

ARTICLE

(De)confined notes. On the contributions of intersectionality to the challenges of Covid-19

Apuntes (des)confinados. Sobre las contribuciones de la interseccionalidad a los desafíos del Covid-19

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Abstract

This article examines how intersectional perspectives can contribute to a deeper understanding of the operations of power in a context of sanitary crisis while delivering a reflection on the theoretical premises and political potential of these perspectives in the historic situation we are experiencing. The central argument is that intersectional approaches not only help us understand the differentiating impact of sanitary measures on the structural inequalities that construct the social order, but they also allow us to identify how this order can be transgressed, resisted and negotiated in a crisis situation.

Keywords:

*Intersectionality,
Covid-19,
precariousness of
life, feminisms*

Resumen

Este artículo examina de qué manera las perspectivas interseccionales contribuyen a profundizar el análisis de las operaciones del poder, en un contexto de crisis sanitaria, entregando también una reflexión sobre las premisas teóricas y potencialidad política de estas perspectivas en la situación histórica que estamos viviendo. El argumento central es que los enfoques interseccionales no solamente nos ayudan a entender el impacto diferenciador de las políticas sanitarias sobre las desigualdades estructurales que conforman el orden social, sino que también nos permiten identificar de qué forma(s) este orden puede ser transgredido, resistido y negociado en una situación de crisis.

Palabras Clave:
Interseccionalidad; covid-19; precariedad de la vida; feminismos

Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyze how intersectional perspectives can contribute to understanding the operations of power in the context of a health crisis and to reflect on the theoretical premises and political potential of these perspectives in the historic situation we are currently experiencing. Empirical evidence shows that the pandemic is a global phenomenon that affects populations in a differentiated way, deepening already existing gaps between countries, regions and social groups (Oxford Committee on Aid Against Hunger, Oxfam, 2021). The central argument of this article is that intersectional approaches not only help us to understand the differentiating impact of the pandemic, but also allow us to identify in what way(s) the social order can be transgressed, resisted and negotiated in a crisis situation. From this perspective, the article seeks to contribute to a reflection on the theoretical and conceptual development of intersectional perspectives in a critical moment of social transformations in Chile after the 18/10 revolt.

The article is structured as follows. The first section analyzes the genealogies of intersectional feminisms in the global north, emphasizing the geopolitical conditions that have (un)(en)abled the generation of spaces of transformative knowledge. The following section asks how intersectional perspectives allow us to address both the deepening inequalities and the transformations of the social order that emerge in a context of social and health crisis. A central aspect is the development of a perspective that, beyond the recognition of differentiated subjectivities, also attempts to formulate an analysis of the power devices that construct and normalize these subjectivities as unequal. In a third section, the article incorporates a reflection on the theoretical impact of the proposals



formulated from feminist mobilizations and their importance for the development of intersectional perspectives in a pandemic context.

Before continuing, it is necessary to make it clear that writing from a position in the academic diaspora in Sweden, my analysis does not escape the condition of partiality inherent to the globalized production and distribution of knowledge. These notes are also marked by the political commitment that led me into exile and that runs through my relationship with southern feminisms. This position of counterpoint, to use Edward Said's words (2000, p. 140), implies not only uprooting, but also some advantages; for example, the possibility of perceiving the simultaneity of everyday life experiences in different cultural contexts, as well as the distance from established norms and established common senses. Honoring this definition is of course a challenge met with humility in this text, understanding also that epistemological limitations can contribute to dialogue and the search for common views.

Genealogies of Intersectional Feminisms

Just as diasporic processes generate new spaces of knowledge, the trajectories followed by concepts and theoretical perspectives are also permeated by the contexts in which they are received and assumed as new ways of interpreting reality. The genealogy of intersectionality appears intimately linked to the debates on female emancipation and to the political strategies developed since the 1970s in the USA. At the same time, the reception of intersectionality in academia and its installation in the feminist canon has also followed the logic of knowledge dissemination implanted by the intensification, at a global level, of neoliberal practices in universities. Practices that, as is well known, sustain the hegemony of the global north with respect to the dissemination, recognition and valuation of knowledge and subjects of knowledge functional to the world economic order.

The rapid circulation of intersectional approaches during the last decades suggests the relevance of a theoretical perspective that responds to fundamental issues in different spaces of knowledge production. However, we must bear in mind that it took more than a decade for the notion of intersectionality to become established in the academic spaces of the global North, and from there it has not yet finished its journey. Until the beginning of the new millennium, the contribution of the African-American jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991) was fundamentally linked to a feminist historiography



that located the so-called “third wave” in the persistence of the racist legacy of slavery in the United States. In Crenshaw’s work, intersectionality is conceived as a metaphor to make visible the position of African-American women, based on specific forms of oppression, generated by the simultaneous operation of different systems of subordination. In the author’s opinion, both feminist and anti-racist discourses had until then systematically ignored the ways in which patriarchy, capitalism and racism operate simultaneously in situations of discrimination and violence against women. From this perspective, Crenshaw also expresses a critique of the feminist movement, which, by marginalizing the experiences of African American women, refrains from problematizing how women’s subordination is marked by racism and class belonging (Crenshaw, 1991).

Although Crenshaw’s contribution has been widely celebrated, the articulation between politics and theory offered by the author has not always been considered by the followers of the concept. The lack of knowledge of the African-American theoretical tradition, from which the feminist anti-racist movement draws its inspiration, has also been a critical point in the reception of the concept in Europe. As feminist theorists Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix (2004) point out, the construction of feminine subjectivity has historically been a matter of dispute. The authors remind us of the testimony of the anti-abolitionist fighter Sojourner Truth who, having suffered slavery, challenged the participants of the Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851 with the question “Am I not a woman?” (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p. 76). Truth’s words question whether suffrage was considered a priority right for women in circumstances where many women were enslaved. This criticism is a clear illustration of the impossibility of taking up a struggle against the patriarchal order without taking into account other structures of oppression. Despite its invisibility in feminist historiography, Truth’s discourse reminds us that the questioning of the universalization of the feminine condition has historically been present in mobilizations for women’s rights.

While the idea of intersectionality is formulated in a context of mobilization of anti-racist feminism, focusing on issues of power, violence, inequality and discrimination in the United States (bell hooks, 1984; Davis, 1981; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016), the reception of this perspective in European countries has been crossed by the fear of fragmentation of the feminine (Bilge, 2013). The absence of a power perspective has been particularly problematic in countries such as Sweden which, despite widely recognized for being a welfare state promoting women’s rights, shows clear tendencies towards racialized and class exclusion (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005). In this context, the



conceptualization of differences among women is based on identity (migrant women) or normative notions (LGBT groups) which, although they account for the different subjectivities contained in femininity, do not problematize the logics of exploitation linked to relations of class, race or sexuality domination.

By conceptualizing inequality as a problem of parity, Swedish feminism has subordinated class exploitation, processes of racialization and the imposition of binary sexuality to the goals of gender parity. Thus, demands for subsidized domestic service are formulated on the basis of a parity argument, which, obviating the racialized exploitation of domestic workers, raises the need for Swedish women to pursue a professional career without having to worry about housework (de los Reyes, 2016). Traditionally, the Swedish welfare model has defined caregiving tasks within public policies, particularly benefiting working or studying mothers as heads of household. But, at the same time that the commodification of reproductive labor intensifies its consumption in high-income families, gender parity goals are displaced from the public policies of the welfare state to the market sphere. The privatization of care consumption thus makes it possible to maintain a heteropatriarchal model, where household income is used to solve, in a differentiated manner, the conflicts between paid work and domestic demands.

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The global circulation of intersectional perspectives has opened an urgent discussion on how to conceptualize inequalities in women's life experiences, as well as on the interrelation of different forms of subordination. However, debates within feminism in European countries have tended to focus on identifying and hierarchizing the power relations that would constitute the central cores of intersectionality, while defining which could be considered peripheral or marginal (Lewis, 2013). In this context, the marginalization of racism has been a source of increasing contestation within European feminism. As Barbara Tomlinson (2013) points out, as long as the hegemony of white, heterosexual and middle-class women in feminist discourses is not recognized, the theoretical tradition of African American and anti-racist feminism will continue to be particularized. At the same time, the author points out, intersectional perspectives risk being depoliticized and stripped of their transformative potential. Tomlinson provides important background to analyze how intersectionality is co-opted by perspectives that recognize the diversity of positions that inhabit feminism, but do not inquire into their causes. In this context, the absence of theorization of the global impact of the colonial project is also associated with the silence on racism that has long characterized feminist debates in Europe.



The particularization of racism, as a form of oppression whose historical antecedents are fundamentally associated with the legacy of slavery in the United States, has also been strongly questioned on the basis of the experiences of the diasporas of the global South in the metropolises of the global North. The elaboration of an intersectional reading of patterns of inequality from the domination of class, race, gender and sexuality, deployed under the protection of European welfare states, has had a correlate in the idea of colonization as a phenomenon that is reproduced in the global circuits of knowledge production (Bilge, 2013; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Lewis, 2013). The contribution of postcolonial feminism, by problematizing the ways in which migrants from countries of the global south are incorporated as racialized subjects in labor markets, welfare systems and citizenship models in the metropolises of global capitalism, has generated important theoretical elaborations on the nexus between colonialism, migration and global racism. The call of decolonial feminisms to (de)essentialize the categories imposed by the colonial project (Lugones, 2012), is also reflected in research that problematizes the (re)production of these categories from the transformations of the patterns of global accumulation of capital (Bhattacharyya, 2018; de los Reyes, 2016; Cavallero & Gago, 2021; Mezzadra, 2020). Thus, the intergenerational reproduction of racialized subalternities appears as a fundamental feature in processes where the (im)possibility of accessing the material and symbolic resources of the centers of power in high-income countries is reflected in nationalist discourses, discriminatory practices and institutional racism (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2020; Erel et al., 2017; Lewis, 2013). At the same time, imaginaries of heteropatriarchal families and biological ties have also become the norm in increasingly restrictive processes of family reunification and recognition of migrants' social rights (Sagen & Mulinari, 2018).

Balancing the impact of intersectionality in the academia, feminist theorists Carvado, Crenshaw, Reys & Tomlinsson (2013) call for an examination of the trajectories of the concept in order to evaluate how it is received, interpreted and applied in different political and academic contexts. These trajectories indicate, according to the authors, that intersectionality is not cloistered in its initial postulates nor is it exhausted in its multiple interpretations. Rather, it could be said that it is a work in progress, where local challenges also imply the adaptation and reorientation of some of its original proposals. From this point of view, intersectional approaches are open to problematize new power relations and to cross disciplinary traditions. The authors thus open up the possibility of a dialogue in which the challenges associated with specific historical conditions are perceived as an opportunity to contribute to generating transformative proposals.

In this line of analysis, the conflicts raised by what Jennifer Nash (2018) defines as “the intersectional wars” tend to focus on corrective looks at the definition, origin and intellectual property of the concept, forgetting central questions regarding the meaning of the institutionalization of intersectionality and the possibility of generating new questions. Nash suggests turning our gaze towards issues that transcend the relations of ownership and domination that flourish in academic circles, opening up the imagination around bonds of affection, care, intimacy and vulnerability. Her proposal acquires special urgency in the current situation, where the precariousness of life -to use the concept coined by feminist movements in Latin America- is exacerbated not only by the structural characteristics of neoliberal capitalism, but also by the situation generated from the ways in which the health crisis is faced nationally and globally.

A review of the trajectories of intersectionality in recent years exposes the challenges of a perspective that analyzes the production of inequality based on the simultaneous operation of class, gender, sexuality and race relations and invites reflection on the logics that construct essentialized identities based on these relations. These debates also show the multiplicity of intersectional approaches and their adaptation to diverse theoretical, conceptual and empirical challenges at the global level. The existence of institutional and disciplinary barriers has been reflected in interpretations that seek to incorporate intersectionality into a narrative of feminist progress -expressed among other things in the idea of different feminist waves-, ignoring the theoretical and political legacy of Afro-American anti-racist feminism and the theoretical contribution developed from feminist mobilizations in the global South. When feminist movements in Chile and Latin America articulate around the formulation of cross-cutting strategies to overcome a situation of social, economic and health crisis, new paths are also opened to revitalize the transformative content of intersectional perspectives.

An intersectional view of Covid 19

The pandemic represents a historic and exceptional situation in which health insecurity is combined with global economic, institutional and political destabilization. Confinement has meant a radical change in people’s daily lives, while health threats and increased economic and labor instability lead to high levels of stress for the vast majority of households. However, we know that levels of crisis and insecurity affect societies differently. The effects of the pandemic in the Global South have been particularly severe for LGBTQ communities, ethnic minorities, migrants, domestic workers and sex workers



(El-Ali, 2020). Social policies relate these gaps to the existence of so-called “vulnerable groups”, which, in the vast majority of cases, are directly linked to the structural inequality of capitalist societies and to the conditions of (dis)protection generated by the priorities established by governments. Thus, the Oxfam report defines Covid as “The inequality Virus” and points out that:

The pandemic has hurt people living in poverty far harder than the rich, and has had particularly severe impacts on women, Black people, Afro-descendants, Indigenous Peoples, and historically marginalized and oppressed communities around the world. Women, and to a higher extent racialized women, are more at risk of losing their jobs because of the coronavirus than men. In Latin America, Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples, already marginalized, have been hit harder than the rest of society; they are more likely to die, and more likely to become destitute. (Oxfam, 2021, p. 14).

In Oxfam’s analysis, those affected by the crisis are identified on the basis of their position in an unequal social order, originating in historical forms of exploitation and subordination. Vulnerability to Covid is here associated with bodies or communities defined on the basis of their status as wage earners, racialized or sexualized. Following the analysis developed above, it is worth asking whether the potential of intersectionality as an analytical tool is exhausted by making visible the bodies that inhabit the most vulnerable positions in society and confirming the simultaneity of the mechanisms of exploitation and social subordination. By not discussing the logics of power that construct these positions, we run the risk of essentializing the subjectivities that inhabit them. Therefore, it is necessary to remember that the potential of intersectionality is given not only in identifying the multiplicity of relations from which power is exercised, but also in questioning the logic(s) that operate through the construction of difference, especially in a situation of crisis that puts at stake the social order and the distribution of resources in society.

By referring to wage-earning women as racialized, Oxfam accounts for the conditions of vulnerability generated by the intersection of capitalist, patriarchal and racist relations of oppression. While the capitalist order appears as a central element in the analysis of the prevailing conditions in differentiated labor regimes, the division between wage labor and domestic work becomes critical in the context of a pandemic. The impact of the health crisis on the economy has forced new ways of organizing living spaces, altering the division between productive and domestic work, structured on the basis of the separation between private and public spaces, due to the demands of telecommuting.



Confinement forces the multiplication and intensification of the use of domestic spaces at the same time that the basic needs of food, care, hygiene and cleanliness require access to external monetary resources. In Chile, as in other countries, the proliferation of communal cooking pots in impoverished sectors is a sign not only of food vulnerability resulting from the crisis, but also of the extreme fragility of subsistence models (Silva, et al., 2020).

Following feminist geographer Doreen Massey's (1999) call to spatialize social theory, and understanding space as an organizing device of bodies and territories, de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) incorporate the spatial dimension into intersectionality, inviting us to examine the power relations that construct differentiated spaces as an expression of diversity. According to the proposal, the construction of segregated spaces makes it possible to understand not only the exercise of power that establishes barriers, but also its normalization, by linking the existence of hierarchically differentiated bodies to segregated spaces. Thus, historically, the construction of the gender-sexual division has been intimately linked to the separation between public and private spaces. Confinement, by breaking the dichotomy between the world of work and the world of care, opens spaces for negotiation, transgression or repression that reconfigure the established social order. From this perspective, the intensification of violence against women and children cannot be considered a circumstantial element, but rather a latent component of patriarchal power relations in the home. In this line, the proliferation of borders, between countries, regions and bodies would be expressing the fragmentation necessary to perpetuate the regimes of accumulation and exploitation that operate at different levels of the social order (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Mezzadra, 2018).

At the same time that people face the pandemic in differentiated spaces, the resources associated with these spaces generate new inequalities in access to care and consumption. Common spaces for recreation (parks, squares and libraries) have been reduced to commodified places (shopping malls), while new and old forms of consumption demand the circulation of bodies exposed to the onslaught of the pandemic and to labor exploitation. This is the case, for example, with domestic workers or people employed in food distribution platforms. While it is true that the logic of capitalist exploitation is central to understanding the intensification of the forms of domination that emerge in a pandemic situation, spatiality allows us to identify some of the particularities of the operations of power, generated from the separation, confinement and circulation of differentiated bodies. In this context, the role of the State appears as a fundamental element in the analysis of the effects of the pandemic on diverse bodies.



State policies not only have a direct impact on health security, but also on household survival conditions. In trying to maintain the balance between economy and health security, states have deepened the existing gaps. A report by the United Nations (UN, 2020) indicated that state efforts have not been sufficient to counteract the effects of Covid on women, children and people belonging to LGTBTIQ+ communities. Oxfam's critique (2021), rather than pointing to conjunctural deficiencies, denounces the negative impact of the last decades of austerity policies on the capacity of public services to face the crisis. The absence of public policies aimed at counteracting the effects of the pandemic is not accidental, but corresponds to a political design in which the right to health is not recognized as such. However, beyond the macro-structural policies of the neoliberal state, which favors the commodification of health security, there is evidence that indicates that normative perceptions of gender, class and sexuality also influence the conditions of access to health services at the micro level. The discriminatory treatment of homeless people, ethnic minorities and LGTBTIQ+ communities in health services is another example of unequal access to health security (El-Ali, 2020).

Discriminatory practices in health care are therefore part of a political management that, by favoring the functioning of the market and the continuity of capital accumulation, is evidence of what the Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe (2003) has called necropolitics. Mbembe locates the origins of necropolitics in the colonial project and in the long history of violence, dispossession and genocide that accompanied European mercantile expansion. The persistence of this phenomenon in today's society, Mbembe points out, is fundamentally linked to the functioning of power in today's globalized capitalism. Necropolitics is interpreted by some as the hidden face of what the French philosopher Michael Foucault called biopolitics, that is, the sovereign power to control bodies and regulate the right to life and death (Foucault 2014). In speaking of necropolitics, Mbembe goes further. Letting die, more than the simple exercise of power, is also constitutive of a global order where both the (ir)rationality of politics and the everyday practices that construct other forms of life as subordinate, dispensable and ultimately also sacrificable to higher interests inhabit.

In Chile, as in other colonized territories, necropolitics has operated not only through the annihilation of bodies, communities and subaltern cosmologies, but also through the systematic and massive dispossession of the material conditions that sustain the existence of forms of life dispensable to capitalist accumulation. In the context of a pandemic, the prioritization of productive-mercantile activities linked to capital accumulation is no coincidence. Neither is the action of the State, which transfers common resources



to big business through tenders, tax exemptions and privatization of natural resources. The policy of letting people die is expressed both in the deepening of the mechanisms of exploitation and in the lack of safeguarding the survival conditions of households. In these times of pandemic we are witnessing the de-territorialization of the sacrifice zones and their installation in urban spaces where a growing percentage of workers seek daily sustenance, despite the risk of contagion. Rising unemployment, low pensions and growing indebtedness further stress structurally precarious living conditions. The structural violence of the social order is reflected not only in increased state repression of citizen protests, but also in the mistreatment of women and children in the family.

In the current crisis, where the precariousness of the present is combined with the (im) possibility of viable futures for the great majority, it is necessary to dwell on the historical continuity between the colonial project and the current modalities of capital accumulation, in order to understand how the construction of differentiated territories and bodies is associated with the parameters of global inequality that have become more acute in the context of a pandemic. Just as the proliferation of borders allows us to unveil the differentiating effects of global capitalism (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Mezzadra, 2020), intersectional perspectives open the possibility of conceptually articulating the fragmentation of spaces with the differentiation of bodies and territories. In this way, it is also possible to advance the understanding of the logics of power that construct the precariousness of life, as a transversal element of the social order. However, it should not be forgotten that the transversality of the precariousness of life is also what today makes possible the articulation of resistances and the emergence of intersectional mobilizations around the valorization of the economy of care, the defense of life and common goods, the respect for the sovereignty of bodies and the recovery of memories that make it possible to weave other futures.

Intersectional resistances

The contributions of intersectional perspectives to the analysis of the pandemic appear even more necessary in a context of social fragmentation exacerbated by decades of neoliberalism. The use of the language of intersectionality in Latin American feminist movements makes it possible not only to identify the divisions that construct the multiple practices of power, but also to question them and propose alternatives that can transgress the order established through these divisions. Feminist contributions to the analysis of violence as a systemic and transversal phenomenon are fundamental here.



Intersectional perspectives make it possible to understand the links that articulate the exercise of violence at the individual, institutional and structural levels, while making visible how violence acts on diverse bodies (Oyarzún Vaccaro, 2018; Troncoso and Follegatti, 2019). An example of this articulation is the much celebrated performance of the group Las Tesis “Un violador en tu camino”², which was replicated in multiple places around the world, summoning women of different ages, nationalities and sexual orientation. The strength of Las Tesis’ interpellation can be understood both from the specific moment of state repression in Chile and the allegations of sexualized violence against protesters, but also in the context of the violent disciplining that has historically built the hegemony of binary bodies. The de-domestication of violence and the denunciation of its systemic character thus emerges as a site of resistance from feminist mobilizations.

As feminist theorists Luci Cavallero and Verónica Gago (2021) point out when analyzing the impact of indebtedness as an exercise of violence on feminized bodies, intersectional approaches make it possible to politicize the connections between apparently separate and/or marginalized demands and to construct a common language around social transformations. Intersectionality is, according to this perspective, not only what makes hierarchically differentiated positions visible, but also a tool for understanding the multiple ways in which capitalism operates on people’s lives. The feminist analysis of indebtedness leads us, according to Cavallero and Gago, to question the temporality of power devices and the different ways of resisting them. Just as indebtedness makes possible the satisfaction of an immediate need, it also entails the sacrifice of autonomy in the future. From an intersectional perspective, it is possible to problematize how temporality influences the normalization of inequality, under the promise of an unattainable future. As historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) has pointed out, the idea of the not yet is deeply rooted in the (post)colonial imaginary, which, based on a linear perception of history, constructs the inequality of the present as different stages of a universal destiny. In this context, memory works from an intersectional perspective also open the door to the problematization of the impact of recent history(s) in the articulation of collective resistance to the violence of the neoliberal order.

The health crisis in Chile occurred in the context of a social revolt that highlighted the repressive nature of the neoliberal model and the government’s inability to implement measures that could effectively address the needs of the population. At the same time, it is necessary to point out that the challenge to the neoliberal order that exploded from

² Editor’s note: for more on Las Tesis’s performance “A rapist in your path”, we recommend Paula Serafini’s article “‘A rapist in your path’: Transnational feminist protest and why (and how) performance matters”, published in the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* in 2020. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1367549420912748>



the revolt is also marked by the intensification of social mobilizations, which through different channels sought to articulate alternatives to this order. The Feminist May 2018 and the Plurinational Meetings of Women Who Struggle represent, among other initiatives, the creation of alternative platforms to the current institutionality from the collective. Deliberative practices, models of representation and the formulation of agglutinative agendas from the territories are signs of resistance to a model of society where conformism (as far as possible), corruption and individualism had made the common a space of dispossession (Elgueta & Marchant, 2020). In this context, the rearticulation of the social fabric, that was already underway before the pandemic, forms a mobilization platform that also allows for facing the health emergency. An example of this is the call of the Coordinadora 8M to organize territorially support to victims of family violence; the organization of common pots, food and water distribution in unprotected places are also examples of these community initiatives.

Intersectional resistances also appear in the questioning of the division between reproductive and productive work. This becomes especially relevant in a pandemic context, where the visibility of care work is given not only by health needs, but also due to the confinement and location of (some) salaried tasks within domestic spaces. The fundamental role of care work in the health sector, although recognized and celebrated, is barely compensated through salary. Nor is it known how the overload of work has affected the organization of domestic work. The concept of time poverty developed by researchers Andrea Sato and Francisca Barriga (2021) reveals the inequality generated by the distribution of domestic tasks within the home, which, due to gender stereotypes, mainly affects women. Confinement also places limitations on access to paid domestic work, which updates the importance of these tasks, which in most cases are made invisible and devalued.

The incorporation of the idea of sustainability of life, developed by feminist economist Cristina Carrasco Bengoa (2016), is a fundamental contribution to facing the challenges of reproduction in the pandemic context. The sustainability of life refers to a systemic vision that articulates the urgency of addressing sustainability at various levels; from nature, through communities and down to households. In contrast to the perspectives of orthodox economics, which considers production and reproduction as separate spheres, and deepening the alternatives raised by feminist economists who postulate the interdependence of both spheres, Carrasco Bengoa emphasizes the need to place the sustainability of life as the fundamental priority of political economy. In this way, the feminist voices that in recent years have identified the precariousness of life as a central problem



of contemporary capitalism, find an echo in the elaboration of conceptual alternatives that, from the academia dialogue with the demands raised by the feminist movement.

Aiming to the future

What can be said about the relevance of intersectional perspectives in a pandemic context? What forms of resistance are generated in this context? These notes give an account of the genealogies of the concept and its circulation in different academic spheres, in order to dwell on the relevance of intersectionality in the analysis of post-pandemic Chile. Following the traces of these trajectories and taking into account the need to overcome the categorical fixation that has characterized much of the academic debates in the countries of the global North, it is possible to conclude that the recognition of the contingent nature of intersectionality is central. In this way, the readings of power exercised around the simultaneity of class, gender, sexuality and race relations, allow us to make visible the subjectivities constructed on the basis of the inequalities of the social order, but also indicate the need to question the constitutive logics of that order and the way in which they are expressed and challenged in specific contexts.

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Contributions to intersectionality from southern feminisms are intimately linked to a boom in feminist mobilizations. They are generated from a political moment in which spaces for deliberation, formulation of demands and collective organization constitute practices that overflow the traditional contents of the established political order. While it is true that intersectionality has contributed to creating a common language to address the inequality that inhabits diverse bodies, it is possible to note that the practices and reflections that emerge in the mobilizations also inscribe new meanings in the intersectional logs. Just as the incorporation of temporality and spatiality allow us to conceptually address -and politically transcend- the processes of differentiation on the basis of which power relations operate, the identification of the precariousness of life (and the defense of its sustainability) also show that intersectionality can be an effective instrument for articulating resistance and proposing new and better futures.

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