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Intersectionalities and care work: circular Bolivian migration in northern Chile[1]

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Abstract: This article analyzes the multiple oppressions that are part of care work and in the circular migration of Bolivian women in northern Chile. Through a qualitative methodology based on in-depth interviews, the analysis draws on the theoretical perspectives of decolonial feminism and intersectionalities. Decolonial feminism operates as a critical framework vis-a-vis global structures and power relations that produce and reproduce the unequal relations that affect migrant women. In turn, the intersectional approach deepens the study of circular migration in cross-border areas, where both social inequalities and simultaneous oppressions are legitimized and consolidated. The findings show that social class, gender, race, and immigration status are all components in the racialization and sexualization of care workers.

Keywords: intersectionality, women, decolonial feminism, care work, circular migration

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Introduction

This text analyzes the situation of Bolivian migrants who perform care work in northern Chile. These women engage in circular migration between the two countries; they leave Chile every three months and then re-enter to continue their work (Leiva, Mansilla, & Comelin, 2017; Comelin & Leiva, 2017).

There are studies on the deteriorating labor conditions that these women face in Latin America; however, our understanding of how Bolivian migrants are situated in a framework of racism, discrimination, and subalternation in Chile is nascent. The inequalities they experience are traversed by the existing gendered and racialized workforce operating in the underground cross-border economy (Sassen, 2003). This article focuses on the subalternation to which these Bolivian workers are subjected. We employ the theoretical paradigms of decolonial feminism and intersectionality, which provides us with a methodological framework whose analytical value is strengthened by its incorporation into an anti-racist and post-colonial critical context.

There are numerous Latin American studies that analyze South–South migration among women involved in care work (Arriagada & Moreno, 2011; Arriagada & Todaro, 2012; Borgeaud-Garciandía, 2017; Carcedo, Lexartza, & Chaves, 2011; Dutra; 2013; Herrera, 2016; Magliano, Perissinotti, & Zenklusen, 2016; Pombo, 2011; Stefoni, 2011; 2013). Likewise, for Chile, there are recent studies of women who migrate from Bolivia and end up doing care work (Comelin & Leiva, 2017; Correa & Vidal, 2013; Leiva, Mansilla, & Comelin, 2017; Leiva & Ross, 2016; Leiva, 2015; Martínez & Soffia, 2013; Barra, 2018). Much of this literature analyzes migratory status, the care work itself, and transnational relations. However, these analyses lack a focus on understanding gender as a racialized and classed concept that acquires a theoretical and practical dimension in the experiences of the migrant women. In contrast, this article delves more deeply into the multiple oppressions endured by Bolivian workers who engage in circular migration.

Intersectionality is a theoretical, methodological, and political perspective (Magliano, 2015) that is employed for the analysis of the different systems of oppression associated with gender, class, and origin that women experience in cultures stratified by both gender and race, insofar as gender proves also to be a race category and race a gender category (Harding, 2004). The debate around intersectionalities allows us to review and critically deploy the languages as well as the conceptual and analytical mechanisms with which we approach the social reality and the challenge of a subject–subject dialogue (Cubillos, 2015). Moreover, this debate lets us question the centrality of some concepts that have contributed to the analysis of particular social phe-

nomena and to the reaffirmation of a kind of political rationalization (Feline, Correa, & Arón, 2019). The notion of intersectionality has taken root in academic discussions on the hegemonic social representations present in the category of migrant women and the multiple violences that affect women.

This article begins with a section describing circular migration between Chile and Bolivia that is intended to facilitate understanding of this phenomenon. The next section considers decolonial feminist thought as critical theory. The third section explores the theoretical–methodological paradigm and its importance for showing a hierarchized subject, which allows for observation of discriminations and power relations. The fourth section describes the study's methodological approach. The fifth section presents our findings in the form of an analysis of the ways in which multiple oppressions interact in the case of Bolivian women involved in care work via circular migration. It explores how these inequalities arise within specific contexts of power and the ways in which different categories are linked with one another. The final section concludes.

Circular migration between Bolivia and Chile

The largest migratory flows into Chile come from its neighboring countries, or at least they did before the Venezuelan migration crisis. According to the annual report of the Department for Foreign Nationals (Departamento de Extranjería y Migración (2019), immigration to Chile has increased exponentially in recent years, going from 0.73% of the overall population in 1982 to 6.67% in 2018: that is, from 83,805 to 1,251,225 people. On the other hand, in the region of Tarapacá, the presence of Bolivian migrants has always been significant, and they currently account for 45.3% of all migration to the region (Departamento de Extranjería y Migración, 2020).

Although geographical proximity plays an important role in Bolivian migration to Chile, the phenomenon is also conditioned by two other historical factors. On the one hand, throughout its history Bolivia has had a culture of mobility (Hinojosa, Pérez, & Cortez, 2000). On the other, people and goods have circulated between Bolivia and northern Chile since time immemorial, encompassing the ethnicities that occupied these regions prior to colonization (Rico & Leiva, 2021).

On the Chile–Bolivia border a series of habitual practices facilitate circular migration, which does not constitute a migration project even though it culminates in work. Bolivians make journeys back and forth thanks to a regulatory framework known as the "Agreement on Residence for Nationals from the Mercosur Member States Bolivia and Chile." Implemented in 2009, it citizens of both countries to cross the border freely by showing their

identity document. The circular migration that takes place is necessarily articulated alongside other social phenomena; as such, it is a function of gender and other dynamics (Albertí, 2018).

There is no single definition of "circular migration" as a concept, although all definitions refer to the displacement of people between countries in a circular pattern of comings and goings (Hinojosa, Pérez, & Cortez, 2000). Piyasiri Wickramasekara (2011) understands circular migration as a migration experience that repeats itself, implying successive processes of migration and return. Steven Vertovec (2007) likewise regards it as a repeated mobility practice, whether on a rotational, multiple, seasonal, or cyclical basis. And for Anna Triandafyllidou (2011; 2013), it is a form of migration that is characterized as international, temporary, repeated, and economically motivated (Leiva & Ross, 2016). It is this latter definition that we employ in the present article, with the additional caveat that it does not involve a change of domicile.

Decolonial feminist thought for reflecting on migrations

The theoretical proposals of the different schools of feminist thought are expressed as theoretical/practical contributions to discussions and readings of the global structures and power relations that are created, recreated, and sustained in most societies around the world, as well as their influence on the inequalities and exclusion experienced by women (Fraser, 2015; Salem, 2016). Within this context paradigms emerged that take into account the implications of colonial history for women and their bodies (Bidaseca, 2011; Espinosa, 2009; Hooks, 2004; Lugones, 2008; Mohanty, 2008; Segato, 2011; Spivak, 2003, and others).

As part of this dynamic, Patricia Hill Collins (2000) notes that hegemonic feminism established two focuses of struggle: the problems that women face in the private sphere (that is, "the personal is the political"), and the causes of oppression in which the patriarchy was reformulated as a sex/gender system. Thus, the category of gender began to enter the field of feminist studies that sought to explain the social inequality stemming from the sex/gender difference in multiple spheres, and to understand the social and symbolic organization of sexual difference so as to analyze the construction of power hierarchies between men and women (Lamas, 2013). Thus, in the context of intersectionality, in order to avoid linear and compartmentalized approaches the analysis must take into account the interconnected complexity of the categories. This means exploring how the intersection between class, race, and gender creates common experiences among women simply because they are women; and why class and race are components of social inequality (Stolcke, 2000).

Critical feminist reflections have become central to theoretical proposals regarding migration and gender because, in the framework of the different systems of subalternation in our societies, it is not enough to interpret the inequalities of migrant women on the basis of gender alone; rather, other axes of inequality must also be taken into account. Decolonial feminism offers up more precise interpretive frameworks with which to investigate the multiple oppressions suffered by Bolivian domestic workers who migrate to Chile.

Moreover, internal criticisms of Latin American feminism became explicit because, from decolonial standpoints, they attempt to think of Latin American feminism in terms of its multiplicity of discourses and to break down the discursive coloniality of hegemonic feminisms (Espinosa, 2009). The objective, among other things, is to reveal the relationships between gender and race in the composition of structured colonial societies.

Authors such as Verena Stolcke (2000) and Mary Nash (2006) refer to the European construction of inequality, arguing that discourses of race and sex/gender correspond to similar deep-seated logics that are founded on the cultural naturalization of difference, constructed ideologically as significant biological facts, and crystalized in an "other" based on the establishment of an absolute difference underpinned by implicit biological essentialism. These discourses are employed to naturalize and reproduce class inequalities, the social construction of race as a notion, and gender discourse in the contemporary world, in an attempt to get around the contradictions of the capitalist model.

In this regard, Latin American theories of decolonial feminism allude to the essential question of how analysis is intersected between patriarchal and colonial oppressions of women in Latin American countries, as part of the construction of female identities there (Rivera, 2010). This is also a criticism of the ethnocentric and universalized character of the subject of feminism (Bidaseca, 2011). The conceptualization of this subject, defined on the basis of women's sexual difference in relation to men, homogenizes women while also invisibilizing other constitutive differences of their subjectivity such as social class, race, or ethnicity (Espinosa, 2009). In this way, postcolonial feminism stresses the importance of glimpsing other forms of oppression that dismantle the illusion of an oppression common to all women, anchored in a patriarchal system perceived in ahistorical terms (Mohanty, 2008).

Along these lines, decolonial feminism challenges Western feminism with regard to its construction from the colonial matrix and the invisibilization of Latin American realities. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2008) argues that any discussion about the intellectual and political construction of feminisms in

the Southern Cone must entail two simultaneous projects: internal criticism of hegemonic Western feminisms, and the formulation of feminist interests and strategies based on autonomy, geography, history, and culture. This entails the questioning of definitions that homogenize the experiences of women, which—together with the suppression of heterogeneity, the subject, and their voices—implies an unmistakable relationship of structural colonial domination in a global context dominated by the West (Bidaseca, 2011; Espinosa, 2009; Mohanty, 2008; Spivak, 2003).

Moreover, an analysis of sexual difference conceived by the patriarchy as monolithic (Espinosa, 2009), singular, and transcultural can only lead us to the establishment of an equally reductionist and homogenous notion of the Southern Cone difference, to borrow from Mohanty's (2008) proposal. Decolonial feminists place emphasis on the gender/race intersection as a means of visibilizing "other" hidden women from both the "women" category and the "migrant" category, the latter of which is understood in homogeneous terms and establishes, as a norm, the dominant positions (Crenshaw, 1991; Hooks, 2004; Lugones, 2008).

Intersectionality as a category for analyzing power relations

Intersectionality marks a paradigm shift when it comes to unraveling the complexity of power relations (Salem, 2016), inequalities, and forms of social oppression towards migrant women, in that it has been closely linked with questions of social justice and the analysis of inequalities, as well as with feminist and human-rights discourses (Viveros, 2009; 2016). It is apparent that gender alone is not enough to explain the experiences of migrant women because gender relations in migratory flows are mediated by ethnic and class relations (Magliano, 2015).

The category of intersectionality was first proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to question the invisibility that affected black working women in the United States, and expanded upon in her study on violence against Afro-descendant women. She defines it as the "expression of a complex system of structures of oppression that are multiple and simultaneous" and show the various forms in which race and gender interact to give shape to complex discrimination of black women in the United States" (p.139).

The intersectional approach draws attention to power relations and denounces the skewed perspectives adopted by some hegemonic feminist discourses (Hill Collins, 2000; Hooks, 2004; Crenshaw, 1991; Sandoval, 2004; Anzaldúa, 2004). Within this conceptualization, as well as the patriarchal system of oppression that characterizes Latin American societies and that has historically discriminated against women, it is possible to identify

other systems that promote exclusion and inequality and impede women's development (Rivera, 2010). Intersectionality explores the simultaneous effects of discrimination that social constructions can generate by alluding to a process that is dynamic, multidimensional, and co-constitutive of how power relations operate, and how they occur on three levels: structural, political and representational (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991).

Structural intersectionality refers to the overlapping of different systems of oppression such as gender, race, and social class, and the specific repercussions of these on women's lives (Crenshaw, 1991). **Political interseccionality** explains how political strategies do not take into account the intersection of racism and the patriarchy. The presentation of policies is problematic, since they center on a single dimension (race, class, or gender) while downplaying other aspects of oppression. This often results in the production or reproduction of greater subalternation of women. **Representational subalternity** concerns the symbolic or cultural construction of the image of women and its function in processes of exclusion, considering the extent to which the public discourse produces and reproduces exclusion and domination.

From a structuralist feminist perspective, Hill Collins (2000) adopts and reinterprets the notion of intersectionality and proposes that the analysis be confined to macro- and micro-sociological questions regarding social structures. To this end, she proposes a matrix of domination that highlights the connections between different systems (also referred to as "domains" or "dimensions") of power in a dynamic way. The matrix clarifies how these systems combine and overlap to give shape to the social organization of power. The main domains of power that Hill Collins (2017) refers to are fourfold. The first is the **structural domain**, whereby the social hierarchy takes shape within social institutions and create elements that organize relations of and access to power in society (law, politics, religion, the economy, communications, the police and armed forces, public policy, and so on). The second is the **disciplinary domain**, which manages the oppression that arises from structural domination (institutions) in order to maintain social hierarchy (through police departments, the media, social media, among others). Third, the **cultural domain** denotes the social practices that produce hegemonic ideas to justify inequalities. This domain of power allows oppression to be socially validated by constructing representations, ideas, and ideologies about social inequality (prejudices, discourses, culture, values, and social media, among others). Finally, the **interpersonal domain** spans the experiences of individuals within intersecting oppressions and includes those intersubjective relations that

shape their life courses. These forms of oppression overlap, justifying intersectionality as a way of approaching the classed and racialized notions of gender, ethnicity, and class.

Similarly, Nira Yuval-Davis (2015) proposes a situated intersectional approach to examine the ways in which different systemic domains create multiple reasons for the production and reproduction of inequalities (Haraway, 1998). Her proposal applies intersectionality as a key element in the social stratification that positions all people in the different axes of social differentiation/social power beyond class, gender, or race/ethnicity, stressing sexuality, age, citizenship, civil status, and capacities. Each axis is autonomous, even though they cut across each other, and create various social positions or establish hierarchies (Yuval-Davis, 2015).

Yuval-Davis adds that intersectional analysis must be situated, contextualized, and historical. It has to be sensitive to the geographical, social, and temporal locations of social actors. Therefore, translocality and transboundary problems—which concern social spaces in which people are located—are significant, as they determine how individuals perceive the world. Yuval-Davis discerns three different facets of intersectional analysis; the first is the positionings of people through socioeconomic grids of power; the second is the experiential and identificatory perspectives of where they belong; and the third is their normative value systems (Yuval-Davis, 2015).

In this way, power is a product of a constant criss-crossing of discourses and normativities. Thus, for example, a woman is a woman in a given society, but simultaneously she may also be young (age category), poor (class category), a migrant (race category), and so on. In the case of Bolivian migrant women, who suffer from violence and discrimination related to multiple identities, the classification of intersectionality is not just a theoretical construct but also becomes reality insofar as it is lived day-to-day. Consequently, analyzing problems from the perspective of intersectionality provides a theoretical framework with which to understand and explain the formation of mobile and intersecting identities, based on the articulation of the diversity of roles and power relations in which these Bolivian workers are immersed.

The intersectionality of gender, class, and racial oppressions as well as other categories of differentiation has been recurrent in recent studies of migration (Anthias, 2012; Bastia, 2014; Lázaro, 2014; Magliano, 2015; Pombo, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Although studies on migration that seek to capture how gender relations influence migratory flows have made advances in this area, their focus has tended to remain on women as subjects of migration or gender, and they show a limited understanding that gender

is also a racialized and classed category. The lack of visibilization, stereotyped difference, and homogenization create the category of "migrant women," defined as victims of the colonial process, of gender violence, and of the social models and imperatives of their own cultures vis-a-vis the image of the white Western woman (Rivera, 2010; Segato, 2011).

Methodological approach

The present study takes a situated feminist perspective. The partial and situated condition of certain knowledges, such as those produced by migrant women—historical subaltern subjects—privileges them epistemologically when it comes to the elucidation of their realities, in what might be described as a different form of objectivity (Haraway, 1998). Using a qualitative methodological strategy, we seek to contribute to the construction of analysis through a lens that does not abet the hegemonic gaze (Gargallo, 2012), and that can therefore center on the experience of Bolivian circular migrant women. This grants us the privilege of looking on from the margins at the context of the care work these women carry out in northern Chile.

Our empirical research consisted of in-depth interviews with Bolivian migrant women,[2] while the discourses are drawn from interviews conducted in 2019 with 12 migrants.[3] The women come from the Bolivian departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, Tarija, and Santa Cruz, and all of them engage in circular migration.

The analysis and presentation of the subjective experiences conforms with the intersectional theoretical framework proposed; thus, we understand that migrations concern relations between populations in which the asymmetrical social statuses and positions of power are a legacy of colonial processes. We seek to explore the predominant role of women within this migrant population, with reference to the gender normativity that assigns them a role of responsibility in caregiving tasks. As María Lugones (2008) points out, such women are characterized by the imposition of a social classification as part of the reproduction of the modern colonial gender system—in this case, one related to type of work.

2 The interviews were recorded and anonymized. The women gave their express authorization for their use through completion of a consent form.

3 The entire research project consisted of in-depth interviews and women's life stories between 2018 and 2021; for the present analysis, we utilized only interviews from 2019.

Results: dominations and inequalities in care work and gender mobility

The findings of this study on intersectionality provide insights into the construction of multiple invisibilities that are structural, political, representational, and cultural. Sara Salem (2016) argues that intersectionality is a way of analyzing a social phenomenon, and that its usefulness depends on the broader theoretical articulations in which the phenomenon unfolds. Hence the need to further our understanding of how migrant women are besieged by a specific form of subalternation that may be heterogeneous but is also a globalized reality, in that women are subalterns around the world (Rivera, 2010).

First, this is of relevance for understanding the structural dimension of the intersectional proposal, in terms of the strategies that Bolivian migrant women deploy to organize their everyday lives and resist their subalternity. Amid current capitalist conditions and social transformations, the most transitory, temporary, and circular forms of migration emerge as ways in which migrants take advantage of the opportunities presented to them in different labor markets, to improve their economic and material conditions:

> Mmm, I took out […] I got, I took out a bank loan and started up a small restaurant, right? But things went badly and later I couldn't make the repayments, and as I was leaving I was told that there [Chile] they were paying better, twice as much as there [...], so I came here. (Cristina)

Migratory dynamics in Latin America have been driven by economic processes associated with the movements of production frontiers (Molinero & Avallone, 2020), and are reflected in population impoverishment and in an increase in social inequalities of which women bear the brunt. In this context, there have been notable changes in the ways in which gender relations are organized within political (Crenshaw, 1991) and cultural intersectionalities (Hill Collins, 2017), which brings about the feminization of alternative cross-border survival circuits that run counter to the geographies of globalization (Sassen, 2003): Because we make a little more than in our country; economically Chile is better, much better… And the pay is very low. (Gabriela)

The circuits in which the migrant women are situated are little known or invisible, they pertain to the informal economy, and are traditionally and predominantly composed of women—resulting in the ongoing feminization of the workforce and of poverty. The hiring of Bolivian women who traverse cross-border circuits for care work is cost-effective and creates benefits at the expense of these migrants and their unequal conditions (Sassen, 2003):

> I don't like the work, but what can I do? Where [else] will I go? Now, this morning, I've talked to the lady because she won't let me wash my clothes. She says it wastes water, that it's too expensive, that there's no food. There's nothing. So, I told her "ma'am, I'm going to have to leave, because I think you have more problems than I do." Yes, she told me, that no, that at least she helps me with my children, that I ate some bread, and that tomorrow she'd pay me. (Silvia)

The consolidation of these circuits is due to structural and political intersectional dimensions: these are women who do not have a definite plan to settle in their destination country. They undertake a process marked by spells of transitory labor and residency and permanent access to their places of origin, and this often becomes a regular dynamic over time. The inequality manifests itself in the economic relations related to the remittances the women send home—a product of the work they do and an inevitable category of discrimination (Parella, 2003). Thus, the economic model reproduces and challenges the inequalities experienced by migrant women. Although this can facilitate meeting basic needs, it is necessary to focus on labor conditions and the types of work that migrants do, and how they intersect with the traditional categories of race, class, and gender:

> So, the thing is I have to keep on working, working, and you put up with it because it's live-in […] Or at times there are people who, because once I had a boss who said to me "You have to put up with it because I'm paying you. You're under my roof and I pay you" […] I'm one of the few people who'll answer back [but this time] I stayed quiet and wept [...] There's nothing else for it. (Judith)

Recent decades have witnessed a growing presence of women engaged in a large variety of cross-border trajectories (Bastia & Piper, 2019). Although migration promises mutual financial benefits, promoted by neoliberal economic globalization with its forms of labor supply and demand, it is bound up with racialized gender. Given the informality of the work undertaken by the Bolivian migrants studied, these women do not have recourse to legal or labor rights. The work opportunities available to the women are permeated by a class strategy associated with gender roles and thus are basically linked to domestic and care work. The formation and the consolidation of these circuits is, to a large extent, a consequence of more lax structural conditions (Sassen, 2003):

> No, no contract, just informal (Cristina)
>
> It makes me feel bad, because I don't complain about the work like I do the food. She, when she sends me to my room, she comes in and says: "go rest for a while," she says. She takes out [their food], they eat, and when they've finished eating they call me (Cristina).
>
> I was live-in but I stopped doing that because it was [...] because I didn't speak to anyone. The lady didn't talk much and the children were also in their bedrooms, in their rooms they were. But, well, it was a prison (Gabriela)

Within insecure borders, migrant women face risks and racialized violence. Their migratory status can create vulnerabilities that are at once coercive and not readily reducible to gender. The state does not provide protection, which poses threats and risks to the women's security (Clavijo, Pereira, & Basualdo, 2019):

> […] And this isn't enough at all. "Go back to your country," she told me, and she sent me back to my country [laughs] and I had to go there. At the border I started crying, because I needed to work, and a man from one of the big trucks […] says to me "why are you crying?" […] "I want to go work there." The man kindly said to me "I'm going to Iquique, but don't go taking anything [into the country] that would cause me trouble." "No," I said, "I've got nothing," I said. "Please, take me now," I said to myself. I checked my suitcase in case I was taking anything that could get him in trouble, but I didn't have anything. The man got me in [to Chile posing] as his wife [laughs], and didn't even know me [….]. (Gabriela)
>
> Eh, I never had problems here. At first yes, I was afraid, it was the first time I brought her […] A year here, because of the thing with the father not wanting to, to […] give permission. So I grabbed my daughter. No, I should say […] my [other] daughter took her to the border for me, the two, the three of us crossed the border […] All the same it was the first time she came here. (Ilze)

Thus, Bolivian women can enter Chile without having to apply for a visa, unlike immigrants of other nationalities. They are entitled to a temporary visa of one year, without an employment contract. But to be able to work, they must pay for a special work permit. What we observe is that these migrants tend to leave and re-enter Chile every three months without

opting for the special work permit, largely on grounds of cost (Comelin & Leiva, 2017; Leiva, Mansilla, & Comelin, 2017):

> I finished the three months and left. I went back to my country and then returned. I didn't want to return again to another home […] because of the pressure you carry inside of you… Yes, no, eh […] I went back three months ago and during these three months I went to report because they give you ninety days; so I went to report; came back. (Griselda)

Circular migration becomes a constant spiral of permanent ruptures and uprooting, given they are transitory, complex, involving mismatches and different destinations, and based on multiple chains of gaps and inequalities. When women migrate, they leave a care gap (Hochschild, 2001) in their families of origin that is generally filled by another woman:

> They were left alone because I didn't have any family in La Paz anymore. I had a sister-in-law from the dad of my children, his sister. She checked up on them every day to see how they were doing and then not any longer […] Each month I had to […] And she [my employer] sent me each month to see them […] And she, on the calls, let me see my children every day on her computer, because I didn't have one and she, later, gave me a cell-phone that I didn't have the money for. (Carla)

On the other hand, one of the major factors in this kind of migration is the so-called "crisis of care," to which it responds. The care crisis in Chile (Acosta, 2013; Arriagada & Todaro, 2012; Comelin & Leiva 2017) entails a shortfall of care services that must instead be obtained on the market, since there are few welfare policies that would allow this demand. This "care drain" has led families and predominantly women to design strategies aimed at addressing their care demands. The measures adopted include reducing working hours, turning to other women in the family for help, or hiring domestic workers.

A society that systematically privileges capital over human wellbeing creates a dilemma that has economic, political, and social dimensions. The result is a crisis not only of care but also of reproduction of life in its broadest sense (Fraser, 2016). This situation is an expression of socio-reproductive contradictions in which there is a demand for care due to both the greater participation of women in paid work outside the domestic space and the lack of co-responsibility for care in households. The intersectional connection is implicit, revealing how enmeshed migrant women are in colonial logics of race, class, and gender relations:

> I don't have family in Tarija. My children live alone. Alone. My family lives, uh, further away. I have like eight hours more to travel to get to [....] (Ilze)

> No, I never wanted to travel. When they [her children] were smaller [...] because my idea is to go to Spain, but I didn't want to for that reason, because I didn't have anyone to look after them. (Cristina)

This is a structural dynamic that generates invisibilized and unrecognized labor systems, extending the gap in these transnational spaces of care (Ryburn, 2016). This gap is understood as those overlapping and interwoven social spaces that represent legal, economic, social, and political aspects in which migrant women are included and excluded simultaneously. A clear example of this inclusion/exclusion is the sexual and racialized division of care work and the legal regulation of migrations, coupled with the economic motivations of the migratory project. These spaces are produced through everyday interactions based on structural factors and subjectivities, and, at the same time, they are impacted within a transnational social zone:

> Yes [laughs] I didn't have any more and, so, with the days and the food, I said to myself "what am I going to do?" I don't have and didn't have anything for my main meal a lot of the time because a mandarin or a banana was cheaper. We would have our meal, a group of us women, we had bread with banana and that was our lunch, so that it would cost us less. The thing is that we didn't know if we were going to find work, if we weren't going to find any, and we had to be prepared for whatever came because we were in an unknown country. Who could lend us a hand? (Judith)

This system of remunerated domestic work leads to a situation in which migrant women become denationalized citizens (Sassen, 2003) in a changing, unstable, and fearful context. This also creates uncertain citizenship (Ryburn, 2016), primarily because it unfolds in an underground economy; that is, it involves a form of work that is executed in the informal sector, within a private residence, and without any effective mechanism of regulation by the state (Pérez & Llanos, 2017). The options for women who migrate and fill this labor niche are limited to residency agreements authorized by the state, or to circular labor:

> I went ahead; a little bit earlier, I went just like that to the seashore and cried for about an hour, and I said "what am I going to do here? Where am I going to go, where to?" And I looked

> one way, the other way. It's as if they take you off to a desert, because where are you going to stay? You don't know the money, you don't know people, you've got no one to call and say "I arrived." It's something, it's an experience in your life that's very […] how can I put it […] very painful. That's how it was for me. (Ilze)

> Well, for financial reasons as well, because I decided to come here, because in truth there you earn very little and because I've got my children who're studying. So, the money doesn't go far. (Serena)

The prevailing economic conditions in Bolivia force other women to migrate in search of work options (Bastia & Piper, 2019; Ryburn, 2016). The capitalist economic system depends on social reproduction activities; it creates an international division of labor that has its origins in poverty and unemployment, as well as in demographic dynamics that mobilize women to migrate and work in domestic service or as care workers in other countries (Hochschild, 2001; Sassen, 2003).

This context creates conditions that lead to a dearth of care for those who migrate, in that the social structures in their country of origin do not provide sufficient social protection for the care of their children, or their elderly or disabled relatives. It is generally women who assume care work, and they are invisibilized, exploited, and subalterned. All this demonstrates that the category of gender is transversal and exerts an intersectional influence in many senses:

> It hasn't been easy at all […] It's not easy to leave behind your children and, worse still, they don't have a dad. […] It's bad, it feels horrible. I drank a cup of tea and it seemed like in the cup of tea their happy faces were looking at me […] The lady gave me food and I ate meat, I ate chicken, I ate rice and I asked: "what are my children eating there in my country?" So, no way, no. […] And the years went by, you get used to it and now I'm used to it [laughs]. I'm used to leaving my children behind […] I've helped them grow up by working here. (Gabriela)

Global chains of care between countries of origin and destination emerge in this dual crisis of care (Carrasco, Borderías, & Torns, 2011; Hochschild, 2001; Parreñas, 2001; Yeates, 2012), which, in the case of Chile and Bolivia, we conceptualize as "cross-border chains of care." Women from countries with less propitious economic conditions, such as

Bolivia, migrate to undertake care work and leave other women, generally family members, to look after their children or their elderly or sick relatives:

> To begin with I felt that I couldn't, because there in Bolivia when I worked I never sat down with my bosses; I ate in the kitchen, you see? Not in the dining room along with them. Well, here it's very different [laughs] in that sense, it is. (Serena)

Thus, the assignment of care work to women emerges not as a domain of reality but a position within general social existence. Global chains of care (Hochschild, 2001) have demonstrated that the mobility of migrants, propelled by a lack of care in certain countries, precipitates yet more care needs. This mobility, based on economic recessions in the countries of origin, is a way of tackling the crises of care in destination countries—but at the same time it creates new care crises at home (Arriagada & Todaro, 2012; Pérez Orozco, 2007):

> Take my children. Before I had a boss who was very good. She was a teacher, Miss Vivian, who lived in the southern part. So, I worked with her for many years and she sent me every month; I mean, she gave me my pay on the first of the month, and she'd say "go to Bolivia on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday." On the Sunday I had to go back in at night and work to see my children who were littler. I'm a mom and a dad to my children; so, she was very good, that boss and, that's how it is. (Griselda)

In this way, international chains and links of care are established. In general, capitalist societies separate social reproduction from economic production, and so the former is associated with women and its importance and value is downplayed (Fraser, 2016):

> Aaah, well, it's as if [...] imagine not being able to hug your son, but you're hugging an angel, a little angel that also communicates it, right? That affection can also project your affection as a human being; it's nice. Of course, it hurts not being able to hug your children, but it's also doing good to another person. (Gabriela)

However, these societies compel their formal economies to depend on the same social reproduction processes whose value they reject, in which relations of care are built under conditions of inequality—. These situations are revealed in the lives of Bolivian migrant women, in social practices and in the different institutions that in the end provide an outcome expressed in terms of power.

In this way, the effects of circular migration on domestic care work—which encompasses cross-border networks of care—serve to visibilize gender inequalities as an array of power relations that can be analyzed through their mutual construction as intersecting oppressions, via structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal domains. At a macro level, these inequalities overlap with the social, cultural, and economic structures in the countries of origin and destination. At a micro level, and as a consequence of the macro level, inequalities are observed among both the women who require care work and those who provide it, taking into account variables such as ethnicity, social class, and place of origin (Pérez Orozco 2009), and these repercussions intersect and mutually reinforce each other.

These migrant women are racialized, which adds epistemic violence to their everyday experiences of risk, uncertainty, and violence. The women describe the dimensions of domination and discrimination that affect their families and especially the women within them, to whom their care responsibilities are redistributed (Arriagada & Todaro, 2012; Pérez Orozco, 2007):

> Hmmm, it was something that not even I expected. Well, people talked to me about Chile, but up to that day what was most difficult was that I felt much sorrow. My little girl was attached to me, my son needed to study […] I had no money. I didn't make enough in my country. I didn't even have a house [...] I rented a room and I had nothing else, you see. (Gabriela)

> Yes, I'm constantly going back for my children (Judith)

> Because everything's all, [laughs], uh, before they went in and went out [of Chile]; so, I'm telling you that the first time my daughters came here, their sister isn't from there either, more of us went […] She came from Tarija, on the border. … From here, she went on alone. I told her "Get off the bus and go straight through […]" "Yes, Mom" [she replied]. So, my daughter left her on own. Now she comes here all by herself. Of course, she enters legally (Ilze)

Bolivian circular migrant women experience inequalities that intersect and are subject to systems of power in which they are left subalterned. They engage in care work through exhausting workdays for which they are paid little. Therefore, they experience a broad spectrum of precarious living conditions as a result of the multiple intersectionalities that manifest themselves in their lives and their power relations (Garcés-Estrada, Leiva-Gómez, & Comelin-Fornes, 2021).

Conclusions

To understand the multiple oppressions involved in the care work of Bolivian circular migrant women, it must be recalled that migrations and care work are related to a social organization that is structured around power relations permeated by intersecting dimensions of gender, class, and race. That is, hegemonic positions are adopted and a field of power is constituted that involves exclusions and inequalities.

To begin with, migrant women experience significant inequalities that are affected by contextual elements such as migratory status, border securitization, the labor market, the underground economy, public policies and institutions, the sexual division of labor, and others. In this regard, women experience numerous limited conditions of existence due to the multiple intersectionalities that exist in their lives, in their labor power relations, and in their Chile–Bolivia mobility (Garcés-Estrada, Leiva-Gómez, & Comelin-Fornes, 2021).

Bolivian women who migrate to do care work because they are marginalized from the national economy constitute what Galindo (2013) calls "the exiles of neoliberalism." In this phenomenon, women from a certain sector of society give up their care responsibilities, which in turn fall to other women who are willing to assume them, thereby reproducing chains of disparities marked by limited salaries and unequal labor conditions. So, women organize their lives among various positions of subalternity, domination, or inequality that they occupy.

To understand the category of care it is necessary to expand our perception of the contextual conditions and experiences that are indispensable to overcoming women's inequality, taking into account neoliberal ideology. Intersectionality entails an understanding of care as a simultaneous construction across different dimensions: class, since, in our case, the women come from impoverished territories; gender, because they engage in domestic and care work; race, given that these are Bolivian women who belong to certain ethnicities; as well as other aspects such as migratory status and/or project—in this case, circular migration.

At the same time, economic thinking has placed supreme value on productive labor to the detriment of reproductive labor, which is not recognized as labor at all; this contributes to the positioning of women as people who in essence are ideal for caregiving and who ought to assume this responsibility as a natural part of their domestic work. Care work is vital, in that its objective is to sustain human life and, therefore, it constitutes the nexus between the private or reproductive sphere and the public or productive sphere. If we add to this the fact that caregiving, unlike market labor, entails a concrete

relationship and specific desires and affects, the process through which it is performed is more important than the final outcome.

Ultimately, circular migration complicates still further the situations of oppression in which women find themselves, in that they are constantly obliged to organize their world to find work (Albertí, 2017). This, then, is a situated intersectionality in which the interactions between categories have a particular significance, given the conditions of mobility.

In this context, there is a need to recognize the social and historical construction that Bolivian migrant women produce based on their experiences. Moreover, it must be understood that they are afflicted by a specific form of subalternity. Indeed, the circular migration of Bolivian women is pervaded by a gender order and by the political, social, economic structures of Chile and Bolivia. Care work not only provides an income; it is also a terrain on which different axes of oppression overlap at the structural, political, and disciplinary levels.

Bolivia's social conjuncture has activated a habitual human mobility that, throughout history, has been reconfigured towards different destination countries based on the characteristics and the situations of each territory and in response to specific labor demands. Different states have opened or closed their borders to the entry of migrants based on their productive needs. In this context, a good deal of cheap labor is produced by the state itself by way of its migration policies and specific inter-country agreements, resulting in a particular kind of management of human mobility. It therefore follows that circular migrant women, as vulnerable workers, are formed as weakened labor by way of state and international laws and policies.

The specific form of subalternity that these workers experience in the sphere of care, although common to all of them, is constructed homogeneously in various social spaces. Thus, we must understand the experiences of Bolivian migrant women within a global narrative, but one that is forged by way of a multiplicity of experiences, social practices, senses of belonging, and value systems. This means considering that the position of migrant women, in many cases, is an expression of oppression. Nonetheless, some women will experience this oppression in a concentrated form given the juxtaposition of various factors of subalternity.

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