

Geographical Mobility as a Bridge to Opportunity: Evidence from the Spanish Military Service*

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Preliminary. Please do not circulate.

Abstract

We investigate the impact of a temporary mobility shock on individuals' future migration decisions and labor market achievements. Our strategy exploits the random assignment of conscripts to various geographic locations within the Spanish military service. Utilizing data gathered from a nationally representative survey, we find that conscripts stationed in regions distinct from their own exhibit a notably increased likelihood of undertaking future migration. Additionally, we observe that those who were deployed outside their native region were more likely to secure employment and work longer hours per week. Our findings indicate that a transient mobility experience during early adulthood can have a favorable influence on future migration patterns and labor market outcomes.

JEL Classification: J61, J62, R23.

Keywords: Migration, Geographical Mobility, Labor Market.

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1 Introduction

Migration has been a significant topic of interest for economists due to its potential impact on labor markets, human capital, and economic growth. The determinants of migration are numerous and complex, ranging from economic incentives to social and political factors. After migrating, individuals might experience gains in terms of income and human capital, but may also face challenges in adapting to new environments and integrating into the labor market. Understanding the drivers and consequences of migration is crucial for policymakers seeking to develop effective strategies to manage migration flows, particularly in recent times, when migration flows have not always responded to changes in the geographical distribution of economic activity (Molloy, Smith and Wozniak, 2011).

Traditionally, the literature on migration focused on wage differentials across regions and countries, the search for better job prospects, and other economic determinants (Borjas, 2003; Peri, 2016).¹ Although economic forces are important drivers for both international and internal migration, some specific economic phenomena, like technological change and macroeconomic circumstances, are particularly relevant for internal migration (Green, 2018), since such type of migration can be used as a form of insurance against negative economic shocks more easily than the international counterpart (Gröger and Zylberberg, 2016; Monras, 2018).

One possible determinant of migration that has received little attention from the literature is previous migration experiences. These experiences can act as a push factor for future migration and labor market performance. For example, early geographical mobility might change the propensity to migrate or serve as a learning experience that makes an individual more productive or more knowledgeable of labor market opportunities. These experiences are also relevant from a policy perspective. If early geographical mobility reduces the cost of future migration and renders positive labor market effects, policies aiming at fostering internal geographical mobility can be beneficial for economies with strong urban-rural economic divides, or economies characterized by a strong segmentation between different local labor markets, among others.²

In this article we provide evidence on the causal effect of early geographical mobility on future geographical mobility and labor market outcomes by exploiting the random geographical allocation of conscripts for military service. More specifically, we focus on the Spanish context and exploit the design of the system that allocated male conscripts to different military camps throughout the country.³ For the population under study, with military service between 1960-1991, the final destination of Spanish conscripts was deter-

¹While these economic factors are important determinants of migration, there are other factors that can play a role in migration decisions. These include political factors, social networks, cultural factors, and environmental factors, among others (Simpson, 2022).

²For the case of Spain, Llull and Miller (2018) show that while movers switch jobs more often and take one year longer than stayers to land a permanent job, their first permanent job wage is higher.

³One important drawback of our study design is that we are silent regarding the potential differential effect on females since they were not obliged to fulfill the military service. This is particularly important since some evidence suggests that female geographical mobility is significantly lower and translates into higher costs later on in life (Farré and Ortega, 2021).

mined through a lottery system. As a result of the lottery, some individuals would serve in their province of residence and stay close to their home, whereas other individuals were forced to serve in another province. We interpret the latter case as a migration shock with potential effects on the future geographical mobility and labor market performance of conscripts. Hence, our empirical strategy relies on comparing the future migration status and several labor market indicators between those who were forced to move and those who stayed during their time of service. This allows us to establish a causal link between an early migration experience and both future geographical mobility and labor market performance.

We use the 1991 Socio-Demographic Survey, a nationally representative survey conducted by the Spanish Statistic Office (INE, for its acronym in Spanish). This survey is unique with respect to the information it provides, as it combines data on the military service of individuals, including their destination, with detailed information about their residential and work history, among other details.

First, with respect to future geographical mobility, we find that conscripts assigned to military service in a region different from their own have a substantially higher probability of changing their province of residence at some time in the future. Our findings are similar when we look at different definitions of future geographical mobility. Importantly, the size of this effect is larger for the older cohorts. Although our study is (still) agnostic about the mechanisms that explain these results, we find that the effect is mostly driven by migrations to provinces different from that of the military service, which is consistent with the hypothesis that the decision to migrate does not rely on the individual having a preference for that destination, but on featuring a greater propensity to move after a previous migration experience. This result leads us to conjecture that the posterior migration decision is not driven by local contacts or personal connections made at the time of the military service, but on the effects that the migration experience by itself had on the individual.

Second, with respect to future labor market outcomes, we find that the individuals who were sent out during the military service were more likely to be employed (2.3 pp), work more hours per week (0.7 hours), and were more likely to make social security contributions (2.5 pp). We also find that these effects are concentrated on the younger cohorts, which is suggestive that an early migration experience helps individuals enter the labor market or, alternatively, that the economic conditions affecting these cohorts were more favorable for the migration shock to have an effect on labor market outcomes.

Our results indicate that early geographical mobility might reduce the cost of future migration decisions and render positive labor market effects. These findings support the rationale of policies that aim to foster internal mobility, like educational exchanges or national social services, specifically in contexts where regional economic differences coexist with information barriers and other forces that cause persistent labor market segmentation.⁴

Our paper contributes to a substantial body of empirical research focused on under-

⁴Bertoli, Moraga and Guichard (2020) show that information frictions are an important factor explaining international migration flows.

standing the drivers and consequences of migration. Within this literature, our study specifically relates to prior research that examines how past mobility experiences influence future migration decisions. For instance, [Winters \(2020\)](#) shows that college enrollment in one’s birth state increases the likelihood of living in that state several years later.⁵ In addition, [Parey and Waldinger \(2011\)](#), [Oosterbeek and Webbink \(2011\)](#) and [Di Pietro \(2012\)](#) explore the relation between studying at foreign colleges through exchange programs and living outside one’s home country later in life, revealing a significant positive effect of foreign college enrollment on living abroad, albeit with some variations in magnitude. Our work offers several advantages compared to this literature. Firstly, our lottery mechanism provides a robust approach to address endogeneity concerns. Secondly, we examine the effects of a mobility shock that affects the majority of the (male) population, rather than solely focusing on college attendees. Lastly, our dataset enables us to explore not only geographical mobility but also labor market outcomes.

In a broader context, our research aligns with the extensive literature that explores the factors influencing future migration decisions, distinct from prior mobility experiences. Among the multitude of factors, we particularly emphasize the contributions that connect educational experiences and migration, as seen in the studies conducted by [Malamud and Wozniak \(2012\)](#), [Machin, Salvanes and Pelkonen \(2012\)](#), [McHenry \(2013\)](#), and [Aydemir, Kirdar and Torun \(2022\)](#), among others. This emphasis arises from the nature of these experiences, which are potentially transformative and typically occur during late childhood or early adulthood, much like the experience of geographical mobility used in this paper. Another significant group of factors that may account for variations in responses to early adulthood experiences pertains to personal characteristics. For instance, [Butikofer and Peri \(2021\)](#) explore how cognitive ability and some personality traits affects geographic mobility, while [Jaeger et al. \(2007\)](#), [Gibson and McKenzie \(2011\)](#), and [Dustmann et al. \(2023\)](#) specifically delve into the relationship between risk attitudes and migration.

In recent years, a growing body of literature has investigated the economic impacts of forced migration, often uncovering positive effects on the lifetime earnings and educational outcomes of both young individuals and the descendants of those affected by displacement episodes ([Chyn, 2018](#); [Deryugina, Kawano and Levitt, 2018](#); [Becker et al., 2020](#); [Groen, Kutzbach and Polivka., 2020](#); [Arellano-Bover, 2022](#); [Nakamura, Sigurdsson and Steinsson, 2022](#)). Our research, however, takes a different approach. While this existing literature primarily explores forced migration, characterized by permanent or near-permanent relocations resulting from factors such as war, civil conflict, or natural disasters, our study focuses on the consequences of a strictly temporary mobility shock. In our investigation, migration arises as a choice following the temporary shock, rather than being driven by necessity.

Our research is also connected to recent studies that examine the economic consequences

⁵Previously, [Groen \(2004\)](#) had explored the impact of attending college in a state on the probability of working in that state –a related but different question than [Winters \(2020\)](#)– using different data and identification strategy, finding only a modest effect between attending college in a state and working in that state.

of relocation driven by specific policies. Two noteworthy papers have used randomized controlled trials. In the first study, [Bryan, Chowdhury and Mobarak \(2014\)](#) utilized subsidies in rural Bangladesh to encourage temporary out-migration during the lean season, revealing positive impacts on household consumption and re-migration. [Chetty, Hendren and Katz \(2016\)](#), in the second study, employed housing vouchers to prompt individuals to move from high-poverty housing projects to lower-poverty neighborhoods, finding positive effects on college attendance and future earnings.

Our findings are relevant to the literature that examines the impact of migration costs. [Diamond \(2016\)](#), [Munshi and Rosenzweig \(2016\)](#), [Díaz, Jáñez and Wellschmied \(2023\)](#), [Lagakos, Mobarak and Waugh \(2023\)](#), among many others, employed general equilibrium models to investigate the determinants and welfare consequences of different factors that affect migration decisions. Across these models, policies aimed at mitigating migration costs often lead to substantial positive welfare outcomes. Our natural experiment can be seen as a non-monetary mechanism that reduces the effective costs of migrating.

Finally, this study fits into the larger body of research that looks at how military service affects different aspects of people’s lives, like their income, political behavior, personality, beliefs, and criminal records ([Angrist, 1990](#); [Galiani, Rossi and Schargrotsky, 2011](#); [Card and Cardoso, 2012](#); [Cáceres-Delpiano, 2019](#); [Erikson and Stoker, 2011](#); [Samii, 2013](#); [Navajas et al., 2020](#); [Fize and Louis-Sidois, 2020](#); [Greenberg et al., 2022](#)). However, unlike most previous studies that focus on the impact of serving in the military, this paper exploits one aspect of military organization: the regional assignment of conscripts within the (Spanish) military. This feature connects this paper to our previous work in which we exploited the same mechanism to study the formation of national identities ([Cáceres-Delpiano et al., 2021](#)).

The article proceeds as follows: section 2 provides institutional detail on the Spanish military service. Section 3 describes our data and empirical strategy. Section 4 presents the main results on future migration and labor market outcomes. Section 5 summarizes and concludes.

2 Institutional Background: The Spanish Military Service (1960-1991)

The individuals in our survey completed military service between 1960 and 1991. Over the course of these 31 years, Spain underwent significant institutional changes, particularly following the transition from Franco’s dictatorship (1939-1975) to a democratic government that began with the adoption of the Constitution of 1978. This transition period also brought about reforms to the Spanish military service, including changes to the duration and conditions of military service and adjustments to the proportion of conscripts who served in their region of origin.⁶ Despite all these major changes, one feature of the military

⁶The 1940 Recruitment Act was reformed by Act 55 in 1968, Act 48 in 1984, and Act 22 in 1998 ([Bagues and Roth, 2023](#)).

service remained unchanged until 1992: each of these years, the destination camp of the conscripts living in a given province was determined through a lottery.⁷

The Lottery: During our period of analysis, the lottery system changed. Before 1987, each province conducted its own lottery independently, and eligible conscripts were assigned a number based on alphabetical order. The lottery draw was conducted publicly using a spherical cage filled with numbered wooden balls. During the draw process, one ball was released from the cage, and the number on the ball determined the order in which eligible conscripts would be assigned to serve in different military areas (Bagues and Roth, 2023). After 1987, the lottery was centralized at the national level and was simplified. The cage, instead of containing one ball per conscript, was filled with 366 balls, one for each day in a given year. Those whose birthday was immediately after the selected date were assigned to different destinations using an algorithm that filled military areas sequentially. The allocation outcome was determined based on different birth date ranges by province (Cáceres-Delpiano et al., 2021). In any case, independently of the lottery system used, the allocation of conscripts from a given province in a given year to different military areas was random.

The conscription process The process of conscription was carried out in three consecutive phases. Firstly, a yearly registration was held at the municipal level, where individuals had to enroll themselves approximately two years before their conscription date. This process resulted in provisional lists of potential recruits, excluding those who deferred military duties for academic or other reasons.⁸ Secondly, potential recruits had to undergo a medical checkup, and a final list of physically fit individuals was posted publicly. Lastly, conscripts were allocated using the lottery system described above.

Three features of the recruiting process and the randomization are worth mentioning. First, individuals who volunteered to do the military service before the corresponding age did not enter the recruiting process we described. Instead, they were allowed to pick the destination. However, volunteers had to stay for a longer period (see Figures A.1 and A.2). Second, all decisions to volunteer, postpone, or be exempted from military service occurred before the realization of the lottery. Third, while the fraction of conscripts who were assigned to the different military areas changed over the period we study, a significant part of the conscripts served in their military area of residence, this implied that those serving in another region had a lower fraction of peers from their own region.

⁷From 1992 onwards, the assignment process was no longer random. Instead, conscripts were allowed to provide information about their preferred destination, and a computer system was utilized to carry out the assignments: https://elpais.com/diario/1991/11/02/espana/689036403_850215.html.

⁸Deferrals were granted for the following circumstances: i) academic studies; ii) family economic support; iii) having another sibling in the army; iv) residing abroad; or v) reasons of National interest.

3 Data and empirical strategy

3.1 Data

We employ data from the 1991 Socio-Demographic Survey (SDS) conducted by the Spanish Statistical Office (INE) for two reasons. First, the SDS is one of the very few surveys that contain questions about military service. Second, the SDS, despite having a cross-sectional data collection design, was actually a life-cycle survey because the questionnaire included retrospective questions about the demographic, family, residential, educational, and work histories of the Spanish population. The complete sample consisted of 159,154 individuals between 10 and 91 years of age at the time of the SDS.

The Socio-demographic survey has a military survey module with several questions that enable our analysis. First, men are asked whether or not they have done military service. We restrict our sample to those men born between 1940 and 1970 who reported going through the service. Moreover, we exclude volunteer conscripts, which are those that chose to start military service at a younger age, since this choice also implied the ability to choose the military destination. We exclude these conscripts from our sample by restricting the analysis to those reporting having served after the threshold age of 18. Finally, for each of the individuals, we know the province of destination. This variable, jointly with the retrospective information about the province of residence at the age of 17, defines the migration status due to military service. We describe the variables that we use below:

Pre-Military Service sociodemographic characteristics Our dataset includes key information about individuals prior to their military service. This includes the month, year, and province of birth, the number of years of education completed before the age of 14, and changes in residence before the age of 17. Additionally, we have data on the individual's parents, including their province of birth and the highest level of education completed. This information is particularly important in ensuring that the destination of military service was randomly assigned and not influenced by these variables.

Military Service The dataset contains valuable information about the military service of individuals, including whether or not they served, the start date and the length of their service, the province where they served, and whether they were studying or working at the time.

Migration outcomes The dataset also includes detailed migration histories for each individual. This includes information on all places of residence, starting from their province of birth, up to the present day. For each place of residence, we have data on the duration of their stay, whether they moved alone or with family, reasons for the move, and their new destination.

Labor outcomes Similarly to the migration outcomes, our dataset also includes detailed working histories of the individual. However, in this version of the paper we focus only on labor outcomes at the time that the interview took place. The information that we use is the respondent’s working status, affiliation to Social Security, and hours worked per week.

Additional outcomes In addition to analyzing migration and labor outcomes, we are also considering several other socioeconomic variables that may be relevant to our analysis. These variables include the age at which the individual left their parents’ household, the age at which they first cohabitated with a partner, the current residence of their parents, any previous unions they may have had, their current marital status, the province in which they currently reside, the province of residence for any previous unions, and the number of children they have.

Descriptive Statistics In table 1, we present the descriptive statistics of the primary variables in our sample and in table 2 we show the descriptive statistics for the reasons to migrate.⁹

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Ever change residence after 17	0.336	0.472	0	1	21,227
Ever resided in a prov. different to the one of birth (after 17)	0.201	0.401	0	1	21,227
Currently other prov. than 17	0.143	0.350	0	1	21,227
Number of province of residence	0.540	0.976	0	13	21,227
Return birth prov.	0.017	0.130	0	1	21,227
Ever moved largest prov.	0.133	0.340	0	1	21,227
MS in other province	0.712	0.453	0	1	21,227
Working in the last week	0.848	0.359	0	1	21,227
Employed in the last week	0.882	0.323	0	1	21,227
Hours worked last week	37.283	15.566	0	70	20,555
SSR in the last job	0.851	0.356	0	1	21,227
Mother EGB+	0.306	0.461	0	1	21,227
Father EGB+	0.358	0.480	0	1	21,227
Mother same CA	0.823	0.382	0	1	21,227
Father same CA	0.819	0.385	0	1	21,227

3.2 Empirical specification

The following specification is at the center of the analysis,

$$y_{ipmbq} = \rho_{pb} + \delta_{bm} + \alpha_q + \beta \text{MSOutP}_i + \gamma X_i + \epsilon_{ipmbq}, \quad (1)$$

where y_{ipmbq} is one of the outcomes for the individual i born in province p in month m in year b who did the military service in province q . ρ_{bp} and δ_{bm} are province-year and year-

⁹Additionally, table 2 in the Appendix shows the descriptive statistics for the reasons to migrate for the subsample of individuals who migrated at least time.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics. Reasons to change residence.

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Work opp.	0.188	0.391	0	1	21,416
Famliy issues	0.015	0.122	0	1	21,416
Spouse	0.109	0.311	0	1	21,416
Educ. or health opp.	0.020	0.141	0	1	21,416
Public services	0.018	0.133	0	1	21,416
Leisure opp.	0.016	0.125	0	1	21,416
Other	0.045	0.208	0	1	21,416

month of birth fixed effects, respectively. α_q is province of service FE. X_i groups other individual controls such as completed years of education at 14, duration of the military service (in months) fixed effects. Finally, the variable $MSOutP_i$, is a dummy variable that indicates whether or not a conscript serves in a province different from the one where he resided at the age of 17 (just before their military service). Thus, β corresponds to the parameter of interest in our analysis and it represents the average conditional difference in the dependent variable for those serving in a province different from the one of residence and those serving in their province of residence. Throughout the analysis, we cluster the standard errors (ϵ_{ipmb}) at the level of province and year of birth.

To estimate the previous specification, we exploit the fact that the the destination of conscripts doing mandatory military service was random in the period that we cover for individuals serving after turning 18 years old.. To further support that the destination was random, we estimate equation (1) for each predetermined characteristics as outcome variables. We show the results in Table 3. Notice that, when we do not include any fixed effect, the coefficient is never statistically different from zero. When we include the year-province and year-month of birth fixed effects, only 3 variables out of 12 are barely statistically different from zero at the 10% and the differences are small (individuals who do the military service in another province are around one month older, and are 1% less likely to have a literate father and 1% more likely to have a mother working when they were 16). The table suggests that the lottery was indeed random, although we include all these predetermined characteristics as control variables in all the following specifications.

Table 3: Lottery assignment and predetermined characteristics

	Mother literate		Father literate		Mother EGB+		Father EGB+	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
MS out	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)
Observations	21227	21177	21227	21177	21227	21177	21227	21177
Mean MS in	.89		.94		.3		.36	
	Yrs educ		Migrate before 17		Mother same CA		Father same CA	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
MS out	0.19 (0.22)	-0.12 (0.17)	0.04 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.01)
Observations	21227	21177	21227	21177	21227	21177	21227	21177
Mean MS in	8.88		.15		.82		.81	
	Age at MS		Dead parents		Working Mom 16		Working Pop 16	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
MS out	-0.01 (0.06)	0.11* (0.06)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)
Observations	21227	21177	21227	21177	21227	21177	21227	21177
Mean MS in	20.63		.07		.13		.93	

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top. Models with (column 2) and without (column 1) controls. Controls are year-province, and month-province of birth FE. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, and * $p < 0.1$

4 Results

4.1 Internal Migration

We first examine the effect of completing military service outside one's own province on the probability of future migration. Figure 1 offers a direct illustration of this effect, capturing the core of the research design implemented in this paper. In the first subfigure, the lines marked with dots and rhombuses represent the conditional share of individuals residing in a province different from their birthplace at various ages for the treated ($MSOutP = 1$) and control groups ($MSOutP = 0$), respectively. Until the age of 19, these lines are almost identical; however, a divergence is evident thereafter, with the treatment group displaying a higher proportion of individuals living elsewhere. Moreover, the second subfigure of Figure 1 presents the conditional differences in these proportions at various ages (shown on the right axis). These differences become statistically significant post-conscription, eventually stabilizing at a difference of roughly 6 percentage points.

Table 4 presents the estimated coefficients of equation (1) using various definitions of moving. The outcome in column (1) is a dummy variable that indicates whether an individual has ever changed residence, whereas the outcome in column (2) takes the value one only if the change of residence also entailed a provincial change. Column (3) takes the

value one if the individual is residing in a different province at the time of the survey. The first panel of Table 4 displays these results for all individuals in our sample. In the second panel, we limit our sample to individuals who did not delay their Military Service. In Panel III, we introduce heterogeneity based on the conscript's cohort to examine potential cohort and/or age effects.

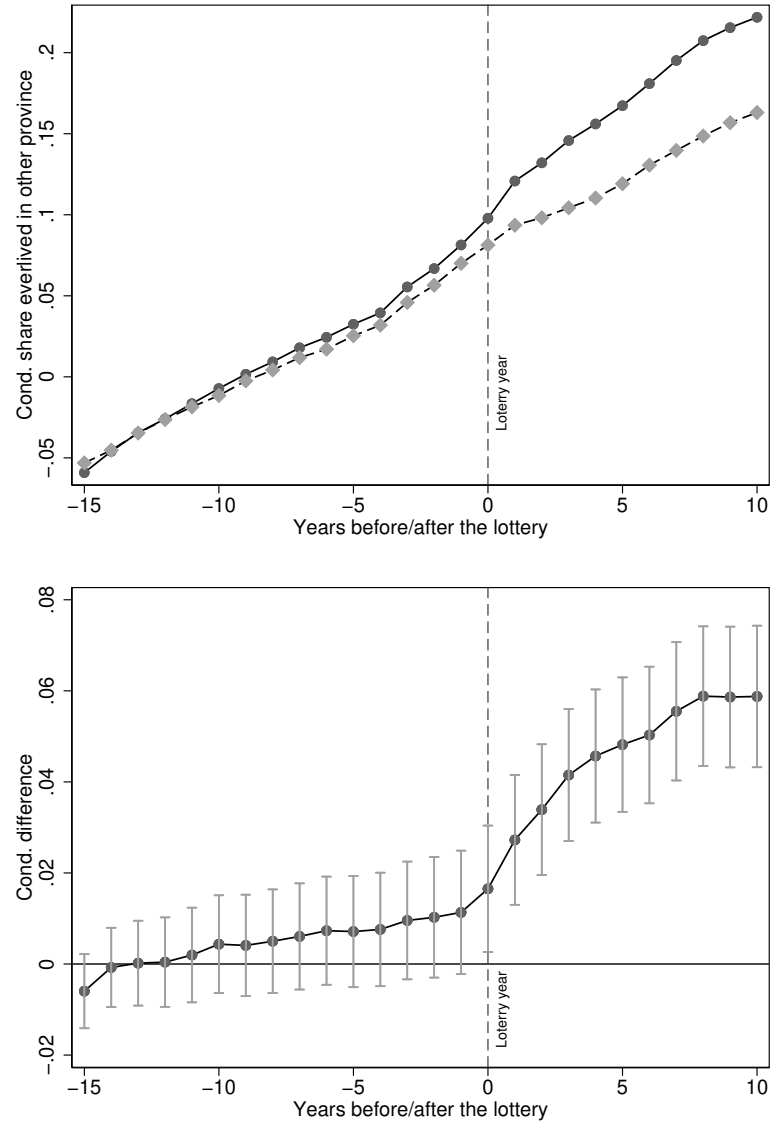
Observing the first two columns of Panels I and II, it's apparent that individuals who underwent their military service outside their home province are approximately 6 percentage points (or 20%) more likely to have ever relocated. Column (2) indicates that this discrepancy primarily arises from relocating to another province. Meanwhile, column (3) suggests a similar effect when examining whether the individual currently lives in a different province than the one they resided in at the age of 17.

Table 4: Effect of MS out on internal migration

	(1) Ever changed residence	(2) Ever resided other prov.	(3) Currently resides other prov.
<i>I Basic specification</i>			
MS out of province	0.064*** (0.012)	0.063*** (0.010)	0.069*** (0.010)
Observations	21367	21367	21367
Mean MS in	.29	.16	.09
<i>II Individuals not delaying MS</i>			
MS out of province	0.0569*** (0.0114)	0.0566*** (0.0099)	0.0616*** (0.0101)
Observations	17583	17583	17583
<i>III Heterogeneity by Yr. of Birth</i>			
MS out 1940-47	0.1087*** (0.0238)	0.1000*** (0.0191)	0.1072*** (0.0172)
MS out 1948-54	0.0905*** (0.0180)	0.0969*** (0.0165)	0.1096*** (0.0111)
MS out 1955-63	0.0221* (0.0129)	0.0137 (0.0094)	0.0177** (0.0075)
MS out 1964-70	0.0176* (0.0099)	0.0260*** (0.0026)	0.0239*** (0.0048)
Observations	21367	21367	21367

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of birth, and province-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals' parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals' parents come from the same CCAA.

Figure 1: Effect of conscription in other province on probability of ever living in another province different of the one of birth at different ages



Notes: First vertical line (-2) represents the age of 16 (one year before the lottery). The second line the age of 18 (one year after the lottery). The dots and rhombuses depict the conditional share of individuals who has lived in a province different from the one of birth at different ages in the treated (MSOutP = 1) and control groups (MSOutP = 0) respectively.

In Table 5, we shift our focus to other outcomes. Column (1) demonstrates that undergoing military service in a different province increases the total count of distinct provinces of residence by 0.1. Column (2) reveals that serving in a different province also augments the likelihood of returning to one's province of birth by 2 percentage points. Lastly, Column (3) indicates that completing the military service in another province heightens the probability of relocating to one of the most populous Spanish provinces by 4 percentage points. Comparing this coefficient with that of Column (2) in Table 4, we deduce that the majority of provincial relocations prompted by military service involve moves towards the most densely populated Spanish provinces, namely Barcelona, Madrid, Sevilla, and Valencia.

Table 5: Effect of MS out on other internal migration outcomes

	(1) Number of prov residence	(2) Return to birth prov.	(3) Ever moved largest prov.
<i>I Basic specification</i>			
MS out of province	0.133*** (0.031)	0.020*** (0.003)	0.043*** (0.007)
Observations	21367	21367	21367
Mean MS in	.46	.01	.13
<i>II Individuals not delaying MS</i>			
MS out of province	0.1052*** (0.0269)	0.0180*** (0.0032)	0.0372*** (0.0080)
Observations	17583	17583	17583
<i>III Heterogeneity by Yr. of Birth</i>			
MS out 1940-47	0.2433*** (0.0590)	0.0306*** (0.0068)	0.0640*** (0.0113)
MS out 1948-54	0.1742*** (0.0584)	0.0256*** (0.0044)	0.0619*** (0.0167)
MS out 1955-63	0.0418* (0.0217)	0.0122*** (0.0028)	0.0221* (0.0123)
MS out 1964-70	0.0372*** (0.0132)	0.0083** (0.0038)	0.0092 (0.0068)
Observations	21367	21367	21367

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of birth, and province-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals' parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals' parents come from the same CCAA.

In Table 6, we explore the dynamics of the effect of undergoing military service in a different province on the likelihood of residing in another province. By the age of 21, indi-

viduals who completed their military service in a different province are already 5 percentage points more likely to live in another province. This effect intensifies with age, reaching 11 percentage points for individuals aged 41. However, as age increases, the sample size diminishes since we must limit our sample to older cohorts. This means we cannot distinguish between an age effect and a cohort effect, as discussed regarding the interpretation of the heterogeneous effects by cohort of panel II of Table 4.

In panel II of Table 6, individuals currently living in the province where they undertook their military service are not categorized as “movers”. Although the observed effect diminishes with this stricter definition of “mover”, it remains significant and consistently indicates that the move is not merely mechanical: doing the military service in another province not only amplifies the likelihood of settling in that province but also boosts the probability of relocating elsewhere. This finding is crucial when contemplating the underlying mechanisms of this effect. If we speculate that the predominant influence stems from an alteration in individuals’ openness to new experiences, we would anticipate the effect to be fairly consistent and not driven only by individuals staying in the province of service. On the other hand, if we assume that forming new connections in the service province is the primary catalyst, we would expect a pronounced effect on residing in the service province and a diminished or non-existent effect on relocating elsewhere.

Table 6: Effect of MS out on internal migration by age

	(1) At 21 yrs of age	(2) At 26 yrs of age	(3) At 31 yrs of age	(4) At 36 yrs of age	(5) At 41 yrs of age
<i>I Residing in a province diff to the one at 17</i>					
MS out of province	0.051*** (0.009)	0.077*** (0.012)	0.086*** (0.013)	0.101*** (0.012)	0.113*** (0.014)
Observations	21367	19419	15505	10456	6536
Mean MS in	.03	.09	.11	.12	.13
<i>II Excluding province of service</i>					
MS out of province	0.026*** (0.005)	0.042*** (0.007)	0.042*** (0.007)	0.048*** (0.007)	0.055*** (0.009)
Observations	21367	19419	15505	10456	6536
Mean MS in	.03	.09	.11	.12	.13

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of birth, and province-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals’ parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals’ parents come from the same CCAA.

4.2 Labor Outcomes

We now shift our attention to labor market outcomes. In Table 7, we examine the disparities in labor market outcomes between individuals who completed their military service outside their province of residence at age 17 and those who served in their home province. We find that the treated group is 1 percentage point more likely to be employed and, on average, works 0.42 hours more per week. However, this average effect conceals significant heterogeneity by age (or cohort). When introducing interaction terms with cohort groups, it becomes evident that the majority of this effect is driven by the most recent cohorts.¹⁰ Since we lack retrospective labor outcomes, two hypotheses are consistent with these results. First, serving in another province appears to be especially advantageous for individuals entering the labor market. From this standpoint, completing military service in a different province might have provided individuals with a competitive edge in entering the labor market, thereby increasing their employment probabilities during their youth.

Alternatively, this finding could be attributed to a cohort effect specific to the younger cohorts under analysis. To distinguish between these explanations, we employ retrospective information about the reasons for changes of residence.

¹⁰This pattern is further illustrated using pairs of years in Figure A.3 in the Appendix.

Table 7: Effect of MS out on labor market outcomes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Employed	Working	Working if employed	Hours	Hours if working	SSR	SSR if employed
<i>I Basic specification</i>							
MS out	0.0077*	0.0100*	0.0025	0.4200*	0.1477	0.0111**	0.0039
	(0.0044)	(0.0057)	(0.0046)	(0.2241)	(0.1901)	(0.0051)	(0.0031)
Observations	21367	21367	18832	20694	17456	21367	18832
Mean MS in	.87	.84	.96	36.6	42.34	.84	.96
<i>II Individuals not delaying MS</i>							
MS out	0.0016	0.0054	0.0039	0.2360	0.2194	0.0075	0.0073
	(0.0062)	(0.0080)	(0.0051)	(0.3306)	(0.1875)	(0.0079)	(0.0044)
Observations	17583	17583	15430	17023	14293	17583	15430
<i>III Heterogeneity by Yr. of Birth</i>							
MS out 1940-47	0.0069	-0.0005	-0.0088	0.4357	0.1415	0.0027	-0.0047
	(0.0087)	(0.0092)	(0.0096)	(0.3753)	(0.3827)	(0.0105)	(0.0050)
MS out 1948-54	0.0017	-0.0025	-0.0045	0.1971	0.1250	0.0039	0.0020
	(0.0087)	(0.0088)	(0.0041)	(0.5585)	(0.2556)	(0.0078)	(0.0023)
MS out 1955-63	-0.0092	-0.0046	0.0028	-0.1840	0.1981	-0.0075	0.0013
	(0.0118)	(0.0148)	(0.0062)	(0.4936)	(0.4278)	(0.0112)	(0.0034)
MS out 1964-70	0.0443***	0.0680***	0.0357**	1.6588***	0.1159	0.0630***	0.0276**
	(0.0037)	(0.0015)	(0.0157)	(0.1781)	(0.1882)	(0.0138)	(0.0120)
Observations	21367	21367	18832	20694	17456	21367	18832

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of birth, and province-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals' parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals' parents come from the same CCAA.

5 Mechanisms

Once we have presented the effect of doing the military service in another region on migration and labor outcomes, we will discuss which are the mechanisms that could be explaining our results.

5.1 Internal Migration

Our survey queries individuals regarding the reasons for each change of residence. Consequently, we can investigate how undergoing military service in a different province influences the reasons individuals cite for migrating. In Table 8, we detail the impact of military service in a different province on the likelihood of reporting the primary reasons for migration. We discern that serving in another region considerably elevates the probability of attributing migration to work-related reasons (column 1) while simultaneously significantly reducing the likelihood of naming a spouse as the main reason for migration. There's also

a moderate increase in the chances of citing family issues (column 2) or noting education or public services as primary motivators (column 4). Columns (7) and (8) address reasons associated with the province the individual is migrating from and to, respectively. As inferred from these columns, only motivations linked to the destination province appear to be significant in the migration decision. Recall that the heterogeneous results by cohort show that work has been consistently declared as the main reason to migrate for all cohorts (except for the 1955-1963). This suggests that the lack of significant effects on labor outcomes that we found in Table 4 can be explained because serving in another province benefits the employability of individuals entering the labor market. It's important to note that, from this viewpoint, the absence of significance in labor outcomes for older cohorts doesn't imply that serving in other province lacks long-lasting effects on an individual's labor market trajectory. An increase in labor opportunities during one's youth can potentially lead to higher salaries later in life. However, our survey does not provide data on salaries.

Table 8: Effect of MS out on selected reasons to change residence

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Work	Family issues	Spouse	Amenities	Other	Push	Pull
<i>I Basic specification</i>							
MS out	0.060*** (0.011)	0.006** (0.003)	0.004 (0.009)	0.012** (0.005)	0.004 (0.004)	0.002 (0.003)	0.066*** (0.012)
Observations	21367	21367	21367	21367	21367	21367	21367
Mean MS in	.15	.01	.1	.02	.05	.02	.26
<i>II Individuals not delaying MS</i>							
MS out	0.0518*** (0.0103)	0.0067** (0.0030)	0.0032 (0.0110)	0.0057 (0.0046)	0.0079* (0.0045)	0.0056* (0.0033)	0.0538*** (0.0120)
Observations	17583	17583	17583	17583	17583	17583	17583
<i>III Heterogeneity by Yr. of Birth</i>							
MS out 1940-47	0.1043*** (0.0173)	0.0158** (0.0071)	-0.0075 (0.0154)	0.0268*** (0.0093)	0.0137 (0.0106)	0.0085 (0.0062)	0.1098*** (0.0223)
MS out 1948-54	0.0851*** (0.0153)	0.0004 (0.0025)	0.0059 (0.0197)	0.0192** (0.0075)	-0.0006 (0.0045)	-0.0028 (0.0041)	0.0913*** (0.0223)
MS out 1955-63	0.0123 (0.0128)	0.0049* (0.0025)	0.0196 (0.0132)	-0.0028 (0.0062)	0.0014 (0.0061)	-0.0004 (0.0027)	0.0277** (0.0110)
MS out 1964-70	0.0254*** (0.0025)	0.0050 (0.0040)	-0.0067** (0.0032)	0.0009 (0.0042)	-0.0000 (0.0044)	0.0060* (0.0034)	0.0143*** (0.0030)
Observations	21367	21367	21367	21367	21367	21367	21367

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of residence at 17, and province at 17-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals' parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals' parents come from the same CCAA.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, we offer new evidence on how a temporary and forced migration shock may affect individual's future geographical mobility and labor market outcomes. We exploit the rules for the allocation of conscripts across the territory in the Spanish mandatory military service as a large-scale quasi-natural experiment.

We find that, compared to those counterparts who stayed, individuals who did the military service in another province are more likely to have ever lived in a different province later in life. Moreover, the effect is of similar size whether we restrict to moving to the province of the military service or exclude it, hinting that there may be a more general change in preference for moving.

We also find some evidence of better labor market performance, as shown by a higher likelihood of working and working longer hours. These effects are concentrated on the more recent cohorts, which may be a sign that the experience abroad helps young individuals with no experience enter the labor market, but those differences disappear later in life.

The findings in this study are particularly relevant for countries with large differences between local labor markets in terms of wages and employment (such as Spain). Although our study is a step in this direction, more research on how to reduce those labor market inequalities is needed.

We believe that similar mobility effects can be achieved through other large-scale policies that also yield contact between different groups; examples of such policies include educational exchanges, national social services or other measures that foster internal labor mobility (e.g. internships in other provinces).

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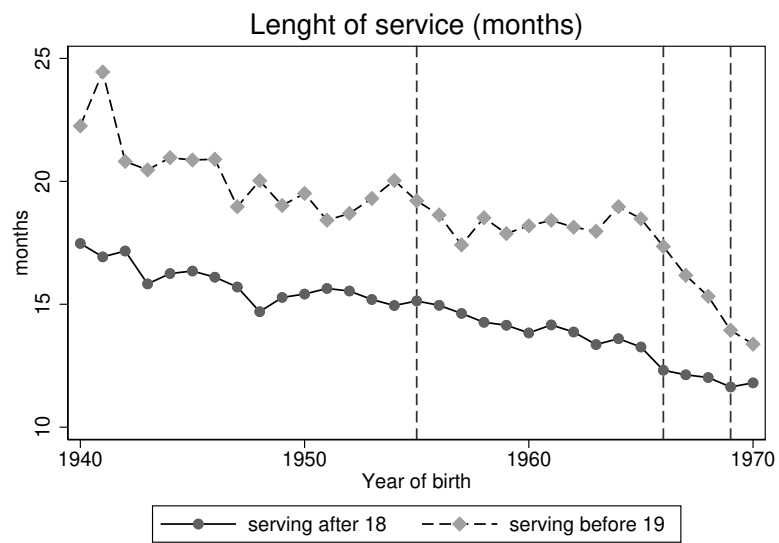
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Appendix

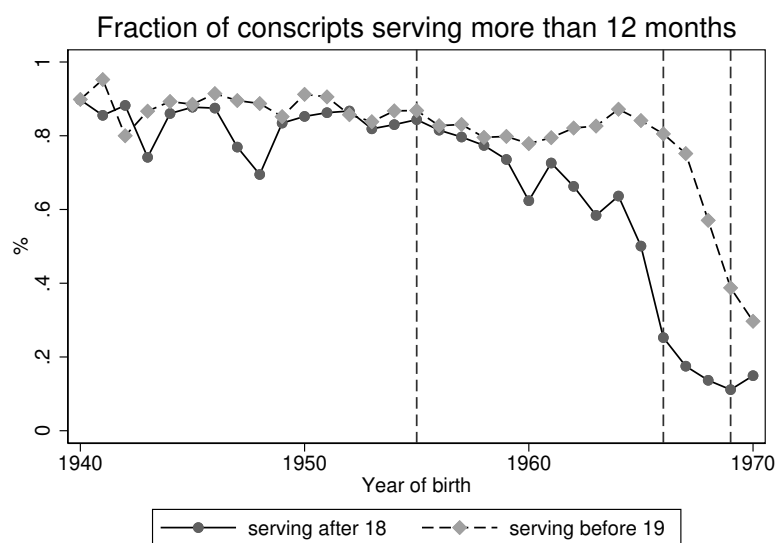
A Other Figures and Tables

Figure A.1: Length of service (months)



Notes:

Figure A.2: Fraction conscripts serving more than 12 months.



Notes:

Table A.1: Descriptive Statistics. Reasons to change residence. Sample of individuals who change residence after 17

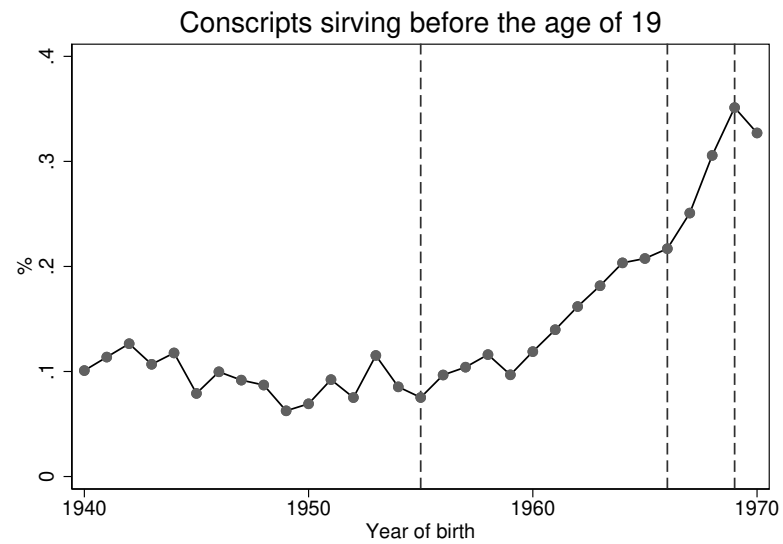
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Work opp.	0.558	0.497	0	1	7,213
Famliy issues	0.045	0.206	0	1	7,213
Spouse	0.322	0.467	0	1	7,213
Educ. or health opp.	0.060	0.237	0	1	7,213
Public services	0.053	0.225	0	1	7,213
Leisure opp.	0.047	0.213	0	1	7,213
Other	0.135	0.342	0	1	7,213

Figure A.3: Impact of MS out on labor market by year of birth.



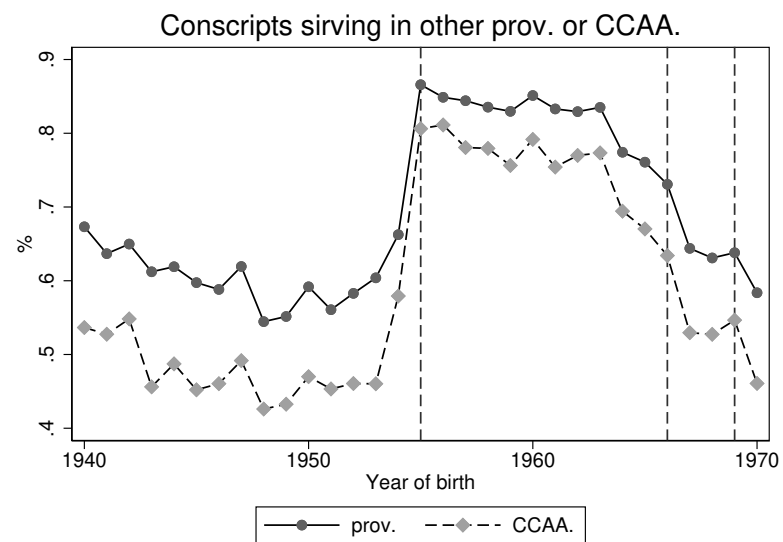
Notes:

Figure A.4



Notes:

Figure A.5



Notes:

A.1 Robustness to including Province of Residence at 17th FE

Table A.2: Effect of MS out on internal migration. Province at 17th FE.

	(1) Ever changed residence	(2) Ever resided other prov.	(3) Currently resides other prov.
<i>I Basic specification</i>			
MS out of province	0.062*** (0.011)	0.069*** (0.012)	0.068*** (0.012)
Observations	21360	21360	21360
Mean MS in	.29	.16	.09
<i>II Individuals not delaying MS</i>			
MS out of province	0.0471*** (0.0110)	0.0574*** (0.0126)	0.0561*** (0.0109)
Observations	17574	17574	17574
<i>III Heterogeneity by Yr. of Birth</i>			
MS out 1940-47	0.1173*** (0.0264)	0.1279*** (0.0237)	0.1178*** (0.0205)
MS out 1948-54	0.0805*** (0.0109)	0.0963*** (0.0159)	0.1017*** (0.0133)
MS out 1955-63	0.0161 (0.0144)	0.0125* (0.0064)	0.0128*** (0.0029)
MS out 1964-70	0.0239* (0.0140)	0.0302*** (0.0075)	0.0252*** (0.0047)
Observations	21360	21360	21360

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of residence at 17, and province at 17-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals' parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals' parents come from the same CCAA.

Table A.3: Effect of MS out on labor market outcomes. Province at 17th FE.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Employed	Working	Working if employed	Hours	Hours if working	SSR	SSR if employed
<i>I Basic specification</i>							
MS out	0.0057 (0.0045)	0.0070 (0.0057)	0.0017 (0.0044)	0.2656 (0.2635)	0.0632 (0.2184)	0.0099 (0.0061)	0.0052 (0.0041)
Observations	21360	21360	18808	20690	17433	21360	18808
Mean MS in	.87	.84	.96	36.6	42.34	.84	.96
<i>II Individuals not delaying MS</i>							
MS out	0.0021 (0.0066)	0.0043 (0.0085)	0.0027 (0.0050)	0.1884 (0.3623)	0.1379 (0.2031)	0.0096 (0.0094)	0.0096 (0.0057)
Observations	17574	17574	15415	17013	14275	17574	15415
<i>III Heterogeneity by Yr. of Birth</i>							
MS out 1940-47	0.0026 (0.0050)	-0.0086 (0.0060)	-0.0122 (0.0075)	0.0372 (0.4806)	-0.0208 (0.5146)	0.0007 (0.0050)	-0.0021 (0.0039)
MS out 1948-54	0.0002 (0.0112)	-0.0037 (0.0109)	-0.0045 (0.0045)	0.0664 (0.6029)	0.0296 (0.2289)	-0.0006 (0.0108)	-0.0014 (0.0029)
MS out 1955-63	-0.0106 (0.0119)	-0.0062 (0.0153)	0.0031 (0.0074)	-0.3830 (0.5065)	0.0941 (0.4374)	-0.0103 (0.0125)	-0.0008 (0.0055)
MS out 1964-70	0.0426*** (0.0059)	0.0652*** (0.0014)	0.0335** (0.0148)	1.8342*** (0.1674)	0.2086 (0.2641)	0.0687*** (0.0190)	0.0397** (0.0154)
Observations	21360	21360	18808	20690	17433	21360	18808

Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of residence at 17, and province at 17-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals' parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals' parents come from the same CCAA.

Table A.4: Effect of MS out on selected reasons to change residence. Sample of individuals with at least one change of residence.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Work	Family issues	Spouse	Amenities	Other	Push	Pull
<i>I Basic specification</i>							
MS out	0.067*** (0.017)	0.008 (0.008)	-0.035 (0.021)	0.012 (0.013)	-0.020 (0.012)	-0.005 (0.011)	0.033*** (0.007)
Observations	6982	6982	6982	6982	6982	6982	6982
Mean MS in	.15	.01	.1	.02	.05	.02	.26
<i>II Individuals not delaying MS</i>							
MS out	0.0569** (0.0261)	0.0060 (0.0095)	-0.0372 (0.0306)	-0.0011 (0.0136)	0.0055 (0.0138)	0.0155 (0.0136)	0.0105 (0.0145)
Observations	5243	5243	5243	5243	5243	5243	5243
<i>III Heterogeneity by Yr. of Birth</i>							
MS out 1940-47	0.0910*** (0.0270)	0.0156 (0.0128)	-0.0969*** (0.0351)	0.0253 (0.0222)	-0.0082 (0.0225)	-0.0135 (0.0153)	0.0328*** (0.0024)
MS out 1948-54	0.0797*** (0.0133)	-0.0084 (0.0123)	-0.0322 (0.0351)	0.0146 (0.0154)	-0.0345* (0.0183)	-0.0056 (0.0203)	0.0341** (0.0159)
MS out 1955-63	-0.0105 (0.0424)	0.0254*** (0.0091)	0.0584* (0.0303)	-0.0090 (0.0229)	-0.0185 (0.0257)	-0.0046 (0.0120)	0.0413* (0.0240)
MS out 1964-70	0.2944*** (0.0306)	-0.0206 (0.0374)	-0.1197** (0.0490)	-0.0065 (0.1045)	0.0211 (0.0557)	0.1045 (0.0689)	-0.0511 (0.0333)
Observations	6982	6982	6982	6982	6982	6982	6982

Notes: Each column represents a given outcome whose name is specified at the top of the column. Controls are year, month, province of residence at 17, and province at 17-year of birth FE. X_i includes, first, years of completed education at the age of 14, months of service, and the province of service FE. Finally, X_i also includes dummies indicating whether or not the individuals' parents completed mandatory education and whether or not the individuals' parents come from the same CCAA.