

PHOENIX PROJECT CHILE



PERSPECTIVES ON RESILIENCE  
AND MOURNING IN THE  
HISTORICAL AND CURRENT  
CHILEAN MIGRATION  
CONTEXT

*Liliana Acero, Pablo Zuleta,  
Claudia Dides (orgs)*



# **PERSPECTIVES ON RESILIENCE AND MOURNING IN THE HISTORICAL AND CURRENT CHILEAN MIGRATION CONTEXT**

**Liliana Acero (FCYE/UFRJ)**

**Pablo Zuleta Pastor (FCYE/UBO)**

**Claudia Dides Castillo (UFRO)**

This e-book was written within the framework of the international research project PHOENIX: Human mobility, global challenges and resilience in an age of social stress, coordinated by Dr. Susan Rottmann at the University of Ozyegin and funded by the Belmont Forum. The Chilean team and all the teams in Latin America were funded by the IAI; InterAmerican Institute For Global Change Research, to whom we thank

ISBN Obra Independiente: 978-956-420-366-9

## Introduction

The increase in inequities, poverty between and within countries, climate change and globalization processes have given way to an important rise in migratory flows. Globally, the International Organization for Migrations (IOM, 2023) estimates that the number of international migrants had reached 281 millions by 2020, representing 3,6% of the total global population. Between 2015 and 2020, there had been a global increase of 5,8 millions in the total number of South American migrants, that represents a 49% increase in one decade. The main countries from where populations have migrated in 2020 were, Venezuela (5.4 millions), Colombia (3 millions) and Brazil (almost 19 millions).

The countries of origin of international migration within and towards Latin America have significantly changed in the last two to three decades. Previously, migration flows towards Latin America had their principal origin in Europe and some Asian and African countries (Solimano, 2004). At present, the growth in migratory flows is essentially related with displacements and mobility within the region (South/South migration) (Salamanca, 2022).

The history of migration illustrates the profound and multiple associations between migration and human vulnerability (Hollifield & Wong, 2014). Multiple stressors influence the lives of migrants induced by the adversities they confront. At present, the stressors that affect displaced people include the risks of the migratory journey; the precarious living conditions in transit and arrival countries; uncertainty related to legal status; difficulties in accessing educational, and health services and adequate housing; lack of work; difficulties in communication due to cultural and linguistic differences and, last but not least, social isolation. The loss of the original roots and the meanings embedded in that cultural context is also a concomitant factor that contributes to the internal and external fragility of migrant experiences, i.e. psychic ones that affect thoughts, memory, and behaviour, and those relating to the interpersonal sphere and adaptation to the new context (Ciaramella et al., 2021). Migrants, especially those from and to Latin American countries, are frequently subjected to more intense stresses due to social inequalities; considerable resilience is required if they are to achieve a reasonable quality of life, especially under strained socioeconomic circumstances (Hernandez-Alvarado et al., 2021).

Migration, particularly when experienced as a forced consequence of risks and dangers to life and/or livelihood, constitutes an exceedingly intricate phenomenon. It involves a complete transformation of everyday life, demanding from migrants the capacity to rethink and recreate themselves within socio-environmental and cultural contexts typically divergent from those of their countries of origin. Consequently, it imposes a global demand on subjectivity, understood here as "the absolute phenomenological life, whose essence lies in the very act of feeling or experiencing oneself" (Dejours, 2012, p. 150). As a result, this experience will likely be accompanied by various psychological sufferings, which, nevertheless, are often overlooked.

This booklet forms part of the theoretical approaches and debates to be applied in Cluster 4 of the international project: "Human Mobility, Global Challenges and Resilience in an Age of Social Stress" (PHOENIX), Coordinated by Prof. Susan Rothman ( General Principal Investigator- PI) and funded by the Belmont Forum, as well as, having financial aid from the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), in the case of the Latin American countries: Brazil (Rio de Janeiro and the Amazon), Uruguay, Argentina and Chile. In the case of São Paulo, the funding for the team at The State University of

Campinas (UNICAMP) has been provided by The Foundation for the Support of Research in the State of São Paulo (FAPESP).

In theme Cluster 4 case studies are developed on existential crises, mental health, wellbeing, resilience and agency according the experiences of migrant groups. This study contributes to the understanding of resilience, coping and fear of cultural extinction and analyses how these factors interrelate with existential aspects in specific groups of migrants per country, most especially in: Chile, Brazil (São Paulo State), Sweden and South Africa.

The Chilean study is based on a historical account of the main economic, social, and political policies and actions adopted at the national level, most specifically, on the type of governance undertaken towards migration in, at least, the last ten years. Structural tendencies in health and mental health and the quality of health coverage and treatments offered to these migrants will be analysed, in relation to other life quality indicators, such as, living facilities, access to work, to schooling, free time, information on citizen rights, family and social relations, participation in civil society organizations and so on, following an intersectionality approach.

The research pursuit also entails the analysis of the narrated experiences on the motives and characteristics of the departure process from the country of origin, arrival and local integration to the country of resettlement of two groups: Venezuelan and Haitian international migrants. Each one of them presents different kind of social trajectories (by class, age, race and gender), as well as, culturally diverse settlement strategies, at different historical periods and relating the geographical locations occupied.

Venezuelan migration and somewhat earlier that of Haiti have impacted Brazil and countries of the Southern Cone. Haitian migration had its peak during the 2010 earthquake. While the Venezuelan migration was provoked by the social and economic collapse, that generated food insecurity, lack of Access to medicines as well as an increase in violence and poverty. This was the group that mainly requested asylum between 2017 and 2019– involving more than 4 million Venezuelans till 2020 (Chavéz-Gonzalez; Echeverria-Estrada,2020).

The three Chapters that follow this introduction have as specific objectives the following:

1. To analyse different theoretical approaches to the concept of resilience and differentiate it from assimilation, acculturation and coping strategies.
2. To determine the role played by subjectivity in resilience approaches.
3. To establish the interrelationship between resilience and key assumptions in adult psychodynamic and psychoanalytic trauma theory.
4. To address the processing of the multiple losses inherent in a migratory process as a crucial condition for making a new life possible.
5. To highlight the narrowing concept of refugees within the framework of contemporary migrations.
6. To illustrate the movement between de-territorialization (the processes of leaving a territory of origin) and re-territorialization (the complex process of appropriation and adaptation to a new territory).
7. To discuss migratory grief, focusing on the multiple anxieties mobilized in migratory processes: depressive, confusion and attack anxieties.

8. To draw a brief panorama of the socio-political history in Chile, addressing also the characteristics and implementation of a neoliberal model that influences the format of past and present migration processes.

9. To illustrate how decades of economic growth and institutional stability have favoured an acceleration of migration.

10. To address current trends in international migration statistically and qualitatively in the Latin American region and in Chile.

11. To summarize international standards and conventions for the protection of migrants' human rights.

12. To describe the characteristics of the different waves of migration in Chile, including the present one, and its causes.

Chapter 1 addresses a discussion of resilience theories highlighting some of its gaps and vacuums; Chapter 2 complements it with a discussion of different concepts on resettlement and psychic suffering of migrants. Chapter 3 places the socio-historical background of international migration within Latin America and Chile, while describing the trends in different waves of migrants until the present.

## **Chapter I**

### **Reflections about theoretical perspectives on coping, resilience, subjectivity and trauma for migration studies**

**Liliana Acero**

#### **Introduction**

The present Chapter forms part of the theoretical framework designed for the Chilean research project on migration policies and associated ones, as well as, on the narratives of Haitian and Venezuelan migrants. The main aim of this Chapter is to present a brief description and critical review of different theoretical approaches in the area of sociopsychological and cultural resilience, the shaping of identity and subjectivity, individually and collectively, and other associated concepts, such as, coping and adult trauma.

Any categorization of this expanding academic field of resilience will be, to a certain extent, reductive and will simplify what has become a very complex scenario. But the Chapter has the purpose of mapping conceptual trends useful for the interpretation of the experiences of resilience, subjectivity and collective action of the migrant populations under study in our research project.

The present conceptual discussion is guided by the following interconnected questions:

- What are the main trends in the theories of human resilience processes and how does the concept of resilience differ from that of coping?
- What main issues do resilience studies address or lack to address?
- How does resilience articulate with key assumptions in adult psychodynamic and psychoanalytic trauma theory?

Some of the most relevant concepts used to interpret the plight of migrants during resettlement and their adjustment processes, as newcomers to countries other than their own, are critically analysed. The potential effects upon migrants' vulnerabilities, specially their mental health and wellbeing, are discussed.

Methodologically, the Chapter is based on a critical bibliographical and documental integrative review (Torraco, 2005). The information chosen from a first listing of relevant academic studies, grouped by the themes of concern, was analysed at two stages. First, the main epistemological and operational standpoints within sociopsychological and cultural thinking, in the expanding theoretical field of resilience, were mapped and analysed focusing upon their perspectives on health and mental health. Second, key topics were defined, such as subjectivity, race, religious practices and trauma to discuss, if and when they are articulated within different approaches to resilience.

It is to be expected that this discussion is examined in the light of broader centre-periphery socioeconomic inequalities and their impacts upon international migration. The Chapter is divided into four main sections: the role of stressors in peripheral economies; different approaches to resilience and their reflections upon specific topics and finally, definitions on adult trauma.

## **Stressors and their role in peripheral economies**

Main stressors inducing adversity may vary significantly between each other. They can consist on substantive and/or continuous stress, fatigue, shock, situations of high instability and incertitude or uncertainty, unexpected violence, abuse, neglect and so on. Amount, diversity, scale, intensity and frequency of these stressors account for the degree and direction of disruptions to the previously existing system's order. In turn, these stressors can be of different origins, such as, political, economic, social, institutional, biological or psychological, as well as, combine between them or interconnect a number of their properties (Chaigneau, et al.,2022).

From a wider point of view, it is common knowledge that all emerging or developing societies are stably subjected to a larger amount of stressors than those predominant in advanced societies, and those stressors tend to also have a higher intensity including, scarce economic resources, extended social inequalities and extended poverty levels. These are usually persistent, throughout different historical periods, and they have a wider scope than in Northern countries. Within the existing unequal international division of labour, belonging to the periphery of the capitalist system, makes all sort of socioeconomic and environmental inequities prevail. In other words, the higher impact of stressors in the Global South is largely a result of the emerging countries' geopolitical location and articulation vis-a-vis the dominant international powers. [See, for example, Acero (2022) for empirical research on power asymmetries in science; Rodriguez Medina (2014) for inequalities in knowledge production; Harding (2009; 2016); Anderson (2009) and Seth (2017) for postcolonial and neo-colonial studies].

However, there are historical moments in these developing countries when habitual stressors increase quantitatively and qualitatively. They can combine more acutely and destructively, e.g. political dictatorships; deep economic crises, general social upheavals or insurgencies, epidemics, severe climate changes, excessive migration and so on, to profoundly destabilize the whole system or specific social agents within it. These extremely harmful events sometimes even produce situations, close to those Mbembe (2003) has defined as embedded in 'necropolitical' ideologies, meaning that, discriminatory political and social decisions over selected populations are made, on who has a right to live and who does not.

Besides, the stressors mentioned are experienced and affect in a more intense and substantive way, vulnerable social sectors within developing societies and produce different and sometimes overlapping effects, by class, age, race/ethnicity, religion and gender. In turn, vulnerable sectors tend to represent a larger proportion of the population than in the advanced economies.

In its "Pathways to Sustainability", the STEPS CENTRE Programme (SPRU/IDS, University of Sussex), working on developing countries' acute inequities and trying to devise pathways to overcome them, states: "that sustainability problems are deep-rooted, complex and interconnected. There are countless different ways of seeing the same problems and responding to them, informed by people's knowledge, cultures, histories, and values" (Leach, Scoones and Stirling, 2007, p.2).

The authors, after describing different forms of incertitude – such as, risk, ambiguity, strict uncertainty and ignorance - propose potential solutions for any dynamic system's properties under stress, that might change across time (temporality) and origin (provenance). Among these potential solutions, figure: stability, durability and robustness, as well as, resilience, that counts just as one potential alternative.



The authors mentioned also propose concrete strategies to confront, towards 'resolution', the destabilization provoked by stressing events and they seek to determine the resources and responses available, in different situations, social and economic sectors, within a number of emerging and poor economies. This is one useful way to reflect upon the variety of ways a stressed system can change.

## **Coping**

There is a certain blurring of concept specificity, in the literature reviewed, about the definition and application of coping. However, there are more abundant research references and empirical studies on coping –“the mother concept” from which the category of resilience seems to have evolved- than on resilience. The theories and empirical findings on coping go way back to, at least the early 60s, with the pioneering studies of, for example, Lazarus (1966) and later on, Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which will be presented next.

Coping is usually applied to indicate a reactive (instead of proactive) and short-term adjustment to conflict, disturbance and different kinds of disruption. Lazarus (1966) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in analysing stress and coping, have distinguished between two main different types: problem focused coping; when action is taken to alter the source of the stress or threat, i.e. it presupposes that something constructive can be done with the stressor(s) and, emotionally focused coping; that tries to reduce or manage the distress associated with the stressor, usually when the stressor has to be endured. These two categories are divided in subcategories establishing what the authors have called the: “Ways of Coping Scale”.

Building upon the work of those authors, Carver and Scheier (1981; 1983) have devised another and more complex tool: “the COPE scale”. This scale intends to empirically measure different forms of coping, which they consider of a wide diversity and somehow, dependent on an individual's character disposition. In their operational tool, they mention a list of categories with functional potential. These are: active coping (taking action); planning (reflection about taking action); suppression of competing activities (leaving alternative projects aside); restraint coping (waiting for the right opportunity to take action); seeking social support for instrumental reasons (advice, information, which can function in adaptive or maladaptive ways); focusing and venting emotions (for the purpose of discharge or sharing, but these may be also dysfunctional for adjustment); behavioural disengagement (set aside the stressor or disengage it from a previous goal); mental disengagement (distract from the stress through concentration in other activities); positive reinterpretation and growth or positive reappraisal (managing distress through optimism); denial (refusal to believe the stressor exists); acceptance (accommodation to the situation) and turning to religion (that has functions like those of increasing hope and faith). This listing of subcategories potentially involved, can help detect and study regular or transitory forms of coping among individuals; i.e. based on personality traits or upon situational responses.

More recently, Pargament et al. (2004) and Koenig et al. (1995) have thoroughly discussed the concept of coping and applied it to study mental wellbeing and illness. The authors have emphasized the importance of the intervening role of religion and spirituality upon the use of coping strategies, for example, among the elderly.

However, as coping refers to the adaptive responses of individuals or households to stress and changing conditions, it is often used as a synonym for resilience (Mosberg and Eriksen, 2015). However, coping tends to indicate more specific types of control or management of a difficult situation and can contribute to shape the reconstitution of traumatic experiences, mostly at an individual level (Masten, 2014). Coping mechanisms do not refer, as in the case of resilience, to factors such as: the persistence of the stressors overtime, the potentially intertwined strategies of responses and transformation, nor to how resilient oriented behaviours become robustly and dynamically embodied in people or systems. More so, engagement practices and community agency become inexistent or, at most, play a secondary role, when the concept of coping is empirically applied.

### **Resilience: Socioenvironmental and culturally-oriented approaches**

Resilience can be understood in diverse ways and it lacks a unique definition between and within disciplines. For example, Roe (2020) shows that two colleagues from different professions working together in an environmental research project on: real-time personnel operating large socio-technical systems, such as, critical infrastructures for water, energy, telecommunications and transportation, had unknowingly based their own research upon different assumptions on resilience. One of them, focused on the time towards recovery after a levee breach; while the other, emphasized the ability of the levee to absorb shocks before breaching. Similar ambiguities can also be found between disciplines (Ungar, 2021).

The recently widely spread use of the concept of resilience in the social sciences, psychology and many other disciplines refers to the ability of a system, population, community or individual to respond to different forms of shock, risk, adversity and disturbances from a standpoint of adaptation and the renewal or transformation of its previous state of dynamic equilibrium. Conventional modes of approaching resilience are frequently referred to as ecological and constructionist (e.g. Ungar, 2004; 2010).

The concept of resilience itself indicates the amount of change a system can undergo, while retaining some control over its own function and structure and maintaining options to develop or change, though not always in predictable ways (Nelson, Adger and Brown, 2007). The assumption behind this approach is that systems are managed for flexibility and not for stability, in an age of uncertainty and many 'known - unknowns', as the STEPS Centre Programme discusses.

Meanwhile, in this approach it is also acknowledged that ecological and social systems are coupled between them and have a capacity towards self-organization and learning (Ungar, 2021). In some cases, they not only respond to, but also take advantage of the opportunities for change that arise during adversity, mainly through self-organization, innovation, resistance and agency. This capacity to absorb change is deeply connected to a concern for context, feedback and connectedness of the systems' components and not exclusively to the actors involved. A number of factors, policies and actions contribute to the implementation and expansion of resilience strategies based upon different normative views (Brown, 2016).

Resilience analysis involves the study of: multiple states, adaptive capacity, trade-offs between resilience and adaptation, governance and normative issues, as well as, of the quality of responses (e.g. citizens' protests, types of demands, novel solutions, institutional reorganizations and so on). Thresholds or boundaries exist which indicate

transitions to another state in a system, at the community or individual levels. They also show potential “tipping points” or “trigger points” that allow behaviour to develop, reproduce or change. These potential attitudes are associated to the elements and events that are prone to generate disruptions in systems, communities or people, as well as, to the environmental and social transformations accessed. They show major vulnerabilities, in the first case, and major expansion of resources, in the second one.

The definition of resilience in Gerard Bouchard’s work (2013, p. 267), that could be summarized as: “the capacity of a society to cope with a challenge or a shock”, provides a cultural perspective to the study of this topic. The author’s work describes that societies tend to develop three ways to recover their former capacities of functioning orderly (or three forms of resilience). These are: a) the conservative strategy; which entails resisting stress and returning to previous equilibrium or the prior state of the system; b) the adaptative strategy; that operates through the use of various adjustment methods, forms of negotiation between social actors and compromise; and, c) the progressive strategy; when those attained by risk and stress creatively respond to shock, while thriving within adversity.

In order to characterize and operationalize resilient strategies in different areas, Silove (2013) develops a framework called: “The Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma Model (ADAPT)”. It consists of a contribution to evaluate the disruptive consequences of massive situations of conflict, potentially affecting psychosocial wellbeing at a personal and social level. The model provides indicators or directions to evaluate adaptive and maladaptive psychological adjustments, as well as, to develop adequate mental health programmes. According to this author, stable societies are considered to be grounded on five core psychosocial pillars deeply affected by severe conflict and prone to analysis and intervention, repair and restoration. These pillars include: (1) Safety and Security; (2) Bonds and Networks; (3) Justice; (4) Roles and Identities; as well as, (5) Existential Meaning. Each one of them is associated to a number of measurable categories. These pillars can be used to analyse processes at an individual, communal and/or institutional level. The model, however, could be complemented by applying an intersectionality approach to the analysis of each pillar. Intersectionality deals with the multiple association of different forms of discrimination that interact and overlap and translate into hierarchical structures that socially position individuals depending on race, class, sexual orientation, nationality, and so forth (Crenshaw, 2002).

### **A critique to neoliberal approaches to resilience**

Sometimes, the concept under study has been misused as a type of “neoliberal resilience” (Krüger, 2018, p. 54), i.e. “a neoliberal security paradigm which tends to make individuals responsible of outcomes, while justifying the withdrawal of the State”. This perspective emphasizes substantive adaptation to the newly created order or chaos. It focuses upon individual and collective action towards self-organization and adaptation, in order to maintain sustainable livelihoods. But it does not deal at all with the capacity of people or collective organizations, to mobilize and make political and socio-economic demands to society and, more specifically, to the State.

According to Burin (2023, p. 12), “resilience, in itself, is an extremely controversial concept”. It often values almost exclusively individual attributes that are available only to some people, establishing a polarity between winners and losers. In other words, the

neoliberal perspective on resilience is based upon a social representation of “those best fit” to cope with adversity, and thus, it is rooted in an elitist and hyper individualistic vision of society. As Bottrell (2009, p. 334) emphasizes, resilience within a neo-liberal framework of individualism, may mean the emphasis shifts from, “positive adaptation despite adversity to positive adaptation to adversity”.

From an opposite perspective, Krüger (2018) privileges the use made of the concept of resilience by academic feminists, such as, Butler, et al. (2016) and Benhabib (1995), who prioritize individual and social agents’ active mutual support, cooperation and solidarity, as well as, different forms of collective organization and social engagement. However, both sides of the concept of resilience might either work together, generate tensions between each other or one might historically dominate the other. From an alternative standpoint, “resilience-thinking requires fostering individuals’ capabilities to (re)act by enhancing their social and economic resources for action and by building a more inclusive society through dismantling societal barriers and impairments” ( Krüger, 2018, p.61).

As Leach (2008, p.14) states, “Contemporary interest in resilience may indeed be a response to broader socio-cultural narratives of fear, anxiety and powerlessness, as well as, a further manifestation of neo-liberal welfare’s disciplinary logic: self-management and self-care”. Reframing resilience, to engage directly with normative concerns requires to privilege and permanently keep in one’s horizon, critical discussions of power and justice. The development of processes of inclusion and exclusion needs public spaces for dialogue, where constructive critique can develop (Mouffe, 2005).

### **Subjectivity and the Body: A feminist perspective on resilience**

From a feminist approach, asset-oriented, instead of deficit models of health, are prioritized, when dealing with resilience. Arana et al. (2012, p. 2), approaching the issue from a feminist poststructuralist and psychoanalytic standpoint, argue that, “There is however relatively less discussion of the nature of the subject at the centre of resilience discourses to make the subject and related notions of subjectivity, identity and the body more visible in resilience theory and research”.

Following Rorty (1999), these feminist authors, name two frequently found positionings on resilience in the relevant literature, which they call “stories”: resilience as “found” or as “made”, and the authors create a third new positioning, characterized as, resilience as “unfinished”. These three types of stories will be explained next, following closely these feminists’ work.

Initially, resilience research identified “special innate attributes” belonging to few people.

But, later on, two new trends of thought arose. First, there was a theoretical change from resilience as exceptional to it as habitual; resilience as “found”. In Masten’s (2001, p. 80) words, “the ordinariness of the phenomenon of resilience” is confirmed. She provides this description, after having conducted extensive research on resilience among children and adolescents. Second, the new perspectives propose a shift from innate to socioecological understandings of resilience (e.g. Ungar, 2021).

But even in those new perspectives, individual identity and subjectivity are still conceived as something innate and relatively stable in an individual, thus, establishing a body-mind split. “This reinforces an invisibility of the body and a disembodied understanding of the resilient experience” (Aranda et al., p.14).

An opposite approach, based partly on Foucault's extensive work, argues that resilience becomes a social practice, reproducing or challenging the dominant social order (Ungar, 2005). This perspective refers to a "story" of resilience as "made", according to the feminist authors being discussed. Resilience is seen as plural, diverse, chaotic, complex, fluid, relative and material, as well as, located in particular socioeconomic, cultural and ecological contexts. This story or view contributes to politicize narratives on resilience and recognizes the social construction of the individual subject.

Interactive negotiations between selves, communities and environments, resisting and sustaining agency, have an effect on wellbeing and health. Risks do not point at just individual vulnerability, but also at social disadvantages and inequalities. This approach, resilience made, evolves from a normative resistance to conventional understandings, as well as, pays attention to the "meaning making" of the self (Acero, 2024). However, in spite of its advances to characterize resilience patterns, the social constructionist perspective found in the "story" of resilience as "made", tends not to explore the particular processes that generate the subject as unstable and open to re-articulation (Lloyd, 2005).

In the case of resilience as an "unfinished" process; -as Arana, et al. (2012) define their third theoretical perspective- the subject is also placed under scrutiny. Based upon Butler's main insights (1990, 2004 a; b), the authors dwell on the existence of a reflexive self, generated relationally, whose subjectivity is negotiated through embodied, affective, historically and culturally situated biographies. Selves, in this vision, are produced through complex identifications and dis-identifications, shaping and shaped by stories, power relations, norms, networks, unconscious processes, institutions, governance and performativity, which are individually experienced but relationally and collectively lived. The subject is gendered and "manufactured through a sustained set of acts" or "performativity" (Butler, 1990, p. 115).

If the resilient subject is performative rather than stably constituted, then resilience would undergo a continuous process of remaking. Subjects can comply or collude, subvert or resist hegemonic discourses of resilience within the health and social care systems. Benjamin (1995, p.38), from a psychoanalytical viewpoint, states that, an excessive focus on the meaning of behaviour, as found in most resilience research, "corresponds to a lack of sufficient attention to the unthought, unspoken, unthinkable and unspeakable" (Benjamin, 1995, p. 38).

The Other is to be understood always inter-subjectively (Acero, 2015). Health and social care practitioners are often reminded of the need to recognize and value "Otherness", but rarely are they encouraged to recognize their relatedness and connectivity to the Other: our shared vulnerable and dependent humanness (Aranda and Jones, 2010). Shared humanness is required for the recognition of the subject's self-esteem within intimate relationships and in relation to the exercise of legal and civic rights.

Recognition depends also on, a shared corporeal vulnerability (Butler, 2004b). However, resilience research tends to ignore or deny the body. But the role of body is extremely important in relation to the quality of life, or more specifically, to health, illness and care (e.g. Foucault, 1980; Turner, 2003). Differentially marked by intersectionality -by age, class, gender race/ethnicity- bodies are socially monitored by medical, health or educational settings (Rose, 2007; Acero, 2021) and they react to these forms of discipline healthily or developing disease. Given that much resilience research and policy focuses on those most vulnerable, excluded or disadvantaged -as in the case of foreign

migrants – the analysis of the body should be at the forefront in the development of resilience theory and empirical research.

### **Resilience and Structural Racism in Neo-colonial Times**

Few studies focus upon the articulation between race and resilience, though many authors interested in race and ethnicity, or else, taking an intersectionality approach, bring a resilience perspective to their specific topics. They tend to address different forms of collective agency and social resistance, without necessarily mentioning openly the concept of resilience. Some of the pioneer feminists on race and gender, such as Hills Collins (1998); Crenshaw et al. (org) (1995); Hooks (2024) and Davis (2023), work explicitly or implicitly from a neo-colonial or counter-colonial perspective, where collective resistance to oppression among black women becomes one of their central themes.

In many developing countries, colonialism in the recent or far past ended legally with the independence of nations. But concrete domination continues through “coloniality”. A modern world system is configured in ways that hierarchize and govern work, subjectivities, knowledge, places and human beings based on their racialization and operates through a particular mode of production and distribution of wealth (Restrepo and Rojas, 2010). Decolonial theory characterizes and denounces the persistence of these modes of capitalist development in the present. Meanwhile, counter-colonialism focuses more on the practices of the social movements, that exercise resistance to these modes, than on its theoretical definition or empirical description.

The intergenerational and intrafamily cultural transmission among black populations, of both submission and resistant patterns towards hegemonic white values jointly, is also discussed by authors focused on race, such as, Gonzalez (2020); Carneiro (2015) and Almeida (2019), and others. Specific values and behaviours are instilled. Interestingly, Hooks (2024) shows in detail how in everyday life, children and adolescents in black families in the USA are indoctrinated to be always strong and unemotional, to establish distant relationships of intimacy among each other and/or to be defiant towards others, most especially, towards white people. Thus, they learn either not to express or show their human vulnerabilities.

This type of regular training could be considered as an indirect form of inducing resilience to permanent discriminatory threats in black lives. However, the question would be, does it work? Hooks (2024) shows that this type of family socialization does not contribute to self-knowledge and social awareness. Neither does it contribute to shape solidarity ties among black women or leads towards collective action, resistance to exclusion and politization. The author promotes struggling to demystify submissive patterns of behaviour towards racial discrimination, hand in hand, with learning new attitudes and values for resisting hegemonic white acculturation and racism.

Hooks (2024) also proposes alternative pathways of expression, such as, deep bonding and collective social and political agency. She supports honouring body characteristics and cultural specificities among black populations, most especially, among black women, for example, body shapes, types of movements, curled hair, clothing styles, food tastes and so forth. In this sense, she vouches for a profound transformation of individual and collective behaviour to confront structural racism. She also considers that public policy should mainly contribute to support programmes that acknowledge the expression of culturally and race-specific types of human vulnerabilities.

Building upon this kind of academic work and praxis and describing black people's type of knowledges supported by empirical analysis, resilience theory and practice could be substantively enriched. In Unger's words (2021, p. 4), "more attention is needed to take into account the diverse sources of knowledge and worldviews about resilience, including those that indigenize and decolonize knowledge, as well as those that challenge discourses that privilege genders, capabilities or specific racial prejudices".

## **Resilience, Religion and Spirituality**

Religious and spiritual coping assists in the cognitive, emotional, or behavioural responses to stress and it can have a variety of purposes and manners of enactment (Wortmann, 2013). However, there can be both positive, as well as, negative forms of religious coping, i.e. constructive for the individual and community or destructive of the self and others through, for example, fundamentalism, punishment, God reappraisal or interpersonal religious discontent, which have been considered as predictive of health decline (Pargament et al., 2004). In the first case, religious coping contributes to mental relaxation and body equilibrium. In the second, it can hinder either or both of them.

Pargament et al. (2000) developed and validated a comprehensive measure of 21 different types of situation-specific religious coping strategies that serve a variety of functions: meaning making, emotional control, comfort, spirituality, intimacy and life transformation. In a literature review on religious coping, Harrison et al. (2001) concluded that positive religious coping strategies have been associated with psychological adjustment variables, e.g. self-esteem, life satisfaction and quality of life. Meanwhile, negative religious adjustment has been associated with the onset of depressive symptoms. Unfortunately, the relationship between resilience and religion has been less explored up to now, with some exceptions, than that between coping and religion or spirituality.

Religion and spirituality can provide powerful frameworks for existential meaning-making of one's life and of "humanness" itself and, hence, help to understand, bear and/or accept psychosomatic suffering. They can also reinforce hope, peace of mind, relational closeness, growth and self-development, as well as, provide life orientation and existential meaning. They also build bridges to a Higher Force or Supreme Being; whether it is named as, God, The Source, Buddha or the Universe, among other. Thus, they bring us closer to our inner self, to the acceptance of our life purpose, as well as, contribute to an awareness of the reality of human limitations, disease and death. A few empirical studies have shown, qualitatively and quantitatively, that spiritual faith aids increased resilience and mental wellbeing (Yoffee, 2012 ; Ano and Vasconcelles, 2005).

One of the central elements of resilience is the substantive role played by self-awareness and social-awareness, on the adjustment or reformulation of individual and communal life, including how to approach stressors. This tends to be one of main reasons why individuals and communities seek religious and spiritual practices. These often contribute to amplify their resilient inner sources and external resources, as well as, restore mental and physical imbalances. For example, meditation increases brain neuroplasticity and provides relaxation; prayer, as an individual ritual, can boost vitality, satisfaction, happiness and existential wellbeing; communal practices and rituals increase the possibility of establishing meaningful social relationships and joint activities

that may contribute to the development of a sense of individual and collective belonging (Davidson and Lutz, 2008; Dossey, 1993).

In the specific case of international migration, and depending on the context in which it takes place, individuals and families are usually confronted to more than one event of loss, grieving and mourning, that need to be healthily overcome. Leaving land and country, one's culture and/or language of birth, often separating from family, children, partners and friends, as well as, the experience of integration into a new setting, confront migrants' capacity for change. But these multifaceted experiences also require the mourning of past losses, as psychoanalytic theories have proven, to attain successful adaptation and adjustment in ways that allow to maintain or even enhance psychological and physical wellbeing (e.g. Kernberg, 2010).

Moreover, migrants might experience very strenuous and/or life-threatening situations during their transit towards the new country and their resettlement. Some of those events, may have been unconceivable for them when they departed from their country of origin. Dreams, illusions, idealization or disinformation might have prevailed. In this sense, religion and spirituality offer internal and external protection to practitioners. Internal protection relates to emotional support and existential sense-making, while external protection is attained through concrete actions taken during the resettlement processes, as well as, engagement in groups, institutions or communities. Communally; shared values and practices also often aid in the maintenance of closeness with lost roots, culture, language and territories. Protection and support tend to have a positive impact upon resilience and wholistic health.

Moreover, in some cultures and subcultures (e.g. religious minorities), as part of human existential concerns, religious-based resilience and coping could counteract totally or partially a 'felt sense' of fear of extinction, most especially, among those migrants with refugee status (Nickerson et al., 2015; Li et al., 2016).

### **Individual Adult Trauma: Sources and Recovery**

At an intrapsychic level, individual trauma causes an extreme flooding of the nervous system and personality through unprocessed experiences of distress, of a magnitude that exceeds the individuals' usual abilities to cope emotionally with adversity. Psychodynamic and psychoanalytical trauma studies have often prioritized the study of early trauma in childhood and its pervasive effects upon adults, sometimes throughout a lifetime (Schoore, 2009). Those early experiences can interfere with adults' resilience to present shocks, according to the individual's genetic build up and quality of past disruptive experiences. However, those early childhood negative experiences can be counteracted by positive early atonement, attachment and human bonding, all acting as internal protective factors, as well as, related to the immediate environment.

Those psychological, psychoanalytic and psychiatric studies' initial standpoint for trauma analysis entail the communicational quality of the mother/child dyad during the pre-verbal stages of the child's development. They tend to measure, for example, the effects upon the child's self-regulation of the role played by: pre-verbal mutual gaze, gestures, mimicking and holding, as well as, of early verbal communication through sound, pitch and language precursors within the dyad. The mother (or main caregiver), in early phases of development, acts as the key regulator of the internal arousal and relaxation periods of the infant (hyperactivity or hypoactivity) and of the outside stimuli required by



the child to fulfil its main needs, such as: nourishment, warmth, sleep, care, play, rest and movement.

Arousal and relaxation have a direct impact on the functioning of the autonomous nervous system (ANS) in its two branches: the sympathetic branch (ruling the fight/flight reactions to confront fear or the existence of stressors) and the parasympathetic branch (ruling the relaxation, rest and tonic immobility modes). Observational and experimental perspectives on early dyads have well established correlations with advanced observations in the field of recent neurosciences' discoveries, most specially, on the right and left brain functions in early development, their effects on psychosomatic experiences for children, adolescents and even adults, i.e. at different developmental stages, that exceed the scope of the present text (See, for example, Acero, 2015).

The propensity to adult individual trauma is associated to situations which are both dangerous and inescapable; i.e. when escape is possible the organism (and hence, the personality), responds with an active sociobiological pattern of coping, founded on the reactions of the ANS (Levine, 1997). In the case of a sympathetic reaction, an activated state arises related to an unavoidable threat. However, when escape is successfully completed (e.g. running, hiding, climbing or any other activity that takes the person away from the aggressor), or successful fight takes place, anxiety as a holistic physiological and psychological constricted state precipitated by the threatening event, tends not to permeate the individual. Moreover, in situations when escape and fight are thwarted, i.e. in the opposite situation, the individual becomes highly aroused internally, while outward movement is almost inexistent or deadened. The parasympathetic branch generates a negative reaction to threat. Instinctive orientation and defensive resources are interfered with, motor patterns become disorganized and the individual loses psychological equilibrium and personal integrity (Levine, 2003). Alternatively, the sympathetic and parasympathetic responses can concurrently be activated, but work against each other, "like a brake and accelerator of a car actioned at the same time", which makes the overt "deadening" of the individual still more intense (Levine, 1997). This reaction is still more apparent in cases of people that react in an autistic manner.

This type of reactions can occur temporarily or permanently, depending on the intensity and frequency of the disruptor, as well as, of the individual's available internal resources and the quality of the social support accessed and obtained, most especially, in or close to the moment when the threat was experienced. Protection patterns can include the containment of the ongoing threatening situation by the community of belonging. The self can be temporarily or permanently disrupted (Stern, 1993; 1983). In the first case, resilience and coping strategies are easier to access after the traumatic situation.

From a psychiatric point of view, the best studied reaction of an individual to pervasive conditions of terror, has been the personality dissociations that take place in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), related to reactions that typically occur for example after terrifying experiences during wars and armed conflicts (Steele and Van der Hart, 2009; Steel, et al., 2014). However, the PTSD syndrome might be considered as only one of the potential reactions to traumatic stress and it is one of the most acute ones.

Meanwhile, other situations can also have profound negative psychosomatic effects, in the way they disrupt everyday individual life and collective adjustment. For example, in the case of migrants, a persistent lack of emotional wellbeing could result in a variety of simultaneous or alternative symptoms (e.g. high anxiety, insomnia, depression, as well as, a number of psychosomatic symptoms, such as recurrent headaches, gastrointestinal dysfunctions and the like). These symptoms can be only partially and

directly attributed to traumatic reactions, diminished individual resilience and coping. They can also be connected to living conditions and the quality of life, social discrimination, lack of collective engagement and social support, strict forms of religious participation, as well as, the negative effects of public policies upon the community affected, e.g. delays in migrant documentation, deportation threats, excessive bureaucracy for the validation of professional degrees, difficulties in access to schooling facilities and health infrastructure, among other.

Basic notions of the repercussions of collective and individual trauma (e.g. coping, repair and reparation) can be studied following an intersectional approach by, at least: context, culture, age, gender, class, race/ethnicity and religion. This contributes to building a more complex picture on the social construction of racism, gender and ethnic discrimination, according to the inequities and subaltern forms in which specific vulnerable populations are inserted, i.e. foreign migrants and refugees in the case of our study. Intersectionality helps to build an interpretative framework of articulations between racism, xenophobia, patriarchy and classism.

### **Concluding Note**

A significant reformulation of the main theories on resilience, within a sociopsychological and cultural focus, entails including some ill-explored dimensions, such as: subjectivity, race, gender and religion. This would enhance the presentation of a better integrated scenario on the wellbeing and mental health of vulnerable populations, most specifically, on that of international migrants within emerging economies, the subject of our wider research.

Moreover, main assumptions within trauma theory, such as the effects of early development trauma on adult coping and resilient behaviour are to be interconnected with the study of human identities. These are to be addressed dynamically, as identities are expressed fluidly in the present. Most importantly, empirical work is required to show recurrent reactions of vulnerable communities confronted with deep distress and grief, brought about by stressors that flood the individual's psychic defences and hinder subjects' social agency and solidarity within collective action. Moreover, empirical evidence needs to be gathered on cultural differences in resilience among different social sectors in emerging economies, taking into account the way they are mediated by centre-periphery relations.

The concepts discussed in this text will be contrasted, and probably reframed, using the empirical evidence of the case-studies that are being developed in Chile. Migrants' narratives of their own experiences, as well as, the interactions between their real lives and the perceptions they have of them, vis-à-vis the migration and associated policies proposed by government and other relevant stakeholders will undoubtedly, render an outline of specific political changes that require implementation. This a key aspect in order to recognize and uphold the multicultural opportunities migration offers both ways: to country and migrants.

### **References**

Acero, L (2024) Storytelling and public engagement in Brazil: TV coverage on Regenerative Medicine. *International Journal of Development Research*. v.14 (1) (164652-64658), <https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.27716.01.202>

Acero, L. ( 2022). Framing regenerative medicine: culturally-specific stories of an emerging technoscience. *Biosocieties* 17: 644–675. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41292-02100236-6>

Acero, L (2021). Biocapital, biopolítica e biossocialidades no contexto global de gênero: revisão teórica e evidências. *Cadernos PAGU*, v.62 e216215

Acero, L. (2015). *Psicoterapia Corporal Vincular: Género y Relaciones Terapéuticas y Educativas*. Rio de Janeiro: E-Papers.

Ano, G. and Vasconcelles, E. (2005). Religious Coping and Psychological Adjustment to Stress: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, v. 61(4): 461–480. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20049>

Almeida, S. (2019). *Racismo estrutural*. São Paulo: Ed. Jandaira.

Aranda, K. and Jones, A. (2010). Dignity in care: Claiming recognition. *Nursing Inquiry* 17(3): 248–256.

Anderson, W. (2009). From subjugated knowledge to conjugated subjects: Science and globalisation, or postcolonial studies of science? *Postcolonial Studies* 12: 389–400.

Aranda, K., Zeeman, L. and Scholes, J. (2012) The resilient subject: Exploring subjectivity, identity and the body in narratives of resilience. *Health* 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459312438564>

Baggio J, Brown, K and Hellebrandt, D. (2015). Boundary object or bridging concept? A citation network analysis of resilience. *Ecology and Society* 23(1):24.

Benhabib, S. (1995) *Feminist contentions: Philosophical exchanges*. New York: Routledge.

Benjamin, J. (1995). *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference*. London: Yale University Press.

Benjamin, J. (1998). *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge.

Bouchard, G. (ed.) (2013). *National myths: Constructed pasts, contested presents*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bottrell, D. (2009). Understanding ‘marginal’ perspectives towards a social theory of resilience. *Qualitative Social Work* 8 (3): 321–339.

Brown, K. (2016). *Resilience, development and global change*. New York: Routledge.

Burin, M. (2023). *Gênero y subjetividad en los modos de envejecimiento femeninos*. *Aperturas Psicoanalíticas* 73 (e3): 1-13.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble*. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004 a). *Undoing Gender*. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004 b). *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning & Violence*. London: Verso.

Butler, J, Gambetti, Z. and Sabsay L ( eds.) ( 2016). Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance In: Butler, J. Gambetti Z. and Sabsay L. ( eds) Vulnerability in resistance, Chapter 1. North Carolina: Duke University Press, pp. 24-40.

Carneiro, S ( 2015). Racismo, sexismo e desigualdade no Brasil. São Paulo: Selo Negro Edições.

Carver, C., Scheier, MF. and Weintraub, JK. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: a theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56 (2): 267-283.

Chaigneau, T. , Coulthard, S. and Daw, TM. et al. (2022) Reconciling well-being and resilience for sustainable development. *Nature Sustainability*.  
Perspective Available at  
[https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/81995/1/Accepted\\_Manuscript.pdf](https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/81995/1/Accepted_Manuscript.pdf)- Accessed\_12/09/2023 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00790-8>

Collins, P.H. (1998). *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis.

Crenshaw, K. Demarginalizing the intersection of Race and Sex: A Black feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989.

Crenshaw, K. , Gotanda, N. and Peller, G. et al. (org.) (1995) *Critical Race Theory: The Writings that Formed the movement*. New York: New Press.

Davidson, R J. and Lutz, A. (2008). *Buddha's Brain: Neuroplasticity and Meditation*. IEEE

*Signal Processing* 25(1) :171-174. <https://doi.org/10.1109/msp.2008.4431873>

Davis, A. (2013). *Mulheres, Raça e Classe*. São Paulo: Plataforma Gueto.

Dossey, L. (1993). *Healing words. The power of prayer and the practice of medicine*. San Francisco: Harper Editions.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Press.

Gonzalez, L. ( 2020). Racismo e sexismo na cultura brasileira. In: Ríos F. and Lima M. (orgs).

*Por um feminismo afro-latinoamericano: Ensaios, intervenções e diálogos*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, pp.75-93.

Harding, S. (2009). Postcolonial and feminist philosophies of science and technology: Convergences and dissonances. *Postcolonial Studies* 12 (4): 401–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790903350658>

Harding, S. (2016). Latin American decolonial social studies of scientific knowledge. *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 41 (6): 1063–1087. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243916656465>

Hooks, B. ( 2024). *Irmãs do Inhamé: Mulheres negras e autorecuperação*. São Paulo: Editora Martins Fontes.

Kernberg, O. (2010). Some observations on the process of mourning. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91 (3): 601-619. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-8315.2010.00286.x>

Koenig, H., Cohen, HJ. and Blazer, DG. et al. (1995). Religious Coping and Cognitive Symptoms of Depression in elderly Medical Patients. *Psychosomatics* 36 (4):369-375. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0033-3182\(95\)71646-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0033-3182(95)71646-2)

Krüger, M. (2019). Building Instead of Imposing Resilience: Revisiting the Relationship Between Resilience and the State. *International Political Sociology* 13 (1): 53–67. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/oly025>

Lazarus, R. (1966) *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process*. New York: McGraw-Hill  
Lazarus, R. and Folkman, S. (1984) *Stress Appraisal and Coping*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Leach, M. (ed.) (2008). *Re-Framing Resilience: A Symposium Report*. STEPS Working Paper, 13. Brighton: STEPS Centre, UK.

Leach, M., Scoones, I. and Stirling, A. (2007). *Pathways to Sustainability: an overview of the STEPS Centre approach*, STEPS Approach Paper, Brighton: STEPS Centre.

Le Berre, M. (1992). Territoire. In: Bailly, AS. and Pumain, D. (eds.). *Encyclopédie de la Géographie. Économica*. Paris, pp. 617-638.

Levine, P. (1997). *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Levine P. (2003). Panic, biology and reason: giving the body its chance. *The USA Body Psychotherapy Journal* 2 (2) :5-12.

Li, S., Liddell, J. and Nickerson, A. (2016). The Relationship Between Post-Migration Stress and Psychological Disorders in Refugees and Asylum Seekers. *Current Psychiatry Reports* 18:82. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-016-0723-0>.

López de Souza, M. (2009). Território da divergência (e da confusão): em torno das imprecisas fronteiras de um conceito fundamental. In: Saquet, MA. and Savério Sposito, E. (eds.) *Territórios e territorialidades: teorias, processos y conflitos*. São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular, pp. 57-72.

Lloyd, M. (2005). *Beyond Identity Politics: Feminism, Power and Politics*. London: SAGE.

Masten, A S. (2001). *Ordinary magic: Resilience in development*. New York and London\_ The Guilford Press.

Masten A S. (2014). Global Perspectives on Resilience in Children and Youth. *Child Development* 85 (1): 6–20.

Mbembe, A. (2003). Necropolitics. *Public Culture* 15: 11–40.

Mosberg, M. and Erikson, SH. (2015). Responding to climate variability and change in dryland Kenya: The role of illicit coping strategies in the politics of adaptation *Global Environmental Change*. London: Elsevier

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2015.09.006>

- Mouffe, C. (2005). *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.
- Nelson, DR., Adger, WN. and Brown, K. (2007). Adaptation to Environmental Change: Contributions of a Resilience Framework. *Annual Review on Environmental Resources* 32:395-419. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.energy.32.051807.090348>
- Nickerson, A., Bryant, RA. and Schnyder, U. et al. (2015) Emotion dysregulation mediates the relationship between trauma exposure, post-migration living difficulties and psychological outcomes in traumatized refugees. *Journal of Affect Disorders* 173:185–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.10.043>
- Pargament, K. , Koenig, HG. and Tarakeshwar, N. et al. (2004). Religious Coping Methods as Predictors of Psychological, Physical and Spiritual Outcomes among Medically Ill Elderly Patients: A Two-year Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Health Psychology* 9 (6): 713–730  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105304045366>
- Rodriguez Medina, L. (2014). *Centers and Peripheries in Knowledge Production*. New York: Routledge.
- Rorty, R. (1999). *Philosophy and Social Hope*. London: Penguin.
- Rose, N. (2007). *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power and Subjectivity in the Twenty First Century*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Schore, A. (2009). Relational Trauma and the Developing Right Brain: An Interface of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology and Neuroscience Self and Systems. *Annual New York Academy of Science*.1159: 189–203. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2009.04474.x>  
!C
- Seth, S. (2017). Colonial history and postcolonial science studies. *Radical History Review* 127: 63–85. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-3690882>
- Sim, A., Puffer, E. and Ahmad, A. (2023). Resettlement mental health and, coping: a mixed methods survey with recently resettled refugee parents in Canada. *BMC Public Health*, 23:386. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15300-y>
- Silove, D. (2013). The ADAPT model: a conceptual framework for mental health and psychosocial programming in post conflict settings. *Intervention* 11 (3): 237 – 248.
- Steel, Z. , Marnane, C. and Iranpour, C. et al. (2014) The global prevalence of common mental disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis 1980–2013. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 43 (2): 476-493. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyu038>
- Steele, K. and Van der Hart, O. (2009). Treating Dissociation. In: Curtois, C. and Ford, J. Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorder: An evidence based guide. Chapter 7. New York: The Guilford Press, pp.145-165.
- Stern, D. (1993). The role of feelings for an interpersonal self. In: Neisser, U. (ed.) *The perceived self: Ecological and interpersonal sources of self-knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.215-225.
- Stern, D. (1983) *The Early Development of Schemas of Self, Other, and “Self with Other”*. In: Stern, D. (org.) *Reflections on Self Psychology (Psychology Revivals)*, London: Routledge.

Torraco, R J. (2005). Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Guidelines and Examples. *Human Resources Development Review* 4(3): 356-367.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484305278283>

Turner, BS. (2008). *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Ungar, M. (ed.) (2021) *Multisystemic Resilience Adaptation and Transformation in Contexts of Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ungar, M. (2010). What is resilience across cultures and contexts? Advances to the theory of positive development among individuals and families under stress. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy* 21(1): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08975351003618494>

Ungar, M. (2005). Introduction: Resilience across cultures and contexts. In: Ungar, M. (ed.) *Handbook for Working with Children and Youth: Pathways to Resilience across Cultures and Contexts*. London: SAGE, pp. xv–xxxix.

Ungar, M. (2004). A constructionist discourse on resilience: Multiple contexts, multiple realities among at risk children and youth. *Youth and Society* 35 (3): 341–365. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X03257030>

Wortmann, J. (2013). Religious Coping. In: Gellman, M.D. and Turner, JR. (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine*. Springer, New York, NY. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9\\_665](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_665)

Yoffe, L. (2012). Beneficios de las prácticas religiosas/espirituales en el duelo. *Avances en Psicología* 20 (1): 9-30.

<https://doi.org/10.33539/avpsicol.2012.v20n1.1940>

## **Chapter II**

### **Migrants and refugees: between loss and agency**

**Pablo Zuleta Pastor**

#### **Introduction**

Migration, even more so when it is lived in a forced manner as a consequence of risks and dangers to life and/or livelihood, is an extremely complex experience, since it implies a total transformation of daily life. It demands from migrants the ability to re-think and re-create themselves in socio-environmental and cultural contexts that are generally very different from those of their countries of origin. It thus implies a global demand on subjectivity, understood here as "the absolute phenomenological life, the essence of which consists in the very fact of feeling or experiencing oneself" (Dejours, 2012: p. 150). Consequently, this experience will most probably be accompanied by different psychic sufferings, which, however, are usually not attended to, since the migratory situation - especially the forced one- demands the attention of countless other priorities linked to the very fact of living. However, as we will point out in this text, the elaboration of the mourning involved in a migratory process (people, objects, culture, landscape, food and a long etcetera) becomes an important condition to improve the possibilities of adaptation to a new life, strictly speaking, to make a new life possible (Volkan, 2019).

Considering the above, it is undoubtedly very important to know and understand migratory experiences from a situated perspective that allows us to apprehend this complexity and to approach the particular dynamics that in each migratory situation will exist between the traumatic experience, mourning and the possibilities of subjective reinvention, dynamics that will impact and result in different states and processes related to mental health and well-being/discomfort of people. However, it is the purpose of this text to conceptualize this problem from a more abstract standpoint that will allow us to understand lived experiences.

The chapter is organized in three sections. The first focuses on the conceptualization of forced migration as a category that articulates the images of migrants and refugees and shows how narrow the notion of refugees is becoming in the context of contemporary migration due to the tremendous gap between asylum and refugee applicants and people who actually benefit from such legal recognition. In the second, we focus on the notions of territory and territoriality, as a way to account for the fact that every migratory process implies a movement between de-territorialization (understood as the processes of leaving a territory of origin) and re-territorialization (also understood as a complex process of appropriation and adaptation to a new territory and the complexities -political, economic, social, cultural- of this location). Finally, in the third section, we address the concept of migratory mourning and focus on the multiple anxieties mobilized in the migratory processes: depressive anxieties associated with the losses experienced; confusional anxieties, often as a result of the cultural shock that migration implies, which undoubtedly impacts the psyche; attack anxieties that may stem from feelings of guilt associated with migration, as well as from actual conditions of hatred, rejection or discrimination on the part of the communities in which the relocation is sought.



## **The migrant/refugee distinction in contemporary human mobility**

In the context of contemporary migration, including South-South flows, which are the ones we are concerned with here, the distinction between the categories of refugee and migrant is much clearer at the conceptual and legal level than in the sphere of lived experiences (Espinar, 2010). According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 protocol, ratified by Chile in 1972, a refugee is a person who:

“...owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (United Nations, 2023. World Refugee Day: <https://www.un.org/es/observances/refugee-day>).

From the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Adrian Edwards (2016) states that refugees are mainly people fleeing armed conflict or persecution and for whom, returning to their countries of origin, implies putting their lives or freedom at risk. It is in this situation that they become asylum seekers under the 1951 Convention adopted in Geneva, which establishes a fundamental principle in international law, which is that refugees cannot be expelled or returned to their country of origin.

However, according to Cabieses, Gálvez and Ajraz (2018), the current migratory phenomenon is characterized by high levels of vulnerability, which to a large extent may imply that the legal definition of refugee is becoming narrow. In this regard, Carreño et al. (2021) indicate that the exponential increase of people seeking refuge in Latin America far exceeds the possibilities of the States in the region to respond promptly to requests. In the Chilean case, according to data from the Jesuit Migrant Service, in 2022, 7571 refugee applications were submitted and only 760 were recognized (JMS, 2022). The same report highlights that the denial of this recognition affected migrants from countries such as Colombia, Venezuela and Haiti, countries experiencing major humanitarian crises. Data from the National Migration Service (2023) in the Report 1 of general statistics, shows that between the years 2013 and 2022 -manifesting a significant increase in 2017 and 2018- refugee applications reached 26,314, with 626 people having been recognized as refugees, representing 2.3% of applications. During the years 2021 and 2022, the highest percentage of applications were from the Venezuelan population (79% and 68% respectively), followed by the Colombian population (4% and 16% respectively). In 2021, refugee status was granted to 12 Venezuelans, 4 Colombians and 3 other nationalities. Meanwhile, in 2022, 45 Ukrainians, 6 Afghans and 4 migrants from Sierra Leone and Venezuela were granted refugee status. In legal terms, people requesting refuge have access to what has been called a "waiting visa" (Carreño et al., 2021), which should allow people to move freely through Chile, access to public health and education services, as well as the possibility of labor integration. However, studies from the same authors as above, report irregularities in the enforcement of this law, which leaves people in a highly vulnerable situation as far as the exercise of rights is concerned.

According to Eva Espinar (2010), today we would be in the presence of many 'de facto' refugees, i.e., who in fact do not have the protection of their countries of origin, but have not received recognition of refugee status in their respective host countries. In this context, the notion of forced migration is of particular interest, which according to IOM (2004) concerns migratory movements in which there are significant elements of coercion that include the threat to life or livelihood, whether due to natural causes or

triggered by human action. In this view, these are not migrations driven by direct violence, so that most of these forced migratory movements do not explicitly fit the national and international legal definitions that allow access to refugee status (Espinár, 2010). In Latin America and the Caribbean, "one of the main triggers of forced migration corresponds to the proliferation of organized crime and gender violence especially in Central American countries" (Cabieses, Gálvez and Ajraz, 2018: p. 286). In this context, in the face of situations of extreme and widespread poverty, precarious food resources, intensified risks of disease and death, there is a need to seek alternatives to obtain daily sustenance and one of them is international migration (Freitez, 2019). The same author states that, what is violated here is the right not to migrate as a consequence of the existence of a State that does not provide guarantees for the exercise of different human rights or even violates them.

Therefore, a large number of people in a situation of forced migration do not have access to refugee recognition and therefore, do not enjoy the protection granted by such status. This tends to make invisible the humanitarian and international protection needs of vast groups of people (Freitez, 2019). Refugees and those who migrate under conditions of humanitarian crisis share leaving their countries of origin by force. In this regard, Lara (2010) is emphatic in stating that when migration is experienced as a forced departure and not as part of a desire, it is difficult for the person to position him/herself as a subject of rights, which increases his/her lack of protection.

This reveals another important differentiation, the one that can be made between voluntary and non-voluntary migration, i.e., "whether it was a decision taken as one alternative among others or whether it was forced by social and subjective conditions. In other words, whether it has to do with the subject's desire or whether it was experienced as an imposition, a forced exit to a dead-end situation" (Lara, 2010: p. 20). In this regard, a study by Vamir Volkan (2019) shows that in cases of voluntary immigration, integration processes in destination countries turn out to be less problematic and the condition of foreignness, and moreover, the identity as a foreigner, operate in a complex way, it both differentiates and favours integration (Venturini, 2006).

### **Migration as a demand for re-territorialization**

Although migrations are nothing new, since human displacements have existed throughout the history of mankind, each historical moment involves different motives, modalities, constructed and attributed meanings and emotions, among other relevant issues that take on particular and novel forms as situated phenomena (Almeida, 2009). Notwithstanding the above, and following the last author, we can say that during the last decades we are living a new era of international migrations.

For Almeida, "the diaspora is a phenomenon involving territoriality, deterritorialization and reterritorialization that may involve one or a varied number of people" (Almeida, 2009: p. 176). These are territories created in a space in movement. "The displaced must build, quickly and in precarious conditions, a relationship with their new territory, while resettlement may induce changes perceived in different ways by former residents" (Chenut and Ocampo, 2014: p.105). To this extent, reterritorialization processes always involve tensions at multiple levels, at least, political (in terms of norms, rules and power relations), economic (in terms of tensions regarding access to resources and wealth) and cultural (in terms of meanings, production of subjectivities, intersubjective relations and symbolic exchanges in general) (López de Souza, 2009). In the case of migration in

Chile, Rojas Pedemonte and Vicuña (2019) emphasize different "myths" associated with the arrival and settlement of migrants in the country in reference to: health, education, employment, security, access to housing and economic development, among others; myths that circulate among the local population, making the processes of settlement and re-territorialization more difficult.

Human existence is inconceivable if it is not in relation to a territory in which it has place and meaning, therefore, we will understand migration and, especially those migratory processes that are carried out in a forced condition, as a demand for reterritorialization in a broad sense. Rogério Haesbaert (2007) argues that, strictly speaking, there are no deterritorialization processes -without denying the experience of people who individually or collectively experience territorial displacement processes due to different causes (economic, political, associated with climate change, among others)- since deterritorialization is inseparable from its counterpart: reterritorialization processes. In this sense, the focus of the analysis is on the processes of territorial relocation, which often are very different from the places of origin.

In summary, in geographical sciences there has been much discussion about the difference between the concepts of territory and place; which account, from different points of view, for the relationship that human groups build and develop with land (Chenut and Ocampo, 2014). Roughly speaking, the last authors mentioned state that the notion of territory would be more closely linked to the relations of power, domination and control that take place there, while that of place refers rather to subjective experiences, affective ties, social practices and generation of meanings. Le Berre (1992) emphasizes that territory is always an appropriated space, especially in affective and subjective terms, including processes of identity and the identification of subjects with the land.

Haesbaert (2007), following Lefebvre, reflects upon an important distinction. He argues that territory always alludes to power, but not only in the sense of traditional political power, but in the broader sense of domination, concepts associated with possession and property. Meanwhile, appropriation would correspond to a process in the symbolic order, charged with affection and inseparable from lived experience. In Marxist terms, the differentiation between territory as property and territory as appropriation, entails an emphasis on the exchange value of the territory, in the first case which becomes a merchandise. In the second case, it would be a use value, much more linked to a lived space and time (Haesbaert, 2014).

However, this sort of dichotomy can only be one that produces two ideal types, in the Weberian sense, as conceptual constructs that never manifest themselves in a pure state. Following Haesbaert (2014), there is no functional territory in which the exercise of domination prevails, nor is there a space in which the symbolic dimension emerges detached from power relations. We will always find ourselves somewhere along this continuum. Then: "the territory can be conceived from the interweaving of multiple power relations, from the more material power of economic-political relations to the more symbolic power of relations of a more strictly cultural order" (Haesbaert, 2014: p. 27). In this way, the processes of replacement of migrant people and/or communities always involve tensions of reterritorialization in which processes of domination and symbolic-identity (territory as property/place as appropriation) are combined. The latter must be observed and analyzed in their own historical-geographical contexts, that is, in a situated manner that changes permanently. This requires thinking of territories in terms of territoriality, that is, as realities in permanent movement between processes of

domination and political-economic control on the one hand, and symbolic-cultural appropriation on the other:

When building a territory, a human group must make it its own space, learn to apprehend it, acquire the skills to inhabit it, identify and use the resources it offers, as well as, avoid its dangers. But the group also has to name it, establish affective and emotional relationships with it and give it meaning. These relationships can be understood as territoriality; which, not only affects geographical objects, but also transforms subjects"(Chenut and Ocampo, 2014, p. 111). According to Almeida (2009), territory becomes something non-fixed, fluid, multiple and plural, problematizing the notion of an exclusive relationship of certain groups with their (supposed) territory.

Together with Lara (2010) and Venturini (2006) it could be said that the migratory and re-territorialization experiences entail the possibility of the construction of new subjectivities, of a new form of positioning the subject. In Chile, thinking about the phenomenon of the feminization of migration, Stefoni (2003) states that, despite economic motivation being the reason most frequently for migrating, as mentioned among the women participating in her research, it is possible to also consider other arguments and narratives. These are possibilities of emancipation and greater personal freedom - that speak of new ways of experiencing themselves in the world as women. Other ways of generating subjectivity, in forms that were more difficult in their territories of origin. Seen in this light, the migratory experience would not just involve loss, but certain subjective gains could also emerge. However, such potential gains cannot lead us to a sort of idealization of the role of migrants or of their displacement processes. These can also be experienced, especially in cases of forced migrations, as a sort of "suspension as social subjects, subjects of law, subjects of desire that has one of its symptomatic expressions in a problematic way of belonging to the place of departure and arrival" (Lara, 2010: p. 17)

A key challenge of the re-territorialization processes is an appropriation of the new space that allows for the subject's positioning i.e. the possession and exercise of rights, a restitution of desire and a sense of control over individual and collective life. Such issues are unthinkable in the absence of a framework of migration governance in the host countries, in its intersectoral (health, housing, work, education, security, etc.) and intersectional dimensions (differences of age, gender, class, race).

These processes of subjective appropriation of the territory invite us to think of another possible social place for the role of migrants (beyond the roles of victim or criminal), that is that of "subjects who express resistance to national, social and cultural homogeneity and who are agents of conflictive and innovative practices" (Lara, 2010: p. 18) who are inserted and participate in the process of social integration, power dynamics, re-signification of territories and of the practices that take place in them. These issues are certainly not free from generating conflict, since the role of migrants is often annoying and disturbing for societies that have cultural, racial, ethnic and social homogeneity as their main value.

### **Dealing with mourning as a condition of appropriation and subjective repositioning**

Migratory movements are inseparable from the history of humanity. Ocampo (2014) proposes that the survival of homo sapiens as a species is due to the migratory and nomadic condition of the first human populations. However, this does not minimize the

fact that displacements necessarily entail losses, even more so when they are forced or pushed by situations that exceed the will of the subjects. In this framework, the need for the elaboration of such losses emerges as a condition for the production of new subjective positions that may even imply certain gains for subjectivity and, therefore, improvements at the level of mental health and subjective wellbeing.

In this sense, Volkan states, "all displacement experiences can be examined from the perspective of the immigrant's or refugee's capacity to mourn and/or to resist the mourning process" (Volkan, 2019, p. 62). Moreover, mourning processes are to be considered as multiple involving, for example, culture, family language, landscape, food and smells (Achotegui, 2004). Displaced persons face the tension of coming to terms with losses while, at the same time, making extreme efforts to adapt to a new environment. The author states:

"mourning refers to an intense internal examination of images of lost persons or things until the preoccupation with the affects associated to them loses its intensity. The degree to which an individual is able to intrapsychically accept loss will determine the degree of adaptation to a new life" (Volkan, 2019, p. 62).

Without intending any form of psychologistic reductionism, the centrality of grief in this process is to be emphasized, as well as, the conditions of psychic security necessary to overcome it. Individual differences, such as, basic personalities and history of separation and/or loss, as well as, cultural ones, such as, the cultural meanings of sadness, strength and even resilience, are to be taken into account to approach this experience of internal revision.

The migratory experience implies a "cultural shock", according to Volkan (2019), due to the sudden change from a expected environment to an unpredictable one. The newly arrived person may feel stunned, because suddenly everything is different and the subjective feeling is of not having the basic tools to make intelligible the new space that is inhabited. These refer first of all to cultural tools, as shared ways of understanding and operating in the world. As Moro (2004) states this process forms part of the psychic dimension of the migratory event, since migration entails a rupture of the internalized cultural framework, of those categories and internal representations that allow the subject read the world and assign meaning to the experience, as it is culture that allows the codification of the lived experience. The act of emigrating can be considered as an experience that is often, but not necessarily always, traumatic.

Trauma acts as an invasive wound, a violent shock that breaks through a protective layer whose effects are invasive for the psychic organization as a whole (Volkan, 2019). In this regard, Nathan et al. (2021) propose two distinctions on trauma: the trauma of non-sense -derived from the notion of double bind proposed by Bateson -which relates to cognitive or intellectual dimensions and the trauma of the loss of the internal cultural framework from which external reality is comprehended, specific to migratory trauma. However, the same authors emphasize the inevitable and complex interactions between the affective, cognitive and cultural dimensions. However, following Moro (2004), migratory trauma is neither constant nor inevitable, and can even be an experience that carries creative potentialities or creative positionings of the subject (Lara, 2010). The above, conditioned by the complexity of each migratory situation, including the pre-migratory experience and the transit period, which will influence both the elaboration of grief and the processes of adaptation and replacement.

According to Bronx,

“In every migration there is, normally, an increase of the most primitive anxieties. Persecutory anxieties due to the threats of the unknown. confusional anxieties related to the disorientation generated by change and depressive anxieties arising from the shock of what has been lost (...) The capacity or not to face and solve the ailments that are awakened: feelings of loss, anguish, sadness, insecurity, instability, precariousness, uprootedness and nostalgia, the expectations and illusions that are realized or frustrated, as well as, the identity crises that frequently occur, mark the success or failure of this process” (Bronx, 2021, p. 6).

In turn, Volkan (2019) states that when migrants are capable of an intrapsychic recognition of the loss of their past lives and are able to accept the pain, they will most likely show signs of sadness or nostalgia. However, reparation tendencies will be preserved that will favor social insertion and, quite possibly, the chances of generating stronger feelings of belonging to the host places. Instead, in those people in whom persecutory anxieties prevail, these increase when they have to face different types of discrimination in the societies of arrival.

Migrants and refugees consequently face both the demands of mourning and of adapting to a new environment. They are faced with the need to integrate images of people and things they have left behind, with images of what they find in their new territories and are also confronted with the nature and depth of other traumatic events experienced before and during the migration process. However, as Volkan (2019) also emphasizes that, in situations of high influx of migratory flows, such as those experienced during the last few years in Chile, both local authorities and national and international support organizations concentrate their efforts on solving vital practical and immediate issues (food, home and shelter). But often postpone the possibilities of investigating the internal world of migrants and even more so, of promoting realms of specialized psychotherapeutic support.

Chile is no exception. For example, study by Carreño et al. (2020) sought to address this issue from a human rights´ perspective, considering especially the right to mental health. They identified significant barriers on access to mental health care for migrants seeking refuge and asylum. This situation tends to result in post-migratory stress, increases the risk of suffering emotional disorders and intensifies psychological suffering. The authors also found significant deficiencies in the capacities of professional teams to address the psychological consequences of the migratory experience and a tendency towards the provocation of episodes of violence and persecution. The expression of one of the persons interviewed in this study is eloquent: "no one is prepared to listen to what I saw". This phrase highlights the loneliness in which migrants have to work through their traumatic experiences. The questions which arise again are, among others: What are the specificities of the type of ´therapeutic listening´ needed by people in conditions of forced and possibly traumatic migration. Which should be the technical and training requirements of professionals working in the field of migrant mental health?

## **Final Remarks**

The definition of the role of migrants and refugees presents different nuances and specificities throughout this text. The first part emphasized that the distinction between the two types is clearer at the conceptual level than at the level of lived experience, since asylum and refugee applications outnumber by far the cases in which the status is

actually recognized. In this context, we are faced with the existence of many people who are de facto refugees; in other words, they cannot return to their countries of origin, but neither are they recognized in their countries of arrival, in which case the "right not to migrate" has been violated. The concept of forced migrants therefore gains strength.

Migration always denotes a movement, a transit. It implies losses at departure, those associated with the territory of origin and the arrival in a new one, with its limitations and possibilities. It demands then, what has been named as 'processes of re-territorialization', which imply tensions of a political, economic and cultural nature. However, any process of appropriation and re-territorialization requires a certain level of acceptance of loss and of what has been lost and a certain recovery from the initial state of cultural shock, since in psychic terms, what is broken is the internalized cultural framework (Moro, 2004).

The work of mourning and grieving loss could allow for a different positioning of the role of migrants, beyond the images of the victim or the criminal; a role of resistance and conflict related to the cultural hegemony of the societies of arrival that may allow innovative and transformative agency. The issues that emerge from the ideas put forward during the present analysis, address the recognition of the need to design relevant devices to attend the complexity of the migratory experience. How to design interventions in the host society remains a task for future research. It entails the possibility of imagining and implementing devices aimed at favoring the integration of those who arrive into the different spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life, but also dealing with affective belonging and recognition.

## References

- Achotegui, J. (2004). Emigrar en situación extrema: El síndrome del inmigrante con estrés crónico y múltiple (Síndrome de Ulises). *Norte de Salud Mental*, 21, 39-52.
- Almeida, M. G. (2009). Diáspora: Viver entre-territórios. E entre-culturas? En M. A. Saquet & E. S. Savério (Orgs.), *Territórios e territorialidades: teorías, processos e conflitos* (pp. 175-196). São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular.
- Bronx, V. (2021). Migración y exilio: Estudio psicoanalítico [Grinberg y Grinberg, 1996]. *Aperturas Psicoanalíticas*, 68.
- Cabieses, B., Gálvez, P., & Ajraz, N. (2018). Migración internacional y salud: El aporte de las teorías sociales migratorias a las decisiones en salud pública. *Revista Peruana de Medicina Experimental y Salud Pública*, 35(2), 285-291.
- Carreño, A., Correa, M. E., Urrutia, C., & Cabieses, B. (2021). "Te recomiendo que esperes": Burocracia y salud en solicitantes de asilo y refugiados de origen latinoamericano en Chile. *Revista Chilena de Antropología*, 43, 113-130.
- Carreño, A., Blukacz, A., Cabieses, B., & Jazanovich, D. (2020). *Salud Colectiva*. Universidad Nacional de Lanús, 16.
- Chenut, P., & Ocampo, M. (2014). Reasentamiento tras el desplazamiento forzado: Dos comunidades étnicas en Colombia. *Iztapalapa Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades*, 76, 105-137.
- Dejours, C. (2012). *Trabajo Vivo*. Tomo I. Sexualidad y trabajo. Buenos Aires: Topía Editorial.

- Edwards, A. (2016). ¿Refugiado o migrante? ¿Cuál es el término correcto? <https://www.acnur.org/noticias/stories/refugiado-o-migrante-cual-es-el-termino-correcto>
- Espinar, E. (2010). Migrantes y refugiados: Reflexiones conceptuales. *Obets. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 5, 35-47.
- Freitez, A. (2019). Crisis humanitaria y migración forzada desde Venezuela. En G. Gandino, V. Lozano, & I. Prieto (Coords.), *Crisis y migración de población venezolana: Entre la desprotección y la seguridad jurídica en Latinoamérica* (pp. 33-58). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Haesbaert, R. (2009). Dilema de conceitos. Espaço-território em contenção territorial. En M. A. Saquet & E. S. Savério (Orgs.), *Territórios e territorialidades: teorias, processos e conflitos* (pp. 95-120). São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular.
- Haesbaert, R. (2007). Território e multiterritorialidade: Um debate. *GEOgraphia*, 9(17), 19-46.
- Lara, A. (2010). Dislocación, subjetividad y migración. *Revista Castalia*, 18, 15-22.
- Le Berre, M. (1992). Territoire. En A. S. Bailly & D. Pumain (Dirs.), *Encyclopédie de la Géographie* (pp. 617-638). París: Económica.
- López de Souza, M. (2009). Território da divergencia (e da confusão): Em torno das imprecisas fronteiras de um conceito fundamental. En M. A. Saquet & E. S. Savério (Orgs.), *Territórios e territorialidades: teorias, processos e conflitos* (pp. 57-72). São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular.
- Moro, M. R. (2004). ¿Por qué crear dispositivos específicos para los inmigrantes y sus niños? La experiencia francesa. *Revista de Psicopatología y Salud Mental del Niño y el Adolescente*, 4, 69-80.
- Moro, M. R., Caballeira, L., Elúa, A., & Radjack, R. (2021). Los adolescentes y el mundo. Un enfoque transcultural. *Revista de la Asociación Española de Neuropsiquiatría*, 41, 151-169.
- Naciones Unidas. (2023). <https://www.un.org/es/observances/refugee-day>
- Ocampo, M. (2014). Migración forzada, desarraigo y despojo: Itinerancia obligada, una ciudadanía inconclusa. *Iztapalapa Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades*, 76, 5-18.
- OIM. (2019). Glossary on migration. [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml\\_34\\_glossary.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf)
- Rojas, N., & Vicuña, J. T. (2019). Los mitos y las realidades de una nueva migración en Chile. En N. Rojas & J. T. Vicuña (Eds.), *Migración en Chile. Evidencia y mitos de una nueva realidad*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones.
- Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes. (2022). Anuario de estadísticas migratorias 2022. <https://sjmchile.org/2023/06/09/%F0%9D%90%80%F0%9D%90%A7%F0%9D%90%AE%F0%9D%90%9A%F0%9D%90%AB%F0%9D%90%A2%F0%9D%90%A8-%F0%9D%90%9D%F0%9D%90%9E-%F0%9D%90%84%F0%9D%90%AC%F0%9D%90%AD%F0%9D%90%9A%F0%9D%90%9Di%F0%9D%90%AC%F0%9D%90%AD/>



Servicio Nacional de Migraciones. (2023). Reporte 1 de estadísticas generales. <https://serviciomigraciones.cl/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/230529-Reporte-1-Estadisticas-SERMIG.pdf>

Stefoni, C. (2003). Inmigración peruana en Chile: Una oportunidad a la integración. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria.

Venturini, S. (2006). La emergencia del sujeto en la migración. *Aesthethika. Revista Internacional de Cultura, Subjetividad y Estética*, 2.

Volkan, V. (2019). Inmigrantes y refugiados. Trauma, duelo permanente, prejuicio y psicología de las fronteras. Barcelona: Herder.

## **Chapter III**

### **Migration context**

**Claudia Dides Castillo**

#### **1. Brief socio-political history of Chile**

##### **Socioeconomic Situation**

The Republic of Chile is a country located in the extreme south of South America, its capital is Santiago and it has 16 regions, 56 provinces and 346 communes. The last Population and Housing Census carried out in 2017 indicated that the total population was of 17,574,003 people: 8,601,989 of them (48.9%) were men and 8,972,014 (51.1%), women (INE, 2023a). In 2000, Chile expanded its total population to 15,351,799 inhabitants, and in 2023, to 19,629,590, representing a 27.9 % increase for the period.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the country has experienced a strong aging of its population, exhibited a low fertility rate, one below the replacement rate. In 2020, the total fertility rate was of less than 1.2 children per woman. Chile had also a low mortality level and a sustained increase in life expectancy at birth (INE, 2023c).

In 2021, the human development index (HDI) was high representing 0.855 -on a scale of zero to one-, increasing slightly as from 2020 (0.852) (Expansión, 2023). Poverty levels were reduced from 8.0% in 2020 to 4.8% in 2022 -representing an average of US\$6.85 income per day. Income inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient, reached 0.43 in 2022 (World Bank, 2023).

##### **Sociopolitical situation**

The political and institutional evolution of Chile since its establishment as an independent republic at the beginning of the 19th century, has been characterized by a presidentialist system. But it has assumed different types of formal and 'de facto' constitutional expressions. Significant moments in this process were: the institutional crisis that resulted in the civil war of 1891, when a parliamentary regime was imposed 'de facto' for some time, as well as, the brief period named as "anarchy" in the late 1920s, when a "socialist republic" was shortly implemented. In spite of these upheavals; including two periods of military dictatorship in the late 1920s and between 1973-1990, the Chilean political system has generally maintained a certain level of stability in comparison with most Latin American countries. In the case of Chile, the military dictatorships have presented certain "refoundational" characteristics. These are hardly found in the rest of the dictatorships that almost all Latin American countries have undergone during their independent life.

On the one hand, the dictatorship of General Carlos Ibáñez (1927-1931), founded the institutional base of a modern State in all spheres. This process was subsequently expanded by the government of the Popular Front (1938-1942), especially relating socio-economic development and industrialization (Tello, 2011, Arias, 2012; Errázuriz, 2014). The dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), on the other hand, carried out what some analysts have called "the capitalist refoundation" of Chile. It implemented

since the late 1970s, almost 10 years before the so-called "Washington Consensus", a "structural adjustment policy" or neoliberal model. This policy introduced profound changes in the Chilean economy, politics, society and culture, which are expressed in the 1980 Constitution imposed by the dictatorship and have effects until the present day.

From the 1990s onwards, Chile has undergone one of the most particular processes of transition from dictatorship to democracy. This transition took place within the institutional framework built by the country's oligarchic sectors with the support of the military dictatorship, creating an institutional framework of "protected democracy". It granted an oversized political representation to oligarchic subjects (a minority), in spite of their low real social support. At the same time it created mechanisms of military tutelage, or "authoritarian enclaves" within the political system. This type of institutionality plus the constitutional limitations placed upon the State as an economic and social development agent i.e. a subsidiary of private interests, originally gave unprecedented power and autonomy to the Armed Forces (FFAA) over popular sovereignty; aspects absent from modern democracies. It also established institutional mechanisms that made the Armed Forces true guardians of the functioning of the political system (Huneeus, 2014). A good part of this institutional framework of "authoritarian enclaves" was slowly dismantled over the last 30 years, when the correlation of forces in Congress allowed (Carrasco, 2008).

Thus, Chile has lived through what could be called the most 'chemically pure' process in the establishment of a neoliberal model. It started under a dictatorship, which allowed to maintain total control over everything that could have altered the different components of that model. At the same time, it strongly repressed the social discontent of any of the sectors that were affected by such implementation. Repression included not only the salaried workers - who paid for the highest costs of change, but also important sectors of small and medium-sized businesses. Hundreds of thousands of them went bankrupt because they could not compete with imported products or compete outside with their own products the country, unable to meet the required quality standards or production volume (Vargas, 2013).

At the same time, Chilean society has undergone vast cultural changes, in a multiplicity of spheres, which have had significant repercussions on the social fabric and on the political representation system itself (Garretón, 2013a). In the course of the reinstatement of democracy during the 90s, there were contradictions between macroeconomic success and social dissatisfaction at the micro level. This phenomenon has been highlighted by the 1998 Human Development Report (HDR) prepared by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This process continued throughout many years, as the neoliberal model extended its impact from the economy to society, to values, to culture, to the behavior of individuals and social groups. This exacerbated individualism and brought market competition to all spheres of social activity, as well as to the State and its public policies, fragmenting the social and political fabric.

The climax of the resistance to this process happened in October 2019, with the deep social and political crisis known as the "social outburst". It deeply shook Chilean society. No solution has been found up to this day, despite two attempts to build a new Constitution that could lay the foundations of a new institutionality and resolve the deep contradictions that run cross Chilean society.

The neoliberal model has somehow come to complete a cycle, because along with its economic achievements, its collateral social processes have unfolded and matured throughout decades. Maybe this can be partly attributed to its very early implementation, since the late 70's, and its 'chemically pure' quality. Its collateral effects, in terms of

social justice, deepening of structural inequalities, widening of the gap between rich and poor, concentration of socially produced wealth in an increasingly smaller contingent of people, excessive territorial centralism of the country's development, the generation of a gap between the capital city and the rest of the country's regions have begun to manifest themselves (Correa, 2009).

This relates to the basic socio-cultural conditions in which the model itself was imposed: with a Chilean society in which the dominant oligarchy has not substantially changed its extractivist and absenteeist mode of production inherited from the colony and its highly classist and exploitative way of perceiving the relations between labor and capital. This situation was reinforced by one of the pillars of the country's economic transformation: the so-called Labor Plan imposed by the dictatorship in the 80's. Within it the recovered democracy had rather marginal and non-structural changes, and there was a clear weakening of the trade union organizations and their bargaining power. Social fragmentation has also reached civil society, where the vast and strong fabric of social organizations that characterized the Chile of the 60s and 70s and that was so important in the resistance to the dictatorship and its defeat in the 1988 plebiscite, no longer exists at the same depth, extension and strength of those years.

Despite such mixed and sometimes contradictory results, Chile's situation stands out in Latin America for the high level of economic growth (Muñoz, 2007) that has characterized much of the last thirty years and for its political stability (Drake and Jaksic, 1999). At the end of the 1980s, in order to defeat the dictatorship in the 1988 plebiscite, a center-left alliance was formed that came to represent the national majority, around two thirds of the country, for a long time. In fact, it governed the country since 1990 in four consecutive governments for 20 years, plus two additional governments, between which there was a period with two right-wing governments that, in practice, remained within the model of a "corrected neoliberalism" that had been in place since the 1990s (Garretón, 2013b).

This growth and stability, in the general context of a Latin America in which some countries have been showing significant economic and political problems, created a context that, from 2010 onwards, favoured an acceleration and growth of migration.

## **2. Current international migration trends: causes and processes**

Currently, the increase in inequality and poverty between and within countries, climate change and globalization processes have led to an increase in migratory flows. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that globally the number of international migrants has increased in the last five decades, reaching approximately 281 million international migrants by 2020, equivalent to 3.6% of the world population, which in 1990 was 128 million and more than three times that of 1970 (IOM, 2023).

In recent times, the countries of the Global South have gone from being countries of almost exclusive emigration to territories of transit and destination, with an increase in international migration with a South-South flows (IOM, 2014). Latin America has not been the exception; its cities make evident the increase in intraregional migration, which shows a relevant pattern of mobility between cities (Rodríguez, 2017; Stefoni et al., 2018).

Currently, according to the IOM, South America is characterized as a region of origin, destination, transit and return of migrants. There are three current migration patterns: emigration of South American nationals outside the región, intra-regional immigration and immigration from other regions. Between 2015 and 2020, there was an increase of

5.8 million in the total number of emigrants of South American origin worldwide, from 11.8 million to 17.6 million in five years, implying a growth of 49%. The countries with the largest population emigrating outside their territories are, in first place, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with 5.4 million, followed by Colombia with 3 million and, in third place, Brazil, with almost 1.9 million male and female emigrants in mid-2020 (DESA, 2020).

The intraregional nature of migration in South America indicates that 79% of the migrant population is of South American origin (DESA, 2020). Thus, in some countries very high percentages are estimated, close to 100% for the foreign population of South American origin: Colombia, 96%; Peru, 87%; Argentina, 83%, and Ecuador with 80%. The country with the lowest percentage of intra-regional migration was, as of July 2020, Uruguay, with 40%. In all cases, except Venezuela, there were increases in the proportion of intra-regional migrants. The countries with the largest foreign populations in quantitative terms are Argentina with 2.3 million, Chile with 1.6 million, Colombia with 1.9 million, Venezuela, with 1.3 million migrants, and Peru, with 1.2 million migrants.

Migration trends were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to restrictions on international and domestic mobility. In the case of Venezuelan migration to South American countries during the years 2020 and 2021, although the pace dropped in February 2020, a total of 3.7 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees were recorded, while in 2021 migration reached 4.5 million people, increasing by 20%. The countries with the highest relative growth between the two periods are the Plurinational State of Bolivia (55%), Peru (33%) and Paraguay (32%). There was also an increase in irregular crossings by extra-regional and South American migrants across the border between Colombia and Panama through the Darien area to reach the United States, which implies serious risks and threats to their physical integrity and human rights. According to official figures from the Panamanian Migration Service (SNM), a total of 134,000 irregular crossings were registered in 2021, involving 62% of Haitian nationals - being the nationality with the highest participation, followed by Cuban nationals with 14%. Many of these Haitian migrants having resided regularly in South American countries, mainly Chile and Brazil, and have sons and daughters born in these countries.

During the period 2015 to 2021, a total of 6,437,663 residences were granted, mostly temporary ones, implying the arrival of new foreign populations and access to formal ways of migratory regularization. For all those years, the total number of temporary residences exceeds the number of permanent residences. Chile, Argentina and Brazil were in the period 2015-2021, the countries that granted the highest number of residence permits. In 2016, 724,000 total residences were granted. Following the behavior of the previous year, in the case of Argentina, the nationals from Paraguayan continues to rank first in terms of the residences granted. Peruvian and Bolivian nationalities also continued to be among the main nationalities receiving residences in both Chile and Argentina. However, in Chile, nationalities from Caribbean countries also lead in absolute numbers (IOM and FEM, 2022).

In 2017, a total of 975,000 permanent residencies were granted. There is a diversification of the main nationalities obtaining them, with Venezuelans occupying one of the first places in both Chile and Argentina. In 2018, a total of 1,216,000 residences were granted. Venezuelans are the main nationality obtaining residencies in Brazil, Chile and Peru, along with Peruvians, Bolivians and migrants from the Caribbean countries and Chile (IOM, FEM, 2022).

With a total of 1,185,000 residences granted within all countries in Latin America, in 2019, Venezuelans continue to be the main nationality eligible for these permits. Also, Bolivians and Paraguayans, in Argentina and Brazil, form part of the most important group of receivers, as well as, Caribbean nationals in Chile and Asian nationals in Brazil (IOM, FEM, 2022).

In 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic declared in March by the World Health Organization, in order to contain the spread of the virus and thus preserve the health of the populations, governments in the region adopted various containment measures. For example, restrictions on internal and external mobility, quarantines and precautionary measures were imposed that affected migratory flows and their regularization. In order to ameliorate this situation, several measures were adopted to prevent migrants from being harmed in relation to their migratory status. These measures taken by most South America governments included: an extension of residency expirations, of migration deadlines relating the presentation of the necessary documentation, of deadlines for extraordinary processes (such as, migration amnesties), as well as, the virtual processing of migrant's regularization status, a rescheduling of migration appointments and so forth (IOM and WEF, 2020).

In 2021, 849,717 temporary and permanent residences were granted. Venezuelans received most of these residences in Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, followed by Peruvians in Chile and Asians and Africans in Brazil. Meanwhile, in Argentina, Paraguayans and Bolivians occupied the main places (IOM and WEF, 2022).

Chile provided 282,000 Mercosur residencies in the period 2015-2021, 83% of them were temporary and 17% were permanent ones. The majority of them were granted to Bolivians and, in second place, to Argentinians (IOM and FEM, 2022).

### **3. International instruments for the protection of migrants' human rights**

Within a framework for the protection of the human rights of migrants, there are a series of international standards that establish obligations for the States that ratify these conventions. These instruments all follow four main principles: the principle of non-discrimination, of non-refoulement, family reunification and the best interest of children (CEM, 2021). The main ones will be listed and described as follows:

#### **Instrument/Description**

*International Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (1990). The most important binding international instrument aimed at protecting the human rights of the migrant population. But does not any establish any specific treatment for victims of trafficking. It was ratified by Chile in 2005.

*United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (2000). A "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children" was formulated. This instrument plays an important role in the protection of the rights of the migrant population. Established by the United Nations, it typifies human trafficking and a specific treatment for these cases. It was ratified by Chile in 2004.

*Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants* (1999). Designation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

*United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (UN, 2018). Chile withdraws, along with a group of countries, that oppose or object in some way to this non-binding agreement that aims to respect the human rights of migrants.

*American Convention on Human Rights* (1969). Established by the Organization of American States (OAS)., it is known as the “Pact of San José de Costa Rica”. It was ratified by Chile in 1991.

*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW, 1979). An instrument that fights discrimination against women in all aspects of their lives with the aim of advancing towards substantive equality between men and women. This convention is important because it pays attention to the experience of migrant women. It was ratified by Chile in 1989.

*Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women and Girls, better known as the Convention of Belén do Pará* (1994) of the Organization of American States (OAS). It criminalizes violence against women and instructs States to fight against it, taking into consideration the vulnerability of migrant, refugee or displaced women. It was ratified by Chile in 1998.

The International Labor Organization’s instruments on migrant protection are the following: (i) Migration for Employment Convention (Revised No. 97) of 1949 which was not ratified by Chile; (ii) Migration Convention (Supplementary Provisions, No. 143) of 1975 which was not ratified by Chile.

#### **4. Chilean Migratory Context**

International migratory displacements have been part of the history of humanity. In Chile, the presence of immigrants in different regions and provinces of the country, both in the past and in the present, has made possible the shaping of new social formats whose social, political, cultural and economic dynamics determined the country’s development. Migration has been a constitutive part of Chilean history and of the shaping of the country as a Nation in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

##### **The first migrations**

During the end of the last century and the beginning of the 20th century, Chile maintained a proportion of immigrants that fluctuated between 1% and 2%, a percentage always lower than that of immigrants worldwide (2.8%). Although migrant flows have not historically been very large, the impact on the country's development, particularly in terms of political, social and economic participation, has been significant (Cano, Soffia and Martínez, 2009).

Around 1800, non-Spanish Europeans began to arrive in Chile, being the English and French the first to arrive. The English, who settled mainly in Valparaíso, developed various commercial projects, banking, insurance and transportation and controlled the centre of commerce and the manufacturing sector until 1930. Meanwhile, the French contributed to the intellectual heritage and the development of the education system

(Cano, Soffia and Martínez, 2009). Most of these immigrants arrived in the country without State intervention. Planned immigration began only in the mid-19th century.

In the 1850s, the process of colonization of Chile's southern territories began with the settlement of Germans in the agricultural regions of Valdivia and Llanquihue, a process led by the diplomat and politician Vicente Pérez Rosales. This immigration process continued to be promoted during the following decade, mainly by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, who elaborated a classification of European immigrants in well-defined categories: as a priority were the Germans, Italians and Swiss; then the Irish, Scots and English; in third place, the French and finally, the Spanish (Rebolledo, 1994 in Cano, Soffia and Martínez, 2009).

As Cano, Soffia and Martínez (2009) point out, during the 1860s, in order to face the labour shortage during the second half of the 19th century, the incorporation of Asians - though not slaves- into the nitrate mines of northern Chile was promoted, although in small numbers compared to those arriving from Cuba and Peru. At the same time, immigration increased the country's entrepreneurial capacity and skilled labour. In 1914, for example, foreigners owned more than 49% of industries, especially in the furniture, footwear, beer sectors and oil factories, spinning industries and other textile sectors (Norambuena, 1990 apud Cano, Soffia and Martínez, 2009). The second generation of migrants is the one that joined the middle strata in Chile and ascended to entrepreneurial positions; while the first generation of foreigners belonged to the lower strata of the country's social structure. This is what the authors discussed identify as the "other immigration", composed of proletarians and adventurers, with trades such as sailors, carpenters, day labourers, bricklayers, masons and artisans, among other (Cano, Soffia and Martínez, 2009).

Between 1883 and 1905, more than 8,000 Spaniards, Italians and Swiss migrants arrived (Stefoni, 2001). However, Gutiérrez (1989) compared the number of Spanish emigrants who travelled overseas to Latin America with the number of passengers arriving in Chile and Argentina, confirming the scarce preference for Chile as a country of destination - the number of passengers to Argentina was 142 times greater than that to Chile between 1902 and 1924. A similar trend can be found among the emigration of Italians and Portuguese. In the period between 1851 and 1924, only 0.5% of the total number of European emigrants in the continent settled in Chile (Cano, Soffia and Martínez, 2009).

The presence of immigrants increased between 1865 and 1960, as a result of the arrival of Arabs and Asians, who, unlike the Europeans, did not have concessions or concrete offers to settle, because they came from countries rated at the lowest hierarchical level of immigrants in the Chilean immigration policy implemented during that period. Among these groups, the incorporation of Chinese immigrants to work in the mines, which was promoted during the second half of the 19th century to face the labour shortage in the North, stands out. The spontaneous arrival of Arabs also dates back to the 1930s, most of them dedicated to commercial activity, the same field which a large influx of Koreans would later join. According to Norambuena (2005), the arrival of these new immigrants during the 20th century did not have a significant impact on the ongoing accelerated population growth. Moreover, by 1982, the lowest level of immigrants in the total population was found, which shows that Chile, along with other Latin American countries, have been traditionally characterized as expelling rather than receiving countries.

As described by Cano, Soffia and Martínez (2009), intra-regional migratory flows can also be observed. The flow of immigrants from neighbouring border countries has historically been significant and continuous. At the end of 1800, Latin American



immigrants -mainly Bolivians, Peruvians and Argentinians- accounted for an unprecedented 67% of foreigners residing in Chile. According to the 1885 census, those born in Peru and Bolivia respectively accounted for 40% and 15% of the foreign population in the country. The increase in border immigration during the 19th century can be mainly explained by the incorporation of new territories in the North of Chile after the War of the Pacific (1879), as well as, the geographical proximity. This facilitated the greater participation of Peruvians and Bolivians in the exploitation of the saltpeter mines. Their presence would later decrease after the decline of saltpeter at the beginning of the 20th century. Argentinian immigration is one of the oldest one due to the extensive border shared by both countries. During the 19th century, there was a significant flow of Argentine workers from Cuyo to the Atacama mines. Another important group of them settled in Magallanes, due to the connection existing between the economic and labour circuits.

### **The migratory waves of the last decades in Chile**

Between the 1970s and 1980s, Chile faced an economic and political crisis that significantly discouraged immigration. During the military dictatorship that began in 1973, Chile became an expeller of population; it is estimated that between 1971 and 1980 about 500,000 Chileans emigrated due to economic and political reasons. Towards the 1990s, when democracy was restored, the negative balance of migration was reversed, partly because many of the Chileans exiled during the dictatorship began to return. The country began to maintain a steady pace of economic growth -despite the crises of 1998 and 2002- and poverty rates decreased significantly. These factors have had an impact in positioning the country as an attractive destination for immigrants from the region, becoming an alternative to overcome poverty and unemployment in their countries of origin (Cano, Soffia and Martínez, 2009).

Migrant flows, as pointed out by Roessler, Lobos, Rojas and Rivera (2022), in the 90s, arrived from border countries, such as, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina. In the 2010 decade, migration increased and diversified to include mainly Colombians and Dominicans. In 2015, it became characterized by the increase of Haitians and Venezuelans. The panorama becomes more complex as these migratory flows were faced with a migratory legislation (Decree Law 1094) of 1975, which was based upon an expulsion perspective, given that it was developed during the period of the civil-military dictatorship. It should be noted that this legislation was evaluated as an insufficient regulatory framework for the complexities of the current migration process. On the one hand, it was designed at a time when migration was lower and this fact has become an obstacle for the regularization processes of foreigners in recent years (Aninat and Sierra, 2019). On the other hand, it presents gaps in terms of human rights by focusing on a “securitizationist” approach - typical of the National Security doctrine applied - with an emphasis on border control and not on the living conditions of migrants (Vásquez, Finn and Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021). As a result of this situation and in accordance with the new migration trends in Chile, after several years of negotiations in the Chilean Congress, a new migration law was enacted in 2021. It incorporates advances in the guarantees of the rights of migrants, as well as, elements of continuity based on the management of human mobility from the securitization approach (Roessler, Lobos, Rojas and Rivera, 2022).

The National Migration Service (SERMIG) points out that while the current migration legislation was being processed, administrative measures were taken, since April 2018, that mainly involved a process of extraordinary regularization and modification to the temporary visa system, particularly for the increasing Haitian and Venezuelan nationalities. Measures sought to emphasize the application for residence permits from

outside the country, for the purpose of regulating migratory flows and reducing irregularity. This responded to an increasing entry of people as tourists, but who sought to reside in the country. Later on, they encountered difficulties in obtaining residence permits, which left them in an irregular situation due to tourism overstay. In February 2022, the new Immigration and Foreigners' Law (Law 21.325) was implemented as a milestone to modernize and strengthen the country's migration institutions (National Migration Service, Government of Chile, 2023).

Over the last fifty years, Chile has gone from being a country that expelled citizens as a result of the civil-military dictatorship (1973-1989) to a country that received immigrants. In the last 30 years in Chile, after the return to democracy, there has been a sustained process of change in migration dynamics (Servicio Nacional de Migraciones, Government of Chile, 2023; Burotto et al, 2011). In the last 30 years, the migration process encountered an outdated regulation (Decree 1,094), which dated from 1975, making it an unsuitable legislative framework for the current context. In 1982, the number of immigrants was 83,805; in 2009, 352,344; and in 2021, 1,482,390.

In the last three decades it is possible to characterize three major waves of migration to Chile: from Peru, from Haiti and in recent years, from Venezuela. During the 1990s and 2000s, Chile was characterized as one of the most politically and economically stable countries in the region, with positive macroeconomic indicators -especially, relating economic growth and inflation control-, improved social protection systems and the credibility of public institutions, which, added to the socioeconomic difficulties in their countries of origin, favoured the arrival of groups of migrants to the country (Burotto et al 2011).

As described above, the economic growth of the 1990s led to an increase in the migration of Peruvians to Chile, motivated mainly by economic and socio-political reasons. It should be noted that in this migration wave, the presence of women was significant, mainly working in domestic and care services, which, as CEM (2021) states, reflects the care crisis in the country.

A second wave, is the one formed by the Haitian population, which accelerates with a sustained growth in the country from 2014 onwards and begins to decline approximately in 2018. The Haitian immigrant profile reflects a more masculine character. In general, it is composed of young people as a high percentage of immigrants are under 44 years old. Unlike Peruvians and Venezuelans, they have a more rural insertion.

The last wave of migration is that of Venezuelans who are currently around half a million people, which increased between 2017 and 2019. The clandestine entry of people through the country's northern border has also increased given the difficult political and economic conditions in Bolivia and Peru. Venezuelans' reasons for migration mainly include: the humanitarian crises faced by their country of origin, their economic situation, problems in human rights and violence (CEM, 2021).

## **Migrants in Chile**

Of the total number of foreigners residing in the country as of December 31, 2021, 744,213 were men and 738,177 were women, while 47.6% of these people were between 25 and 39 years old (INE, 2022).

In December 2021, the National Migration Service estimated the presence of 1,482,390 habitual foreign residents. Unlike the wave of the 1990s and 2000s, only one of the four

nationalities with the highest presence among the resident foreign population comes from a country bordering Chile: 30% are from Venezuela; 16.6% from Peru; 12.2% from Haiti and 11.7% from Colombia (Servicio Nacional de Migraciones, Government of Chile, 2023). According to the INE (2022) the number of migrants in the country in 2021 represents an absolute growth of 22,343 people and a relative increase of 1.5% over the previous year, with an updated estimate of 1,460,047 foreigners for 2020.

The latest figures for the year 2023 according to the National Institute of Statistics and the National Migration Service in collaboration with the Investigation Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Civil Registry and Identification Service, indicate that in December 2023 foreign persons amounted to 1,625,074, of which 826,071 are men and 799,003 women (INE, 2023b). This 2022 figure represents an increase of 3.9% over 2021 and an increase of 25.0% compared to 2018. The majority of foreign nationals come from Venezuela, Peru and Colombia, are between 25 and 39 years old with the highest proportion located in the 30 to 34 age group (17.8% of the total). A total of 210,521 children and adolescents (under 20 years of age) were estimated, representing 13.0% of the total foreign population, a percentage that has been decreasing since 2018, when it reached 15.4% (INE, 2023b).

The top six countries of foreign persons residing in Chile have remained the same over time. In 2022, the vast majority came from Venezuela (32.8%), followed by Peru (15.4%), Colombia (11.7%), Haiti (11.4%), Bolivia (9.1%) and Argentina (4.9%), countries that together account for 85.3% of the total estimated foreign population (INE, 2023b).

The group that has grown the most in recent years is that of Venezuela, followed by Bolivia. For its part, the Haitian group has been decreasing in proportion. In 2018, it was estimated as 13.8% of total migrants?? and they were the third group with the highest prevalence in the country, a place that in the years 2021 and 2022 will be occupied by Colombians (INE, 2023b).

Regarding the place of residence, the Metropolitan Region has the highest number of foreigners, with 57.8% of the total estimated for 2022, followed by Antofagasta (6.7%) and Valparaíso (6.1%). And although the number of people at the national level has increased, as stated by INE, in 2022 for the first time there was a decrease in the Northern border of Chile - region of Arica and Parinacota. In absolute terms, this represents 849 people, i.e. 2.6% less than in 2021. The change is mainly explained by departures from the country involving migrants located in that region (INE, 2023b).

The World Bank, in its 2022 survey, aimed at characterizing the populations that have arrived in the country in recent years and detecting the barriers to their integration. It indicates that 72% of the migrants surveyed are concentrated in the 18-39 age bracket, with an average age of 36 years. Regarding children in the 0-15 age bracket, they are concentrated in Haitian, Colombian, Venezuelan and Peruvian households. The average number of migrants per household is of three members - 2.9 in the case of Haitians and 3.2 in the case of Venezuelans. The majority of migrants arriving in Chile in 2018 come from Haiti and Venezuela (World Bank et al 2022).

The same survey indicates that the reasons for migrating to Chile are: seeking economic stability and a search for quality of life in the case of Haitians and in the case of Venezuelans, also economic reasons plays a part and family reunification. For both Haitian and Venezuelan women, their main reasons regard family reunification. For both, sending financial remittances home is a highly prevalent activity, even during crisis

situations, such as that of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the children of migrants (over 95%) have access to primary and secondary education. In the case of the Haitian population, 52.7% have completed secondary education and among Venezuelans, 64.5% have completed tertiary education. It is also noted that, in the case of Haitian migrants, mastery of the Spanish language is a barrier to integration.

Regarding labour participation and employment rates, most men, both Haitians and Venezuelans, work. Among Haitians, the rate reaches 97 % of men and 76% of women; among Venezuelans, 96% and 87% respectively. Occupations are concentrated in the central zone and metropolitan region. Venezuelans are the ones who mostly use the mobile application or web platform to work (24%), followed by Peruvians (16%), Colombians (11%), and Bolivians and Haitians (6%). One important barrier to employment is the lack of internet access and lack of digital skills (World Bank et al., 2022).

On average, more than 90% of migrant workers report receiving social security contributions. However, there are problems in access to the health system according to occupational category. Self-employed workers have less access, while Peruvians and Colombians are the most affected. Around 85% of people registered in the social registry of households is estimated had access to money transfers by the State during the pandemic (World Bank, et al., 2022).

Local governments are one of the most important support networks for access to information and services as reported by 43% of Haitians and 57% of Venezuelans. They involve mainly food, basic goods and medicines delivered by health centres. Another problem detected by the report discussed is discrimination based on nationality and race, mainly for Haitians and Colombians. Regarding the level of satisfaction with life, the lowest percentage was found among Haitians (World Bank et al. 2022).

In summary, the main reasons for leaving the country of origin are economic, linked to the lack of job opportunities. In Chile, work and public roads are the main areas of discrimination. Support networks are vital for integration.

## References

Aninat, I. y Sierra, L. (2019). Regulación inmigratoria: Propuestas para una mejor reforma.

En I. Aninat y R. Vergara (Eds.), Inmigración en Chile. Una mirada multidimensional (pp. 31-64). Santiago de Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Arias, K. (2012). Ideas, intentos y fracasos en el proceso modernización administrativa entre las dos administraciones de Ibañez (1927-1958). Revista Universum, N°27, vol. 1, I sem. Pp.13-27, Universidad de Talca.

Banco Mundial. (5 de noviembre de 2023). Chile Panorama General. <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/country/chile/overview>

Banco Mundial, Centro UC de Encuestas y Estudios Longitudinales, Instituto nacional de Estadísticas-Chile, Migraciones Chile y Joint Data Center en Forced Displacement (2022). Encuesta Nacional de Migración 2022: presentación de resultados. Recuperado

de: <https://serviciomigraciones.cl/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Encuesta-Migrantes-2022-Presentacion-de-Resultados-Evento.pdf>

Burotto, A.; Cáceres, T.; Rojas, R.; Torres, C.; Lagos, V.; Olea, H.; Benaventes, C.; Dides, C.; Bettin, P.; Idelniso, P.; Cubides, D.; Debique, F.; Algacir, P. (2011). Ciudadanía y Protección de los derechos humanos de la población inmigrante en Chile. Santiago de Chile. Instituto de la Mujer, Universidad Diego Portales, FLACSO-Chile, Instituto Católico Chileno Migratorio, Casa de la Mujeres Arica.

Cano Christiny, M. V.; Soffia Contrucci, M., Martínez Pizarro, J. (2009). Conocer para legislar y hacer política: los desafíos de Chile ante un nuevo escenario migratorio. Centro Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Demografía (CELADE) - División de Población de la CEPAL.

Carrasco, S. (2008). La evolución político-constitucional de Chile, Estudios Constitucionales, Año 6, N°2, pp. 312-324, Centro de Estudios Constitucionales de Chile, Universidad de Talca.

Centro de Estudios de la Mujer CEM. (2021). La inmigración en Chile: el papel de la feminización. Material pedagógico 107/108. Septiembre-octubre. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Correa, G. (2009). Un nuevo paradigma descentralizador: organizar la oferta central desde la demanda regional, en Von Baer, H. (ed) 2009, Pensando Chile desde sus regiones, Ediciones Universidad de la Frontera.

Drake, P. y Jaksic, I. (1999). El modelo chileno; Democracia y desarrollo en los 90. Editorial LOM.

Errázuriz, T. (2014). La administración de Ibañez del Campo y el impulso a la circulación moderna (Santiago 1927-1931). Historia Santiago, Vol. 47, N°2. Santiago diciembre. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0717-71942014000200002>

Expansión, Datos Macro. (5 noviembre 2023). Índice De desarrollo Humano. <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/idh>

Garretón, M.A. (2013a). Cultura y democratización en Chile. Los nuevos desafíos, Comunicación y Medios n. 27 (2013). pp. 13-24. Instituto de la Comunicación e Imagen. Universidad de Chile

Garretón. M. A. (2013b). Neoliberalismo corregido y progresismo limitado: Los gobiernos de la Concertación en Chile, 1990-2010, Editorial Arcis-CLACSO-Desconcierto.

Jaksic, Iván y Rengifo, Francisca (eds.). (2017). Historia política de Chile 1810-2010, Tomo II Estado y Sociedad, Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Huneus, Carlos. (2014). La democracia semisoberana: Chile después de Pinochet, Aguilar Chilena de Ediciones S.A.

Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas Chile -INE. (2022). Informe de resultados de la estimación de personas extranjeras residentes en Chile al 31 de diciembre de 2021. Desagregación Nacional, Regional y Principales comunas. Subdirección Técnica. Departamento de Estadísticas Demográficas y Sociales. Subdepartamento de Demografía Período de Información: 2021. Versión 1.0 (actualizado en octubre de 2022)

Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (20 noviembre de 2023a). Censos de Población y Vivienda. [https://www.ine.gob.cl/estadisticas/sociales/censos-de-poblacion-y-vivienda#:~:text=El%20C3%BAltimo%20censo%20de%20poblaci%C3%B3n,51%2C1%25\)%2C%20mujeres.](https://www.ine.gob.cl/estadisticas/sociales/censos-de-poblacion-y-vivienda#:~:text=El%20C3%BAltimo%20censo%20de%20poblaci%C3%B3n,51%2C1%25)%2C%20mujeres.)

Muñoz, Oscar. (2007). El modelo económico de la Concertación 1990-2005: ¿Reformas o cambio? Catalonia-FLACSO.

Organización Internacional de Migraciones OIM. (12 de julio 2023). Informe sobre las Migraciones en el mundo 2022. <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/?lang=ES>

Organización Internacional para las Migraciones-OIM y Foro Especializado Migratorio del MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados-FEM. (2022). Movimientos migratorios recientes en América del Sur-Informe Anual 2022. OIM, Buenos Aires.

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, PNUD-Chile. (1998). Informe de desarrollo humano: Las paradojas de la modernización.

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, PNUD-Chile. (2002). Informe de Desarrollo Humano 2002, Nosotros los chilenos: un desafío cultural.

Roessler Vergara, P.; Lobos Guerrero, C.; Rojas Pedemonte, N. y Rivera Rojas, F. (2022). Inclusión relacional de personas migrantes en Chile: hacia un modelo de medición estadístico. Revista Migraciones Internacionales, Vol. 13, Art. 20 <https://doi.org/10.33679/rmi.v1i1.2465>

Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, SJM (2021) Casen y Migración: Una caracterización de la pobreza, el trabajo y la seguridad social en la población migrante (Informe N°1). Santiago, Chile. Recuperado de <https://www.migracionenchile.cl/publicaciones>

Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, SJM (2022). Migración en Chile. Lecciones y desafíos para los próximos años: Balance de la Movilidad Humana en Chile 2018 - 2022 (3).

Santiago, Chile. <https://www.migracionenchile.cl/publicaciones>

Servicio Nacional de Migraciones, Gobierno de Chile. (2023). Reporte 1. Estadísticas generales registro administrativo. Servicio Nacional de Migraciones 2021-2022. Santiago, Chile. <https://serviciomigraciones.cl/estudios-migratorios/analisis-sermig/>

Servicio Nacional de Migraciones, Gobierno de Chile. (2023a). Cuenta Pública Participativa '23. <https://serviciomigraciones.cl/participacion-ciudadana/cuenta-publica/>

Servicio Nacional de Migraciones, Gobierno de Chile (2023b). Migración y Género. <https://serviciomigraciones.cl/migracion-y-genero/>

## LILIANA ACERO



Collaborating Professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) UFRJ= at the Postgraduate Programme on Public Policies, Strategies and Development (PPED) at the Institute of Economics (IE). Additionally, she collaborates as Senior researcher within the Chilean team of the international research project: “Human Mobility, Global Challenges and Resilience in an Age of Social Stress” (PHOENIX), Coordinated by Prof. Susan Rothman funded by the Belmont Forum and the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI). She is also the founder of the Fundación Cuerpo y Energía at Santiago de Chile and its Academic Director *Honoris Causa*. She holds a PhD. in Social Sciences from the University of Sussex (1983) and a Postdoctoral Fellowship from Tinker-Lampadia as Associate Visiting Professor at the University of Massachusetts and Brown University (1992-1994). Her research interests include health and mental health, regenerative medicine, public policies, innovation, migration processes, development and gender.

## PABLO ZULETA



Psychologist and PhD in psychology from the University of Chile. In addition, he is a body psychotherapist trained at the Cuerpo y energía Foundation and certified by the International Foundation for Biosynthesis and has a diploma in qualitative research from the University of Chile. His main research interests have been the demands that contemporary work organization has on subjectivities and psychophysical health, especially of different groups of male workers among which mine workers in the great north of Chile stand out. Professor at the faculty of human sciences of the Bernardo O’Higgins university in Chile.

## CLAUDIA DIDES



Sociologist, Master in Gender and Culture Studies, Universidad de Chile. PhD in Communication (student), Universidad de la Frontera. Researcher in gender and public policies, gender mainstreaming, sexual and reproductive health and rights, abortion, sex education. Professor Stanford University-Bing Overseas Program in Santiago-Chile. Professor Department of Management and Public Policy, Faculty of Administration and Economics, Universidad de Santiago de Chile. Evaluator of Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo de Chile- ANID. Director of different NGO’s and research institutions. She has published a number of books and academic papers.