

From private to public spaces: labor market and urban policies in peruvian domestic workers in Buenos Aires

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1. Introduction

2. Historical Context of Migration to Argentina

3. Social and epistemological transformations

4. Home as a paradigmatic space:
Geographies of encounter/cartographies of Otherness

5. Policies that fragment and segregate: city and homes

6. Trajectories of migration, labor segmentation and urban
policies

7. Final Considerations

Approach to the subject

- Relational Approach (“figurational process”, Norbert Elias: 1939)
- Relational Analysis (not “isolated studies”)
- Connected Spheres: Public/private, home/street; politic/private money/love (Zelizer, 2005)
- Qualitative data and ethnographic analysis

Some information

- Argentina:
- 17,8% of the women works at the domestic service (Economically Active population:2009)
- 27% of the labour force comes from regional countries
- Mostly have low levels of education (57% incomplete secondary school)
- Buenos Aires:
- 52% of the labour force comes from regional countries (Mostly from Perú and Paraguay; less from Chile and Bolivia)
- Most works at the “live out” work (82%)

National, regional and local contexts

- Immigration: a historical phenomenon, constitutive of Argentina
- State Narrative (from public policies and discourses) of inclusion for European immigrants in Nationbuilding.
- European migration as beneficial for the country (ideas of “progress”, “modernity” linked with this kind of immigration)

1970- 2010. Social and epistemological transformations

- Visibilities and invisibilities: from the men (and europeans) as a center to the women (and latinamerican) as focus
- From the national borders to the “visible” cities
- From industrial jobs to “immaterial work” (services, care work)
- From “individual” to “collective” (networks, households, collective decisions)

Neoliberal context (1990-2001): ups and downs for the regional migrants in Buenos Aires

- Convertibility Regime (1 peso = 1U\$S)
- Women and remittances for their families
- Residential concentration in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires: Higher Visibility
- Paraguayans, bolivians y peruvians as a focus for the attacks by “porteñan society” (mass media)
- Discrimination that associates national origin, race and social class
- Phenotype that departs from the standard representation of “argentinian” people
- Imagery of a country without “blacks” and “indians”

Homes: physical proximity and social distance



Homes: Constructing differences and negotiating inequalities

- Ambivalent “Geographies of encounter” (Schuermans, 2012): public categories and private tensions (solidarities, micropolitics and reconfigurations)
- Frontiers of negotiations and classifications: reproducing or questioning the stereotypes
- “Inside” versus “Outside” : false dichotomy (the porous nature of classifications)
- Construction of stereotypes and and the negotiations around class, ethnic and racial identities.
- Preferences, stereotypes and negotiations of identity

Stereotypes, representations and identities during the 90's

- How do Peruvians articulate their characteristics with the “middle classes” in Buenos Aires?
- Transform the historical pattern in domestic service (higher level of education and less experience in domestic service in Perú)
- “Peruvianity”: becoming a positive mark of distinction and used as a resource (against the negative view)

“Morochitas”(derogatory categorie that means dark skinned) BUT Well Educated” → racial separation which is obscured and superceded by culture and education ↓

Modern imagery versus the “barbarian” image that represents the rest of the employees

→ “Having a peruvian”: appears as a mark of distinction inside middle-class homes

Policies that fragmented: city and homes

Immigration Law:

1976-2003: Old Law of “Dictatorship” for Immigration

- Restrictions to obtain papers and to access to fundamental rights (labour, health and education system)

2003-Present: New Law for Immigrants

Urban and Local laws:

- 1- Restrictions to sell in the street
- 2- Absence of housing policy

3 moments that link migration trajectories, the type of domestic work and urban policies

- Objective: analyze the connection between the trajectories of migration, the type of work and urban policies (local and national)
- Labor segmentation and spatial segregation
- 3 interconnected issues: Housing, visibilities and uses of public space
- Stage in Life cycle at the moment of migrate

1. The “Entry”

- Mode of work (in general: “live in”) and the construction of a way of relating to the employers
- Women without family in the city of destination and far from their families (children)→ “Transnational Motherhood” (Sotelo, 2001)
- Greater emotional involvement (reciprocities, loyalties, hopes)
- Emotional Availability/Openness when they arrive in the new country
- Ambivalent feelings: from the “public” stigmatization to the extended category of “well treated” in homes
- Majority: Irregular condition (undocumented)
- NETWORKS : provide contacts to housing
- Weekends: time to get in contact with other women in the same situation

Public reunions (squares)



Affective relationships and dependence



2. “Live out”

- Process of Family Reunion and changes in types of labor
- Find housing for children and the family: greater expenses, needs and uncertainties
- Networks from “paisanos” and from their employers
- New relationship with the public space

New Labor Strategies (greater labor movility, uncertainty and new challenges):

- Street Selling and other labour strategies (tension with policies from the City Government of Buenos Aires)
- Spatial segregation: Continuing to concentrate in one of the central locations of the city (Housing, restaurants, remittances agencies, cultural centers)
- Greater the participation in public life





3. Third moment

- Mostly domestic cleaner Jobs and intitutes for elderley care: Less emotional committment and more “contractual” relationships
- Lesser importance of social networks (less obligations): new contacts and different ways of constructing social mobility (veritical and horizontal movements in the labour market)
- Greater uncertainties and precarity in their jobs (quantitie and not fixed)
- Greater needs linked with a new life (housing for a long period, health care and and continuing at the labor market)
- Obtain documents by the state (2003) or by *Ius Solis* (childs born)



Public places: presences, uses and visibilities

Peruvians: concentrate in the one of the most commercial and central neighborhood in BA

1- Squares: place to meeting the weekends

2- Family hotels

3- Public Transport

4- Restaurants and cultural centers

Map of Neighborhoods in Buenos Aires



New policies that affected the life of migrants and domestic employees

- Crisis 2001/2002: Reconfiguration of their trajectories: ideas of return, reemigration and continuity (2001-2005)
- 2003: New Immigration Law→ Inclusive perspective towards immigrants from the region
- Other possibilities in Buenos Aires (Argentina): cultural and economic possibilities
- Family Project in Argentina: children born and brought up in Argentina
- Limited: residential Segregation: *gentrification* of urban spaces
- Continuing difficulties in obtaining dwelling and access better jobs and better places in the social scale



Squats in Once neighborhood



Final Considerations

- “New” migrants question the “hegemonic” cultural identity
- Peruvian Women in homes: put in connection some axes of the “modern imagery” in an ambivalent way
- Uses of this “place” (home) to find new jobs and construct respect and a “career” inside and outside of the domestic service
- Overlap and porosity of spheres in daily life (private, public, politics at home; solidarity and public disputes in private)
- The relational construction of cultural diversity
- New social and symbolic space for “regional” migration in the imagery in Argentina (law, discourse and legitimacies)
- The socio-anthropological view of the process of migration: relational, connected and interpenetrative analysis