

# Women in (Dis)placement: The Field of Studies on Migrations, Social Remittances, Care and Gender in Chile\*

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**ABSTRACT** | This article presents current perspectives on the gender approach to the study of migration in Chile between 1990 and 2018, contextualizing it in light of international debates in the social sciences. We will discuss how the feminization and the growth of Latin American migrations have given rise to a prolific field of research, as exemplified by studies conducted in central and northern Chile. We will show how the concepts of social remittances and caregiving permeate the Chilean debate on migrant women. We conclude with reflections on topics and perspectives to be incorporated into the Chilean research agenda on gender and migration.

**KEYWORDS** | Care; Chile; gender; migration; social remittances

## Mujeres en (des)plazamiento: el campo de estudios sobre migración, remesas sociales, cuidados y género en Chile

**RESUMEN** | Se presenta un estado del arte sobre el enfoque de género en los estudios de la migración en Chile entre 1990 y 2018, contextualizándolo a la luz de debates internacionales de las ciencias sociales. Abordaremos cómo la feminización y el incremento de las migraciones latinoamericanas inauguran un prolijo campo de investigaciones, articulado a través de estudios desarrollados en el centro y en el norte de Chile. Señalaremos cómo los conceptos de remesas sociales y cuidados permean el debate chileno sobre las mujeres migrantes. Finalizamos con reflexiones sobre temas y perspectivas a ser incorporados en la agenda chilena de investigaciones sobre género y migración.

**PALABRAS CLAVE** | Chile; cuidados; género; migración; remesas sociales

## Mulheres em (des)locamento: o campo de estudos sobre migração, fluxos sociais, cuidados e gênero no Chile

**RESUMO** | Apresenta-se um estado da arte sobre a abordagem de gênero nos estudos da migração no Chile entre 1990 e 2018, contextualizando-o à luz de debates internacionais das ciências sociais. Abordaremos como a feminização e o aumento das migrações latino-americanas inauguram um amplo campo de pesquisas, articulado

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por meio de estudos desenvolvidos no centro e no norte do Chile. Indicamos como os conceitos de “fluxos sociais” e “cuidados” permeiam o debate chileno sobre as mulheres migrantes. Finalizamos com reflexões sobre temas e perspectivas a serem incorporados na agenda chilena de pesquisas sobre gênero e migração.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE | Chile; cuidados; fluxos sociais; gênero; migração

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to offer a contextualized review of the debates around gender and migration in Chile. It is the result of a state-of-the-art review of publications on the subject in Chile and of a second review of international debates. Both reviews were influenced by our empirical experience working on the issue of female migrants in Chile from 2011 onwards. The analytic perspective adopted in the following pages centers on a critical discussion of the ways migrant women’s experiences are represented both in Chilean and international social sciences literature. We are particularly interested in understanding the possibilities and limitations of the debate on migrant women’s agency, linking the uses of this concept to wider changes in understanding gender, the care economy, identities and intersectionality. Last but not least, our review also seeks to bridge the gap between Latin American and anglophone literature sources on these issues, fostering an interdisciplinary (and intercultural) reading that touches on multiple fields in the social sciences and diverse national traditions of research.

In the second section, after this introduction, we offer a general overview of the feminization of international migration in Chile since the mid-90s. The third section deals with the emergence of the gender perspective in international migration studies between 1970 and 1990. The fourth section will look at the period between 1995 and 2004, when the debate on the feminization increase in Latin American migration to Chile sparked a new field of research in the country. The fifth section discusses the period between 2005 and 2011, when the concepts of social remittances and caregiving permeated the Chilean debate on women migrants. In the sixth section, we present the results of studies on gender in migration in Chile from 2012 onwards, highlighting how regional research affected the choice of topics and perspective. Finally, we offer our analysis of what should be incorporated into the future Chilean gender and migration research agenda.

## Migrant Women in Chile: A General Overview

Chile has seen a significant absolute rise in international migration since 1995 (Godoy 2007, 42; Martínez-Pizarro 2003b, 1; Navarrete 2007, 179; Schiappacasse 2008, 23). This rise has been accompanied by a diversification in

migrants’ country of origin, especially since 2010,<sup>1</sup> and it is characterized by three general features.

Firstly, Peruvians have consolidated their position as the main migrant group. In the 1992 census, they ranked fourth (7,649 individuals), behind Argentines (34,415), Spaniards (9,849) and Bolivians (7,729). In the 2002 census, they had become the second largest group, at 39,084 individuals (Guizardi & Garcés 2012, 15). By 2009, that number had reached 130,959, outnumbering Argentines (60,597), Bolivians (24,116) and Ecuadoreans (19,089) (DEM 2010). In 2015, Peruvians made up 31.7% of Chile’s migrant population, “followed by Argentines (16.3%), Bolivians (8.8%), Colombians (6.1%) and Ecuadoreans (4.7%)” (Rojas-Pedemonte & Dittborn 2016, 14). The way Chileans “received” these Andean migrants was influenced by their historical experiences of ethnic and racial conflict with neighboring countries. In Chile, identity conflicts stemming from the process of setting national borders with Peru and Bolivia in the nineteenth century have left deep marks on the social imagination of a significant portion of the population. According to these imaginaries, certain nationalities (especially Peruvian and Bolivian) are associated with the indigenous condition, and this foments a generally discriminatory attitude towards migrant men and women of both nationalities.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the Metropolitan Region of Santiago is the biggest pole of attraction for migration in absolute terms. However, when the figures are considered as a proportion of total inhabitants of a region, the northern regions of the country see the most migration. According to the 2002 census, 64.81% of Chile’s migrants resided in Santiago

1 International migrants made up 2.3% of Chile’s total population in 2014 (Rojas-Pedemonte & Dittborn 2016, 10). The international average for the same year was 3.3% (UN 2015a, 1) while that in “developed” countries was 11.5% (Rojas-Pedemonte & Dittborn 2016, 10). In 2016, Chile had the fifth-highest proportion of migrants among countries in the region (Rojas-Pedemonte & Dittborn 2016, 10-11). In 2015, the country was fourth among South American countries in absolute numbers, with 469,000 migrants (UN 2015b). State agencies estimated that the Chilean migrant population would exceed 900,000 in 2016 (DICOEX 2005, 11).

2 However, studies on the migration to Chile of those self-identifying as indigenous people of Peruvian and Bolivian origin (usually members of the Aymara and Quechua ethnic groups) are recent. Few of these studies have addressed the specificity of the female condition. For a discussion on the subject, see Guizardi *et al.* (2017b).

(DEM 2010, 15),<sup>3</sup> which is home to 40% of the national population. Migrants thus represented 3.35% of Santiago's total population (DEM 2010, 16). In the regions of Tarapacá, Arica y Parinacota and Antofagasta, migrants made up 6.66%, 6.10% and 3.7%, respectively, of the population in 2009 (DEM 2010, 16-17), and 7.4%, 5.8% and 4.6% in 2015 (Rojas-Pedemonte & Dittborn 2016, 12-13).

Thirdly, there has been a clear feminization of migration from Latin American countries. In the 1992 census, practically all the migrant groups (such as Argentinean, Peruvian, Bolivian, Ecuadorean, Brazilian and Colombian migrants) showed a slight preponderance of women. By the 2002 census the feminization of the populations had increased: all groups except Argentineans registered higher numbers of women than men. The Chilean Department for Foreign Affairs and Migration (Spanish acronym DEM) data for 2009 states that women constituted absolute majorities: Peruvian women made up 57% of the total number of migrants from that country; Bolivian women, 54%; Ecuadoreans, 55%; Colombians, 58.5%, and Brazilians, 55% (DEM 2010).<sup>4</sup> Between 2009 and 2013, the proportion of women in the international migrant population grew from 51.5% to 55.1%, according to Chile's National Socio-economic Characterization Survey (CASEN) (2013, 7). However, the 2015 CASEN registered a decrease in this proportion, putting the percentage of women migrants at 51.9%.

This portrait of the migration landscape is also related to some features of the Chilean national context. Upon its return to democracy at the beginning of the 1990s, Chile entered a period of growth and economic stability (Martínez-Pizarro 2003c, 1; Navarrete 2007, 179; Núñez & Holper 2005, 291; Núñez & Torres 2007, 7; Schiappacasse 2008, 23; Stefoni 2005, 283-284). This, together with the economic and political crises in neighbouring countries (mainly Peru and Bolivia [Araújo, Legua & Ossandón 2002, 10]), led to significant Andean migration towards the central regions of Chile. This trend intensified after September 2001: due to the increasingly restrictive migration policies of the USA and Europe, interregional migration in South America grew, and Chile was part of this pattern (Araújo, Legua & Ossandón 2002, 9; Lipszyc 2005, 11). It was only around this time that migrant communities began to be a topic of academic debate in the country. Even so, the issue of migration was already present in Chilean political speeches and media (Browne-Sartori

& Castillo-Hinojosa 2013; Browne-Sartori *et al.* 2011; Póo 2009; Quevedo & Zuñiga 1999), and it was this new relevance to public debate that sparked the interest and attention of social scientists. The latter had shown little interest in international Latin American migration to Chile prior to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Grimson & Guizardi 2015; Jensen 2009).

As several researchers have shown, migration (including cross-border mobility) of individuals from neighboring Andean countries to northern Chile has been a constant historically (Guizardi & Garcés 2012, 2013; Tapia 2012, 2015; Tapia & Ramos 2013). But for the central areas of Chile, this migration was something new, first occurring in the 1990s (Grimson & Guizardi 2015). The arrival of large numbers of these migrants to the national capital, Santiago, awakened nationalist imaginaries and myths about identity differences between Chileans, Peruvians and Bolivians. This rekindled processes and disputes that date back to the 19th century (Guizardi & Garcés 2014).

However, in contrast to other South American countries, the migration debate in Chile was sparked by major concerns regarding the feminine aspect of the phenomenon. The first studies on this topic were published by an important core group of female researchers who paid close attention to the gender dimension of the phenomenon (see: Acosta 2011; Araújo *et al.* 2002; Erazo Vega 2009; Godoy 2007; Liberona 2012; Mora 2008; Núñez & Holper 2005; Núñez & Torres 2007; Stefoni 2002, 2005, 2009; Stefoni & Fernández 2011; Tapia & Gavilán 2006; Tapia & Ramos 2013; Tijoux 2002, 2007, 2011). Between 2005 and 2011, the studies focused on women migrants (often Peruvian) (Guizardi & Garcés 2012). Thus, we can argue that the feminization of migration became a unifying key idea which initially structured debates on international migration in Chile, as we will detail in the following pages.

### Female Migration in International Debates (1970 - 1990)

For most of the 20th century, women were secondary actors in the debate on international migration (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Gregorio 1998; González 2007). Androcentrism and Eurocentrism in analytical approaches prevented researchers from realizing the fundamental role played by female migrants —not only in the structuring of migration networks, but also in the social reproduction of the families and economies of migration (Martínez-Pizarro 2003a). Although some studies from last century did note the presence (or importance) of women in the migrant family and community “private life”, they portrayed them as circumscribed by a fictitious domestic space, isolated from an (also fictitious) public space (Herrera 2012). This led to the consolidation of an analytical bias in the international literature on migration studies: the representation of women as “agents without agency”.

3 According to Chile's National Socio-economic Characterization Survey (*Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional de Chile*) (CASEN 2006) Santiago's migrant population is somewhat larger, comprising 68% of the country's total foreign population (Contreras, Ruiz-Tagle & Sepúlveda 2013, 10).

4 Using data taken from Chile's 2006 National Socio-economic Characterization Survey, Acosta (2011, 218), found that the percentage of feminization diverged from 2002 census data. In 2006 women made up 56.4% of Argentinean migrants, 57.8% of Peruvians, 57% of Bolivians and 49% of Ecuadoreans.

They were presented as subjects whose voices, performances and actions go unnoticed in the political and economic spheres of migrant life (in what some analysts have called the “public space” of migrant communities).<sup>5</sup>

In the last few decades, scientific output on migration has become a very fruitful area for contemporary research. The social sciences owe a large part of their recent contributions to the dialogue about the relation between the migration phenomenon and gender aspects (Gregorio 1997; González 2010). This output, which has been described as immense, established links with feminist approaches which, despite some rejection from more orthodox currents in academia, have been fundamental in developing accounts that break through the discursive and interpretive hegemony of the social sciences (Pérez-Orozco 2014, 43).

Currently, we have a robust body of studies showing how migrant women incarnate the compatibility of the processes of capital valorization with the sustaining of life (Alicia 1997; Aranda 2003; Coe 2011; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Ávila 1997; Sørensen 2008; Sørensen & Vammen 2014; Vertovec 2004). But this acceptance of the inseparability of the production-reproduction cycle did not happen overnight. Quite the opposite: it was a drawn-out process over many years. Gregorio (2011) explains it through two categories of analysis: change and social reproduction.

The concept of social reproduction is part of the Marxist debates that were reinterpreted by feminist thought from the 70s onwards (Ferguson 2008, 43). According to the Marxist argument, in order for the capitalist mode of production to exist, it must not only produce the conditions for its existence but also for its continuity in time (Laslett & Brenner 1989). Capitalist production implicitly requires the reproduction of mechanisms that encourage maintaining divisions, inequalities and asymmetries not only between classes but also between internal blocks of the same class (Bourdieu 2011). There would be a strong link between the system’s continuity and its immanent reproduction: social change would thus depend on breaking this cycle, requiring the rupture of social reproduction strategies.

Extrapolating from Althusser’s (1988) argument, according to which certain social institutions such as the family, the state, the church, and the school are central to maintaining these strategies that reproduce inequality, the feminist argument questions the subalternization of

gender that underlies these strategies (Ferguson 2008). This debate exposes the fact that an important part of the reproduction process of the productive mode rests on women, given their predominant role in “reproducing” new generations. Thus, any perspective aiming to produce social change must by necessity advocate a change in the asymmetries in the division of labour and power between genders.

The categories “change” and “social reproduction” have clearly bridged the international dialogue on migration and gender relations from the 70s onwards. Moreover, they show how gender debates contributed to the development of migration theory. However, according to Gregorio (2011), we must go back several decades to locate the beginning of this debate, to a time when the analytical questions on women in migration were mainly focused on *social change*. In this initial research, scholars asked themselves whether, as a consequence of migration, gender relations would become more egalitarian, or whether the same relations of inequality and subordination that existed in countries of origin would be reproduced at the destination. It was proposed that migration led to a shift from one gender system (that of the country of origin) to another (that of the destination), and a certain transformative potential for women was attributed to it. Gregorio (2011, 55) called this approach “the dual systems of gender”.

Research using this approach focused on what changed and what remained static between countries of origin and destination. Borders emerged not so much as porous spaces but rather as territories anchored to the nation state. This approach was marked by a particular form of methodological nationalism, since the link between society and nation state was assumed in a territorially isomorphic manner, as though borders tacitly delimited a cultural, political and relational separation between societies and subjects. Thus, a correspondence was established between nationality, territory and ways of being and belonging, implying a homogenizing vision of the gender identities (and relations) on both sides of the border.

During this period, which covered the 80s and 90s, the literature on women in migration grew rapidly in the fields of history (Gabaccia 1992), sociology (Pedraza 1991; Kofman 2004) and, in particular, anthropology (Brettel & Deberjois 1992; Biujs 1996; Mahler & Pessar 2001; Gregorio 1998, 2012).<sup>6</sup> This latter discipline gradually positioned itself as *avant-garde* in its theorizing about

5 After the Second World War, many European countries recruited male migrants for reconstruction works. Some of these workers managed to reunite their families; this implied a complementary female migration that, soon after, would acquire labor centrality in host societies. For example, there was significant migration of women nurses from the Caribbean to the UK starting in the 1950s.

6 The debates, categories and topics of reflection through which this gender-migration relationship is expressed took on different dimensions in different countries (and in different contexts within each country). Therefore, the history of these debates takes on contextually specific contours: for example, the contributions from US, Spanish or Chilean academia are distinct.

gender in migration (Gregorio 1998; Ramírez 1998; Herranz 1997), thanks to the efforts of generations of feminist anthropologists who gave visibility to the differences between male and female migrants' experiences, thus contributing to the definition of women as an active migrant subject.

It was not until the end of the 80s, once the turbulent globalized transition to the present century had already started, that women began to appear in international studies on migration as subjects with agency (Herrera 2012). Firstly, an agency freeing them of the subordinating ties of gender. This was particularly true of the 90s, when many analysts held certain hopes for the "empowering" possibilities of globalization. However, by the first decade of the 21st century, social scientists in different disciplines had confirmed that the migrant reality discredited any utopian interpretations. In light of the cruel and asymmetric outcomes of globalization, ontologically contradictory agency began to be observed in international migrants, with a complex interplay between resistance to processes of female subordination and the strengthening of the bonds that reproduce them. It was observed that these bonds are increasingly intertwined in a transnational way, constructing heterogeneities and asymmetries of gender between the localities of origin, transit and destination (Gregorio & González 2012).

This change of analytical perspective is due to the work of researchers who share the female condition and trajectories of family migration (or even their own experience as migrants) with the women they study, fostering an epistemic turn and positioning gender as an unavoidable axis, central and articulating, for the study of migrant communities. This transformation is one of those that structured the emergence of the transnational perspective, which has become a preponderant one in international debates on migration.<sup>7</sup> It was women with a personal history of migration who carried forward the debate on the concept of transnationalism in migration in the mid-90s. Some of these women, such as Nina Glick-Schiller and Peggy Levitt, are from the United States and write from universities in that country, but were born into migrant families. Others, such as Cristina Szanton-Blanc, Ninna Nyberg Sørensen and Bela Feldman-Bianco, were themselves migrants to the United States.

Studies in diverse disciplines from the 80s onwards show that gender is a category that influences the decision to migrate. It has a decisive impact on choices such as how and when to migrate and who migrates, as well as the process of settling in to the receiving

society (González 2010). In some of these studies the feminine experience was addressed in a somewhat reductionist way, establishing that the gender perspective's fundamental demand was to place the analytical focus on women (Gulati 1993; Phizacklea 1983). But it is important to mention that this change was a critical decision for many female researchers: it was a research choice made with the clear objective of correcting the invisibility of women produced by androcentric approaches (Morokvasic 1984; Parreñas 2001). In the following section we will give an overview of these debates, the historic framework of their emergence and their interaction with the specific Chilean context.

### The First Stage (1995-2004)

Studies from this period coincided with a time when migrant remittances gained prominence in academic debates. Increasingly, researchers questioned whether remittances contributed to the development of families and localities in countries of origin. From 1990 to 2000 these remittances multiplied exponentially. For the first time, for example, the amount of money sent as remittances exceeded economic support from international cooperation by so-called developed countries to those countries considered underdeveloped (Martínez-Pizarro 2003a). All this acquired a fundamental gender aspect in studies on migration from Latin American countries, given that in the 90s these flows showed a strong trend of feminization. Latin American women have become the protagonists of the international flow of remittances from the north to the south of the planet.

Throughout the 90s, the links constructed through migrant remittances were studied, prioritizing an understanding of the economic aspects that characterized them. But this economics-centric vision soon came to be viewed as inadequate. By the beginning of the 21st century, several researchers (Sørensen 2008; Sørensen & Vammen 2014; Vertovec 2004) were already beginning to theorize that remittances have more than just economic impacts, since

They affect the socio-cultural institutions of the society of origin such as the hierarchies of status, gender relations —emancipation of women— marital patterns, consumption habits, the value system through the circulation of ideas, the revitalization of the social fabric and the political sphere (Lipton 1980; Vertovec 1999; Levitt 2001). Thus, remittances go further than other dimensions and reach beyond the economic sphere, to others such as the social, cultural and political [...]. (Parella & Cavalcanti 2006, 244)

In this way, the idea of "social remittances" emerged, alluding to the transnational migrant experience of women, which provoked new demands for consumption, symbols, experiences and values from those left behind. These demands were reinforced by the fact

<sup>7</sup> This "change of winds" is part of broader feminist debates. For this reason, it must be understood as a critical turning point. Although it has had very concrete applications in migration studies, it is broader than just that specific field.

that migrant women would often devote a significant share of their salaries to meeting these new and old family necessities.

After the first decade of the 21st century, migration research began to cast light on the way in which women's responsibilities as mothers, sisters or daughters play a central role for them and other members of their family and promote kinship networks. In these studies, it was shown how the circulation of goods, caregiving and affection between related women supported family life in the transnational space (Gregorio & González 2012). These studies showed that social remittances, while remaining intangible, actively circulated between origin and destination(s) and were sustained mainly through kinship ties.<sup>8</sup> Even though the concept of social remittances is relatively new, it has its roots in a not-so-new phenomenon, invoking ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital that flow from the receiving country to communities in the country of origin, but that are always shot through with a gender dimension that has different intersectional effects on female migrants between origin and destination.

The second and third generations of researchers participating in the transnational debates included migrants from countries in the global south working at universities in the global north, especially "chicanas" (Mexican-American women), who contributed to the study of transborder female migration between Mexico and the United States.<sup>9</sup> The work of these female Latin American migrants revitalized the gender debate and contributed to its decolonization, offering elements (aesthetic, philosophical and political) that helped rethink the structuring of the analytical separations between female migrants and locals.

The beginning of the 21st century was also a time of great progress in research conducted in Spain, a country which received voluminous and feminized Latin American migration (migrants who would later form part of the student and research population in the country). There, both migrant and local women contributed to migration studies through the lens of feminist critique and broadened the debates from the transnational perspective of migration. This experience had an important impact on Chile: many of the female researchers currently working on gender in migrant communities in the country completed their postgraduate studies in Spain. Therefore, these researchers and their backgrounds created a link between the Iberian and Chilean debates in migration studies.

In parallel, female researchers at Latin American universities began to reflect on the contributions transnationalism could make to a critique stemming from both national and specific local contexts. The Latin American contextualization of this debate was accompanied by the feminization of the international migration process that began in countries in the region and is linked to many factors. Among them are the effects of the asymmetries of gender (the productive and reproductive overload on women) caused by the spread of certain neoliberal reforms (Martínez-Pizarro 2003a; Mora 2008; Stefoni 2002, 2009).

However, these debates were partially absent from the discussions held by researchers in Chile between 1995 and 2004. There are two central aspects of the work developed in the country during this period to highlight. First, these studies were published at a time of increased public mistrust towards Peruvian migrants who, for the first time, were present in greater numbers in Santiago. For almost a decade, the Peruvian migrant community and Santiago were prioritized for research (Guizardi & Garcés 2012, 2014), creating what some would call a "Santiagocentric" perspective (Grimson & Guizardi 2015; Guizardi *et al.* 2017c).<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, the studies generally bore a descriptive stamp; while perceiving the feminine question, they still lacked a more critical reading on gender. Researchers perceived this migration as novel, and given the lack of statistics or previous studies, they made an immense effort to collect quantitative information in order to build up an initial characterization of the migration and, in particular, the migrant women. Examples of these studies include Elizaga (1996) and that of the OIM (1997), where the feminization of new migrant communities was highlighted, especially in Andean communities; however, this research did not delve into the phenomenon in any real depth.

By the beginning of the 21st century, these studies were improving the characterization of the migrant phenomenon, building up a quantitative reading that would serve as a base for future research. These studies include those by Martínez-Pizarro (2003a, 2003b, 2003c): a careful statistical treatment of the Chilean census, a comparative Latin American study and a precise interpretation of the feminization of migration as a result linked to the application of neoliberal policies in several countries in the region (Martínez-Pizarro 2003a).

Along similar lines, but also contributing qualitative data on the Peruvian community in Santiago, are the studies by Stefoni (2001, 2004), Tijoux (2002) and Mujica

8 This coincides with a period of reflection on the typology of remittances, now classified not only as "economic" or "social" but also as "cultural", "symbolic" and "political".

9 See Anzaldúa (1987).

10 This trend continued through the following decade. In their overview of perspectives on migration in Chile between 1990 and 2012, Guizardi & Garcés (2014) reviewed 76 studies, of which 72 had Santiago as *locus*. Up to 2012, only four published works that dealt with other regions in the country could be found.

(2004). All of them provide data that clearly displays the feminization of the Peruvian community, the modes of labour insertion, and the problems faced by these women, as well as information on their communities of origin and their life histories between their homes in Peru and Santiago. The work of Araújo, Legua & Ossandón (2002), focusing particularly on female Andean migrants and looking in depth at the relational, labour, legal and economic conflicts experienced by Peruvian women in Santiago, constitutes a founding framework, together with Stefoni's publications (2002) and the PhD thesis by Holper (2002).<sup>11</sup> These three studies were the first publications that focused primarily on female migrants.

### The Second Stage (2005-2011)

In the first decade of the 21st century, international migration studies made significant progress in the theorization and visibility of the asymmetries of power and the subordination that transnational gender relations imply for women in the framework of migrant family life. Analytical concern with kinship as an axis of social differentiation enabled researchers to problematize the impact of conceptions linked with the exclusivity of biological ties in interpretations of transnational social reproduction of migrant families.

Female researchers of migration began to consider that gender and kinship made up relations of power and inequality, contrasting the social organization of families with the *social reproduction* of transnational life. The practices of giving and receiving care began to be compared with relations of transnational kinship. Thus, an interest in the asymmetry of transnational kinship links emerged in the international literature, in which maternity, paternity and married life were some of the key subjects considered (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 1997). Transnational kinship relations became central to studies on the subject when remittances began to be understood as being profoundly linked with transnational care as a further way of capturing intangible transfers between countries.

It was in this manner that the category “care” emerged. This term refers to changes in the management of family wellbeing which, since globalization, have been constructed through the migration of women, mainly from the global south (González 2013). The “social organization of care” refers to the way in which each society establishes a correlation between its specific

care needs and how to meet them, and the way in which social actors who have a part to play in providing care (family, community, market and state) combine to meet this need, as well as the role each of them takes on in doing so. The concept “social organization of care” is a regional adaptation used in Latin America and derived from the concept “social care” as proposed by Daly & Lewis (2000). In Arriagada's words (2010), it refers to the interrelations between economic and social policies of care. To understand how care is organized socially, it is necessary to understand the care needs of a given context and how different actors respond to them. The aforementioned actors—family, community, market and the state—make up the “care diamond”. This expression emphasizes the presence of these four actors and the relationships between them. Care provision does not take place in isolation, nor is it static; rather, it is the result of a continuous series of activities, work and responsibilities (Rodríguez 2015).

With the intensification of female Latin American migration to the global north from the 90s onwards, social organization of care in the region took on a challenging transnational dimension. This feminine migration was largely triggered by a growing demand for domestic care workers in countries of the north as well as others in the global south (González & Acosta 2015, 127; Pérez-Orozco 2009, 10). This resulted in the *care drain* (Bettio, Simonazzi & Villa 2006), “a model where the flexible, female workforce (usually immigrant, indigenous and afro-descendent women) replaced the unpaid, domestic and care work that was done by women in developed countries” (González & Acosta 2015, 127). The backdrop to this social phenomenon is the “care crisis” linked to the massive integration of women from certain sectors in the receiving societies to the productive market (Hochschild 2002). Female migrants took over the domestic and family care previously provided by women who had entered the labour market, resulting in new protagonists, circumstances and methods of giving and understanding care (Pérez-Orozco 2006). All of this accompanied the transformations of global capitalism in the last three decades (Benería 2011), in particular those linked to the consolidation of internationalized mechanisms exploiting female work (Mills 2003).

Until the early 2000s, the predominant view in the social sciences attributed care work to women with blood ties to those who “received” the help. But in the first decade of the 21st century, feminist criticism once again pointed out the diversity of existing transnational family forms and the different transnational practices of motherhood. The reproduction of intensive maternity in transnational families was one of the most analyzed and problematized links from the critical and reflective points of view. From this moment on, and given the interest in *transnational social reproduction*, analysis of the “global care chain” (a term coined by feminist sociologist Arlie Hochschild [2002]) has gained prominence

11 The thesis deals with the construction of illness from stress and the physical deterioration of Peruvian female migrants working as caregivers in Santiago. It constitutes a powerful interdisciplinary gender perspective linking health studies and the social sciences. However, it was not translated into Spanish and had little impact on the contemporary and subsequent Chilean debates.

due to an interest in discerning how transnational life is sustained by the chain of exploitation of women who take interlinked responsibility for the various tasks of social reproduction. Many studies on care related to international mobility are focused on this very issue of the management of family wellbeing.

Once again, it was feminist critique that made visible the reproduction of inequality based on the practices of giving and receiving care as fundamental principles of social organization to understand the causes and impacts on migration. Feminist researchers<sup>12</sup> also analyzed the specificity of care work, asking who does what, how, when and why. These questions made such practices visible in the complexity of their moral, material and affective aspects in local and transnational contexts. When we follow the full length of this chain, whose specifics depend on factors such as intra-family distribution of care, the existence of public services, migration policies and the regulation of domestic work, the gender inequalities which arise from transnational care become visible.

Studies on the social organization of care enabled researchers to scope and clarify the role of international migration, and the role of women within it, thanks to the analytical, political and ideological weight given to the category “care”. Labelling care as a political category allowed migration studies to focus on both the “care crisis” and on the “commodification of affection”, a product of the interactions between economic practices and loving or sexual relations in the private sphere (domestic workers, nannies, nurses, sex workers, transnational marriages). Thus, international debates on migration and gender began to integrate the idea that understanding the practices of giving and receiving care far from home implied looking “beyond the care”. Researchers must consider the analytical framework of *transnational social reproduction*. By bearing these concepts in mind, we are in a position to explain how studies on migrant women in Chile were fashioned by these debates and how they contrasted with the various realities and migration contexts in the country.

In Chile, from 2005 to 2011, the feminine question took central stage and catalyzed interest from researchers in different fields. Their work represents fundamental progress for three reasons: i) it launched a field of debate on contemporary migration in Chile, with a focus on the transnational migration perspective; ii) it included a concerted methodological effort to test qualitative and quantitative ways of capturing female migrants’ presence and iii) it advanced towards a critical perspective that moved from a focus on “women” to a cross-cutting look at gender.

It should be observed that there is a difference between “women” and “gender” in studies on migration in Chilean contexts. While it is true that concern about the female question was a starting point and a structural axis of migration studies in Chile at the end of 20th century, a fully realized gender perspective, structured by criticism analyzing the relational, economic, political and symbolic hierarchies between masculine and feminine identities, clearly appeared in migration studies from 2005 onwards. Until that year, studies had described the problems and characterized female migration, but from that time on, researchers (the majority of whom were women) began to investigate the intersectional role of the discrimination experienced by women migrants, given their subordinated class and racial status (Staab & Maber 2006; Tijoux 2007).

And so, an increasingly critical view developed, focusing on the problematic insertion of migrants into domestic service (Alman 2011; Godoy 2007; Stefoni 2009; Stefoni & Fernández 2011; Thayer 2011) and tackling the psychosocial and physical impacts of the phenomenon on women (Núñez & Holper 2005; Tijoux 2011) in view of the burden they carry as the principal source of remittances. These transfers begin to be seen as more than mere economic links, and as having a growing transnational impact (Stefoni 2011). Here, Chilean debates have paralleled contemporary international discussions on the redefinition and typologization of migrant remittances and their social role between the country of origin and destination. Attention has also been paid to women’s reproductive health (Núñez & Torres 2007) as well as their relationship with their children: both those who migrate with them, and those who are left behind in their country of origin in the care of other women (Pavéz-Soto 2010a, 2010b; Stefoni *et al.* 2008). These debates are leading to a better articulated vision of female migrant issues at both micro and macro scales (Cano & Soffia 2009; Mora 2008). The debate on the global care chain of international female migration that contributes to life in Santiago has matured, albeit only one decade after this issue became central to studies of international female migration (see: Acosta 2011; Arriagada 2010; Arriagada & Moreno 2011; Setién & Acosta 2011).

However, despite the undeniable importance of these studies, it is possible to identify some shortcomings in how they represent women. The majority of them focus on Peruvian women in domestic service in Santiago; however, they are portrayed in very general terms as “migrant women in Chile”. They reproduce, at least partially, the social uncertainty caused by the rapid entry of female Peruvian migrants into the domestic service and care job market. These women were employed in large numbers as domestic workers in middle and high class neighbourhoods of Santiago and replaced Mapuche migrant women who had traveled from the south of the country between 1950 and

12 Especially in the fields of feminist economics and anthropology.

1980.<sup>13</sup> Such jobs tended to present the Peruvian women as the new “ethnified other” of the elites, but without delving into the historical-political dimensions of the phenomenon. These semantic uses ultimately erase women of other nationalities and female migrants working in other sectors. It could be said, then, that debates influenced by theories such as Butler’s (2002) about the constitution of gender in bodily borders as a mechanism of participation in complex processes of ethnicization and proletarianization were absent from the first debates around care in Chile. In addition, there was no academic interest during this period in the presence of Peruvian women in the north of the country, near the Peruvian border.

### The Third Stage (from 2012 onwards)

After the first decade of the 21st century, globalization shifted to a post-globalization phase of capitalism (Bauman 2016). The *social reproduction crisis* became part of this new way of life, which places capital and life at a global level in conflict (Pérez-Orozco 2006, 21). Within this framework, international debates on *gender-based migration* are increasingly associating the female migrant experience with these crises. They are also seeking to create methodological, theoretical and empirical mechanisms to capture the link between these macro-scale phenomena and the daily life of migrant women.

These concerns have emerged hand in hand with other reflections in the international field of migration studies, especially with regard to splitting the “gender” category. Debates on the relationships between migration and the social organization of care led to a certain academic consensus with significant support among scholars of international migration. Part of this consensus, in the current contexts of globalization and post-globalization, has to do with the gender frontiers produced by the separation of the reproductive or domestic sphere and the productive or labour sphere. This separation, a result of the so-called “sexual contract”, is rendered more complex by new logics of domination. These new logics rest on mechanisms that replicate gender in the production of new bodies, corporealities and subjectivities, creating conflicts, crises and inequities through “metaphoric” and “metonymic” forms of production of borders in different gender identities.

These debates were heavily influenced by *queer* theories laid out by authors like Butler (2002). Their arguments remind us that we are witnessing the production of: i) *masculinized body-machines*, required only to produce

capital gains in the framework of market relations (Gregorio 2011); ii) *sexed bodies* considered only in their relation with work and unable to care for themselves or others, and iii) *feminized, ethnized and proletarianized bodies* that move between home and the market and are needed not only to produce capital gains but also to provide care. Thanks to these debates, studies on gender identities in transnational migration contexts began to consider that, given the crushing power of patriarchal asymmetries (Segato 2003), the female migrant experience is doubly (or at least repeatedly) bordered. However, at the same time, the “double border experience” of these women places them in a strategic position from which to operate interstitial mechanisms of transforming established relations (even when these transformations are limited to micro-social spheres). The aforementioned does not mean that women do not also reproduce patterns, mechanisms, and symbols that facilitate their own subordination (Guizardi *et al.* 2017a). This experience, which crosses gender and national borders, with its contradictions between subalternations and resistance, can be understood as a hyper-border condition (Guizardi *et al.* 2017c).

These questions were raised again in what we have identified as the third period of studies on migration and gender in Chile, the period from 2012 onwards. One important change from this time has to do with criticism from the border regions of the country regarding the lack of academic interest in the female migrant condition in the Chilean north, in areas with a historical Peruvian and Bolivian presence. Even though Tapia & Gavilán (2006) made an early effort to diagnose migration in these northern regions, it is only since 2012 that debate has intensified on this issue, with the publication of the first studies offering a demographic characterization of migration in the Chilean Norte Grande (Tapia 2012, 2015; Guizardi & Garcés 2013) and specifically migration among women (Guizardi & Garcés 2012).

The first, more descriptive, studies were shortly followed by research that contributed more qualitative information (Méndez & Cárdenas 2012; Guizardi 2016; Guizardi *et al.* 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Guizardi & Veldebenito 2016; Valdebenito & Guizardi 2015; Tapia & Ramos 2013). Starting with these studies, the use of the category “border” has increasingly been used to refer to two things: the specific migratory movement that prevails in the north of the country, and the liminality of the female experience, investigating the juxtaposition between cultural patriarchy and state patriarchy (Guizardi *et al.* 2017a). These studies contributed to a reading of the gender perspective of the (trans)borders by reflecting on the intersectionality experienced by migrant women in the north of Chile as a superposition of multiple border experiences.

At the same time, in case studies from Santiago, gender perspectives on care gained more depth and the analyses linked to these readings expanded and multiplied

13 For more on this see the article by Szasz-Pianta (1995) on female migration and the job market in Santiago, which, written against a backdrop of demographic transformations, provides an analysis of internal migration patterns and their links with the “new” Andean migration towards the Chilean capital.

(Acosta 2013; Arriagada & Todaro 2012). Increasingly critical and plural dialogues began to appear during this stage. From 2015 onwards more diverse identities, such as transsexual, bisexual, gay, transvestite identities (Stang 2015), became objects of study, as did heterogenic ways of understanding the relationship between gender and sexuality (see: Carrère-Álvarez & Carrère-Álvarez 2015; Gutiérrez Mangini & Jorquera Núñez 2016; Pavez 2016; Stang & Stefoni 2016; Torres-Rodríguez 2015). This enabled research to extend past the binary structure of masculine and feminine identities that had previously been used in Chilean case studies.

However, despite this diversification and deepening of views, there are still gender-related fields and issues that remain to be addressed in migration studies in Chile. We will offer some thoughts on these issues in the section that follows.

## Final Considerations

This article has focused on discussions about gender and migration, situating international and Chilean studies, problems and interpretations in their historical context. This exercise enables us to point out that Chilean discussions of these issues differed from international debates in a very specific way. Although questions, categories and reflections simultaneously brought forward elsewhere in the world were studied, the Chilean academic dialogue in these fields was somewhat out of sync, occurring from the end of the 90s onwards. It reclaimed some analytical points, but rendered others invisible.

Some of the main axes of discussion in international research also began to resonate in Chile at the same time as they were being explored in other countries. This could be read, on the one hand, as part of Chile's progressive opening up to international research, a process that could only happen gradually after the country's return to democracy. On the other hand, it is also a result of the fact that these international debates were incorporated or appropriated in Chile using a critical interpretation process, by researchers weighing their coherence or pertinence in the Chilean migration context. Thus, the debate on gender and migration in Chile takes on a contradictory stamp: out of step with international production, and yet simultaneously showing a critical and contextualized effort to overcome decades of restriction, control and isolationism of social thought in the country.

We would like to contribute to this process by highlighting elements that, we believe, will enhance the critical capacity of views on female migration in Chilean contexts. Our first consideration is related to an epistemological dimension of female migration studies. The debate on phenomena such as the relationship between

gender and the migrant experience implies asymmetric constitutions of identity and power. This means that extra epistemological care must be taken with the definitions used by researchers for analytical categories.

This epistemological debate is of the utmost relevance to being transparent about the analytical exercise we carried out in this article. Both authors are women who immigrated to Chile, which means that the debates are formulated from a perspective that questions the analytical bipolarity between subjects and objects of study. On reviewing the bibliography for this text, the reader will notice that 90% of the papers are by female researchers. Is this just a coincidence?

Our experience as researchers and migrants leads us to conclude that it is not. The majority of those who study female migrant experiences in Chile are women because there is an area of common subjective experience between us and the women we study. This common experience structures a form of political production of knowledge, given that it moves the dialogue between different positions of power and hierarchy among women. This commonality is a central factor; it creates and facilitates the links of interpretation, empathy and analysis on which our studies are based. In our opinion, scholars of gender and migration in Chile should advance more decisively towards this critical reflection, in order to assume both the position of researchers in the social fabric and a state of intersubjectivity and reflexivity with migrant women.

With these nuances in mind, certain considerations should be explored in more depth. All scientific reflection and empirical research operate from a sample of social processes. These sampling exercises are pre-shaped by the categories we use to think about and interpret said processes (Becker 1998). How we select and adhere to these categories in turn depends on our formation as social subjects, the contexts we live in, our role within these contexts and the hierarchies, distinctions and differentiations of which we are situational subjects (Dussel 1999). The historicity of the processes and people who we analyze and with whom we interact, and our relationship with these people, also influence our categorical perspectives. Context, historical positioning, and subjective insertion are what enable us to think and to analyze social phenomena. Therefore, social thought is an eminently political experience (Gramsci 1982).

We should thus dismiss any fetishistic attachment to categories, or tendency to assume ahistorical and naturalized views. As scientists we are also social beings, and it is impossible to objectively define the entire framework of conditions that interfere with and form our viewpoint, our perspective. Much of what we think is constituted, as Bourdieu (2011) put it, by the *habitus*: those forms of social knowledge that we take on as corporeal dispositions, beyond rationality. However,

this does not free us from our obligation to epistemic vigilance, the permanent exercise of seeking to understand and enunciate the conditioning factors of our interpretations. Intersubjectivity between researchers and migrants could encourage the deconstruction of certain commonplaces and facilitate the avoidance of some analytical distortions (methodological nationalisms and transnationalisms, to name but one example). It would also make it easier to detect the social assumptions that sometimes inadvertently permeate the imaginaries of researchers in the representations they make of their study subjects.

Our second consideration concerns the need to strengthen the critical position on feminine migration studies in Chile in other areas, as part of an attempt to break away from analytical dichotomies that, from an androcentric epistemic position, have contributed to reproducing biased visions about the role of women in social processes in general and migration in particular. These dichotomies are expressed in the social sciences using antagonistic paired categories such as biological/cultural, synchronic/diachronic, agency/structure, material/symbolic, and public/private, to name just a few (González & Acosta 2015). They continue to appear in case studies on migrant women in Chile and lead to a reduction in the analytical capacity of these studies. We acknowledge, of course, that this criticism may also be directed at our own work.

The third of our considerations relates to the need to understand migrant women in more depth. As suggested by Chakravorty-Spivak (1998), these women are characterized by a specific form of subalternity that, although context dependent, is the result of a globalized reality (Mills 2003). We must bear in mind, as black feminists did, that while the feminine condition is itself a liminal experience, some women will experience this liminality in a more concentrated way, given the juxtaposition of various factors of subalternation (Crenshaw 1991). Migrant women in general are subaltern, liminal and intersectional subjects. Any study that does not confront these factors in theoretical terms runs the risk of reproducing the symbolic mechanisms responsible for making the operation of these marginalization processes invisible.

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