats of dismissal or deportation	X		Has your employer ever denounced you to the authorities to make you do something, or threatened to do so?	mp_coercion_authorities=1 (Yes)
	X		Has your employer ever threatened to dismiss you to make you do something?	mp_coercion_dismiss=1(Yes)

ICLS Guideline Description	ILO FL Conditions **		Mapped Survey Question(s)	
	Threat and menace of penalty	Involuntariness	Question	Response criteria
Restrictions on workers' movement	X		After your shift is over, does your employer allow you to move around freely in the community (for example, can you go to the market, visit friends and family, visit the pharmacy, etc.)?	ile_freedom=0 (No) OR 2 (Yes, but need a pass or special permission)
	X		(If respondent lives in employer-provided housing) Would your employer let you live somewhere else and keep your current job if you decided you did not want to live in employer-provided housing?	lc_freedom=0 (No); AND lc_freedom_why=1 (Employer, manager, or recruiter would not let me/ they require that I live here)
Threats or violence against workers or workers' families and relatives, or close associates	X		Has your employer ever threatened or enacted physical or sexual violence on you to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_threats=1 (Yes); OR mp_coercion_violence=1 (Yes)
	X		Has your employer ever threatened or harmed your family to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_family=1 (Yes)
	X		Has your employer ever convinced other employers in your area to boycott hiring you or your family, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_boycott=1 (Yes)
	X		Has your employer ever threatened to make your working conditions worse to make you do something to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_conditions=1 (Yes)
	X		Has your employer ever excluded you from future employment or overtime opportunities to make you do something, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_exclusion=1 (Yes)
	X		Has your employer ever imposed excessive taxes or fees on you to make you do something, or threatened to do so?	mp_coercion_fee=1 (Yes)

ICLS Guideline Description	ILO FL Conditions **		Mapped Survey Question(s)	
	Threat and menace of penalty	Involuntariness	Question	Response criteria
	X		Has your employer ever made you work extra hours as punishment?	wld_ot>56 AND mp_coercion_extrawork=1 (Yes)
Withholding of valuable documents (such as identity documents or residence permits)	X		Did your employer or recruiter hold any of your identification documents, such as your passport or ID card?	ile_docs =1 (Yes); AND ile_docs_access=0 (No) or ile_docs_access=2 (With difficulty)
	X		Could you get those identification documents back from your employer or recruiter at any time you wanted?	mp_coercion_papers=1 (Yes)
Withholding of wages or other promised benefits	X		Not paid on time as employer wants to keep me working here longer than agreed	wld_fixed_dates = 0 AND wld_fixed_dates_why = 2
	X		Has your employer ever unfairly withheld due wages, including overtime wages, or threatened to do so [to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_withhold=1
	X		Your employer/recruiter/person who helped you get this job retained some or all of the money you earned, and you felt compelled to continue in the job.	screen_withhold=1 AND screen_abilitytoleave = 1
Situations in which the worker must perform a job of different nature from that specified during recruitment without a person's consent		X	Before you started your job, did your recruiter discuss [job factor X] with you? Compared to what was discussed, how was [job factor X] when you started?	ur_real_nature=4 (Worse); OR ur_real_wages=4 (Lower); OR ur_real_hours=3 (Longer); OR ur_real_housing = 4 (Worse); OR ur_real_location=3 (Different than promised, without my permission)
Work for other employers than agreed		X	Before you started your job, did your recruiter discuss [job factor X] with you? Compared to what was discussed, how was [job factor X] when you started?	ur_rec_emp =2 (Who employer would be promised/agreed verbally and/or written) AND ur_real_emp = 2 (Other employers than agreed)

ICLS Guideline Description	ILO FL Conditions **		Mapped Survey Question(s)	
	Threat and menace of penalty	Involuntariness	Question	Response criteria
Work for longer period of time than agreed		X	Before you started your job, did your recruiter discuss [job factor X] with you? Compared to what was discussed, how was [job factor X] when you started?	ur_rec_length= 2 (Length of your employment promised/ agreed verbally and/or written) AND ur_real_length = 2 (Yes)
Unfree recruitment at birth or through transaction such as slavery or bonded labour		X	Who decided you should take your current job? What would have happened if you had refused to take the job?	ur_work_who= any response option other than Myself (=1); AND ur_refusal=0 (No); AND ur_refusal_coercion=3, 4, 5, 6
Debt bondage or manipulation of debt	X		Has your employer ever manipulated the amount of debt you owed, or threatened to do so to make you do something you did not want to do?	mp_coercion_debt=1 (Yes)
Abusive requirements for overtime or on-call Work that were not previously agreed with the employer		X	Abusive requirements for overtime or on-call work that were not previously agreed with the employer	ur_rec_ot = 2 (Overtime requirements promised/agreed verbally and/or verbally) AND ur_real_ot = 3 (Higher) AND wld_ot >56
		X	Is there a relationship between your overtime work and your job-related debt/paying your housing expenses? Is the requirement for overtime mandated by your employer to settle job-related debt/ employer-provided housing expenses, rather than it being a voluntary choice?	wld_ot_debt=2 (Yes, my employer requires me to work OT to pay off debt) OR ((lc_rent_who == 1 OR lc_rent_who == 2 OR lc_norent_who ==1 OR lc_norent_who ==2) (Respondents living in employer-provided housing) AND wld_ot_rent = 2 (Yes, employer requires me to work OT to pay rent))
		X	Were you paid for working overtime beyond the legal limit?	wld_ot>56 AND wld_ot_pay=0

ICLS Guideline Description	ILO FL Conditions **		Mapped Survey Question(s)	
	Threat and menace of penalty	Involuntariness	Question	Response criteria
In degrading living conditions imposed by the employer, recruiter, or other third-party		X	(For respondents living in employer-provided housing) Could you have lived somewhere else and still work at your job? How would you describe the quality of your current living conditions? How many people sleep in the room you sleep in? Do you feel safe in your housing? Do you have a safe space in your housing to store your belongings? ¹⁸	lc_freedom = 0 AND (lc_conditions=5 AND - lc_roommates>8; or - lc_safety=0; or - lc_belongings=0 OR lc_safety=0 AND lc_belongings=0)
Work in hazardous conditions to which the worker has not consented, with or without compensation or protective equipment		X	Work in hazardous conditions to which the worker has not consented, with or without compensation or protective equipment	(osh_hazardous_work=1 AND osh_haz_informed=0) OR (osh_haz_informed=1 AND osh_haz_mismatch=2/3)
Work with very low or no wages		X	Were you ever paid no wages or wages below the minimum wage?	wld_low_wage = 1
Work with no or limited freedom to terminate work contract.		X	Is it possible for you to leave your job before your contract is finished? What would happen if you left your job before your contract finished?	ile_leave = 0/1 Y ile_penalty < 8

¹⁸ Indicator construction of "Abusive Living Conditions" based on Verite framework (Verite 2012).

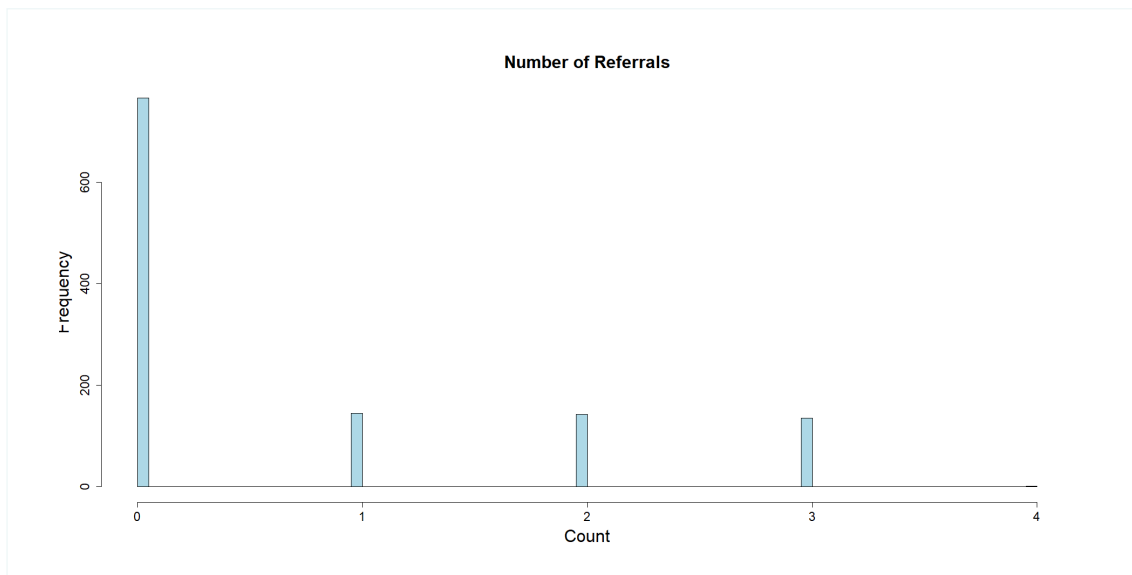
Annex 3: Weighting Methodology

RDS Study: Factory/workshop workers

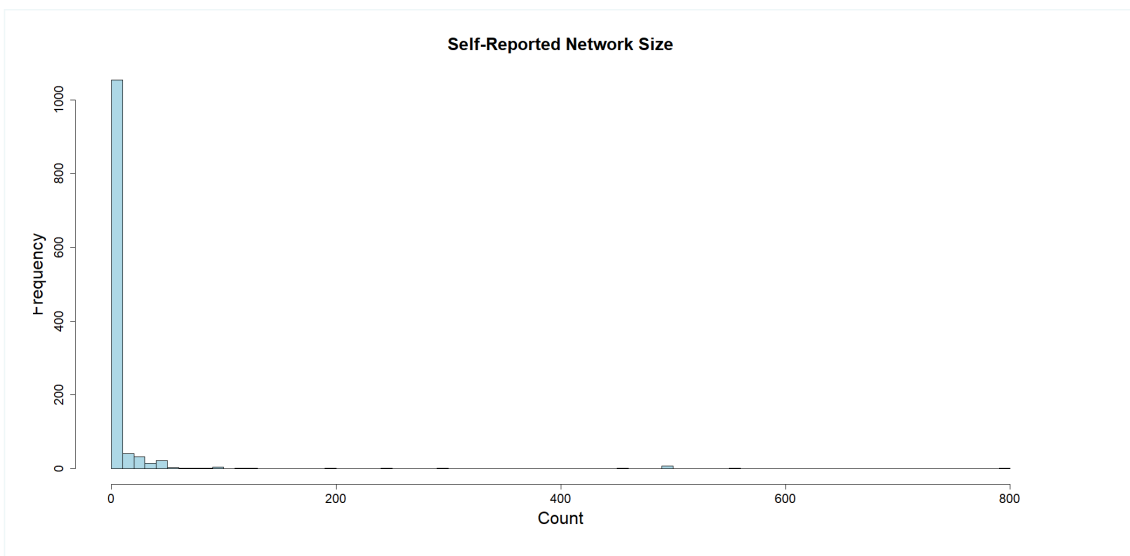
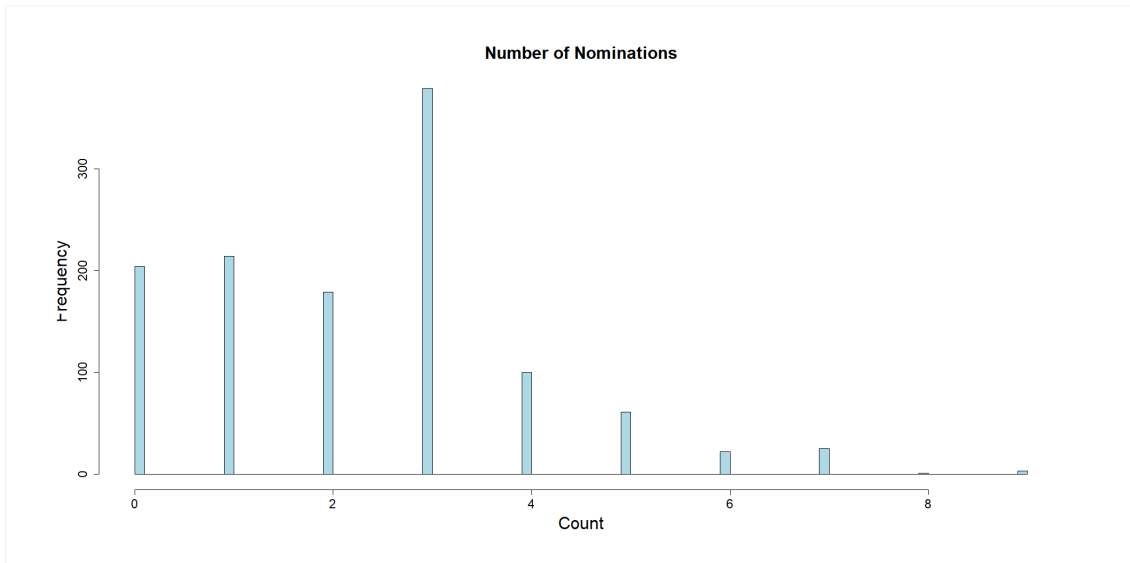
A total of 1,188 individuals were recruited through the Vincent Link Tracing Sample (VLTS)¹⁹ link-tracing sampling design, of which 351 were recruited as seeds.

The following illustrations present histograms showing the number of referrals, the number of nominations, and the self-reported network size after applying logical cleaning rules. A respondent’s number of referrals should be less than, or equal, to the number of nominations, which in turn should be less than, or equal, to the self-reported network size. Note that for proper RDS weighting techniques to be applied, each respondent must have a self-reported network size of at least one. It was found that 323 sampled respondents self-reported a network size of zero; these values were adjusted to one.

► Figure 10: Number of referrals, nominations, and self-reported network size

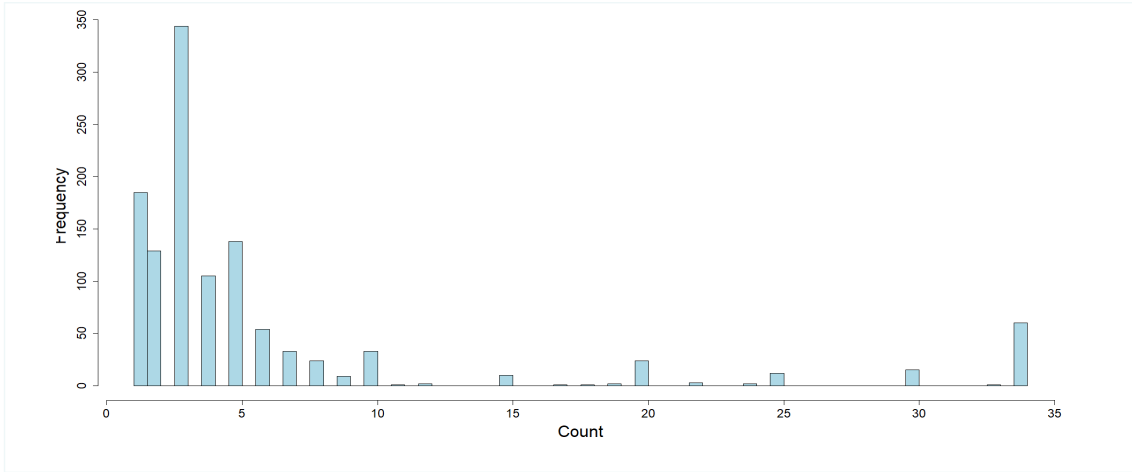


¹⁹ Vincent Link Tracing Sampling (VLTS) is a recently proposed sampling strategy by Canadian statistician Kyle Vincent, who also served as an expert consultant for this project. The design aims to overcome some of the major shortcomings of traditional RDS designs. VLTS follows the traditional RDS recruitment process while retaining the advantages of conventional sampling strategies by exploiting the ability to observe adjacent units of sampled individuals once a unit of high interest has been found. In this study, this refers to the overlaps of social networks within the final sample and nominations.



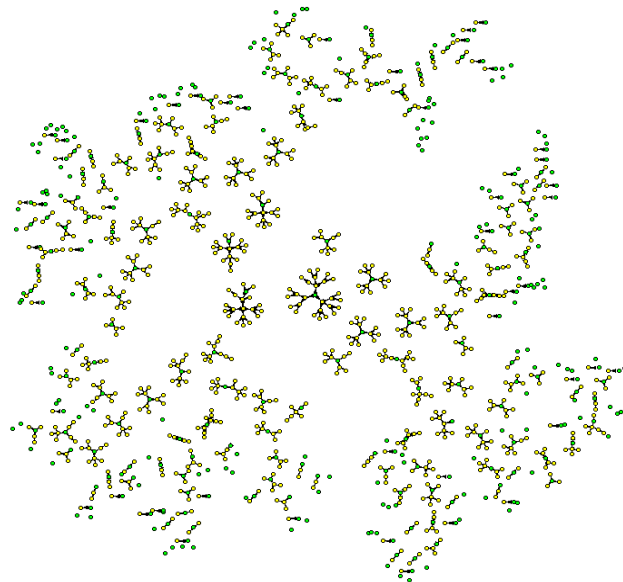
A winsorisation procedure is used to mitigate the influence of extreme counts on the RDS weighting procedure; extreme values are truncated at the 95th percentile of the sample distribution. Figure 11 presents a histogram of the adjusted self-reported network size.

► Figure 11: Self-reported network size based on winsorisation at the 95th percentile



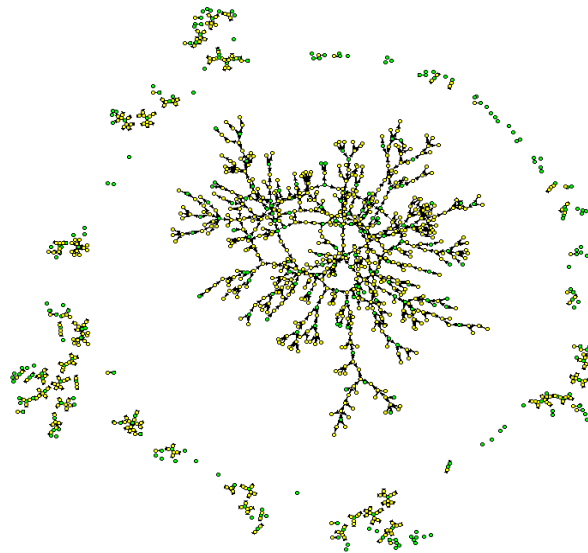
The following illustration presents a network plot of the RDS sample. The green nodes represent the initial sample (seeds), while the yellow nodes represent individuals selected in subsequent waves.

► Figure 12: RDS network graph of factory/workshop worker survey ample



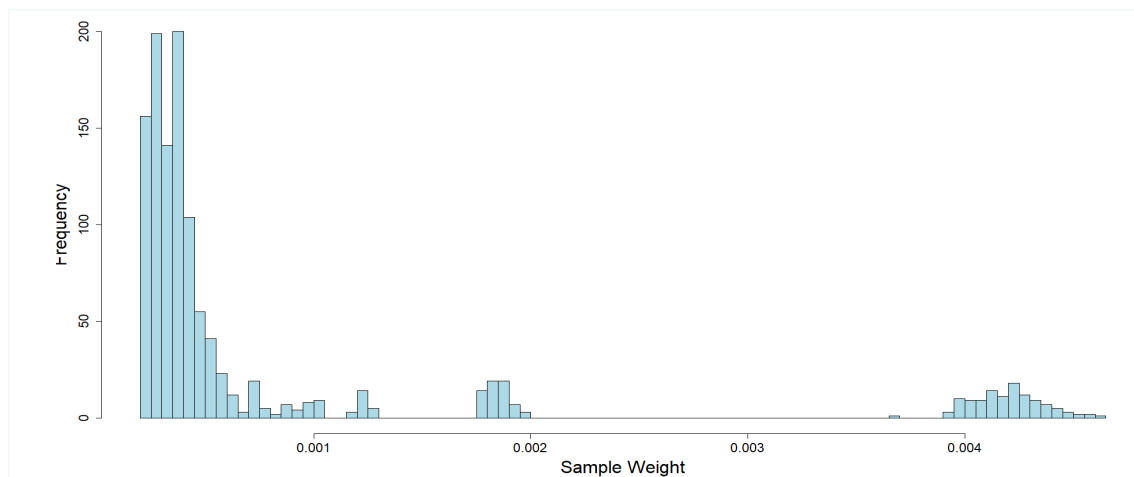
An RDS+ adjacency data set was constructed by appending additional linkages using the covariate information provided by respondents about their nominees. An additional 178 links were identified through these nominations. Figure 13 shows a visual plot of the resulting adjacency data, illustrating the underlying network based on both coupon referrals and post-data linkages that identify additional connections between respondents and all nominees within the final sample. Seeds are depicted in green.

► Figure 13: RDS+ network graph of factory/workshop worker sample



The NE4NS weighting scheme (Thompson, 2020) was applied to the RDS+ data set. The algorithm was based on 100,000 iterations with an initial resample size of 25% of the targeted sample size 400. Figure 14 provides a histogram of the resulting sampling weights. Note that the algorithm tends to assign larger weights to more isolated individuals and smaller weights to better-networked individuals. The concentration at the right end of the histogram corresponds to the more isolated individuals.

► Figure 14: Sample weights for factory/workshop worker respondents based on RDS+ data set and resampling procedure



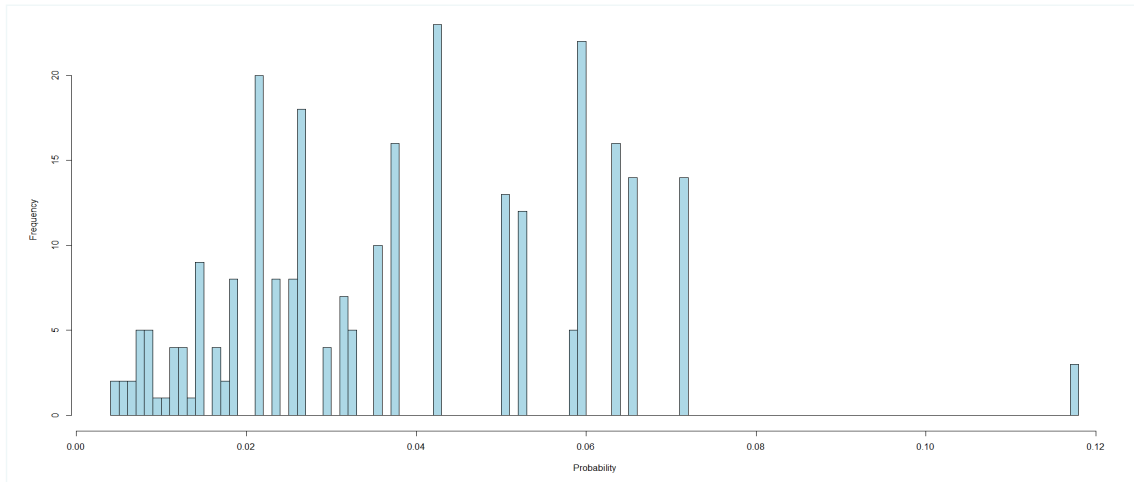
Home-based workers

Consistente con el diseño de muestreo, la ponderación de la encuesta se llevó a cabo por separado para la muestra probabilística y la muestra no probabilística.

Probability sample

For the probability sample, weighting followed a two-stage sampling design. The first-stage selection probabilities corresponded to selecting households for interviews, modeled as a simple random sample applied to all eligible households within the corresponding (aggregate) district(s). Second-stage selection probabilities were modeled as if a respondent were randomly selected from the total number of individuals in the selected household. The final selection probabilities were calculated as the product of the first- and second-stage probabilities. Figure 15 shows a histogram of the approximated final selection probabilities for respondents from the probability sample. Sampling weights for the probability sample were taken as the inverse of the selection probabilities.

► **Figure 15: Approximated final selection probabilities of the probability sample respondents**

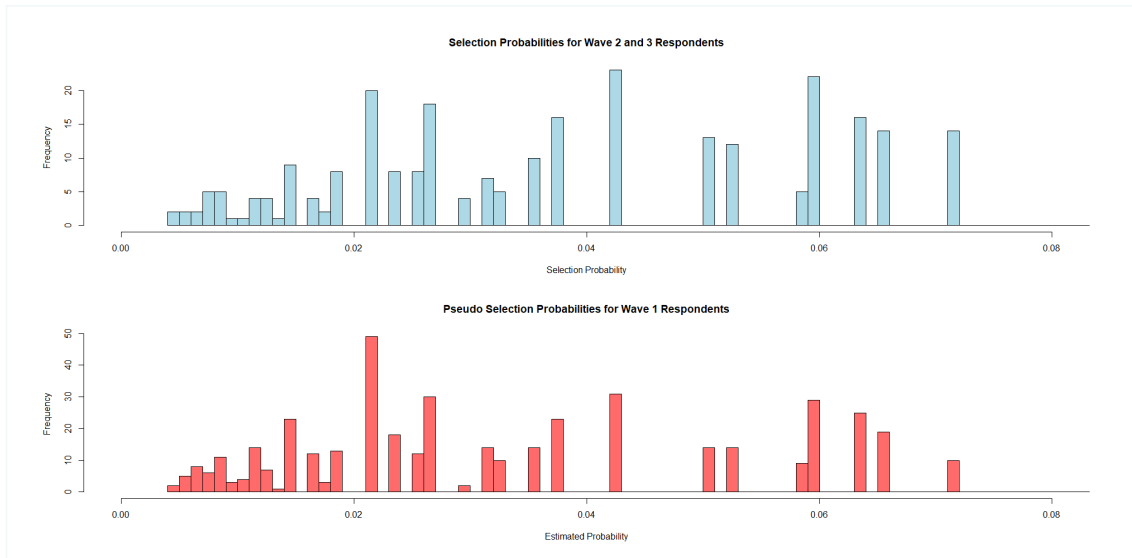


Nonprobability sample

For the non-probability sample, pseudo selection probabilities were assigned using a sample matching procedure, specifically a predictive mean matching approach (Gelman et al., 2004). This approach helps reduce selection biases that may arise in non-probability samples; see Elliot and Valliant (2017) for a formal framework on inference for non-probability samples.

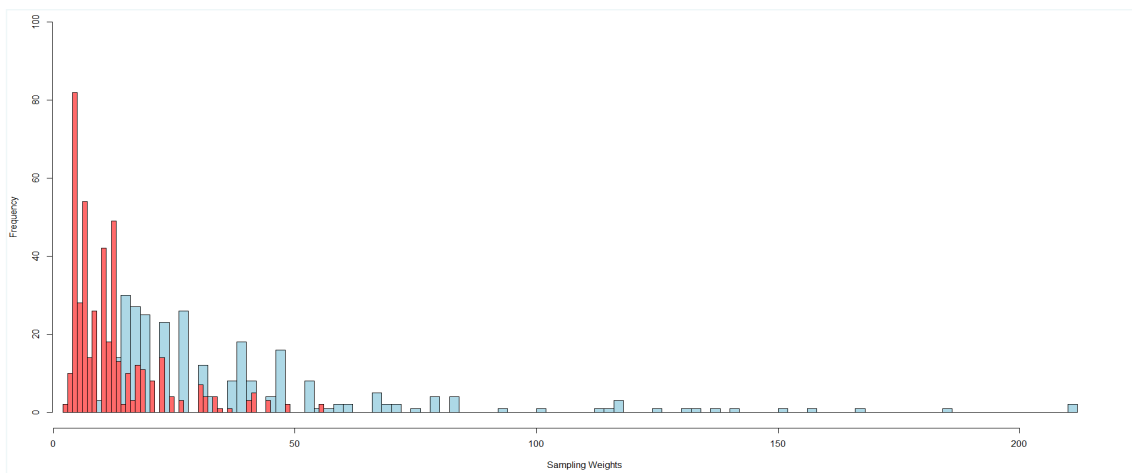
A wide range of survey variables was considered for the matching model. To select a suitable subset of these variables for the predictive mean matching procedure, beta regression models were fitted to the probability sample’s final selection probabilities, and both AIC and BIC stepwise selection procedures were employed. The research team chose to retain the most significant and relevant predictor variables, as identified by the AIC and BIC stepwise selection procedures. These included state, total number of households in the (aggregate) region, number of household workers, education, marital status, and work type. The pseudo-selection probabilities for the non-probability sample were then imputed based on the predictive mean matching model and these variables. The illustration below (Figure 16) shows histograms of the approximated selection probabilities for the probability sample and the imputed pseudo-selection probabilities for the non-probability sample.

► **Figure 16: Comparing selection probabilities of the probability sample and imputed pseudo-selection probabilities of the nonprobability sample**



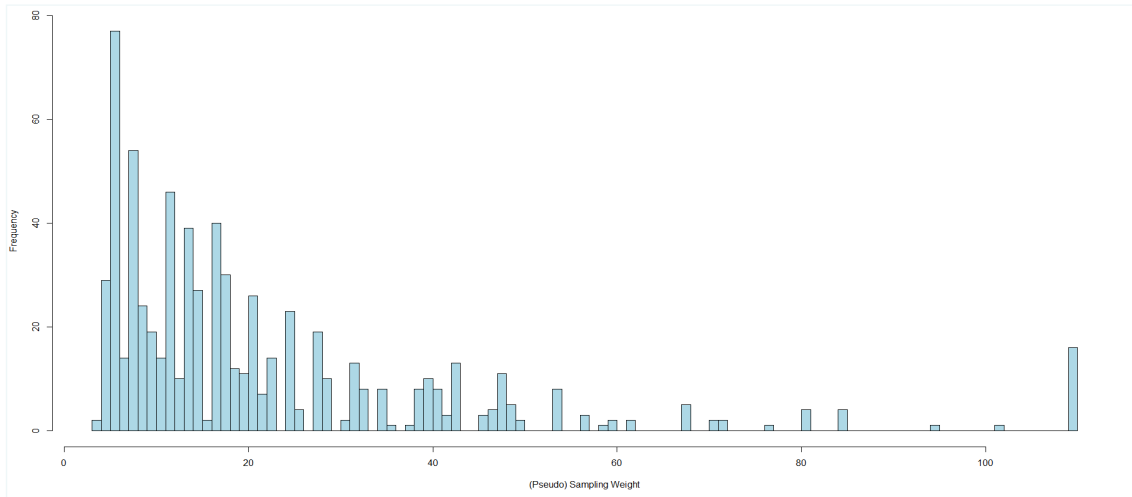
There appears to be no strong principle guiding how much the pseudo sampling weights should contribute to the estimation. The research team scaled these weights to sum to half of those based on the probability sample, ensuring that the probability sample contributes the majority to the estimation. The illustration below shows a histogram of the resulting final approximated sampling weights.

► **Figure 17: Final sample weights: probability sample in blue and nonprobability sample in red**



To mitigate the influence of extreme weights on estimation, a weight trimming procedure as suggested by Battaglia et al. (2004) was used to trim such weights. Weights greater than five times the mean of the sample weights were trimmed to this value. Figure 18 provides a histogram of the final sampling weights.

► Figure 18: Final sample weights for home-based workers sample after trimming



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