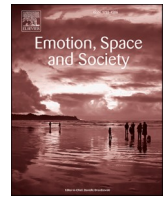


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# Migration, gender, and emotions. A reflection on global care chains and circuits of care in the context of migration from Bolivia to Argentina<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The intersection between the history of emotions and migration studies highlights how motherhood and care practices are transformed during migration. In this article, through the example of Bolivian migration to Argentina, we shed light on diverse emotional experiences around care work that cannot be understood if we analyze them through the classic approaches of global care chains and the circulation of care. In this study, we set out to analyze care practices and the emotional dynamics that are connected to them from a situated perspective that focuses on different geographic locations to those studied in these two classic approaches. We call into question essentialist views of motherhood, care, and emotions by conducting a historical analysis of human mobility between two countries in the Global South: the waves of migration from Bolivia to Argentina that took place between the 1970s and 1990s.

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, the feminization of migration has posed a two-fold challenge to social sciences. First, how to examine the ways in which the new composition of migration flows influences the distribution of domestic and care work (Hochschild, 2001, 2008). And second, how to understand the ways that women manage and express their emotions within a transnational family in which they must exercise (and negotiate) their roles as mothers, wives, and material and emotional providers (Hochschild, 2008; Brooks and Simpson, 2013).

Two concepts have dominated these approaches: global care chains and circuits or the circulation of care within contexts of migration. The first of these was coined by Hochschild (2008) in her analysis of the economic migration of women from the Global South to the North to work as nannies or childcare providers, leaving their children at home in the care of other female family members and/or nannies. Hochschild argued that this migration flow results in care being exported from poor countries to rich countries and in time, energy, and love being transferred in the same direction. In the process, love becomes a resource that is unfairly distributed at the global level (Hochschild, 2008, p. 277). From this perspective, the migration process is not an emotionally innocuous experience for female migrants, who suffer the physical

absence of their children and feel remorse at having left them behind.

The concept of global care chains drew attention to the intersection between gender, class, and the racialization of migration flows within the global distribution of care work, along with the emotional aspects of this. However, the idea of care chains that focused only on relations between mothers and children became more complex following the emergence of a new interpretative framework that drew on the notion of circuits to suggest that care is a form of capital that circulates unequally and in multiple directions across a broad spectrum of kinship ties. As a consequence, the family relationships within which care is provided are asymmetrical, and their singularities are determined by gender, age, and economic status (Merla and Baldassar, 2016).

Despite the differences between these approaches, both emphasize emotional issues and draw attention to the role of love and guilt in women's experiences of migration and how they exercise motherhood and care work from a distance. However, both the care chain and circuits of care approaches look at care practices and the emotional dynamics they entail from the same perspective: that of migration from the Global South to the Global North. In contrast, in this article, we set out to examine both of these aspects from a situated perspective that not only focuses on different geographic locations to those examined in these classic approaches, but also calls into question the essentialist views of

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motherhood, care, and emotions these were rooted in. We ground our study in a historical analysis of human mobility between two countries in the Global South: the waves of migration from Bolivia to Argentina that took place between the 1970s and 1990s. This is significant because, as [Bastia and Piper \(2019\)](#) have shown, although most empirical research on migration from a gender perspective is based on South–North migration flows, almost half of all cross-border migration is South–South.

Before attempting to interpret the evidence, we will provide an overview of migration from Bolivia to Argentina, a country with a long tradition of migration that is currently a major destination for people in movement within the Southern Hemisphere. Broadly speaking, migration from Bolivia to Argentina has been a dynamic process that developed through the consolidation of family and community networks that facilitated the circulation of information, resources, and people. In 1930, in response to the growing demand for labor in specific niches in the provinces of northwestern Argentina near the Argentine–Bolivian border, Bolivians began to perform jobs for which the demand was typically highly seasonal, such as sugar production and other types of agriculture ([Benencia, 2009](#)). Bolivian migration into urban areas in Argentina’s Pampean region began in the 1950s. Migration flows began to reach the city of Buenos Aires and Buenos Aires province, driven by the demand for labor in textile workshops, construction, small-scale vegetable farms, and domestic service ([Jelin and Paz, 1991](#)). This shift in destinations influenced the dynamics of Bolivian migration, which gradually ceased to be seasonal and temporary and instead became long-term and permanent. As it did so, the family model gradually gained ground within these flows.

These have allowed them to enter the labor market and find employment in three main economic sectors: the textile industry, small scale vegetable farming, and trade in fruit and vegetables. The common denominator of these three areas is the predominance of family work, which leads to an overlapping of the domestic and productive spheres, in which different experiences, learning, and feelings are generated. Likewise, it entails forms of care work and notions of motherhood that conflict with the social and cultural prescriptions and emotional norms of Argentina, the host society. Nowadays, Bolivians are one of the largest migrant groups in Argentina, representing 27.7% of migrants from neighboring countries, second only to those from Paraguay, according to the 2010 National Population Census. As is true of current South–North migrations, flows from other Latin American countries to Argentina have also become more feminized ([Mallimaci Barral, 2012](#)).

This article is divided into four sections. In the first section, we provide a description of our methodological approach. In the second section, we draw on the contributions made by the notions of “the global care chain” and “the circulation of care” to explore the particular aspects of the historical process of migration from Bolivia to Argentina in order to locate our criticisms of these theoretical concepts at the intersection between the fields of emotion studies and care studies. In the third section, we explore the multiple meanings that love and care take on within family migration, based on the personal histories and testimonies of migrant women. We also examine the tensions that arise in the course of integrating into a host society whose moral prescriptions around childcare and the exercise of motherhood differ from those of migrant families. In the fourth section, to deepen our understanding of the emotional fabrics in which migrant women are embedded, we will analyze other emotions (such as fear) that are experienced in a context of overlap between the workplace and the domestic space in which care tasks are carried out, which gives rise to specific emotional dynamics and tensions.

### 1.1. Methodological considerations

The sources on which this study is based are interviews with female migrants that were carried out by the three authors between 2008 and 2019 in the course of various individual research projects. The

interviews took place in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (2008–2010) and Quilmes (2017–2018) and General Pueyrredon (2017–2020), two districts in Buenos Aires province, Argentina. These three areas were populated by migrants that arrived at various times during the study period. How can we address these complex, multiple layers of meaning in this case study? Our individual lines of research have explored the macro- and microstructural aspects of the historical process of this migration; experiences of domestic work and the labor market for Bolivian women and their daughters in General Pueyrredon and the configuration and reconfiguration of the ethnic identity of members of the Bolivian community in the city of Quilmes ([Blanco Rodríguez, 2022](#); [Cardonetti, 2020](#); [Cassanello, 2016](#)). Subsequently, as part of the research project “Domestic Work, Care, and Emotions: Motherhood and Family in Migratory Contexts in the City and Province of Buenos Aires in the 20th Century,” our research converged on the question of the differences between the experiences of Bolivian women who migrate with their children and those of women who leave their children in the care of other women in their place of origin, who tend to feature much more heavily in migration studies. Although emotions had arisen in the testimonies that all three of us had gathered, none of our previous research had focused on how vital they are when analyzing care work. Revisiting our fieldwork from this perspective was fruitful on two fronts. On the one hand, it enabled us to ask new questions within the fields of South–South migration studies and care work and to breathe fresh life into our own research agendas by doing so.

Although we had conducted interviews with migrants who had settled in both rural and urban areas in a variety of locations in Buenos Aires province and the city of Buenos Aires, there were some noteworthy points in common among our interviewees: in contrast with the experiences documented as part of the research on global care chains and the circulation of care, with very few exceptions, the Bolivian women that all three of us interviewed did not leave their children in the care of other women in their places of origin. We found other points in common among the few women who had done so. One of these was that the women expressed that the material wellbeing they brought their families by migrating was more important than their physical presence. Guilt was therefore not the main emotion that the women mentioned in association with their experiences of motherhood and caregiving. The convergence of our lines of research prompted new questions: what other emotions might be relevant to understanding care when the context and type of migration in question differ from those that generally feature in the research? What meanings do these emotions take on? This led us to explore the relationship between subjects and objects from an emotional perspective, as will be seen in the second section of this article ([Moran and O’Brien, 2014](#)).

Although it would be unwise to make sweeping statements about all South–South migration experiences, there are some specific features to migration from Bolivia to Argentina that affect experiences of motherhood and caregiving and the emotions that are associated with these experiences. First, unlike North–South migration, migrants’ proximity to their places of origin allows them to visit their families more easily and maintain closer ties with them, which means that the emotional suffering caused by separation from their families can be dealt with in different ways than those shown in global care chains. Second, although they have changed over time, Argentina’s immigration laws make the country more open to foreigners than others ([Novick, 2008](#)). As a result, when migrants arrive, they experience less anxiety than those facing immigration checkpoints in the global North. They can also leave Argentina to visit their families confident that they will be able to return. However, although Argentina’s immigration laws are relatively more inclusive, some studies have pointed out that migration from neighboring countries such as Bolivia is racialized, which implies different kinds of discrimination and exclusion ([Grimson, 2001](#)). In this sense, it has become evident that migrant women are judged for their parenting and caregiving practices, and may be targets of suspicion or surveillance in relation to how they raise and care for their children. State agents

often judge parenting and care practices as being good or bad, or assume that women have migrated to Argentina hoping to benefit from public programs such as the health system or other social programs (Mallimaci Barral, 2011). Although it is not possible to address all these premises in this paper, it is important to keep them in mind as context for the testimonies that we analyze.

As part of our individual research projects, we conducted 25, 16, and 6 interviews, respectively, for a total of 46. In this article, we drew on those interviews that allowed us to analyze our research question—in other words, interviews with women. As will be seen, these interviews are intergenerational in nature: we reconstruct events through the testimonies of migrants themselves but also, in some cases, through those of their daughters. We prioritized testimonies that revealed the diversity of the mobility strategies used by Bolivian families that migrate to Argentina, as this affects the ways in which they solve their care needs.

Based on these interviews, in the following sections, we analyze this migration process, in which the family plays a fundamental role as a productive and emotional unit, one that rests on an overlap between work for the market and care work. This overlap gives rise to tensions, negotiations, and inequalities both within and outside domestic units, tensions that reveal feelings and forms of emotional management. The specific nature of these points to a need to rethink the notions of guilt and love that studies of global care chains and circuits have drawn on to date. The predominance of family migration within migratory flows from Bolivia to Argentina allows us to discuss and question certain reductionist views of the management of care tasks and the emotions that circulate in these processes.

## 2. Care in the context of South–South migration processes

Arlie Hochschild (2000) ushered in a new line of research on how care is distributed in a globalized capitalist world. Her concept of global care chains, describes a series of ties that are established in a context of a care deficit, which Hochschild presents through the typical pattern of a woman/mother from a poor country who migrates alone to work as a nanny for a family in a developed country and simultaneously turns to another person to take on her role in her place of origin. Hochschild's work showed how care tasks and responsibilities are embedded in a globalized economy, where individual decisions are linked to and involve broader social and economic transformations. It also shed light on how class, migration status, and gender shape the position that different stakeholders occupy in care chains. She used the concept of emotional labor to explain how migrant women transfer love that was originally intended for their own children to those of their employers. However, it was this aspect of her interpretation that was most harshly criticized: Hochschild universalized emotional dynamics and took an essentialist view of motherhood and women's place as caregivers. Likewise, aside from the case of migrant mothers themselves, she did not take into account the different family relations within which care is important in migration, nor did she consider the agency of migrant nannies and childcare providers, who she portrayed as victims of a globalized system (Vaitinen, 2014; Yeates, 2012).

In response to Hochschild's work, several authors proposed that care work be denaturalized to allow it to be examined from a perspective that contemplates the intersection of gender, migratory origin, class, and generation. Other studies pointed out that the contexts in which care practices are performed should be interpreted in the light of the specific cultures and territories in which the migration flows in question are taking place (Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Brown, 2015; Premilla Nadasen, 2017; Yeates, 2012). In this vein, Baldassar and Merla (2014) argued that the chain metaphor is inadequate because it reduces human mobility to back-and-forth movements between two points in a chain and between two groups of stakeholders, in which migrants and nonmigrants exchange assistance, information, and resources. They drew attention to the complexity of family networks, which cannot be reduced to a unilateral relationship, and instead propose the notion of the “circulation of

care” as a more appropriate way of conceptualizing the circular manner in which exchanges of care work take place.

Emotions and emotional labor play a vital role in both these interpretational schemes (care chains and circuits of care). Consequently, this study will attempt to analyze the emotional dimension in greater depth, drawing on the literature on the history of emotions and the conceptual scaffolding thereof to examine practices of unpaid care in migratory contexts, on the assumption that ways of feeling and expressing (or repressing) love, sadness, and guilt largely result from cultural constructions that are historically and geographically situated. Migration involves a transition between different emotional repertoires: those of the place of origin and the standards that regulate the expression and management of emotions in the receiving society. In this regard, the contributions of emotional geography are important. This approach has shown that there is a link between places and emotions. It argues that emotions are rooted in a sense of space and that different places spark different emotions. Moreover, the key proponents of emotional geography have shown that people can attribute specific meanings to places according to the emotions that they evoke and may also project specific emotions onto them. As migrants inhabit different territories and move through them, analyzing emotions becomes central to understanding their experiences and how their feelings may be changed by migration (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Nogué, 2009; Campos Delgado, 2019).

This is why it is crucial to anchor emotions such as love and guilt in empirical references, concrete experiences of migration, and specific historical and geographical contexts. It is also why using analytical tools from the history of emotions may help researchers to move beyond essentialist views, revealing that care work entails heterogeneous strategies and practices that respond to arrangements that are situated in specific cultural contexts. This heterogeneity is also revealed in the way that care work is situated within a broad constellation of emotions. Not only are love and guilt merely two of many other possibilities, but their meanings also vary depending on migrants' origins, their social, economic, and family context in their place of origin, how their migration projects are negotiated, emotional learning, and the challenges that migrants face in the process of adapting to their host society. Research that has included the emotional dimension in the study of migration has been crucial in this sense. These approaches have shown how spatial mobility affects subjectivity, gender roles, and the ties between parents and children and between spouses (Baldassar 2008; Svašek 2012). They have added important nuances to economic or rational explanations of the factors that prompt people to migrate and the related family obligations. In relation to motherhood, scholars have demonstrated that the economic and emotional dimensions of transnational care practices are inseparable parts of a single process (Baldassar and Boccagni, 2015). In this sense, although emotions have been an independent object of research since 1980, when they began to be conceived of as social and cultural objects under the paradigm of social constructionism, the intersection of these two fields is still in its infancy (Bjerg, 2019). Based on these premises, in the following sections, we analyze the care strategies used by Bolivian migrants to Argentina in an attempt to comprehend the different meanings they ascribe to care and love.

## 3. The multiple meanings of love and care in family migration

In the experience of migrant mothers, physical separation from their children is not always associated with a feeling of guilt. When mothers do feel guilt, providing for their families' material needs justifies their absence and functions as a demonstration of love and care that is just as important as a physical presence, or even more so.

The testimonies that we gathered during our fieldwork show that during the first waves of migrations from Bolivia to Argentina, the separation of mothers and their children was usually understood as a guarantee of a better quality of life for the children. Moreover, while there were instances in which children remained in Bolivia when their mothers migrated to work, these separations did not always unfold as

described in studies of global care chains. In the early years of these migrations, families would migrate together and would only be separated when the adults began working the sugarcane harvest, leaving the children with wealthy families who employed them in their homes. Indeed, the widespread practice of placing underage daughters in domestic service when the family's labor needs came into conflict with care work was not perceived as running counter to a notion of wellbeing. Consular reports from the 1970s, when migrations were still highly seasonal, show that this strategy was spreading, bringing consequences that the consul in the city of Salta in northwestern Argentina perceived as negative:

... during the harvest, young girls from the countryside are taken by their families to work as live-in maids without any guarantees for their wellbeing. Many of them are dismissed from their jobs and are left wandering the city. Consequently, this consulate and the Magistrate for Minors have to find positions for them at respectable homes or send them to juvenile reform facilities in the city of Salta (...) (Bolivian Consulate in Orán, 1972)

From the perspective of the migrants and according to the logic that regulated the moral economy of Bolivian workers, placing girls in domestic service was an economic strategy to increase family income and also a care practice that avoided exposing minors to the harsh conditions of the harvest. However, in some cases, the consular authorities perceived it as a form of abandonment:

There are frequent accounts of minors who were abandoned to their own fate in the region due to unusual circumstances. In these cases, the consulate intervened to try to contact their parents or relatives or find work for them (Bolivian Consulate in Orán, 1971).

Two perspectives were undoubtedly in conflict here: that of the consular officials and those of the migrants themselves, which reflect different positions of power, class, and gender. Although these two groups were from the same country, this does not mean that they were embedded in identical fabrics of meaning nor that they had the same emotional repertoires. In fact, although consular officials accepted child labor (since it was care that was at issue, not work), they saw the physical separation of parents and children as leading to a risk of abandonment. As we will analyze in greater detail below, this perspective was also reflected in the discourse of public authorities in Argentina. Indeed, the Bolivian consuls were much more attuned to the moral prescriptions regarding child labor and childcare that circulated among Argentine civil servants and officials than those of their fellow countrymen and women.

Just as the consular reports reveal the resources that officials used in an attempt to make migrants conform to hegemonic moral and emotional regimes, the interviews with migrants allowed us to identify the tension and emotional suffering caused by the prescriptions that were imposed by state(s) and the notions of childcare that migrants deemed legitimate from their own moral and emotional standards. Placing girls in domestic service, which lightened Bolivian women's care load during the harvest, or the need to leave children in Bolivia so that a relative could temporarily take over their care, did not always provoke feelings of guilt in mothers, because it was a practice that was rooted in an understanding of love that was loaded with cultural and social meanings. The testimony of Roxana, who came to Argentina from Cochabamba in the 1990s, was particularly telling in relation to the changes in intra-family dynamics that migration brings about. On the topic of care practices in her family, Roxana noted:

So the three of us were left with my grandmother, two boys and me, the only girl (...). My mom would come back once a year, to spend Christmas with us, or twice a year. My grandmother (...) she was the one who was like our mother, and my mom was like a father who went out to work and sent us money (...) (Interview with Roxana, 2010).

According to [Sassone et al. \(2008\)](#) the feminization of migration

shows that women can become breadwinners. Although, the naturalization of women as caregivers and mothers and of men as the main material providers meant that for Roxana, her mother played the part of "father" rather than being a mother who could also provide for her children. In this sense, Roxana's perception that the roles in her family had been switched during her childhood is evidence of a rearticulation in both material and emotional terms. However, this shift did not imply suffering for the children or guilt for her mother, since this was how she was able to provide for the family's material needs and also provide her children with love. It is important to note that many of the migrants who began to move from Bolivia to Argentina lived in conditions of extreme poverty, so it is not surprising that women prioritized providing for their children's material needs, even if that meant not being physically present ([Klein, 2001](#); [Cassanello, 2016](#)). In this context, the emotional distress of not being able to meet children's basic needs was more important than the guilt of being absent for parts of the year. On this point, it should be noted that in Bolivia, family-related obligations, support, and duties often reach beyond the nuclear family. Bolivian families may solve their childcare needs by turning to relatives or other Bolivians outside the family. In this sense, other nonfamily ties are also important when it comes to solving care needs, such as relationships with compatriots or those of *paisanaje* (fictive kin relationships) ([Hinojosa et al., 2000](#); [Cassanello, 2016](#)). This reveals that what is understood by "family" is not a fixed notion. Above all, it shows that appealing to other women for help with childcare is common practice among mothers and is understood and accepted by children.

Lidia also spoke of the memories her mother used to share with her of her own childhood, which relate to her work during the harvest and in which a specific object connects their two experiences as migrants. When she was interviewed in 2012, she was 30 years old. Though she was born in Buenos Aires, her family had a history of intergenerational migration. Her parents emigrated to Argentina in the 1970s, when migration from Bolivia had not yet reached the scale of subsequent decades. Her testimony reveals how guilt manifested itself within the mother-daughter bond as a consequence of migration. This account expresses how subjects' relationships with objects revolve around the management of emotions and notions of maternal love that are linked to the provision of material objects:

She told me that [when she was a child] she used to sing to her dolls and since she didn't have real dolls, she played with potatoes, drew faces on them, that kind of thing. That's why she showered me with dolls, hundreds of dolls, and it's why she loves making dolls. Anyway, my mom worked a lot, I don't remember her timetable, but I do remember that she left home early, my brother and I would go to school by ourselves, and she would come back at nine at night (Interview with Lidia, 2012).

The meaning that the recollection of dolls made of potatoes takes on for Lidia's mother speaks of the relationships between migrants' life journeys, their biographies of objects and emotions, and shows to what extent "objects are companions in our life experiences that mark transitions, spark emotions, and prompt certain thoughts" ([Bjerg, 2019](#), p. 149). In Lidia's testimony, the emotional dynamics of the mother-daughter bond are articulated through the relationship between subjects and objects and time and space. Dolls are the emotional object that ties Lidia to the absences and material deprivation that her mother experienced as a child, when she migrated with her own mother (Lidia's grandmother) to work the sugarcane harvest. At that time, her potato dolls were "things" that "consoled" her and alleviated her mother's sense of guilt, which was itself shaped by her own history of family migration. When Lidia's mother became an adult and had to face the challenge of leaving her own daughter, she filled the void created by her absence with "hundreds of dolls." By doing so, she reshapes her memories by creating a kinder, more affectionate present for Lidia herself. Dolls were the expression of maternal love and, at the same time, a form of care, understood not just as the daily supervision of children but also



as a form of emotional presence during the mother's absence, when her work forced her to spend long hours away from home. In this sense, the material conditions in which Lidia's mother found herself, which had been improved by migration in comparison with those of her own childhood, allowed her to give her daughter the dolls that she herself had been unable to have, thus alleviating the sense of absence that enveloped childhood in her family.

As in Roxana's case, Lidia's mother prioritized material support over physical presence as a form of care. In this sense, although guilt is present in some interviewees' testimonies, it is not the main feeling that they associate with love and care, because the possibility of providing their children with material support is more important than being physically present, as the testimonies show. Indeed, as we will show in the next section, love and guilt are not the only emotions that are linked to care in the context of migration from Bolivia to Argentina, nor are they always the most significant.

#### 4. Fears and concerns in caregiving practices

Vegetable farming is one of the productive sectors in which Bolivian migrants play a major role in Argentina, as sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or owners (Benencia, 2017). The green belts around major cities in Argentina contain intensively farmed plots of land known as *quintas*, which supply the domestic market. Family labor predominates within these. One significant aspect for understanding the care work that takes place at small-scale vegetable farms is the overlap between the workplace and the domestic sphere, given that the family home is located on the farm itself. In this sense, care practices unfold in the same place as farming work. The emotional dynamics that are linked to care can only be understood in the light of these conditions: unlike the situation with the sugarcane harvest (or that of mothers who migrate from one hemisphere to another), distance is not a factor, and physical separation is a matter of a few feet. However, despite these differences, absence continues to play a crucial role. Andrea, who migrated with her husband Javier in the late 1980s to work as vegetable growers, explained that:

Since [our children] were small, they were babies, you just put them down somewhere ... when they got older they were always following me around, but I always took care of them myself. I couldn't leave them in the house by themselves, because it was worse, you know, I was worried ... you have to be careful [on the farm], there are tractors driving about, trucks coming in and out, but I was always very careful in that sense, I didn't like going out, I didn't like leaving them alone while I went out to do the shopping, I always preferred to take them with me rather than leaving them by themselves (Interview with Andrea, 2017).

Andrea's testimony reveals that children staying at home while their parents are working implies leaving them by themselves, a situation that mothers prefer to avoid by taking them with them to the fields to be able to keep an eye on them. Another migrant, Victoria, said that when she arrived in General Pueyrredon, she started working at a vegetable farm where the boss did not let her take her two small children out into the fields with her, forcing her to leave them alone in the house, a couple of hundred meters from where she was working. One day, when she stopped work to check on them, she found her six-month-old baby lying on the floor because he had fallen out of bed, which made her "very upset." (Interview with Victoria, 2017). Victoria does not mention having felt guilt but rather expresses other feelings when recalling the experience of raising her children while living at the farm: fear that they might have an accident while she was unable to care for them and being "upset," a word that she perhaps uses to summarize the anxiety and stress she experienced because her work in the fields prevented her from performing her work as a caregiver.

The challenge for Victoria and other Bolivian migrants working on small-scale vegetable farms was how to reconcile work with motherhood

and caregiving. One option is for mothers to take their children out into the fields with them. This does not actually allay the fears and anxieties that arise from being responsible for farm work and childcare at the same time: instead, it causes other forms of tension, due to the risks that come from children wandering around in places where tractors, tools, and agrochemicals abound, and from being exposed to harsh weather.

Having children in the fields with you isn't easy, you go out to work and you leave them alone, you have to hire someone to look after them, the fields are far away, you have to go all the way there with all your children, then if it's cold or it rains, it's difficult ... Then in the summer, it's really hot. I had a relative who didn't work so I left my daughter with her (Interview with Mónica, 2017).

Within this context, state oversight in the form of farm inspections add yet another layer to the fear that Bolivian mothers experience in connection with exposing their children to the risks of life at these small-scale vegetable farms. As the presence of children in the fields can be interpreted as "child labor" (which is expressly punishable by Argentine law since 1996), inspections might lead to adults being reported to the juvenile justice system for child exploitation.

This risk increases mothers' anxiety over how to implement care strategies that will keep children away from the farm and the risks this entails, while also keeping them safe from the prying eyes of state agents. Having older children care for their younger siblings is often an option for some families, but this depends on how the household is configured. For young couples with very small children, it is not an option. Leaving them in the care of other women can be even more complicated, because among migrants who work in vegetable farming, all women tend to work in the fields. The severe demands of the job itself, poor safety conditions (pesticides, tools, trucks entering and leaving the farm), and the watchful eye of the state only increase the fear that these mothers experience. Vegetable farms are thus "emotionally heightened spaces" (Anderson and Smith, 2001, p.3), not only because they are portrayed as being dangerous for children but also because the space in which "private life" unfolds might be subject to scrutiny by state agents. This gives rise to a series of emotional tensions that are specifically enabled by the overlapping of domestic spaces and those of the labor market for this particular version of South-South migration.

Bolivian women have their own interpretation of the challenges that this context poses for their children. They speak of children who "had it worse" or who were "dumped": they maintain that their oldest children had it worse because they were unable to take care of them, which meant they spent more of their childhoods alone (which is why they say they were "dumped"). These children were left alone at home with little supervision or care from their mother and went to school by themselves, often walking long distances. In contrast with the uninformed view of state officials, Bolivian women workers are convinced that taking their children with them to the fields makes the children's experiences "less painful" despite the risks that are involved, because they stay "on the edges of the field," sheltered from the sun by an umbrella and with their mothers close by. What Bolivian women see as care and love, government officials perceive as child labor. In contrast to what is argued in the literature on care chains and circuits of care, fear appears much more frequently as a feeling than guilt. The weather, the distance between these small-scale vegetable farms and schools, bad roads, infrequent public transportation, or the high cost of hiring other forms of transportation to get to school are all sources of anxiety for mothers, as their children often have to walk unsupervised on freezing winter mornings to the bus stop, which is usually several kilometers from the farms where they work.

The care experiences of rural Bolivian women who work at vegetable farms differ from those that have been studied in the analytical framework of care chains and the circulation of care not only due to the presence of fear as a significant emotion, but also in terms of gender inequality. What is at issue is not the inequalities inherent in the migration of nannies from poor countries to rich ones, nor in the

transfer of love from the South to the North. Instead, the inequalities in question originate in the workplace and have repercussions on families.

On vegetable farms, the possibility of taking time off to perform care tasks is defined by the family's employment relationship. If the migrant leases or owns the land they are farming, there is no employer with whom they need to negotiate working hours and time for childcare. However, it is always women who have to perform this care work. On the other hand, when the migrants in question are in someone else's employ, the sexual division of labor that exists within families is reinforced by the fact that employers place greater value on men as workers, even when men and women are performing the same tasks (Blanco Rodríguez, 2022).

In environments other than vegetable farms, such as cities where other migrants work as fruit and vegetable wholesalers or retailers, there are other care practices that allow us to analyze the emotional dynamics that are the product of family migration and take place in spaces that are both workplaces and places for the provision of care, in which the boundaries between the domestic sphere and working life are blurred. Despite the similarities in the experiences of women who work at markets and those who work on farms, there are clear differences due to the specific nature of the two locations (urban and rural). For decades, Norma and other Bolivian women have been practicing a particular form of mothering in the city (Interview with Norma, 2017). Norma said that she raised her daughter under the table of the stall where she has worked for more than 30 years. In contrast to the situation on vegetable farms, the urban backdrop of the fruit and vegetable market may well simplify the daily life of these women, while also easing the tensions and concerns that the women who worked in rural areas described to us.

Norma explained that before she started working at the market, she was a street vendor and shared the care for her children and nephews and nieces with her sister: one would go out to work and the other would look after the children, and the next day they would switch roles. When she began working at the market, she simply had to change her children's school shift to fit the market opening hours. In the mornings, Norma would look after them at the stall, and in the afternoons they would go to school. As they got bigger, they also started helping her at work. Her testimony does not mention a sense of fear in connection with childcare, perhaps because the market does not pose a danger to their physical wellbeing—it simply entailed remaining inside a small stall with adults nearby. The testimonies also show that the distances between home, the workplace, and school are shorter in the city, and public transportation is more convenient.

The urban and periurban spaces in which these migrant women settle determine their material living conditions, which in turn shape their unique ways of inhabiting these spaces and approaching work and care strategies. Migrants' daily lives unfold in emotionally heightened spaces, places (be they urban or otherwise) that are impregnated with dense emotional content that is expressed differently in the different territories that they inhabit (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Nogué, 2009). The social relationships that unfold on these small-scale vegetable farms are marked by concern, fear, and the suffering caused by having to adapt to the moral standards of the host society. However, urban areas enable different kinds of relationships to unfold between the native-born population and migrants and between mothers and their children. Relationships at the fruit and vegetable market appear to be marked by emotions such as pride in the fact that children learn their parents' trade by spending time there with them. The interviews also show that the market evokes feelings of satisfaction and relief. These emotions are linked to the fact that migrants in urban areas find it easier to guarantee care and education due to the shorter distances that come with being in the city, along with other benefits, in contrast to the situation on vegetable farms. Consequently, although care and work overlap both on vegetable farms and in the market, women's experiences are different because of how they are shaped by the rural and urban settings. This is why analyses of care work during migration need to be clearly situated.

## 5. Conclusion

The intersection between the history of emotions and migration studies sheds light on how motherhood and care practices are transformed during migration. The example of migration from Bolivia to Argentina has allowed us to examine diverse emotional experiences around care work that cannot be understood if we analyze them through the classic approaches of global care chains and the circulation of care.

During the process of migration from Bolivia to Argentina, care practices and family reorganization strategies show that interpretations of love and guilt, two emotions that are at the core of classical explanations, are not enough to explain the emotional dynamics of migration. We noted that not only might other significant emotions be expressed in South–South migration dynamics, but also that the meanings attached to love and guilt themselves should be re-examined, as these meanings change according to the historical and geographical contexts in question.

We set out to explore these emotional experiences from a historically, culturally, and geographically situated perspective, as they cannot be understood without taking into account these factors, which endow them with meaning and consistency. Our analysis spanned several decades, and these different historical moments each determined the type of migration that took place (temporary/permanent, family/individual) and also revealed the hegemonic emotional registers in play in each period (for example, in relation to perceptions of child labor). Furthermore, the spaces and type of work carried out by migrant women (harvesting sugarcane, growing vegetables on small-scale farms, domestic work, or working market stalls) shape their emotional registers and the specific tensions they experience.

In the cases we analyzed, the economic and emotional dimensions are inextricably linked, giving rise to specific expressions of emotion. We observed that love involves both sending remittances or sustaining communication and affection from a distance and protecting children from negative experiences within spaces in which the boundaries between the home and work overlap, as is the case on truck farms. Through this situated approach, we were able to see that in contrast to what is shown in the global care chain literature, guilt is not an emotion that functions here as an emotional and moral regulator. However, concern and fear regarding children's physical wellbeing are two other emotions that we did observe. Finally, we noted the importance of understanding the anxiety and emotional distress caused by the process of fitting in with the models of motherhood and emotional standards that prevail in Argentina.

We also found that even when migration leads to profound changes in the lives of migrant women and their families in terms of family organization, gender roles are often maintained, such that women's roles as caregivers and mothers are naturalized and reinforced. Although Bolivian migration to Argentina began many years ago, the inequalities that Bolivian women experience in connection with their care work and their access to precarious jobs are ongoing.

Conducting a situated study of the emotional dynamics associated with care work and motherhood during migration allowed us to better understand the family strategies deployed in specific historical and geographical contexts. We also gained insight into the overlaps and mismatches between different emotional regimes. Hegemonic models of motherhood and care affect migrant women's care strategies: in the tensions between these two models, we noted that emotions such as love, fear, loneliness, and/or guilt are all conditioned by the cultural and historical context in which they are experienced and take on meaning.

## Ethics

The research project that this paper is part of was evaluated and approved by the National Agency for the Promotion of Research, Technological Development, and Innovation, which is part of Argentina's Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation.

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