POLICY TRANSFORMATIONS

CHILE
COLLECTIVE CARE TO CONFRONT THE PANDEMIC AND THE CRIMINALISATION OF MIGRATION

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Using a feminist intersectional and interlinkages approach, this project closely examines policy changes that have taken place during the period of exceptionality produced by the pandemic, exploring how they may impact the future in four policy areas: macroeconomics; labour policies and workers’ rights; migration and human mobilities, care and social protection.
**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMPRO</td>
<td>Asamblea Abierta de Migrantes y Promigrantes de Tarapacá</td>
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<td>IPE</td>
<td>Provisional School Identifier</td>
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<td>SJM</td>
<td>Jesuit Migrant Service</td>
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<td>PCR</td>
<td>Polymerase Chain Reaction Test</td>
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<td>PDI</td>
<td>Investigative Police</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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This paper analyses how the COVID-19 pandemic favoured the increase in entry restrictions and biopolitical control of international migration. We consider that the effects of these measures have been resisted and addressed mainly by civil society organisations, with the significant participation of migrant women.

We argue that the repressive response to the 2019 social outburst and the implementation of new restrictions as a result of the pandemic contributed to normalising state, military and police control over the population. On the other hand, the closing of borders as a measure to "stop" the pandemic strengthened the policies restricting the entry of migrants. Thus, the parliamentary debate on the Migration Law during 2018 and 2021 took place in an environment of increasing criminalisation of migration, in a context of acute economic crisis and an increase in irregular entries as a result of border closures. This scenario was compounded by an increase in racist and xenophobic discourse, limitations on access to social assistance during the pandemic and a series of administrative difficulties that have slowed down the regularisation process. In return, practices of resistance and solidarity led by women have developed. The study is based on qualitative research previously conducted by the authors and an update of the ethnographic work carried out in Santiago and Iquique.

In order to address the proposed hypothesis, the paper first analyses the national context based on three elements. Firstly, the social outburst that occurred in October 2019 in Chile. This national mobilisation is relevant because it installs control and the loss of civil liberties, while transforming the social and political scenario of the country to the point of opening a constituent process that should reflect, among other things, on the place of migration in nation-building. Secondly, we analyse the new migration law passed in 2021 and its implications for the migrant population. We also address the measures that have been implemented towards the migrant population during the current government of Sebastián Piñera (2018-2022) and the consequences this has had on the migration regularisation process. The third context item is the effects that the pandemic has had on the migrant population, especially since the closure of the borders as a result of the health emergency. This is an extremely complex situation, as poverty has increased even more among this social group.
The case study analyses women's responses to the vulnerabilities experienced by the migrant population. Using a feminist approach, the chapter explores the differentiated effects of the pandemic and the measures adopted towards the migrant population with a view to identifying the articulation of violations and violence experienced, in particular, by migrant women and their families, residents or in transit in Santiago and Iquique.

1- INTRODUCTION

The situation of the migrant population during 2020 was marked by three central events: one global, one national and one that specifically affected these groups in Chile. The first is the pandemic, whose health, economic and social consequences hit migrants the hardest. The second refers to the social outburst that occurred in October 2019, which transformed the political scenario in Chile, as it brought about a profound questioning of the neoliberal economic structure inherited from the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990) and deepened during the democratic governments (Araujo, 2020). The third one refers to the parliamentary discussion of the Migration Bill during 2020, which was submitted to Congress by President Piñera at the beginning of his government in 2018. The law was enacted in April 2021 (Law No. 21325), after a discussion process with limited participation of migrant and pro-migrant organisations.

The interrelated action of these elements deepened the vulnerability of the migrant population. The repressive response to the social outburst and the implementation of new restrictions as a result of the pandemic contributed to normalising state, military and police control over the population. On the other hand, the closing of borders as a measure to "stop" the pandemic strengthened the policies restricting the entry of migrants. Thus, the parliamentary debate on the Migration Law took place in an environment of increasing criminalisation of migration, in a context of acute economic crisis and an increase in irregular entries as a result of border closures.

This scenario was compounded by an increase in racist and xenophobic discourse, limitations on access to social assistance during the pandemic and a series of administrative difficulties that have slowed down the regularisation process. In return, practices of resistance and solidarity have developed, led by women who have fought
hard to survive, which on many occasions exposed them to the virus, revealing their capacity for agency and their links with the feminist movement.

In this context, considering the hypotheses put forward in the analytical framework of DAWN Policy Transformations Project "The pandemic as a portal: policies transformations disputing the new normal" (Llavaneras Blanco and Cuervo, 2021), we find that the one that comes closest to our case is that the pandemic favoured the increase in entry restrictions and biopolitical control, broaden the authoritarian tendencies underway. The dramatic effects of these measures have been resisted and addressed mainly by civil society organisations, with the significant participation of migrant women. Accordingly, in this article we will analyse the differentiated effects of the pandemic and the measures adopted towards the migrant population from an intersectional feminist approach that allows us to identify the articulation of violations and violence experienced, in particular, by migrant women and their families, residents or in transit in Santiago and Iquique.

Subsequent to our introduction, we present the methodological section. In the following section we will present the context of the social outburst, the discussion of the migration law and the effects of the pandemic on the migrant population, especially since the closure of the borders. We will then analyse the measures implemented towards the migrant population from a gender perspective, review the main difficulties of the regularisation process and how these impact women and their families. Finally, we will address the collective survival strategies deployed by migrant women and end with some brief conclusions.

**METHODOLOGY**

This article is based on previous research carried out by the authors and on an update of ethnographic work in the cities of Santiago and Iquique, in collaboration with migrant organisations, through joint actions that made their issues visible, such as the drafting and dissemination of statements. We also conducted interviews in both cities with migrant women of Peruvian, Bolivian, Venezuelan and Ecuadorian nationality, including two activists. In addition, we conducted a systematic review of the press from March 2020 to May 2021, focusing on migration policy, irregular entries, expulsions and the reactions of authorities and citizens to migration. The ethnographic work was carried out between May and July 2021.
The selection of Iquique and Santiago is due to specific criteria. Santiago, the capital of the country, concentrates the largest number of migrant population and Iquique, capital of a border region, is the city that faces the most critical entry of Venezuelan migration through unauthorised crossings.

The projects carried out previously and which provide us with theoretical and empirical material are: i) "Routes and trajectories of Venezuelan migrants throughout South America. When the doors begin to close. 2020-2024" (FONDECYT 1201130); (ii) "Migrants during the pandemic. Immobility at the margins of inclusion. 2020-2021" (funded by Centro de Estudios de Conflicto y Cohesión Social, COES) and iii) (In)mobility in the Americas (May to December 2020).

2- CONTEXT
A) POLITICAL SCENARIO. THE TRANSFORMING POWER IN THE STREETS

On 19 October 2019, Chile’s recent history changed. Massive mobilisations which went on for more than four months despite the deployment of police forces that harshly repressed the demonstrators, illustrated the enormous difficulties that the executive has had in listening to and tuning in to the demands of the citizens. The "outburst" began with a student mobilisation as a result of the increase in the price of public transport. Many sectors, tired of waiting for solutions to the inequalities and injustices generated by the neoliberal system that mortgages people's lives, joined these demonstrations (Gutiérrez, 2020). The slogan "it's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years" was quickly heard throughout the country, reflecting a deeper demand for social transformation (Araujo, 2020).

The feminist movement had been growing stronger for some time with the "ni una menos" and "me too" movements. Months before, women students had taken over several universities in the country demanding policies against harassment in the classroom. They also mobilised to push for parliamentary discussion of decriminalising abortion beyond the three grounds currently established in Law 21030/2017.

This made women take a leading role during the outburst, which was reflected in the worldwide reception of the performance by the collective "Las Tesis" with "Un violador en tu camino" (A rapist in your way). Women of all ages appropriated the
performance, defying the impotent gaze of those who represent and sustain the patriarchal system.

The outburst, therefore, succeeded in bringing together multiple actors who transversalised their demands. The result of this process was the call for a plebiscite (25 October 2020) to approve or reject a constitutional change. The result was categorical: 78.27 percent of voters approved of the need for change. Months later, representatives voted to form the Constitutional Convention, a process that stood out internationally for establishing gender parity and reserved quotas for indigenous peoples.

Among the citizens' demands, migrant and pro-migrant organisations raised the need to recognise the right to migrate, as well as the importance of migratory regularisation (Jesuit Migrant Services, 2020) iv. This demand was supported by social organisations such as the Coordinadora 8M, Anamuri and the Confederación de Trabajadores Mineros. On the other hand, the femicides of migrants and the death of migrant women at the border have been elements that have added to the struggle of feminist organisationsv.

In March 2020, as mobilisation resumed after the summer, the pandemic was declared, national borders were closed and the country entered a long and uncertain quarantine.

The economic consequences were immediate and, given the conditions of inequality in the country, socio-economic gaps widenedvi. The National Socioeconomic Characterisation Survey (CASEN, 2021) is clear in this regard. While the poverty rate increased between 2017 and 2020 for Chileans and foreigners, this growth was higher for the latter group. Migrants went from a poverty rate of 10.9 per cent in 2017 to seventeen per cent in 2020, while the local population went from 8.4 per cent in 2017 to 10.4 per cent in 2021 (CASEN, 2021). At the national level, the increase in poverty is largely explained by job losses, although as we will see below, the difference between the migrant and local population is not necessarily explained by this variable. However, for migrants, the loss of work means the interruption of the regularisation process, given the current conditions established by Law 1094/2075. In the case of women, the loss of work also means their exit from the labour market as they have no one to leave their children with.

Simultaneously, this critical situation generated a series of solidarity and collaboration initiatives that, sustained by the struggles for survival and resistance to the care crisis, were supported by the revolutionary impetus left by the outburst, as well as
by the hyper-virtualisation of communications. Social networks served as a means of circulating collections, raffles, soup kitchens, campaigns to collect food, clothing, nappies and cleaning supplies. Many of these initiatives came from migrant organisations, grassroots organisations and feminist collectives. In the case of the initiatives led by migrants, there was a significant presence of women leaders and community leaders who, knowing the affected population, were able to get the aid to the neediest households.

**B) THE NEW MIGRATION LAW AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MIGRATION CONTROL AND RESTRICTION**

The Act on Foreigners (Decree-Law 1.094/1975) was enacted during the dictatorship (1973-1990). Its main characteristic is the absence of a human rights perspective and the national security approach that established a series of prohibitions on entry and stay for those considered potential enemies of the nation. In addition, the Decree Law grants broad discretion to officials in charge of migration control and regulation. Thus, during the dictatorship, the foreign population was reduced to less than 1 per cent of the total population, in contrast to the departure of more than one million Chileans abroad as a result of political persecution and the systematic violation of human rights (Rebolledo, 2001). Another characteristic aspect is that labour migration is conditional on the presentation of a work contractvii.

At the end of the dictatorship in 1990, there was an increase in immigration from Peru and later from Ecuador, Colombia and the Dominican Republic. These groups faced a law that hindered the regularisation process and the arbitrariness of public officials both at the border and in public services. The sustained increase in migration exposed a series of rights violations, such as difficulties in accessing health care (Liberona and Mansilla, 2017), education for children and adolescents (Ninas, Ninos y Adolescentes, NNA) (Riedemann and Stefoni, 2015), as well as the precariousness of their lives in the labour (Thayer, 2021) and housing (Liberona and Piñones, 2020) spheres. During the first and second Bachelet governments (2006-2010; 2014-2018), specific measures were adopted to improve access to rights for this population; however, no progress was made in changing the Act on Foreigners or in developing a National Migration Policy (Stefoni, 2011).
One example is access to education. At the beginning of 2000, irregular migration made it impossible for children to enrol in the school system. In August 2005, the Ministry of Education, through Ordinary Official Dispatch No. 07/1008-1531, sought to ensure the entry, permanence and exercise of the rights of immigrant students in educational establishments, regardless of the migratory status of the child and his or her parents. The problem is that, as they were not associated with a regularisation process, the children did not have access to a series of social benefits or to a certificate of completion of the school year. Later on, new measures have been promoted (such as the Provisional School Identifier -IPE) to guarantee access to rights on equal terms, but without advancing in mechanisms that would make it possible for children to regularise their status. In this way, the solutions for accessing rights were of a sectorial nature, without affecting the design of the Migration Law.

The arrival of Sebastián Piñera to the presidency (2018-2022) has meant a shift in migration policy. Shortly after taking office, he sent the bill for a new migration law to Congress, a demand long supported by civil society, as the Act on Foreigners did not provide a response to the characteristics of 21st century mobility. However, the approach of this project has been questioned and rejected by various migrant, pro-migrant and human rights organisations. Although certain advances are recognised, such as the creation of a new institutional framework and the recognition of international agreements on human rights, the regulation restricts entry by requiring a migration visa before arriving in the country (Jesuit Migrant Service, 2020). On the other hand, it facilitates administrative expulsions and establishes restrictions on tax-bearing benefits (SJM, 2020). The bill's discussion process was also controversial given that, although during 2018 and 2019 civil society was called to different commissions in Congress to present its positions, the context of exception experienced from October 2019 onwards (Stang, 20 July 2020viii)ix, greatly reduced the instances of participation in the last stage of processing. The law was finally enacted in April 2021 (Law No. 21325) in the city of Iquique, the scene of the border crisis caused by the lack of institutional mechanisms to protect the migrant population, and from where the first collective expulsions were carried out in February 2021. As of October 2021, the law has not yet entered into force, as the drafting of the regulations is still pending.

In discursive terms, Piñera's government installed the ideologeme of "putting the house in order", a phrase used at first to distance himself from the previous administration (Bachelet) and then to install the idea of combating irregular migration.
In this context, the Plan Frontera Segura (Secure Border Plan) was implemented, with the aim of protecting national borders from different external threats (Dufrainx, Ramos and Quinteros, 2020; Stefoni and Brito, 2019). This measure was announced in 2018 along with others concerning new types of visas for the Haitian and Venezuelan population. For the latter, the Democratic Responsibility visa was established for people coming from Venezuela, which must be requested at the Chilean consulate in Venezuela and allows entry to the country in an expeditious manner. The problem with this visa is that it is not much granted; around 25 per cent of applications have been effectively accepted and granted (Stefoni, Cabieses and Blukacz, 2021), so it does not represent an effective solution for those seeking international protection. In addition, as of 5 April 2021, the government suspended the processing of this visa, citing the closure of borders due to the pandemic as the reason.

Finally, during his administration, two regularisation processes have been carried out. The first in 2018, which included all persons who had entered the country by 23 April 2018, regardless of the type of entry. The second started in April 2021, with the publication of the new Law. This time, persons who entered irregularly were excluded. They can leave the country without sanctions and apply for a consular visa from outside the national territory.

C) SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND BORDER CLOSURES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Ministry of Social Development recently released the results of the National Socioeconomic Characterisation Survey 2020 (CASEN, 2021), which shows the greatest increase in poverty in the migrant population for the period 2017-2020, as noted above. Based on this survey, the Jesuit Migrant Service produced a report that seeks to explain the reasons for this increase. The report points out that the difference between the two populations is not due to unemployment, informality or length of stay in the country. Although the unemployment rate increased for locals and migrants, the latter have better employment levels than the Chilean population. On the other hand, informal employment is higher in the Chilean population, as twenty-four per cent of employed migrants are employed in informal work, while in the local population this figure rises to twenty-eight per cent. Finally, time of settlement does not explain the greater increase in poverty among the migrant population either, as there is no
significant statistical difference between those who have been in Chile for more than 5 years and those who have arrived in the last period (nineteen per cent versus sixteen per cent). The study concludes that the possible explanation "rather than an issue of labour insertion and formality, or the characteristics of the current migration pattern, is due to a lower presence of institutional support networks". (SJM, 2021: p.4). This means that migrants have not been able to access the various supports and assistance managed by the government. A similar conclusion is reached by the study conducted by Stefoni, Blucakz, Cabieses et al. (2021), which found that only 20.8 per cent of respondents had access to unemployment insurance, 35.2 per cent to family shopping baskets, and 3.1 per cent to the Covid voucher. The low access to institutional networks and support, which could explain the greater increase in poverty, could be due to the following causes: a) lack of migratory regularisation, since without a RUT (identification number) it is not possible to access social benefits; b) the existence of a lower percentage of migrants registered in the Social Registry of Households, which is the Registry that determines eligibility for the delivery of social benefits and aid; c) the way in which the score is calculated to deliver aid is not in line with their socio-economic reality (for example, having a university education subtracts points in the qualification). These possible explanations require further research.

On the other hand, it is important to remember that the distribution of poverty across the country does not present a unique pattern. In the northern macro-zone (which includes the regions of Iquique, Arica and Parinacota and Atacama), poverty among the Chilean population increased from 5.3 per cent (2017) to 8.8 per cent (2020), while poverty among the migrant population increased from 14.8 per cent to 27.8 per cent (SJM, 2021). Thus, the Tarapacá region went from being the twelfth region with the highest percentage of poverty to the third (SJM, 2021). (Cárdenas, 6 July 2021, 1st).

In terms of gender, poverty affects migrant women more strongly. Chilean women have a slightly higher poverty rate (10.6 per cent) than men (10.2 per cent), while female migrants have a poverty rate of 17.7 per cent, compared to 16.1 per cent for male migrants (SJM, 2021).

The closure of borders as a health measure to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus has had enormous consequences on the migrant population, as the flow has not stopped, but has resulted in irregular entry as a result of the acute crisis in Venezuela. To date, an estimated 5.6 million people have left the country (UNHCR, 2020). Chile
has become one of the many destinations for this population in the south of the continent, receiving around 500,000 people by December 2020.

The first effect is the increased risks for those entering through unauthorised crossing points and on foot, due to the altitude and extreme temperatures of the altiplano. Likewise, the incipient development of a migratory industry (informal people (*pasadores*)) and networks that "help" people cross) (Sorensen and Gammeltoft, 2013; Liberona, Piñones and Dilla, 2021) has made this route more expensive and has led to the emergence of new risks such as abandonment by *pasadores*. The result has been the death from hypothermia of at least 11 people between November 2020 and August 2021 (El mostrador, 23 August 2021xiii, some of whom were found with COVID-19 symptoms and most of whom were Venezuelan nationals.

The second effect is the construction of a criminalising discourse on irregular migration. The increase in irregular entries brought with it an intensification of restrictive measures to stay in Chile, which had already proven to be part of the global migration control approach (Domenech, 2017). According to migrant activists, the pandemic created the conditions for this resurgence, starting with the militarisation of the border, with Piñera's signing of the modification to Decree 265 (Rivas, 12 January 2021xiv), which allows the Armed Forces to support border control in terms of drug trafficking and organised crime, and which was extended to migration control. This contributed to associating irregular entries with crimes, without understanding the critical humanitarian situation in which people find themselves. In the words of one interviewee: "the pandemic brought about certain conditions that allowed or facilitated, perhaps, the decision or the political will of this government, to install the migration issue on its agenda as a tool for managing public opinion, also instrumentalising it for the purpose of validating itself as a government". (P.L_ 9 July 2021).

The third consequence is the absolute exclusion from citizenship rights, as the only possible options are to make a self-denunciation, which entails the initiation of an expulsion process, or to try to circumvent controls to avoid being detained and deported. According to information provided by the Investigative Police (PDI), in 2020 there were 13,000 irregular entries into the country (Nuevo Poder, 31 December 2020xv). In 2021, the situation has worsened, with a greater presence of Venezuelan men, women and children and adolescentsxvi. The pandemic measures require all persons entering the territory to undergo a PCR test and quarantine in a Sanitary Residencexvii, in this case in Iquique. The authorities provided transport to move these people from Colchane, but
only to those who had made a "self-denunciation" to the PDI. This procedure however, is very confusing, since it is presented as compulsory and as the beginning of regularisation, but it opens a process of administrative expulsion. Those who do not make the "self-denunciation" cannot get on the bus and will have to walk the 237 km to Iquique without the possibility of entering the Sanitary Residences.

The fourth effect is the growth of xenophobia and discrimination by the local community. The media and the authorities contributed to these negative reactions by describing these people as invaders, criminals and carriers of the virus. The government insisted on calling them "illegal" and the authorities called for an end to the chaotic situation. Political discourses focused on demanding order and security. Thus, the Venezuelan population began to experience a significant process of stigmatisation (poor, criminals, dangerous) and dehumanisation, which enabled the possibility of disregarding their rights and dignity as human beings.

In February 2021, the first flight of a programme of several flights with deported persons, carried out by the State of Chile, took place. The collective nature of these deportations makes them an illegal action denounced by organisations and institutions for the defence of the Human Rights of migrants and confirmed by the courts. The majority of the 138 people deported in the first operation (Díaz, 10 February 2021) were in the Sanitary Residences. They were informed that they would be deported one early morning, and two days later, also in the early morning, they were taken to the airport and put on a plane, under a media coverage that contributed to the staging of the demonstration of "order" implemented by the government. During these days, remedies of amparo were activated, claiming that these people required international protection; however, the decisions were made public after the expulsions. First, the Iquique Court of Appeals declared the expulsion illegal, and then the Supreme Court rejected the government's appeal against this decision. As reported in El desconcierto (2 March 2021), "the Supreme Court made express reference to Resolution 2/18 of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on Forced Migration of Venezuelan Persons [...]. The aforementioned instrument is a sufficient international precedent to provide recognition of the universal principle of welcoming the protected persons in Chile, based on the effects of the Principles of Non-Return and Non-Refoulement at the Border in the terms of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees of 1984".
Despite these statements, collective expulsions persist. The second operation took place in April 2021, involving fifty-five migrants of Venezuelan nationality. In May, fifty-six more migrants were deported and twenty-five more on 6 June. The main nationalities are Venezuelan (forty per cent), Colombian (twenty-two per cent), Bolivian (twenty-one per cent) and others (seventeen per cent). According to data provided by the PDI, twenty-six per cent are women.

In the words of one migrant leader, the government simply does not recognise their rights: "the government's omission or denial to generate some actions with all these families seeking a humanitarian return, the subsequent border closures and all the actions that have followed, and the latest and most serious actions that we are seeing with the collective expulsions, all respond to a government that has permanently insisted on refusing to recognise migrants as subjects of rights" (P.L._ 9 July 2021).

3- ANALYSIS: THE ABSENCE OF A GENDER APPROACH IN THE NEW LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND WOMEN’S INCREASED VULNERABILITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC

The new Migration Law has been defined as a border law and not a migration law (Thayer, n.d.). It establishes that anyone migrating to Chile must apply for a visa from their country of origin and eliminates the possibility of entering as a tourist and then applying for temporary residence within the country through a work contract, as is done in other South American countries. Given the high percentage of informal employment in the case of women, it is extremely difficult for them to apply for a visa (Thayer, 2021).

It is important to highlight that the new Law does not emphasise the process of social inclusion of the migrant population. Although the law guarantees the right to education and health regardless of their migratory status, access to specific programmes is conditional on migratory regularity. Nor does it consider care as a central element of life in society.

Intersectionality makes it possible to make visible and understand the articulation of gender, class and "race" inequalities, which in the context of migration
include the condition of foreignness. The social reproduction of these inequalities occurs in various spheres, but we are interested in observing how the legal framework and the measures implemented by the State, especially in the context of the health crisis, affect migrant women.

The International Labour Organisation noted in 2017 that female migration experienced a number of vulnerabilities in the country of origin, in route and on arrival (Lupica, 2017). The report indicated that in the Latin American context, many women emigrate to escape domestic and gender-based violence in their countries of origin. In turn, during their journeys, they may be exposed to situations of sexual violence, especially at border crossings, or associated with smuggling and trafficking networks (Salinas and Liberona, 2021). On the other hand, once at their destination, women face discrimination and restrictions on entry into the receiving country, access to work and social protection (Lupica, 2017).

During the pandemic, these vulnerabilities have increased. The high concentration of migrant women in the care sector (domestic work, care for the sick, the elderly, cleaning, among others) meant that job losses were strongly felt. Moreover, care work has multiplied, resulting in long hours of paid and unpaid work in the household (UN Women, 2020). Public policies towards migration often fail to pay attention to the greater vulnerabilities faced by women, making these structural inequalities invisible. This absence leads to the precariousness of migrant women's lives, especially those who have fewer resources and are in an irregular situation.

A) REFLECTIONS ON THE 2021 REGULARISATION PROCESS.

The extraordinary regularisation process of 2021 is a necessary measure given the current difficulties faced by migrants in regularising their status. It is a process to which all persons who had entered Chile before 18 March 2020 through authorised crossing points and were in irregular status were eligible to apply. The application period was 180 days from 20 April 2021. Applicants must desist from any ongoing residency application or administrative remedy. If the application is approved, a Temporary Visa will be granted at a cost of USD 90 for those over eighteen years of age. The requirements for adults are: a criminal record certificate from the country of origin in force at the time of application (legalised or apostilled), a valid passport (in the case of
Venezuelans, an expired passport from 2013 onwards is accepted) and a tourist card or stamped copy of the last visa. The application must be made online\textsuperscript{xi}.

The process, however, has been very difficult in the opinion of the interviewed women leaders, who describe the following as the main problems faced by the migrant population:

- **DIFFICULTY IN THE CASE OF MIGRANTS FROM HAITI AND VENEZUELA TO OBTAIN THE CRIMINAL RECORD CERTIFICATE.**

  P.L, from the Corporación Colectivo Sin Fronteras in Santiago, points out that although this process will benefit a significant number of migrants, it leaves out those who are currently in a more vulnerable situation. The states of Haiti and Venezuela face structural problems that make it impossible to provide even the most common documents, such as a birth certificate. This has generated a perverse incentive in consulates, where managers begin to charge fees.

- **DIFFiculties in carrying out procedures online.**

  The difficulty of accessing the Internet and computers for certain groups, such as women, especially those living in rural or extreme areas, reflects a digital, generational, gender and class gap. In addition, carrying out these procedures online requires a certain level of expertise. This generates an undesired effect, which is that some people charge a fee to carry out the procedure.

  Our interviewee notes the absence of a support system on the part of the State to enable families to carry out this regularisation process: "there are indeed migration offices, but in the context of the pandemic, the support resources that may have been available have also had restrictions". (P.L. 9 July 2021).

- **Online payment**

  Another problematic aspect is that payment must be made virtually from a bank account, which is not accessible to persons in an irregular situation. This means relying on others for the deposit, creating an additional difficulty. L.Z, leader of the Open Assembly of Migrants and Promigrants from Tarapacá (Asamblea Abierta de Migrantes y Promigrantes de Tarapacá - AMPRO), in Iquique, points out: "it was never said, for example, that in this process you had to pay through a web page, where not everyone
has bank accounts, where it is somehow obliged for someone to pay you for this migratory regularisation. And while at the border irregular people pay the coyotes, we believe that the processors are "processing coyotes", because they charge figures that make no sense, $90,000, $100,000 (110-125 USD) to regularise you, children, adults, the elderly!"

- **PROBLEMS WITH THE PLATFORM**

There are several complaints about the malfunctioning of the platform. Several people who have applied for the process have been told that they have to upload their documents into the system again.

- **ABSENCE OF CONSULATES IN CERTAIN CITIES**

In many Chilean cities there are no consulates where the required documentation can be requested. L.Z. points out, for example, that in Iquique there are no consulates of Venezuela, Cuba or the Dominican Republic, which negatively affects migrants from these countries: "just like in 2018, the Haitian, Dominican, Cuban communities continue to be hit in the regularisation, the countries that have their consulates further away". This generates frustration and uncertainty about what is to come, what type of visa they will have, whether another payment will be necessary, among other doubts. These situations cast a shadow of doubt over the spirit of this regulation, "there is a set of issues that would seem small but which, in practice, for some families, create significant difficulties for the conclusion of the process". (P.L., 9 July 2021).

Furthermore, L.Z emphasises the feeling of deception that remains: "we felt that calling for regularisation was to give a respite to migrants in an irregular situation, but it was not specified to whom, again people are deceived, as in 2018". She argues that it was a sort of bargaining chip regarding the migration policy of control and criminalisation promoted by the government.

**B) MIGRANT WOMEN’S STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST IMPOVERISHMENT.**

The unequal distribution of care work and social reproduction is the basis of the capitalist economy (Fraser, 2016; Arruzza, 2016). Despite the fact that political interests do not point towards the integration of gender in migration policies, nor in particular
policies for care, it is important to highlight women's resilience in the face of this particular context. As Pinto and Cisternas (2020) point out, it is crucial to unveil and understand the capacity for agency they present in this hostile context. Here we will discuss the collective actions of solidarity that have been deployed during the pandemic, in which women - in their historical and social role of providing care - have been the main figures.

The struggle for survival against unemployment gave way to a series of actions focused on covering the care and reproduction needs of families. In this context, organisations such as AMPRO focused on the development of fundraising and food campaigns with the aim of setting up soup kitchens, which in some cases allowed them to deliver more than a hundred plates of food a day. Hundreds of boxes of goods or packages of groceries were also distributed in camps and informal settlements. To organise themselves, AMPRO activists meet virtually, usually after 10 p.m., the time when they finish their household chores and care for their own families. At these meetings, they agree on where to distribute the donations. Then, they meet physically to take the donations, check that the local leaders distribute them equitably and to those who need them most, and make photographic records of the deliveries.

In times of full quarantine, collective permits were obtained from the municipality to move within the cities, as there were many military and police checkpoints at different points that significantly restricted mobility. Although there is a team composed of diverse gender identities, it is the women who lead the initiatives aimed at covering care needs such as food, either through virtual campaigns or through their networks. In this way, it is possible to see a collectivisation of some care work among women, in response to the political and economic vulnerability they face.

A campaign aimed at migrant women deprived of their liberty, mainly indigenous Bolivian women, stands out. These women do not receive visits because they are not residents in Chile, which exacerbates their precariousness, as they do not have hygiene and intimate care products. The campaign was carried out at the initiative of academics from a public university and AMPRO. A sexual and reproductive health operation was also carried out for the migrant population in conjunction with organisations such as Aquelarre Feminista Iquique and Con las Amigas y en Tarapacá (Ampro Tarapacá, 2021xxii). Various health and social professionals collaborated through their knowledge to support migrants in these issues. Another initiative, from the
organisation "Apañales" dedicated to the promotion and donation of ecological washable nappies, sought to support families and especially mothers who, being without or with little income, frequently have to buy nappies for their babies.

With the massive arrival of Venezuelan migrant families, aid then focused on finding water, clothing, food, work, housing, dealing with expulsions and demanding migration regularisation. Thousands of families arrived between mid-2020 and mid-2021, settling in the streets of border towns and cities such as Iquique. Faced with so many needs, women migrant leaders have taken to the streets every day, where they have witnessed police abuse and anti-immigrant racism, to lend a hand to those who have been treated like criminals. They have also taken turns assisting people seeking to regularise their immigration status, in an office or on the ground, orienting them and referring them to other institutions.

The leaders are women who are able to recognise the needs that other women may have. In this sense, the way in which they generate networks of resistance and support regarding central issues that affect them, such as childcare, stands out. In this way, two levels can be seen in relation to care: on the one hand, a political lack of protection in relation to the issue and, on the other hand, a collective and collaborative resistance in response to the global crisis of COVID-19, where care becomes a place of collective resistance and solidarity among women.

Networking was also a characteristic observed among the migrants organised in Santiago, according to P.L., "the articulation with institutions for the defence of human rights, in the pandemic we have had to link up more with the Children's Ombudsman's Office on issues [...] with children who had situations of serious rights violations during this wait in front of the consulates or the residences where accommodation was improvised for them". She also states that there was significant solidarity between grassroots civil society organisations in general and from feminist organisations with migrant organisations. In particular, in the campaign to support migrant families who were on the streets waiting for a "humanitarian return" in front of their consulates: "There we articulated very strongly with the feminist movement, with the 8M coordinator and with other feminist organisations to bring a set of support and accompaniment". These actions have been seen as an opportunity to incorporate and make visible the struggles of migrant women and dissidences within the feminist movement in Chile.
She also points to solidarity as an axis of action: "What we have seen and have accompanied and promoted is the strengthening of collective initiatives to struggle the crisis and especially, well, during the most complex period of the pandemic, we were accompanying five soup kitchens which, I think, was the tone of different organisations, with women leading these soup kitchens and with a lot of solidarity from organisations of different types, from civil society".

Within the social accompaniment work of the Corporación Colectivo Sin Fronteras, progress has been made, "certain problems that the migrant community could not solve previously, could be solved now, through the implementation of virtual mechanisms, for example, the incorporation of people into the Social Household Registry". A survey that allows access to the Social Protection System, which was previously applied by a civil servant, can now be done virtually, avoiding discrimination, because "two families living in the same cité and that, well, the migrant family had a much more complex socio-economic condition, came out with a much higher score than a Chilean family, right? And it's like... there was no other explanation than the bias of the person who had applied the instrument". The virtual mechanisms avoid the aforementioned racist bias, considerably increasing the number of migrant families registered in the Social Household Registry.

This struggle for survival is carried out by many people, but especially by migrant women leaders who, through actions in the public space, have made it possible to protect the lives of their own families and of many other migrant families who have been more vulnerable during the pandemic. However, these actions expose women to the virus on a daily basis, since, despite safety measures such as the use of masks and alcohol gel, they circulate around the cities on public transport, without social distancing, and attend to dozens of people every day who have not yet been vaccinated (Stefoni, Cabieses and Blukacz, 2021), in offices or in the territories, setting up precariously to provide guidance regarding migratory regularisation or access to social rights.
4 - CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have sought to highlight the adverse context that the pandemic and migration policies have generated for the migrant population in Chile and, at the same time, to emphasise that, under these conditions, migrant women have deployed strategies for the collectivisation of care that demonstrate their capacity for agency. We understand this care as a struggle for survival in response to a situation of hyper-vulnerability and precariousness of their lives, as well as stigmatisation and racism. In this sense, it is important to point out that throughout the text some of the political transformations that were generated in the context of the pandemic and that produce an increase in biopolitical control were expressed, where authoritarian tendencies towards migration could be evidenced. Intersectionality was used to analyse how this affects the everyday lives of the people involved, through their own experiences. These forms of state control reveal the intersectionality between migration, poverty and health, as the health argument is used to close borders and the migrant is constructed as a possible agent of contamination, which generates fear and rejection by the local population.

One of the most significant findings is that the actions generated particularly by migrant women have enabled spaces for the incorporation and visibility of migrant women's struggles. We were also able to identify the construction of broad coalitions at an important political moment in Chile, permeating labour, social and cultural spaces from anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist and anti-racist feminism. The challenge going forward is the articulation of these actions with the feminist movement in Chile, which could be extended to those of sexual dissidences.

Another element observed is that within the branches of the State there is a variety of positions, specifically, strong differences between the Executive and the Judiciary with regard to migration policy in terms of expulsions, as demonstrated by the rulings of the Supreme Court; and between the Executive and the Ministry of Social Development, with regard to aid policies that include migrants. A better balance between the branches of the State is required to avoid the violation of rights that has been evidenced.

With regard to the latter, despite the fact that the migrant population was largely excluded from government economic activation programmes, an improvement in access to the Social Household Registry was identified. This shows the contradictions of the
virtuality that certain exclusions entailed, but it has also allowed the development of policies that indirectly represent progress, as in the case of the Social Protection System. Finally, we highlight the important work carried out with leadership by migrant women who, despite permanent exposure to COVID-19, strive to build and maintain collective care strategies in a supportive and selfless manner, seeking to counteract the multiple attacks that this population receives from a patriarchal, capitalist and racist system.
REFERENCES


ENDNOTES

i The report of the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH) states that 33 people lost their lives, more than 300 were victims of eye trauma (Resumen, 17 June 2021), thousands of people were detained, beaten, abused and raped in police barracks. (INDH, 2020). During this period, a State of Emergency, a night curfew and military control in the streets were decreed, which inevitably evoked in the citizens the times of the military dictatorship. Resumen. "The INDH directorate left more than 300 victims of eye injuries by police officers in the Chilean outbreak off the registry". Resumen, 17 June 2021. https://resumen.cl/articulos/direccion-del-indh-dejo-fuera-de-registro-a-mas-de-300-victimas-de-lesiones-oculares-por-efectivos-policiales-en-el-estallido-en-chile


iii Danger to the woman's life, pregnancy resulting from rape and lethal foetal non-viability.


v Coordinadora Feminista 8M https://www.facebook.com/coordinadoraFeminista8M/posts/3218935841666511; https://www.instagram.com/p/CHrSlYqDRu3/?utm_medium=copy_link


ix The President of the Republic, through Supreme Decree No. 104 of 18 March 2020, of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, declared the constitutional state of emergency of catastrophe, due to public calamity, throughout the national territory, for a period of 90 days, a measure that was extended until the current date.

x EFE. Piñera assures that he wants to "put the house in order" in view of the immigration bill. EFE, 21 August 2020. https://www.efe.com/efe/americas/politica/piñera-asegura-querer-ordenar-la-casa-ante-proyecto-de-ley-de-migratoria/20000035-4324177

xi With regard to Haitian nationals, a consular tourist visa is required to enter Chile as of 16 April 2018, and with regard to Venezuelan nationals, as of 22 June 2019.

xii Cárdenas, R. «Casen Survey: Tarapacá was the region that most increased its poverty rate due to a fall in labour income. La tercera, 6 July 2021. https://www.latercera.com/pulso-pm/noticia/encuesta-casen-tarapaca-fue-la-region-que-mas-aumento-la-tasa-de-pobreza-por-caida-de-ingresos-del-trabajo/BTR6ROAUYNFBNTQSKN6PEGDI/
El mostrador. A 56-year-old man became the eleventh migrant to die trying to enter Chile through Colchane. 23 August 2021
https://www.elmostrador.cl/dia/2021/08/23/hombre-de-56-anos-se-convirtio-en-el-undecimo-migrante-que-muere-tratando-de-entrar-a-chile-por-colchane/


https://www.facebook.com/169781943633864/posts/914466135832104/?d=n

The "Sanitary Residences" aim to offer, to people who require it, adequate conditions to carry out safe and effective quarantine or isolation, in accordance with current regulations.

Díaz, A. Chile carries out the largest expulsion of irregular migrants in a single day. RT, 10 February 2021. https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/383112-chile-expulsion-inmigrantes


Quotes are used to refer to race, as it is understood that it is not a natural condition, but a social construction.

Information at extrajeria.gob.cl


What was demanded in the context of the pandemic was a humanitarian return, resorting to the rhetoric of the government, which promoted a return plan in 2018, but, in this case, at the request of people who were left unemployed because of the pandemic. https://msgg.gob.cl/wp/2018/10/18/comenzo-inscripcion-en-que-consiste-el-plan-de-retorno-humanitario-para-migrantes/. https://incami.cl/retorno-humanitario/