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Ni La Tierra, Ni Las Mujeres Somos Territorio de La Conquista

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“Ni la tierra, ni las mujeres somos territorio de la conquista”¹

A study of Neoliberalism,
Indigenous Bolivian Women
and
Transnational Motherhood

By

Adrienne Beitcher

SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

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¹ Creando, Mujeres. “Ni La Tierra, Ni Las Mujeres Somos Territorio De La Conquista.
Graffiti. La Paz, Bolivia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter 1: Neoliberalism

Chapter 2: Indigenous Women in the Bolivian Andes and Neoliberalism

Chapter 3: Andean Female Migration and Transnational Motherhood

Conclusion

Works Cited

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I would like to thank my mom and dad, three amazing siblings, Patsy Slater, caring friends and incredibly supportive readers April Mayes, Marina Perez de Mendiola and Miguel Tinker Salas for putting up with me over the past eight months. Marina, thank you for calming me down every time I sent a panicked e-mail. Through my ups and downs during these past months I knew that I could depend on you all for support and encouragement; without that, this thesis would have never been possible. I would also like to thank all of the people I met while abroad and traveling in South America. Your warmth and openness are what fueled me to keep my head up during this process and inspired me to write the best undergraduate thesis I could. And to Bolivian transnational mothers, and transnational mothers everywhere, for your never-ending love and dedication to the wellbeing of your children and families even under hegemonic systems of domination. ¡Que viva la mujer!

Neoliberalism

“Rights are ‘organized expectations of generalized others’ that do not translate directly into policy or action. To do so requires the acceptance ‘of our most basic feelings and experiences as embodied emotional beings,’ because rights cannot be decided in the abstract.”²

“Pero un dia, un dia si...tiene que cambiar... y para cambiarlo que tenemos que hacer? Las mujeres tenemos que prepararnos.”³

-Doña Modesta Alegria

The idea for my thesis began the day I became conscious that my housekeeper had left her children behind in Trinidad in order to come to the United States in search of opportunities that would give her not only better earning power but would offer her a safer environment to live in as well. Patsy came to New York and began working for my parents a few months before my mother gave birth to me; 23 years later her two children, mother, several sisters and brother now live in the United States. When I became aware that Patsy had children of her own, I was only around four years old and didn't fully understand what it meant for her to love and take care of me and my three siblings while she simultaneously loved and cared for her children in Trinidad. When her daughter visited us in New York for the first time I was extremely jealous and possessive of Patsy;

² Jaquette, Jane. "Feminism and the Challenges of the "Post-Cold War" World." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 5.3 (2003): 331-54. Web. p. 341.

³ "Dona Modesta #1." Personal interview. 15 Nov. 2010. Translation: ["But one day, one day yes ... it has to change ... and to change it, what do we have to do? Us women have to prepare ourselves. "]

I didn't understand that Nicola was Patsy's daughter and the feelings of resentment and jealousy she had towards my family, understandably. As I got older and Nicola moved here, I slowly began to grasp what it meant that Patsy had not been present for much of Nicola's adolescence and what my position of privilege in the situation meant.

Then, my freshman year of college I enrolled in a class titled "Dangerous Domesticities" in which I learned what transnational motherhood is (mothers who are separated from their children across national borders) and what it means for all members involved; my final paper was on Central American transnational mothers living in the United States. From this point on my desire to understand Patsy's and Nicola's experience with transnational motherhood became my academic interest as well. Traveling to Trinidad and Tobago with Patsy on her first trip back in 20 years during my sophomore year I began to ask more questions about her decision to leave her country and family behind. She explained to me that although leaving was extremely difficult, she knew that ultimately it would turn out for the better and that opportunities (economically, medically, politically) in the United States would be more stable and secure. During this time I also questioned more and more my positionality in the situation; recognizing the unique relationship that Patsy's family and my family have. I am a student of privilege studying cases of women who leave children behind in order to send remittances home by working for wealthy families in the United States while simultaneously participating in this cycle.

In my junior year I studied abroad in Bolivia during the fall semester and Argentina during the spring semester. While in Bolivia I worked with a group of migrant women on the outskirts of Cochabamba City and was given the opportunity to listen to

their stories. Repeatedly the younger women told me of their desires to leave Bolivia in search of better economic opportunities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Spain and the United States. I began to connect the dots between my interests in migration, transnational motherhood, politics and economics with my upbringing and with my current experiences abroad. Signs of neoliberalism were *everywhere*; from foreign NGO's, stories of the Cochabamba water wars and continued migration between cities because of unstable or unavailable economic opportunities in rural areas. Knowing that I would be in Buenos Aires two months later, I decided to further focus my questions towards migration on both the national and international levels.

While in Buenos Aires I was given the incredible opportunity to work with the Co-Op clothing company "No Chains" that also functions as La Alameda, a soup kitchen, library, pottery studio, legal aid office and large extended family consisting mainly of migrant Bolivian women. During my interviews and chats over lunch with the women I asked questions about their experiences of migration, whether they still had family or connections with family in Bolivia, how often they returned home and if they still maintained "Bolivian" households. Upon my departure from Buenos Aires to Los Angeles six months later, the connections I made between the two experiences would serve as the foundations for my senior thesis.

Unlike the traditional format of a thesis, I do not begin with a review of literature. The organization of this thesis is designed to use chapters as building blocks that end with a conclusion tying together the previous chapters' central themes, presenting the significance and importance of the argument. In order to further examine the implications of transnational motherhood as a product of neoliberalism this thesis poses and hopes to

answer the following questions that the literature on this topic often fails to address: What do these changes in household formations and child-sharing essentially mean for children and families left behind due to gender selectivity in migration as a consequence of neoliberalism? What kind of consequences do transnational motherhood, changing household structures and shifting kinship circles have culturally or structurally on the individual and or collective? Where and what are the hidden human costs of neoliberalism- induced transnational motherhood on Bolivian children, grandparents, and mothers alike? And lastly, what are the lasting psychological and emotional effects neoliberalism creates when it perverts Andean traditions? The following chapters attempt to answer these questions and expound on their greater significance both locally in Bolivia and globally within hegemonic structures of class, race and gender.

In the following pages I argue that neoliberalism has exacerbated the migration of poor female Andean women and explore what the greater implications of this are. I focus specifically on poor indigenous women because neoliberalism most directly and profoundly affects them. It is critical to state that the term "poor" I often rely on in the context of this thesis is used solely in terms of economic status and does not in any way seek to imply that these women are not "rich" in other aspects of their lives. This thesis focuses on roots of Bolivian transnational motherhood and the feminization of migration within the larger frameworks of neoliberalism and globalization. Neoliberal policies and reforms undertaken in Bolivia transform and change patterns of migration, gender relations and household formations, which foster the phenomenon of transnational motherhood. The literature which presents the effects of neoliberalism on poor indigenous Andean women, the feminization of migration and transnational motherhood,

focuses attention to four themes: 1) neoliberalism and economic policies/reforms, 2) effects of neoliberal policies on women and specifically poor indigenous Andean women, 3) traditional and present migration patterns of indigenous Andeans and 4) Bolivian women living in Argentina and more specifically Buenos Aires from 1980-the present.

Building on fieldwork I conducted in both Bolivia and Argentina in 2010-2011, I focus on traditional Andean migratory patterns and neoliberalism's impact on poor indigenous Andean women in Bolivia, many whom migrate to Argentina. In "Femenismo, generos y migraciones" Ana Mallamaci provides the following data on female Bolivian migrants in Argentina: in 1980, 44.36% of all Bolivians migrating to Argentina were female, in 1990 48.24% were female and in 2001, 49.73% were female.⁴ A five percent increase occurred in just twenty-one years. In 2011, "The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimates that in today's world of 7 billion people at least 214 million are living outside their countries of birth; an unknown number move around inside their own nations."⁵ Migration worldwide has seen an overall increase, along with a feminization. In Bolivia, indigenous women have historically moved internally from the highland and mining provinces such as La Paz, Oruro and Potosi, to Cochabamba and Santa Cruz in the lowlands. More commonly seen today is a direct migration to neighboring countries Argentina, Brazil and Chile as opposed to the previous "step-migration" pattern. These seemingly separate types of migration are, I argue, intertwined; very often, internal migration prepares the women for transnational migration. One of many results of female migration in either

⁴ Mallamaci, Spring 2011, powerpoint clase 2. p. 22.

⁵ Crossette, Barbara. "State of World Population 2011." UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund. UNFPA. Web. 08 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/>>.

direction is a significant recalibration of the household and communities. This thesis will also pay close attention to and focus on the emotional and psychological human toll as a result of mothers migrating and leaving children and parents behind in their home communities and or countries. New household formations and strategies, mother-child relationships, emotional hardships and scars are all “on the ground” consequences of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism

“ The things Pinochet did with a bayonet, Paz has done within a democratic system”⁶

“ Only a crisis- actual or perceived-produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable.”

Milton Friedman, 1982.⁷

Neoliberalism forces the “politically impossible” to become the “politically inevitable” taking advantage of crises, desperate situations and existing policies that do not fit into the western and U.S. normative ideals used to rationalize systems of domination. In 1973, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet used violence and repression to implement the first neoliberal model of structural adjustment in Latin America. Twelve years later in Bolivia, attempted president Víctor Paz Estenssoro was democratically elected and implemented neoliberal structural adjustment plans as well. Neoliberalism in both Chile and Bolivia was unsuccessful and created devastating long term effects in every country where it was implemented, respectively. In Chile, neoliberalism was “accepted” because the military dictatorship of Pinochet implemented these changes, yet ultimately it still failed. Bolivia has a deeply rooted history with colonialism, a majority indigenous population whose cultures are based in communal landholdings and reciprocity as well as relationships through fictive kinship that make neoliberalism and Andean tradition incompatible and contradictory. The difference between neoliberalism

⁶ Klein, Naomi. The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007. p.189.

⁷ Ibid. p.174.

in Chile and Bolivia is that in Chile it was imposed and in Bolivia neoliberalism was contested. In *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*, Stephenson highlights many of the reasons behind the imposition in Bolivia arguing that

Hegemonic appeals to modernize attempt to legitimize political, social, and economic practices that endorse racial homogenization. By promoting racial acculturation, modernization seeks to 'reform' communal indigenous socioeconomic practices based upon exchange and reciprocity in favor of a liberal economic enterprise that endorses participation in market systems as individual producers and consumers.⁸

Policies of neoliberal economic reforms that enforce U.S. hegemonic notions of individuality and consumerism while “endors [ing] racial homogenization” go against the very foundations of Bolivian “culture.” Attempts to homogenize a country of nearly 36 different indigenous groups with unique “socioeconomic practices” as well as cultures, languages and traditions makes for the perfect stage of an uprising and rejection of these ideals. The dichotomous relationship between the very foundations of indigenous Andean “culture” and neoliberalism make it strikingly clear why these “reforms” were contested in Bolivia.

These policies began with Milton Friedman, considered the contemporary creator of neoliberal economic policies and thinking. He believed in freeing the market from the state, essentially blurring the line between business and government, as well as severely limiting social spending. The private sector is prized as efficient while government is deemed inefficient and what used to be government responsibility is placed into private hands. Neoliberalism must first be understood broadly in order to contextualize and fully capture what it means in Bolivia specifically. Benjamin Kohl explains,

⁸ Stephenson, Marcia. *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*. Austin: University of Texas, 1999. p.1-2.

While Bolivia's successful national challenges to the hegemony of neoliberal globalization illuminate some of the contradictions inherent in neoliberal globalization, I argue that any long-term challenge to neoliberalism must address its fundamental nature as a transnational process.⁹

Neoliberalism includes a hegemonic system of control and is a transnational process and development strategy that seeks to weaken poor Andeans and more specifically women. To capture the multi-faceted impact neoliberalism has on economies, cultures, policies, gender relations and household strategies this chapter begins with the history of these policies, followed by a more specific focus on Latin America and then Bolivia. The basic market ideologies as well as key aspects of the "Chicago School" style of economic policies emerged during Friedman's tenure at the University of Chicago (1946-1976). In *The Shock Doctrine*, Naomi Klein writes that the central idea of the Chicago school was the domination of power relations by the U.S. which were expressed "In the truly free market...[where] these forces [supply, demand, inflation and unemployment] existed in perfect equilibrium, supply communicating with demand the way the moon pulls the tides."¹⁰ The reality of these "forces" however is that they are constantly fluctuating which allows a minority economic elite to benefit because these "forces" almost never align with each other in "perfect equilibrium." Any attempt to solidify this equilibrium is inevitably disastrous. In order to "free the market" and supposedly create balance, Friedman believed that giving power to multinational corporations and the privatization of the public sphere was the answer. Essentially business managers become the government, creating a revolving door and blurring the line between government and

⁹ Kohl, Benjamin. *Challenges to Neoliberal Hegemony in Bolivia*. Geography and urban studies. UK, London.p.306.

¹⁰ Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.18.

business. Purported to be efficient, the private sector must control the now deemed “inefficient” and “incapable” public sector. Government is therefore considered inefficient and through the narrow eyes of neoliberalism must be controlled by private hands i.e. multinational businessmen or their locally appointed “puppets.” The deepest problem with this is that money previously allocated to the public sector and or social spending is privatized, never finding its way to those it is implied for. Data collected by the Political and Economic Analysis Unit of UNICEF in 2002 shows that in rural Bolivia nearly 82 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and in urban areas the number is lower but still staggering at close to 54 percent.¹¹ Money supposedly designated for the poor, and in this case majority population, never makes its way to these communities, remaining in private hands, clearly demonstrating that neoliberalism deepens already existing class differences. In a country such as Bolivia, where economic and ethnic differences are polarizing, these policies only deepen power relations and social, economic and ethnic inequalities. Klein argues that this corporatist approach’s

...main characters are huge transfers of public wealth to private hands, often accompanied by exploding debt, an ever-widening chasm between the dazzling rich and the disposable poor and an aggressive nationalism that justifies bottomless spending on security.¹²

Her argument highlights the word “disposable” to describe the poor/ labor force and “dazzling” to describe the rich; this becomes an intensified reality in Bolivia where stark class and socioeconomic differences existed even before neoliberalism. In Chile, where these economic policies were first put to the test, under a military dictatorship, 45 percent

¹¹ "UNICEF Bolivia - Resources - Situation of Poverty in the Country." UNICEF - UNICEF Home. Unicef. Web. 10 Feb. 2012.

<http://www.unicef.org/bolivia/resources_2332.htm>.

¹² Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.18.

of the population fell below the poverty line while the income of the richest 10 percent of the population grew by 83 percent in 1988.¹³ These numbers hold true to this day; Chile retains one of the largest income gaps on the planet and the divide between the extremely rich and the dire poor across Latin America is outstanding. In all of the countries that Milton Friedman or the Chicago School of economics has been involved in, a strengthening of ties between wealthy politicians and large multinational corporations leading to a decrease in the standard of living for the majority of the countries population is instantly recognizable. A Center for Economic and Policy Research briefing paper, Weisbrot and others state that: “ There are almost no instances in which groupings of countries that were performing poorly at the start of the period saw more progress during the era of globalization than in the previous two decades.”¹⁴ Neoliberalism is the most widely spread and powerful form of hegemony today, enforcing western notions of gender relations, economics, household models and market systems. It is a mechanism of control in the public and private sphere (whether it be through music, food, media, education) to rationalize the oppressing systems under which we live, depending on normative ideals and populations that will not question or resist its tentacle-like grasp on virtually every sector of society. Inevitably a clash will emerge when a hegemonic system such as neoliberalism is implemented in a country like Bolivia where around 40 percent of the population still lives traditionally in rural areas, 85 percent of the population is Indigenous and where there is a deeply seeded history with colonialism, something

¹³ Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.86.

¹⁴ Weisbrot, Mark, Dean Baker, Egor Kraev, and Judy Chen. *The Scorecard on Globalization 1980-200: Twenty Years of Diminished Progress*. Issue brief. Center For Economic and Policy Research, 2011.p.15.

neoliberalism is not so distinct from.

Neoliberal policies were implemented through the Washington Consensus, which mandated mutations through conditionality agreements and lending based on policy “adjustments.” The consensus was strongly recommended to countries with high external debt and consists of ten basic elements: “1. Fiscal discipline, 2. Rationalized public spending, 3. Tax reform, 4. Competitive exchange rates, 5. Liberalized trade, 6. Liberalized financial markets, 7. Liberalized inward FDI, 8. Privatized state enterprises, 9. Deregulated markets, 10. Legal security for property rights.”¹⁵ It is important to point out that the word “liberalized” appears three times and that these ten elements of adjustment are comprised of the words “reform,” “privatized,” “deregulated,” “rationalized” and “competitive.” The language used in the Washington Consensus implies that these “adjustments” are suggested in an act of goodwill, but the mere idea of suggesting to a government, state or people that it/they are in need of “reform” or “adjustment” according to a U.S. based hegemonic set of ideals is presumptive and insulting. Neoliberalism is modern day colonialism and presumes that western, U.S. notions of progress and organization (societal, political, economic) are adaptable and suited for all countries and peoples. What these reforms in fact mean is free trade, dismantling of local businesses unable to compete on a level playing field while promoting multinational ones, massive lay-offs for public sector employees, and a shrinking of the state and its control over the economy. In essence the Washington Consensus is neoliberalism written out in 10 “easy-to-follow” steps. Both the IMF and

¹⁵ Díaz Frers, Luciana. "Why did the washington consensus policies fail?" CIPE Development Institute. Center for International Private Enterprise, 2008. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <<http://developmentinstitute.org>>.

World Bank recommended and enforced the Washington Consensus in Latin America and across the globe as the only option for overcoming amounting external debt; if a country wants to overcome external debt and high inflation, neoliberalism has been presented as the only option.

In the 1950's Latin America had achieved new levels of development and economies were booming; the region served as an example that it was possible for the "Third World" to move forward and away from its historical role as supplier of mono exports to the "First World." For example,

...Uruguay had a literacy rate of 95 percent and offered free health care for all citizens. Developmentalism was so staggeringly successful for a time that the Southern Cone of Latin America became a potent symbol for poor countries around the world: here was proof that with smart, practical policies, aggressively implemented, the class divide between the First and Third World could actually be closed.¹⁶

During the next two decades (1960's and 1970's) many countries in Latin America borrowed large amounts of money from foreign lenders in order to industrialize and develop more rapidly. These lending countries agreed to support the region's development because Latin American economies were exceptionally prosperous at the time and because debt was a new form of control. However, over a period of about eight years, debt across the region grew tremendously, nearly quintupling during this time. Then, in the late 1970's to early 1980's, high energy costs created by the oil embargo in the Middle East forced Latin American countries to borrow large amounts of money from Europe and the United States; while the European and United States economies suffered from the embargo, borrowing from these countries was directly effected as well. These

¹⁶ Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.67.

policies caused inflation to skyrocket, severely limiting most consumers' purchasing power. Then the debt crisis hit Latin America and neoliberalism was imposed as the new and only alternative across the region for overcoming the crisis. In order to compensate for this "lost decade" the previous import substitution economic model (ISI) was replaced with mono-export economies encouraged by the IMF and World Bank through the Washington Consensus. In 1983, the IMF encouraged and introduced this "structural adjustment" plan and later admitted that "everything we did from 1983 onward was based on our new sense of mission to have the south 'privatized' or die; towards this end we ignominiously created economic bedlam in Latin America and Africa in 1983-1988."¹⁷ These policies and institutions are unmistakably responsible for the ensuing crises in developing nations. Economists believed that companies and the private sector could default but it was even more profoundly assumed that states and governments could not collapse under economic catastrophes. Neoliberal structural adjustment plans were thought to be invincible.

The time period of my thesis begins with the implementation of neoliberal economic and social reforms in Bolivia, which began with the "lost decade" of the 1980's through the present. When the "lost decade" hit Bolivia in 1985, "Inflation, driven by a massive fiscal deficit, was running at an almost inconceivable annualized rate of over 23,000 percent, the national economy had been shrinking for five consecutive years and real wages had fallen by 30 percent since 1981."¹⁸ This enormous deficit was due to U.S president Ronald Reagan's policy in 1984 which aimed to eradicate the production of

¹⁷ Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.205.

¹⁸ Green, Duncan. *Silent Revolution: The Rise of Market Economics in Latin America*. London: Cassell, 1995.p.73.

coca in Bolivia; not only would this operation greatly affect the Bolivian economy but it was also an attack on a cultural and traditional crop of the Andean nation. Klein states that “the siege, which turned a large section of Bolivia into a military zone, didn’t just choke the coca trade, but cut off the source of roughly half of the countries export revenues, triggering an economic meltdown.”¹⁹ At this time Bolivia had one of the highest inflation rates in the world and neoliberal economic policies were promoted as a way to overcome this period of high inflation. Those in favor of these reforms argued that Bolivia (and the rest of the Third World) would therefore have a “comparative advantage” in the mono export economies production of raw materials. Instead prices began to float while salaries remained fixed. Bolivians earning power was reduced and their livelihoods were destabilized.

Contrary to the clearly disastrous effect this catastrophe had on the Bolivian people, North American economist and economic advisor to the Bolivian government at the time, Jeffrey Sachs, believed Bolivia had been transformed into a country that would serve as the perfect “democratic” example for experimentation with the neoliberal model of reforms. He therefore began to implement his structural adjustment plan, using elements of the Washington Consensus for inspiration. In order to highlight that what took place in Bolivia was not entirely unique, Klein states that

It was strikingly clear that in Bolivia, hyperinflation had played the same role as had Pinochet’s ‘war’ in Chile and the Falklands War for Margaret Thatcher-it had created the context for emergency measures, a state of exception during which the rules of democracy could be suspended and economic control could be temporarily handed over to the team of experts in Goni’s living room...that meant that hyperinflation was not a problem to be solved, as Sachs believed, but a golden

¹⁹ Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.178.

opportunity to be seized.²⁰

Sachs viewed the turmoil and economic catastrophe in Bolivia as an opportunity to remake the economy, disregarding the majority of the populations' suffering and implement changes that, it turns out, not only worsened the economy, but damaged kinship circles, gender relations and household-based survival strategies. As most policy makers, Sachs knew virtually nothing about Bolivia's long running and historical oppression from colonialism, the gains made by the 1952 revolution or struggles of the country's majority indigenous populations. Stephenson argues that

The new subject specific to privatization and heralded by the novel's project of modernization is one who has become acculturated to western socioeconomic practices and therefore is ready to enter the social contract (citizenship) and embrace a liberal market economy. These are the characteristics of the modern (civilized) citizen. For this reason, the act of privatizing indigenous communally held lands, an act that accelerates the formation of citizens according to hegemonic economic and political discourses, also has racial implications.²¹

In Bolivia, neoliberalism's stress of private property clashes with Bolivian culture that is deeply rooted in family and community. *Ayllu*, in both Quechua and Aymara, are self-sustaining family networks that function through reciprocity and shared collectives on commonly held lands. In traditional Andean households, families, or household units, several generations live together and these large, extended families work the land. Neoliberalism undermines the *ayllu* system. For example, based on my own experience in Bolivia, meals were never taken alone and I rarely left the house or spent time alone. Coming from the United States, where I am very independent this was a source of cultural shock. This puts into perspective the effect of a uniform approach that promoted,

²⁰ Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.195.

²¹ Stephenson, Marcia. *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*. Austin: University of Texas, 1999.p.73.

enforced and privileged private property as well as individualized capitalist lifestyles.

Following the Washington Consensus, Sachs began these neoliberal reforms with decree 20160 whose most important aspects were “removal of restrictions on imports and exports, an end to fixed prices on most goods and services and the freezing of public sector wages for four months (later reduced to three).”²² Just as reforms of the Washington Consensus exacerbated the effects of the meltdown during the “lost decade,” the human toll that Sachs’ neoliberal economic policies created were seen as temporary corrections, but their effects remain continual for Bolivians. Sachs’ vision began to materialize and in his article, “Challenges to Neoliberal Hegemony in Bolivia” Benjamin Kohl argues that there are three phases to neoliberal restructuring in Bolivia that begin in 1985; this is the first structural adjustment plan (New Economic Policy or NEP) that was implemented in Latin America by a democratically elected government.²³ The first phase is what he calls the “invasion” or the structural adjustment program put in place by actors such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Kohl argues that the second phase of neoliberalism in Bolivia focused on the privatization of “the largest state-owned firms” which looked to recreate the country economically. The third phase is the government’s loss in their ability to control the widespread public rejection of neoliberalism and globalization in 2000.²⁴

On the eve of 2000, the Bolivian government gave a forty-year lease of the water system in the city of Cochabamba to U.S based utilities corporation Bechtel. Almost

²² Green, Duncan. Silent Revolution: The Rise of Market Economics in Latin America. London: Cassell, 1995.p.73.

²³ Ibid. p.231.

²⁴ Kohl, Benjamin. Challenges to Neoliberal Hegemony in Bolivia. Geography and urban studies. UK, London.p.305.

immediately after Bechtel took over, water prices tripled, causing families with very limited incomes to spend unbelievable amounts on water. This privatization was not taken calmly and large protests erupted causing the government to finally overturn the lease and renationalize the water system. In October 2011, I interviewed residents in the district of 1° de Mayo in Cochabamba and was fortunate enough to hear speak one of the main actors of the movement against privatization. Don Angel spoke about the levels of violence, hunger and extreme frustration that took place during the protests as well as the reality of water issues in 1° de Mayo today. During my time spent in the community in November, I interviewed women about their experience with water availability and prices before and after privatization; currently water is only available two to three times a week and families must share with their neighbors. Everyone I spoke to, however, preferred this to the exorbitant prices they could not afford during the period of privatization. Water is still a serious problem and scarce resource all over Bolivia. The effects and reactions to changes in policy and ownerships are evident in every day lives of Bolivians. Quoting Karl Polanyi, a Hungarian philosopher, economic historian and political economist who opposed traditional economic theories, Kohl writes,

... 'the dynamics of modern society were governed by a double movement: the market expanded continuously but this movement was met by a countermovement checking the expansion' by those 'most immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market' (Polanyi 1957:130). The repeated uprisings, strikes, and roadblocks in Bolivia during the past 20 years of the NEP are manifestations of this resistance.²⁵

The rise of social movements within historically underserved communities in Bolivia prove that Sachs was wrong: that you cannot instill such harsh economic and social

²⁵ Kohl, Benjamin. Challenges to Neoliberal Hegemony in Bolivia. Geography and urban studies. UK, London.p.320.

policies without taking into account the human toll those policies will have while simultaneously assuming that the populations most effected by these policies will remain submissive. These indigenous uprisings against neoliberal reforms are counter hegemonic because they go against ideas of indigeneity that non-indigenous peoples are taught. The movements go against the stereotypical view of the “backwards” or “powerless” and “weak” Indian. Not only does this visible resistance to neoliberal hegemonic policies exist but so do the less visible, unforeseen and hidden consequences such as changes in household survival strategies as well as kinship and gender relations.

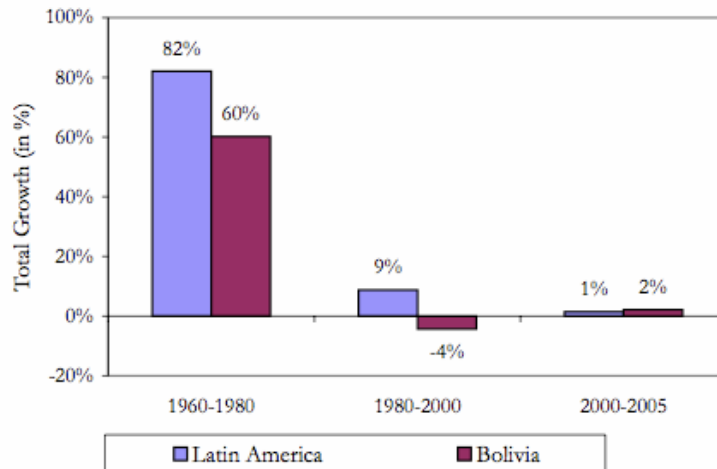
In addition to Kohl’s three phases of neoliberal restructuring, Henry Veltmeyer and James Petra’s, authors of “Peasants in an Era of Neoliberal Globalization: Latin America on the move,” add a fourth phase: decentralization.²⁶ This refers to the flexibilization of the labor forces, undermining unions and the state-employee relationship, while forcing low wage laborers to take economic opportunities wherever they may be available due to an already weak economic system. The authors continue their argument stating that these policies were “implemented by a state that has been restructured so as to better serve the interests of the ‘international capitalist class’ what John Pilger (2003) has termed ‘the new rulers of the world.’”²⁷ Because neoliberalism regimes fail to serve those outside the ruling capitalist class, blaming the individual rather than the state for poverty, poor indigenous women migrate to provide for their families because their husbands or partners are no longer able to do so. As Kohl argues “...-in countries that have undergone neoliberal restructuring (often in the form of IMF structural adjustment programs-SAPs),

²⁶ Veltmeyer, Henry, and James Petras. Peasants in an Era of Neoliberal Globalization: Latin America on the Move. 2008.p.6.

²⁷ Ibid.p.7.

the majority of citizens have seen their standard of living fall.²⁸ The following graphic is evidence of the drastic changes in per capita GDP growth both in Latin America and Bolivia during the period 1960-2005 providing graphical evidence of the destruction done by neoliberalism.

FIGURE 2. Real per capita GDP growth in Latin America, 1960-2005



29

Kohl continues this argument by stating that

Neoliberalism faces different challenges at the national and subnational scales-in our case, within the national boundaries of a small, landlocked, Andean nation-where the expectations it creates of a better life confront the reality of ongoing hardships for the majority of the population.³⁰

What he highlights is the reality world of neoliberalism and the fact that it did not and does not take into account that in the upwards of 80 percent of Bolivians residing in rural areas live in dire poverty, rather it is a “one size fits all” approach. It makes and made blanket assumptions, implementing changes without taking into account the communities

²⁸ Kohl, Benjamin. Challenges to Neoliberal Hegemony in Bolivia. Geography and urban studies. UK, London.p.306.

²⁹ Weisbrot, Mark, and Luis Sandoval. Bolivia's Challenges. Publication. Center For Economic and Policy Research, 2006.p.4.

³⁰ Kohl, Benjamin. Challenges to Neoliberal Hegemony in Bolivia. Geography and urban studies. UK, London.p.309.

and culture it was imposing them on.

This chapter seeks to lay the groundwork for further understanding of how neoliberalism affects poor, indigenous women, not taking into account their realities as women or as members of a multi-ethnic Andean country historically seen as “backwards” and “underdeveloped.” Economic policies provoke changes that then make migration to urban centers or neighboring countries Chile, Brazil and Argentina an option for poor Andean women to seek employment opportunities that then allow them to send remittances home, attempting to fill the gaps created by neoliberalism. They must make up for what the state is no longer able to provide to them, changing notions of kinship and exacerbating new household survival strategies and migration patterns. York University professor Ricardo Grinspun argues

...that an approach in the Keynesian or developmentalist tradition seeks to mobilize support and share the burden through ‘a negotiated process involving key stakeholders-government, employers, farmers, unions and so on. In this way, the parties come to agreements over income policies, like wages and prices, at the same time that stabilization measures are implemented.’ In sharp contrast, says Grinspun, ‘the orthodox approach is to shift all the social cost onto the poor through shock therapy.’ That, he told me, is precisely what happened in Bolivia.³¹

The following chapters examine and analyze the unequal gendered and socioeconomic effects neoliberalism has had in Bolivia, not just on indigenous women who migrate, but as well as the effects it has on their children and aging parents who remain in Bolivia. Neoliberalism is in no way unique to Bolivia but the ways in which it has manifested itself into every aspect of Bolivian “culture” is, I argue, distinct.

³¹ Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan /Henry Holt, 2007.p.186.

Indigenous Women in the Bolivian Andes and Neoliberalism

“ The fact that some of the poorest and most marginal households in Bolivia are run by single women reinforces the assumption that non-normative family and sexual status is the cause of their troubles. Yet women without male partners often excluded from direct benefits of programs such as those described here, do find collaboration, resources, and sexual and emotional intimacy in a variety of ways, some more, some less accepted by society.”³²

“These efforts to drive Bolivia forward on the path of modern development have made deep, and deeply uneven, marks, while indigenous people in the Andean highlands and Amazonian lowlands have resisted, appropriated, and/or resignified elements of these ‘universal’ models.”³³

This chapter provides the basis for understanding the ways in which neoliberalism disproportionately affects indigenous Andean women in Bolivia and how these economic and social policies exacerbate migration patterns and gender relations. Structural adjustment shifts money from the public sector into private hands and this directly affects the social welfare of women in historically and presently underserved rural indigenous communities. These “adjustments” force poor indigenous Andean women to develop new economic and emotional coping methods as well as new household strategies in order to replace services the state no longer provides. As Lourdes Benería argues:

...drastic cuts in government spending are used not only to reduce deficits in the public sector but also to shift resources and economic activity from the public to the private sector. They are also used to decrease aggregate demand in order to stem inflation. The cuts reduce or eliminate government services and subsidies, such as in education, health and other sectors, that contribute to the social wage,

³² Lind, Amy. *Development, Sexual Rights and Global Governance*. New York: Routledge, 2010.p.120

³³ *Ibid.* p. 117

particularly of low-income groups. Another aspect of the reduction of the government's role in the economy is the process of privatization of public firms.³⁴

Although Benería does not explicitly focus on gender, other scholars and this study argue that the reduction or complete elimination of government services through privatization directly and firstly affects poor women and their children. In the case of Bolivia, where 40 percent of the population (indigenous) lives in rural areas, when the state no longer provides what was already limited social welfare, existing gaps in livelihood between rich and poor, urban and rural become glaringly evident. Women and their families are forced to compensate for the human toll neoliberalism did not take into consideration; these policies did not account for how they would impact women and this is highly ironic because development is now gender focused. I argue that structural "adjustment" policies pervert kinship and family networks, household formations, and therefore has a dramatically negative impact on familial strategies indigenous women use to cope with these changes. Women's responsibilities inside and outside the household increase under neoliberalism, forcing mothers, for example, to migrate and transnational motherhood as a household strategy becomes a reality. It is important to point out that while Andean people have experienced a great deal of migration, neoliberalism has transformed temporary, seasonal migration into long-term, permanent migration. Amy Lind states that, "since the 1980s, development policies that emphasize the market (e.g., neoliberal policies)... have done so largely under the pretext that families, and especially women, will "absorb" the costs of economic restructuring (Benería and Feldman 1992; Bakker

³⁴ Benería, Lourdes. Structural Adjustment Policies. Cornell University. Web. 12 Oct. 2011. <http://www.arts.cornell.edu/poverty/Papers/Beneria_SAPs.pdf>.p.2.

1994).³⁵ Neoliberalism functions as a cookie cutter model of “adjustments,” and an understanding of Bolivia’s particular history with colonialism and constant struggles between indigenous and criollo populations adds to Lind’s argument; the push for modernity vs. tradition. This argument furthers the understanding that the creators of these policies took nothing into consideration before they implemented long lasting, detrimental changes. Neoliberalism does not function under the pretext of anything because it does not consider social, sexual, political, economic, environmental, or historical elements of countries it enters with strong undertones of colonialism. Neoliberal economic and social policies enforced in Bolivia did not consider the history of the poor, rural, indigenous communities and the harsh realities they continue to face as a marginalized majority. In addition, neoliberalism ignored and continues to ignore the exacerbated burdens placed onto poor, indigenous women in Bolivia through policies and the ignorance with which they were egregiously construed and enforced.

Neoliberalism is patriarchal and works to enforce heteronormativity through its hegemonic models of development and structural adjustment. In the introduction to *Development, Sexual Rights and Global Governance*, Lind states that

on an economic level, privatization, state deregulation, and free-market ideologies have helped shape an institutional context in which non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), both for profit and non-profit have had to pick up where the state left off. This has led among other things to the reprivatization of social welfare, with important consequences for non-normative families and households that do not ‘count’ as the subjects of development aid, even within local grassroots efforts where people (necessarily) take planning for survival into their own hands.³⁶

³⁵ Feminist Post-Development Thought: "Women in Development" and the Gendered Paradoxes of Survival in Bolivia Amy Lind. *Women's Studies Quarterly*. New York: Fall 2003. Vol. 31, Iss. 3/4; p.227.

³⁶ Lind, Amy. *Development, Sexual Rights and Global Governance*. New York: Routledge, 2010. p.1.

Lind's main argument that social welfare is placed on the household and that the heteronormative household specifically will receive some kind of aid from NGO's is understood and agreed upon, but I emphasize that the majority of these same NGO's function within and through neoliberal and Western lenses. She critically points out that non-heteronormative households do not "count" under development aid umbrellas and I push this further arguing that the NGO driven development world essentially functions under the same hegemonic, heteronormative notions as neoliberalism. Susan Paulson also furthers the argument that neoliberal development models do not account for "non-normative" household structures when she writes that,

this example is one of many cases in which assumptions built into development projects have led to economic and political benefits for people in certain sexual relationships and family arrangements, while degrading or diminishing resources and forms of participation available to others... nationwide, the 2001 census found that 30.8 percent of households were headed by women.³⁷

Paulson's argument is understood, and she, like Lind, deconstructs the reasons and ideologies behind why certain sexual relationships, family arrangements and forms of participation are excluded in development projects. They are excluded because in order to maintain heteronormativity and patriarchy through both neoliberal policies and development aid, the state cannot allow for any sort of variation from this set standard of family, sexuality or relationships to exist or receive assistance or even recognition. Looking at both Lind and Paulson's arguments on a surface level it is evident that in Bolivia, heteronormative or male headed households are the majority, but more than a quarter of Bolivian households do not fit into this model. What is one to do when such a

³⁷ Lind, Amy. Development, Sexual Rights and Global Governance. New York: Routledge, 2010.p.120.

large portion of the population does not fit into the model promoted by development and neoliberal economic reforms? If 30.8 percent of households are headed by women and 40 percent of the population still lives traditionally in rural areas, how many of these rural households constitute the 30.8 percent nationwide headed by women? If NGO's and or development projects are present through neoliberalism or work to assist communities and individuals cope with the *effects* of neoliberalism yet both maintain the heteronormative household and family model, these communities and individuals who do not fit this "cookie cutter" mold once again are left to confront these changes and survive in any way they can i.e. migrate.

In the World Bank Policy Research Report on Gender and Development, *Consumption Expenditure and Female Poverty: A Review of The Evidence* by Julian A. Lampietti and Linda Stalker, the authors state that

...the bulk of the literature on gender and consumption expenditure has focused on female-headed households. Jazairy (1992) and Buvinic (1997) argue that female-headed households deserve special attention because they face the triple burden of poverty, discrimination, and absence of support as heads of household.³⁸

The word *burden* is defined as: “ (n) a difficult or worrying responsibility or duty (vt) to cause somebody or something to carry a burden” by Encarta World Dictionary and by Oxford English dictionary as “ (*fig.*) To load, encumber, oppress, lay a burden on, tax (memory, conscience, resources, etc.).” These definitions are essential to remember in the context of the effects of neoliberal policies on poor indigenous Andean women and the burdens that these policies intensify as well as the new burdens these policies create. It is

³⁸ Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. Working Paper Series No.11 Consumption Expenditure and Female Poverty: A review of the evidence By Julian A. Lampietti and Linda Stalker p.17-18.

easy to play down the real meaning behind this word and "the burden" is too often assimilated or understood as a mere "interference" or "hindrance." However, a collective burden, we need to remember is first and foremost created by an oppressive system of domination and a hegemonic set of policies such as neoliberalism; the system creates and places burdens on poor indigenous Andean women that changes their lives drastically. Although this report stresses the fact that female-headed households do not receive the support they are in need of, it is essential to know that they do not even receive recognition as legitimate forms of households.

In Bolivia, these "burdens" become so extreme and oppressive that women must create their own methods and strategies through which their families and homes can be managed in order to, if not alleviate their hardships, at least be able to carry them. Migration as one method of survival is necessary if the only opportunities created by the state to escape the NGO and neoliberal driven development pattern (which reinforces poverty, already existing race, class and gender inequalities and patriarchal/heteronormative relationships) are through informal jobs in urban areas. Lind argues that along with a broad reformation of societies and economies, "...changes in consumption patterns, cultural practices, community and family networks and household expenditures" take place as well.³⁹ I agree with Lind and add that all of these changes are reactions to neoliberal reform and inflate patterns of female migration and transnational motherhood.

³⁹ Lind, Amy. "Making Feminist Sense of Neoliberalism: The Institutionalization of Women's Struggles for Survival in Ecuador and Bolivia." *Journal of Developing Societies* 18.228 (2002): 228-58.p.229.

Indigenous Andean women have developed responses and reactions to neoliberalism in various ways and for differing reasons. In her article, Lind argues that women respond to neoliberalism by collectively mobilizing

...against foreign banks, corruption, cocaine dollars, increased poverty and inflation and the foreign-debt crisis. Yet many others have not responded publicly but rather through individual means or social networks, by restructuring their household budgets and lowering their daily expenses, sharing costs with neighbors and collectively working together in local planning initiatives...⁴⁰

She adds that poor women have gained more visibility in the political realm but that their economic burdens have increased because of neoliberal economic reforms that began in the 1980's but whose effects are still deeply engrained in the everyday lives of Bolivians.⁴¹ This quote serves as an example to my argument that Bolivian women are responding to a restructuring of politics, economics, society, etc, which works against their traditional way of living but by using communal Andean traditions such as migration and child sharing. These Andean traditions are, however, perverted by neoliberal policies, as I will analyze in chapter three. Neoliberalism works to flip the state structure and society upside down and enforce a new way of "existing" through oppression and a furthering of class and social gaps/ differences; it does not take local history into account and applies the same model of reforms virtually everywhere it penetrates. In *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*, Marcia Stephenson expands this even more by arguing that: "Consequently, the state constitutes itself through specific constructions that not only produce traditional gender roles but also promote racial assimilation by privileging white, western norms" which encompasses household

⁴⁰ Lind, Amy. "Making Feminist Sense of Neoliberalism: The Institutionalization of Women's Struggles for Survival in Ecuador and Bolivia." *Journal of Developing Societies* 18.228 (2002): 228-58.p.232.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*p.233.

formations as well.⁴² Critical to point out are the ways in which these women respond to this “flipping” or privatization and capitalization (individualized) through collective, Andean methods, which resemble the *ayllu* and *ayni*. Lind’s paper focuses its discussion to poor rural indigenous women in both Ecuador and Bolivia, offering a case study in understanding the effects of neoliberalism on poor indigenous Andean women. Gender and more specifically men, and men who abide by a patriarchal system, influence economic change; historically and more often than not they create and implement changes while women are the first to feel the effects of the adjustments and experience oppression (physical, emotional, economic) as a result. Policies such as the privatization of water, for example, forces women to plan their families’ welfare and daily lives around the price and availability of water; this disenfranchises the women and takes up valuable time that could be spent in other spheres such as participating in local government and community planning. Men who implement neoliberal policies do not take into account that the effects of these policies further gender inequalities along with race and class differences.

In a different article “ Gender, Development and Urban Social Change: Women’s Community Action in Global Cities,” Lind cites Alvarez’s argument that, “...neoliberal development policies have served to institutionalize what were once viewed as spontaneous strategies to cope with momentary crisis.”⁴³ What becomes clear is that previous “momentary crises” have become permanent crises in the everyday lives of poor, rural, indigenous communities of Bolivia. These crises can be defined as lack of

⁴² Stephenson, Marcia. *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*. Austin: University of Texas, 1999.p. 63

⁴³ Lind, A. "Gender, Development and Urban Social Change: Women's Community Action in Global Cities." *World Development* 25.8 (1997): 1205-223. p.1207.

resources due to cuts in social spending, multinational companies' monopolies of exports as well as environmental degradation due to climate change. Once seen as transient, these crises have been made permanent by the "structural adjustments" enforced by neoliberalism and women bear the brunt of their consequences; they must create new emotional coping methods as well as family and household strategies, which in turn become fixed realities and not just temporary solutions to short-term crises.

The gendered analysis that Lind provides is critical to understanding neoliberalism as the cause of the feminization of migration and transnational motherhood; two coping methods poor indigenous Andean women use in response. Lind essentially argues that "...the Bolivian state-like other Latin American states-has 'organized women to demobilize them' rather than organizing them to create an autonomous social movement."⁴⁴ I would stress the fact that it is the *neoliberal* Bolivian state that has specifically demobilized poor indigenous Andean women. In turn, they have responded communally through supposedly traditional Andean methods of migration and child sharing and in recent years specifically urban female indigenous social movements in Bolivia may have grown enormously in number and power yet this change has not been seen in rural areas.

Authors often draw attention to the impact of neoliberalism on women but do not view neoliberalism itself as patriarchal or as a "development" strategy that reinforces heteronormativity and the repression/oppression of poor indigenous women. This can be explained through the ways in which neoliberalism decentralizes the state and

⁴⁴ Lind, Amy. "Making Feminist Sense of Neoliberalism: The Institutionalization of Women's Struggles for Survival in Ecuador and Bolivia." *Journal of Developing Societies* 18.228 (2002): 228-58. p.240.

emphasizes the importance of the market and privatization. When the state is weakened, social spending must be cut and resources shift; these burdens are pushed onto the local level, which inevitably means women in increasingly numerous female-headed households. As Lampietti and Stalker, posit,

There is mounting concern that the number of female-headed households in developing countries is increasing. Bruce et al. (1995) compare data on de jure headed households in twenty-four countries at two points in time and find that in 17 of the countries the proportion of female-headed households in the population has increased. The process of female-headed household formation, which appears to differ by region, deserves special attention. In LAC teenage pregnancies, informal unions and female migration are identified.⁴⁵

The use of the word concern in reference to the number of growing female-headed households draws my attention because I question why this is a “concern” to the state. Is it because state structures that have been reconstructed through neoliberalism do not support this type of household formation or is this of concern because the authors view heteronormative households as the only form of stability? It is also interesting that they point out that teenage pregnancies, informal unions and migration are all products of female-headed households because I argue that these are all outcomes of neoliberalism and the privatization of the social sector. If neoliberalism exacerbates and feminizes Andean migration, making women more vulnerable, and if the state refuses to provide them with assistance, is it not inevitable that rates of teenage pregnancy and informal unions will rise? The authors define “de jure” headed households are those with no adult male present and “de facto” headed households signify that the male of the family was

⁴⁵ Lampietti, Julian A., and Linda Stalker. Consumption Expenditure and Female Poverty: A Review of the Evidence. Working paper no. 11. World Bank, 2000. Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. p.26.

not present at the time the survey was taken or that he is active through remittances.⁴⁶ It is also argued in the paper that because female-headed households are not a homogenous group, public policy should not target them but that sub-groups of this type of households need to be examined.⁴⁷ It is crucial to contextualize this statement by pointing out the fact that this paper is a publication of the World Bank, which played a direct role in implementing and forcing neoliberal changes in Bolivia.

Neoliberalism seeks to demobilize poor indigenous women by placing previously held state responsibilities onto women's already extensive list of household tasks. As an outcome of policy, rural women's roles as active social participants are weakened and they are forced to contend with the effects of neoliberalism through migration to urban centers and informal markets both internationally and nationally. In addition to the consequences stated earlier, the exacerbation of female migration patterns creates transnational motherhood and the emotional, economic, physical and psychological aspects that are a part of this household strategy are intensified by neoliberalism. The policies of neoliberalism are implemented through a generic mold and responded to in a "traditional" Andean way by poor indigenous women in Bolivia. Although migration from rural areas to the city and neighboring countries existed before neoliberalism, this tradition of migrating is exacerbated and has different roots or motives than the migration previously seen.

Neoliberalism does not work to alleviate women's obligations in the household but instead adds to them by creating "spaces" and "roles" for women to "participate" in

⁴⁶ Lampietti, Julian A., and Linda Stalker. Consumption Expenditure and Female Poverty: A Review of the Evidence. Working paper no. 11. World Bank, 2000. Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. p.18.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.25.

community projects and decision-making. This can be seen in Lind's article "Making Feminist Sense of Neoliberalism: The Institutionalization of Women's Struggles for Survival in Ecuador and Bolivia," in which she argues that attempts at neoliberal development "'target' poor women and tend to reinforce and institutionalize their participation in community-development projects and organizations, rather than easing their burdens." As a result, more women are likely to seek out actual, real opportunities such as urban informal market jobs to alleviate their hardships.⁴⁸ NGO's and local development projects promote themselves as helping to alleviate the burdens placed on households and more specifically women but in fact their work does the opposite. Poor women in rural areas are channeled into local development projects in addition to their household chores, doubling their burdens and chores. When one is forced by a system to seek solutions one can hardly think of these solutions or as Lind terms it " participation in community-development projects" as opportunities; migration is therefore used as a household strategy to cope with the effects of neoliberal policies. During my stay in Bolivia, the women I interviewed from highland provinces such as Potosi, La Paz and Oruro who now reside in the lowland 1°de Mayo district of Cochabamba, told me that although they do not have a "real" voice or power when it comes to decision-making impacting the community, they are participating more in their own lives, discussing gender equality and domestic violence more than before. Doña Modesta, for example, a very vocal and opinionated woman, said that she and her friends/co-workers are more politically aware *but* that they are still not involved in the actual making of political

⁴⁸ Lind, Amy. "Making Feminist Sense of Neoliberalism: The Institutionalization of Women's Struggles for Survival in Ecuador and Bolivia." *Journal of Developing Societies* 18.228 (2002): 228-58. p.229.

decisions that directly affect their lives.⁴⁹ Younger women whom I interviewed mentioned plans to migrate for a second time to neighboring countries such as Argentina and Brazil in order to find work. Older women migrated from highland provinces to the lowland province of Cochabamba with the understanding that their daily hardships would be similar but under the condition that the weather is more agreeable than that of the harsh Altiplano. Almost none of these women were involved in informal market urban center jobs; they participated daily in a sewing workshop sponsored by an Italian NGO. The organization promoted itself as a women and children's health, sex and nutrition center yet during my three weeks in the community the women sewed daily and worked together to watch over their young children as they sewed. It was evident that the women were learning new skills, but their heteronormative, patriarchal relationships with their partners remained the same. The organization provided little to no information regarding child nutrition, sexual health or equal participation during sexual encounters. Many women left the daily workshop early because they needed to return home and make lunch and or dinner for their families, wash clothes or clean the house. The NGO and neoliberal driven development plans do not alleviate the daily burdens of poor Andean women; if anything these plans displace daily tasks for a few hours at most but in turn add to the daily stresses and maintenance of patriarchal household formations. The "often hidden transfer" of state responsibilities is cloaked in other discourses and development plans.

Lind argues that NGO's and community organizations whose focus on women

...provide examples of how women have responded collectively to the (often hidden) transfer of welfare responsibilities to the community level-something which remains largely unexamined in the planning and development literature-

⁴⁹ "Dona Modesta #1." Personal interview. 15 Nov. 2010.

and of how women have integrated themselves into local decision-making and planning processes.⁵⁰

Since the state no longer provides the basic needs (previously supplied in limited amounts) to the poor indigenous due to decentralization measures implemented by neoliberalism, these communities and more specifically women within them must find ways to ensure their needs as well as their families' needs are met. As Lind's research shows "women have integrated themselves into local decision-making and planning processes." While this is true to some extent, the level of integration of these women is varied. During my three weeks in 1° de Mayo, it was obvious that this transfer of welfare responsibilities had taken place and continues to take its toll on the community and more specifically women. However, during my interviews it was no less obvious that women's integration into the local decision-making arena when it came to water availability in the community was very limited as there were no women on the government board; furthermore, although every interviewee responded that they now have sharing systems in place with relatives or neighbors for water distribution in order to cope with the extremely limited days and quantity of water they receive, women are the ones who are still most affected by the lack of water in the community. They are pushed into NGO's that do not empower them to participate in local government and decision-making processes. As I explained earlier, they are aided in advancing their sewing and knitting skills, which prepares them for factory work abroad, but never were these women given the tools to express their voices and hardships to the men making decisions.

⁵⁰ Lind, A. "Gender, Development and Urban Social Change: Women's Community Action in Global Cities." *World Development* 25.8 (1997): 1205-223. p.1206.

Infant mortality and literacy rates as well as health, education and nutrition are now all placed within the responsibility of mothers. This may be considered as giving women a participatory role in decision-making but it is severely undermined by the context in which these decisions are made. Neoliberalism has forced local communities and specifically women to seek both independent survival and development strategies. Transnational migration and motherhood are new household strategies poor indigenous women in Bolivia must use in order to cope with these changes. These women migrate to urban centers or countries, such as Argentina, Chile and Brazil, where informal sector jobs are more accessible and readily available in order to provide these basic needs to their children.

Additionally, neoliberalism does not give space for household diversity to exist and in “Households, gender and rural-urban migration: reflections on linkages and considerations for policy” author Sylvia Chant cites Carolyn Baylies who

... points to the contradictory situation whereby, although capitalist development may foster the nuclear family, it simultaneously ‘creates conditions for its dissolution’ through labor displacements, structural adjustment programs and so on... the importance of considering ‘the household’ in analyses of gender and rural-urban migration, both in respect of how it shapes the gender selectivity of migrant flows and how in turn, the latter contributes to household diversity across rural and urban areas.⁵¹

Neoliberalism places importance on the nuclear family yet, at the same time, works to disassemble it through the reinforcement of patriarchy and capitalism that give power and privilege to white males or criollos. Stephenson argues that

... it is only through the control and privatization of sexuality (the feminine), that the individual, male subject is produced; indeed, subjectivity itself is understood to

⁵¹ Chant, Sylvia. "Households, Gender and Rural-urban Migration: Reflections on Linkages and Considerations for Policy." *Environment and Urbanization* 10.1 (1998): 5-21. p.6.

be masculine and, in Wigley's words, its 'specific to that privatization. The new conditions of privacy mark a new subjectivity rather than simply modify preexisting one' (Wigley 1922: 345). This new, masculine subject is, importantly, also racialized: it is insistently white. Consequently, the white, masculine (individual) subject can only be produced by and through the control and management of the indigenous feminine collectivity.⁵²

The binary that exists between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples is pushed further when Stephenson argues that the creation of the white male subject and the power this subject holds can only exist through the oppression and suppression of the indigenous female and the collective power this group holds. Neoliberalism creates new subjectivities in order to maintain a hegemonic, heteronormative grasp on poor indigenous women. I argue that these white male subjects feel the need to deepen this binary because, in a country such as Bolivia, with a majority indigenous population, the power this group has could be immense and threatening to those who create and implement neoliberalism. Under neoliberalism, the creation of a permanent, repressed, laboring class which in Bolivia is (as it was during colonialism) Indigenous peoples, is essential to the maintenance of hegemony and dominance. What is different between this repression under neoliberalism in comparison to colonialism is that poor indigenous *women* are most deeply affected. This suppression of indigenous women also leads one to understand the power they must hold if white male subjects feel the need to implement such extreme policies in an attempt to control them. Through hegemonic policies that work to destabilize the state, create new meanings and legitimize only certain types of family, kinship and household formation, exacerbation of migration to cities and neighboring countries is seen. In response to the feminization of migration, children and

⁵² Stephenson, Marcia. *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*. Austin: University of Texas, 1999.p.73.

aging parents of migrants must bear the brunt of the unforeseen consequences of neoliberal policies.

According to author Sedef Arat-Koc's "Whose Social Reproduction? Transnational Motherhood and Challenges to Feminist Political Economy," "the irony is that among those involved in transnational migration, it is specifically those who migrate to provide reproductive labor who are unable to care for their own children..."⁵³ This occurs worldwide; women from the global South migrating to the global North because as Paulson argues "...the absence of sexuality from development agendas conveys the assumption that, while people in the global North need sex and love, people in the global South just need to eat..."⁵⁴ In other words, the migration of women of the "Third World" (a problematic term in itself) is legitimized by the international capitalist class because it is believed that women of the global South are so desperate to provide for their families and live in such impoverished, unstable countries that they will do anything in order to feed their families even if this constitutes leaving their own children behind. What is missing in this discourse is that because of neoliberal policies the state no longer aids poor indigenous women through social spending; these women in turn are no longer able to provide for their families and must migrate to serve wealthy families and leave their own children behind. This migration is not a choice and it has increased because of the new detrimental conditions that neoliberalism is creating, adding to the economic struggles that these women already face. Neoliberalism widens racial, class and gender

⁵³ Luxton, Meg, and Kate Bezanson. "Introduction." *Social Reproduction: Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neo-liberalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2006. Print. Introduction. p.77.

⁵⁴ Lind, Amy. *Development, Sexual Rights and Global Governance*. New York: Routledge, 2010.p.116.

inequalities and changes migratory patterns and household strategies which all result in transnational motherhood; this extends the responsibilities put on mothers and families and deepens dynamics of power between poor communities or countries and rich ones. The “international capitalist class” is taken care of through a hierarchy of social reproduction, which “ builds on and deepens debates about domestic labor and women’s economic roles in capitalist societies.”⁵⁵

In “ Feminism and the Challenges of the ‘Post-Cold War’ World,” Jane Jaquette asks “... why the political mobilization of women has not produced a more vigorous challenge to neoliberal economic policies nor addressed broader issues of inequality” which she attempts to answer by arguing that a new look at development policies and “redistribution politics” is crucial to understanding the women of the “Global South.”⁵⁶ Bolivia provides answers to this question by through the example of urban indigenous women who do in fact challenge neoliberalism and inequality through unions, dress and “radical” voices. This challenging of neoliberalism has not taken place in rural areas, however, because the neoliberal state works to demobilize and weaken poor indigenous Andean women who live in rural areas. I think that in this aspect neoliberalism has succeeded; in rural Andean Bolivia women and more specifically mothers must focus on filling the gaps created by neoliberalism and may not have the time or resources to fight against the very policies that make their lives more difficult. This “lack of challenge” to neoliberalism by poor rural women can also be due to the fact that these women are

⁵⁵ Luxton, Meg, and Kate Bezanson. "Introduction." *Social Reproduction: Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neo-liberalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2006. Introduction. p.3.

⁵⁶ Jaquette, Jane. "Feminism and the Challenges of the "Post-Cold War" World." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 5.3 (2003): 331-54. Web. p. 332.

forced to migrate in order to provide for their families and therefore it is more difficult to act from abroad and challenge policies at home.

The role of mothers is extended and women are “stretched thinner” by unforeseen consequences of neoliberalism; a direct correlation to the escalation of female rural to urban migrants as well as transnational migrants all over Latin America and the Caribbean is evident. There has been a rise in the number of female headed households and female migrants who travel alone because women are more likely to send remittances home, are more likely to return home after a short period of time abroad as well as remain loyal to their families while they are away. Historically it has been the male head of household who migrates first and is then followed by his partner. With the feminization of migration neoliberalism not only forces transnational migration upon poor indigenous women in Bolivia and all over Latin America and the Caribbean, but it forces families to adapt to new strategies and household formations which create new kinship relationships, networks and meanings. This phenomenon of transnational motherhood in Bolivia is not unique to the country or Latin America and the Caribbean; it is a feminized global phenomenon affecting poor women and their families.

Female Andean Migration and Transnational Motherhood

“Soy hija de mi misma, de mi sueño nací, mi sueño me sostiene”

–Rosario Castellano, *Mujeres Creando* ⁵⁷

“...some individuals ‘initiate flows and movement, others don’t. Some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it...[there are] groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space compression, who can really use it and turn it to advantage, whose power and influence it very definitely increases [such as media moguls and the business elite]... but there are also groups who are also doing a lot of physical moving, but who are not ‘in charge’ of the process in the same way at all” ⁵⁸

“(he) identity of anyone or any group is produced simultaneously in many different locales of activity by many different for many different purposes.” ⁵⁹

Contemporary Andean Migration to Argentina and more specifically Buenos Aires builds on older patterns and households strategies from the colonial period to the present day. This chapter begins with a brief history of migration patterns as well as social and community organization in the Bolivian Andes from the pre-Incan/Incan time up until the present. This provides the basis for contextualizing and critically analyzing migration patterns, motives and strategies that exist today in indigenous Andean Bolivian communities moving to Argentina and more specifically to Buenos Aires. It is necessary

⁵⁷ Creando, Mujeres. “Soy hija de mi misma, de mi sueño nací, mi sueño me sostiene.” Graffitti. La Paz, Bolivia.

⁵⁸ Mahler, Sarah J., and Patricia R. Pessar. "Gender Matters: Ethnographers Bring Gender from the Periphery toward the Core of Migration Studies." *IMR Spring* 40.1 (2006): 27-63. Web. p.43.

⁵⁹ Paulson, Susan, and Pamela Calla. "Gender and Ethnicity in Bolivian Politics: Transformation or Paternalism?" *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 5.2 (2000): 112-49. p.3.

to examine past migration patterns in order to compare and contrast them with the present; each migration period builds on older patterns and strategies. For example, there are methods used today by migrants that have roots in the pre-Inca period, which I explore further on in the chapter. Focusing on present changes in migration patterns that are exacerbated by neoliberal economic and development policies, motives for and strategies of migration are altered and the number of women who migrate is increased. Neoliberalism has resulted in feminizing migration, especially for poor indigenous women. This is true in Bolivia and around the world. The focus of this chapter is specifically on Bolivian women in Buenos Aires. The previous two chapters that focus on neoliberalism and its profound impact on poor indigenous Andean women serve as building blocks to delve deeper into the roots of the increased number of these women in Buenos Aires and the implications and impacts of this both locally and globally in Bolivian communities. Neoliberalism and its alteration of Andean tradition have larger implications and consequences for indigenous women, their children and aging parents, questioning both the long and short-term human toll of such policies in sectors where little attention has been focused before. I argue that because neoliberalism perverts and takes advantage of Andean traditions, exacerbates female migration and transnational motherhood, these communities and traditions must adapt not in order to get ahead, but to survive.

There are three main phases of Andean migration patterns and practices that coincide with three periods of Bolivian history: pre-Incan/Incan (*ayllu* & *ayni*, ecological continuity, surplus goods); colonial (mercantilism, silver mining, market based economy); and neoliberal (privatization, free-market, individualism). These are not

separate, distinct periods but rather there are important continuities between them.

Before the Inca Empire, Andean people were ethnically and economically defined by their *ayllu*, which Ann M. Wightman defines as

...linkage through common ancestry, which conferred access to communal property and reciprocal labor assistance. Common land holdings not only provided the means of subsistence but also symbolized *ayllu* unity. Kin ties were also implicit in the individual's right to claim labor assistance through the system of reciprocity, in which each *ayllu* member owed varying types and amounts of services to others by virtue of their common affiliation. Such reciprocity within a community was paralleled by understandings between *ayllu* groups.⁶⁰

This type of social and community organization centered on reciprocity and kinship networks functioned to sufficiently take advantage of the incredibly diverse environment and ecology of Bolivia. The *ayllu* worked in conjunction with the *ayni* (reciprocity) meaning that labor was shared. Community organization such as the *ayllu* and *ayni* is present throughout the Americas before Empires and market economies took over. In Bolivia, this type of organization was used in order to take advantage of

...widely dispersed and contrasting ecological zones [...] From small ethnic groups to powerful, confederated ethnic chiefdoms, Andean social organizations developed around the cultural ideals and practices of ecological complementarity.⁶¹

The pure brilliance of the *ayllu* and *ayni* was that in such a diverse landscape such as Bolivia, kinship ties and reciprocal acts were used to take advantage of the incredible benefits ecological diversity provided to Andeans. For example, people in the highlands were able to enjoy coca and fruit found in tropical regions while people in the low-lying valleys could appreciate llamas, salt and potatoes from highland regions. The distinct

⁶⁰ Wightman, Ann M. *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Forasteros of Cuzco*. Durham: N. C., 1990, p.76.

⁶¹ Larson, Brooke, Olivia Harris, and Enrique Tandeter. *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995. p.9.

systems of social organization in the pre-Inca Andes functioned through reciprocity and sharing, no formal market structure existed before the Inca's; goods and labor were not seen as "for profit" or "for sale" and social identification was through one's *ayllu*. During this time Andeans migrated in order to benefit from this vast landscape and ecological diversity, maintaining ties across long distances as well as strong ties within local kinship groups and communities. Critical to point out as well is that before the Inca Empire, women (represented by the moon) and men (represented by the sun) maintained their separate religious and social spheres but were valued equally; there was dual power between gender in Andean communities. The Incas rise to power altering this duality and the sun supplants the moon; patriarchal relationships are imposed by the Incas and mirrors subject relationships between Empire and conquered people.⁶²

Although a large shift occurred when the Inca Empire came into power, Inca rulers recognized the power of and valued traditional Andean life and adapted them to new realities. Migration remained necessary to the diverse agricultural consumption and sharing of goods as previously seen; unique to this period is the way in which the Empire takes advantage of this in order to create and accumulate *surplus* goods. In addition, Wightman states that,

The Incas recognized the traditional *ayllu* as the basic units of social organization throughout the sierra but significantly altered the structure and function of these communities. Although the *ayllu* retained some of its pre-Incan characteristics-principally the communal allocation of resources and reciprocity of labor- its essential consanguineous nature was threatened by the Inca practice of relocating conquered communities or concentrating local populations into villages.⁶³

⁶² Silverblatt, Irene. Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987.

⁶³ Whightman, Ann M. Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Forasteros of Cuzco. Durham: N. C., 1990. p.77.

During the Inca Empire the *ayllu* and *ayni* were seen as advantageous while simultaneously their function was adapted to work within the structure of the Empire. The Incas used *ayni* in order to create surplus goods but the *ayllu* suffered because Cuzco rulers conquered and relocated them. This marks the very beginnings of change to the *ayllu* system.

The second phase incorporates Spanish colonialism and consisted of silver mining, market based economies and the *mita* system of tribute. This period provides a stark contrast to the pre-Inca and Inca Empire periods because the market system forced and introduced new migration patterns and household strategies to deal with tribute payments. Kinship networks and communities that previously functioned through *ayllu* and *ayni* were now forced to function through the individualistic market.

The Colonial period in Bolivia is defined by new economic relationships in particular the Spanish Crown's insatiable hunger for silver. Indigenous male laborers were brought to Potosí to extract silver that was sent back to Spain. Some historians argue, for example, that with the amount of silver extracted from the Cerro Rico mine in Potosí a bridge linking Bolivia with Spain could have been built; a bridge made of the bones of indigenous laborers was also possible. Colonialism took advantage of surplus labor and of indigenous Andeans migratory customs. In her article "Gendered Practices and Landscapes in the Andes: The Shape of Asymmetrical Exchanges," Susan Paulson states that

... Spanish Viceroy Francisco de Toledo (who governed from 1560 to 1581) mounted a massive program of rotating obligatory mining labor (*mita*) that was designed to draft one seventh of all adult males in indigenous communities and managed to secure some 12,600 draftees (*mitayos*) annually (Larson 1988:60). Countless women took over the responsibilities of absent men in their home communities, while each year thousands of women left their animals and children

in the care of others and accompanied men to mining cities to earn what was necessary to feed and cloth them both (Zulawski 1990).⁶⁴

The *mita* system turned migration and reciprocity from a traditional part of Andean “culture” into an obligation to the Spanish crown. This new type of migration altered and re-defined *ayllus* because it changed households’ locations and compositions. Migration during the colonial period equally affected both men and women even though the number of men migrating was much higher than women because it was men who were contracted as workers in the mines; during this time migration was, for the most part, short-term and transient. This temporary migration usually lasted as long as the *mita* service (one year); women who migrated to accompany their husbands left children and aging parents behind but the burdens placed on those left behind were relieved when the couple returned home.⁶⁵ Migration to Potosí was not always temporary, however, and often families settled there for generations, becoming permanent workers in the mines altering communities. Unlike migration in the pre-Inca and Inca period, migration during the colonial period is not based on the *ayllu* and *ayni* nor did it function to take advantage of the diverse ecology of the Andean landscape; its purpose is to provide the Spanish mines with indigenous laborers who are forced to pay tribute by working and providing mass amounts of silver to the crown. Larson adds to this, arguing that not only were migration patterns and *ayllus* altered through colonialism but that

out of the imperative of the silver economy, and the preexisting capacity of Andean ethnic groups to produce surplus goods and services, markets took root and spread throughout the Andes, where money and mercantilism had never

⁶⁴ Paulson, Susan. "Gendered Practices and Landscapes in the Andes: The Shape of Asymmetrical Exchanges." *Human Organization* 62.3 (2003): 242-54.

⁶⁵ Horton, M. Anore. *New Perspectives on Women and Migration in Colonial Latin America*. Princeton, NJ, USA: Program in Latin American Studies, Princeton University, 2001.p.7.

before existed.⁶⁶

The emergence of markets and money greatly changed migration patterns, household strategies, gender relations and kinship networks; living patterns were restructured. In addition, although migration to the mines was seen as temporary, migration patterns during this time also became long term when compared to previously seen patterns due to the emergence of markets in urban areas. Members of the same *ayllu* were not necessarily able to connect and share as they had in the past because *mitayos* were often relocated upon completion of their *mita* service and the emergence of market based economies that relocated family members to urban areas. Changes in migration patterns during colonialism will also be seen in the capitalist (1940-1980, which I do not discuss) and neoliberal periods; significant continuities exist. Colonialism begins the process of evolution in migratory patterns; there is a layering of survival strategies and migration.

Neoliberalism defines the third phase of migration patterns. During the neoliberal period, migration patterns are used as coping strategies in response to structural adjustments and economic policies that privatize and individualize the market. In, *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization* Shultz and Draper state that, "In late 2006, nearly five hundred Bolivians left the country every day, boarding buses and planes to seek opportunity and employment abroad. Nearly one out of every four people who were born in Bolivian soil now lives elsewhere."⁶⁷ A mass exodus of Bolivians is taking place in what is known as the "Andean Diaspora." I am particularly

⁶⁶ Larson, Brooke, Olivia Harris, and Enrique Tandeter. *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995.p.10.

⁶⁷ Shultz, Jim, and Melissa Draper. *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California, 2008. p.255.

interested in the feminization of this Diaspora because of women's roles in the maintenance of community, family and culture. Neoliberalism has exacerbated female migration patterns as well as the number of mothers who leave children behind in Bolivia as they are forced to migrate in order to fill jobs that serve as the only opportunity for survival. In "Gender Matters: Ethnographers Bring Gender from the Periphery toward the Core of Migration Studies" authors Mahler and Pessar argue that generally

Demand-driven or induced migration turns commonplace assumptions about migration and migrants' motives on their head. It questions the assumption that people migrate merely because they envision a better life. Quite conversely, most migrations do not *begin* with individuals cost-benefit calculations but with enticements made to people with no intention of migrating...recruitment geographies present a little-explored place to examine gender in operation, frequently interacting with other socially stratifying forces, state policies, and colonial and neocolonial relations to sculpt people into workers and channel them into gendered employment niches.⁶⁸

When this broad understanding of "push and pull" factors is applied to poor indigenous Andean Bolivian women migrating to Argentina, it is clear that these women do not initially migrate simply because they envision a better life, but because of "socially stratifying forces" such as policies and unequal relationships between "less developed" countries such as Bolivia and "more developed" countries like Argentina. Women become central to a development ideology that defines "progress" as the embrace of capitalist, western values, which do not align with Andean tradition and or the majority population's idea of progress today.

While in Buenos Aires, I interviewed a Bolivian migrant who has been living in the port for the past four years. Ten years before, while in Bolivia Marisol, who is now

⁶⁸ Mahler, Sarah J., and Patricia R. Pessar. "Gender Matters: Ethnographers Bring Gender from the Periphery toward the Core of Migration Studies." *IMR Spring* 40.1 (2006): 27-63. Web. p.47.

46, was abandoned by her alcoholic and abusive husband, and lived on a patch of grass outside a soccer stadium in La Paz and worked as a street vendor selling coffee.⁶⁹ In Buenos Aires she worked as a street vendor only this time selling shoelaces, DVD's, and socks. Marisol did not decide to migrate because she envisioned a better life but because she won a raffle through the radio in which she was promised a well paying job in Buenos Aires. Initially Marisol and her eldest daughter, now twenty, were brought to Argentina by a trafficker, temporarily leaving two other daughters in Bolivia. Upon her arrival in Buenos Aires, Marisol and her daughter worked in a leather factory where her daughter became depressed and stopped eating; both women desire to return to Bolivia because as Marisol explained to me, if they were going to suffer and essentially be in the same economic conditions in Buenos Aires as they were in La Paz, they would rather be in their country, with their people. However, they are unable to return to Bolivia because the tickets are too expensive. Marisol mentioned her two sisters who still live in Caranavi (Las Yungas) and Cochabamba in Bolivia; she has lost all contact with them and wonders daily if they are even still alive.⁷⁰ Marisol's experience provides an understanding of the argument made by authors Pessar and Mahler that migration does not begin with a decision to find a better life, but with "enticements made to people with no intention of migrating" and "recruitment geographies" as well as state structures that channel poor indigenous Andean women into the informal urban market economy first in Bolivia and then again in Argentina.

Patterns and motives of migration are perverted by neoliberalism and are not to take advantage of the landscape of the Andes, they are not because of *ayllu* and *ayni*

⁶⁹ The names used in personal interviews have been changed by the author.

⁷⁰ "S, La Alameda." Personal interview. 16 May 2011.

relationships, they are not to supply the state with surplus goods, they are not to serve the crown with labor and silver. Migration in neoliberal Bolivia supplies nearby countries, such as Argentina, with cheap labor and cheap goods. Buenos Aires is known as the “Paris of South America” because of its “European feel” which is due to its large European immigrant population. The influx of non-white, indigenous immigrants from Bolivia boosts the Argentine economy. This reproduces an internal colonialism into what can be termed “southern cone colonialism” in which *Porteños* (most of whom are white and of European descent) mistreat and exploit indigenous peoples. Within this southern cone colonialism, indigenous women are the most targeted groups including other indigenous women from Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina and Peru. Neoliberalism creates relationships that in appearance and essence resemble those during colonialism. The international capitalist class, or in this case the elite, wealthy class in Argentina (particularly Buenos Aires) are supported by working class indigenous Andean Bolivians and more specifically women, among others.

Migration patterns in response to neoliberal structural adjustments and policies force poor rural indigenous women to move to cities because they are no longer able to survive in rural areas under a state that does not provide for them. In Cochabamba, Bolivia and Buenos Aires women told me about households’ economic strategies to have family members spread across national and international borders; for example, one family had a mother working in a dairy factory in Cochabamba; a father/husband laboring in a mine in Potosi; a daughter selling DVD’s in Buenos Aires; and a son in Spain working construction. Family survival strategies now must work in conjunction with the global economy in order to survive. This is a decision based on cost-benefit analysis, this is a

sign of literally having no other option for survival other than migrating to urban environments or to other countries in order to provide cheap labor in the informal market. Initial intentions of migration are not strategies for long-term absences, but under neoliberalism these patterns become permanent household survival strategies.

Many Bolivian women I interviewed in Argentina talked about how they had not been home for several years and did not know when they would be able to return because of economic conditions or lack of work, travel or identification paperwork. Neoliberalism creates long term and often, permanent, transnational migration as opposed to short term, internal migration. Burdens that rural families experienced when heads of family migrated to the mines during colonialism were frequently relieved within a short time due to return migration. Within neoliberalism-induced patterns of migration these burdens are sometimes never relieved because the migrants send home remittances which work to alleviate monetary burdens yet leaves physical and emotional absences.

This type of migration is reflective of a colonial relationship between “more” developed and “less” developed nations of the Southern Cone; poor indigenous women from the “backwards” and “underdeveloped” country of Bolivia are forced to migrate to “modern” and “developed” nations such as Argentina in order to supply a cheap source of labor. In the report “South-South Migration and Remittances,” the authors state that

... 74 million, or nearly half, of the migrants from developing countries reside in other developing countries. In other words, South-South migration is nearly as large as South-North migration. Almost 80 percent of South-South migration is estimated to take place between countries with contiguous borders, and most appears to occur between countries with relatively small differences in income.⁷¹

⁷¹ Ratha, Dilip, and William Shaw. "South-South Migration and Remittances." Rpt. in Migration and Remittances Team of Development Prospects Group, World Bank. 2007. 3-30.p.1.

The authors add that,

Globally the number of female migrants is estimated to have increased from 35.5 million (or 46.8 percent) in 1960 to 94.5 million (49.6 percent) in 2005. The share of women among migrants in developing countries was about 38.9 million (or 51 percent) in 2005, compared to 46.2 million (or 51 percent) in high-income OECD countries and 8.7 million (or 40 percent) in the high-income non-OECD countries.”⁷²

A report published by CEPAL adds to these numbers as well, showing the feminization of specifically Bolivian migration to Argentina in the last twenty years:

Between 1980 and 2001, the proportion of women in the total Bolivian immigrants living in Argentina rose from 44.4% to 49.7%. The fact that recent migrants, i.e. those who arrived in the country from 1996 to the census, women constitute 52.2% is also indicative that the feminization process continues. [Translation by author]⁷³

Although a five percent increase in twenty-one years does not appear to be significant, it is important to note that statistics on migration patterns do not always reflect reality. Historically, female migrants have been understood in relationship to their male counterparts as migrants who were dependent on their husbands/partners. Women have been viewed solely as accompanying their husbands either at the same time as initial migration or shortly after. Under present conditions women are migrating on their own, independently of their husbands/partners and that the number of female, Bolivian migrants is slightly higher than the number of male migrants. Authors such as Cerrutti and Pizarro make the argument that female migration is independent of male migration, that is, women are migrating on their own, and this can be both empowering for the

⁷² Ratha, Dilip, and William Shaw. "South-South Migration and Remittances." Rpt. in Migration and Remittances Team of Development Prospects Group, World Bank. 2007. 3-30.p.21.

⁷³ Courtis, Corina, Gabriela Ligouri, and Marcela Cerrutti. Migracion Y Salud En Zonas Fronterizas: El Estado Plurinacional De Bolivia Y Argentina. Publication. Santiago: CEPAL, 2010.p.11.

women and serve as a way for them to become autonomous of patriarchal structures and gender inequalities/norms. I argue that poor Andean women who migrate do not leave 1) to become more autonomous, 2) to free themselves from systems of repression or 3) for personal self- empowerment. Neoliberal economic and social policies *force* these women to migrate as a response to systems that no longer support them. The initial motivation of female indigenous Andean migration is not, per se, seeking autonomy; this is a possible outcome of migration however. Bastia argues that migration is most frequently a direct response to, in this case, neoliberal reforms and that

...[people migrate] in a context of decreasing control over their own lives (Mitchell et al. 2003). The choices women migrants make might therefore effectively work against their autonomy, as they negotiate the shouldering of increased responsibilities in a context of market liberalization...⁷⁴

Her argument is essential to defining autonomy in the context of poor Andean women migrating transnationally as a response and coping strategy to neoliberalism. During my interviews in Buenos Aires, the same woman interviewed above discussed how her character has changed while in Buenos Aires. Marisol said she has become comfortable standing up for herself, knows her rights and has traveled within Argentina to different provinces, something she never did while in Bolivia. These women, however, do not become autonomous of hegemonic patriarchal systems, because, whether they are living in Bolivia or Argentina, patriarchal systems confine them to gendered and ethnically specific roles in the urban informal market economy. Marisol indicated that although she is independent in certain facets of her life, she still resides with her abusive husband

⁷⁴ Bastia, Tanja. "I Am Going, with or without You': Autonomy in Bolivian Transnational Migrations." *Gender, Place, and Culture* (2012). Web. 2 Apr. 2012. p.2.

because she cannot afford to live on her own.⁷⁵ In fact, these roles are exacerbated in xenophobic Argentina where poor Andean women face the quadruple threat of gender, ethnicity, economic status and lack of citizenship. The social hierarchy in Buenos Aires is so extremely polarizing and uncompromising that there is essentially no room for movement outside of prescribed roles. As a result, the “international capitalist class” is taken care of through a hierarchy of social reproduction, which “builds on and deepens debates about domestic labour and women’s economic roles in capitalist societies.”⁷⁶

It is within this context that we can now discuss transnational motherhood in relation to these patterns of migration. It is important to point out that there can be beneficial and positive outcomes of the feminization migration and that it is critical not to place a value on this type of motherhood but to critically analyze its consequences whether positive or negative. Author Silvia Chant argues that “...although most women have little choice in determining decisions over their own or others’ migration (or household arrangements), the “feminization” of household headship which so often results from demographic mobility is not necessarily negative for women.”⁷⁷ She supports this argument with fieldwork from Mexico, Costa Rica and the Philippines where the women she interviewed had frequently migrated to escape abusive households and become independent of their spouses. There are also positive aspects of female migration that can be seen through the sending of remittances. According to the “Second Report of the Inter-American Dialogue Task Force on Remittances,” 71% of Bolivian

⁷⁵ "S, La Alameda." Personal interview. 16 May 2011.

⁷⁶ Luxton, Meg, and Kate Bezanson. "Introduction." *Social Reproduction: Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neo-liberalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2006. Introduction. p.3.

⁷⁷ Chant, Sylvia. "Households, Gender and Rural-urban Migration: Reflections on Linkages and Considerations for Policy." *Environment and Urbanization* 10.1(1998):5-21.

remittance senders are women and 52% of the receivers of these remittances are women as well.⁷⁸ El Diario in La Paz states that, "... by 2006 [income from remittances] had increased to 8.7%, the highest percentage among all South American countries."⁷⁹ Information regarding what sector of household expenditure these remittances are put towards (education, health, infrastructure, etc) was unavailable with respect to specifically female remittance senders.

The feminization of migration can be both empowering and problematic; when indigenous Andean families are forced to implement new methods and networks of child sharing, and aging parents are left behind, there is little room for empowerment. It is essential to define empowerment; Kumar and Paul expand on Naila Kabeers theory arguing that

According to Kabeer, empowerment cannot be reduced to a single aspect of process or outcome. How women exercise choice and the actual outcomes will depend on the individual. Choices will vary across class, time and space. Moreover, impacts on empowerment perceived by outsiders might not necessarily be those most valued by women themselves.⁸⁰

Autonomy is necessary for empowerment; through empowerment, women gain autonomy. Kabeer's theory of empowerment when applied to the Bolivian case and the discussion of neoliberalism induced female migration puts into question whether this type of migration gives women the potential to gain both empowerment and autonomy. The "choices" women make under neoliberalism do not necessarily implicate empowerment,

⁷⁸ Orozco, Manuel. Making The Most of Family Remittances. Rep. no. 2. Inter-American Dialogue, 2007.p.6.

⁷⁹ "Impacto Económico De Remesas." *Noticias EL DIARIO*. El Diario, 02 Aug. 2010. Web. 17 Apr. 2012.
<http://www.eldiario.net/noticias/2010/2010_08/nt100802/3_04ecn.php>.

⁸⁰ Kumar, Prahlad, and Tinku Paul. *Empowerment of Women: A Study of Work Participation Rate of Rural Women. Empowerment of Women: Concept, Policy Approach and Implications*. Department of Economics, University of Allahabad. Web. 12 Apr. 2012.p.4.

nor do they dismiss it as possible. If poor indigenous women are forced to migrate this is not empowerment, but individuals may become empowered and autonomous once this forced migration is put aside and individual, daily choices are made. I argue that *economic* “autonomy” when you have been channeled into a specific job market; when the state no longer gives support to you and your family and you must work to send remittances home while simultaneously mothering children across borders and facing harsh discrimination puts Chant's argument into question. The migration of poor indigenous Andean women is tied to systemic poverty induced and exacerbated by neoliberalism and regional labor needs.

Those who are left behind in rural areas (internal migration) or in Bolivia (international migration) as a result of neoliberalism must adapt to living with mothers or daughters “across the space and time” that divides families.⁸¹ This also implies that people become disconnected from larger communities, from family members, from *ayllus* but also that in order to cope with this disconnect from abroad migrant women form their own *ayllus* and band together. The experience of indigenous Bolivian women is reflected in other countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. I build on the research provided in “Women’s migration and the crisis of care: grandmothers caring for grandchildren in urban Bolivia” by Tanja Bastia with examples from Guatemala and Peru as well as Latina transnational motherhood discussed in a more theoretical manner. The strategies that Peruvian, Guatemalan and other Latina women and their families use in order to cope with transnational migration, motherhood, and female-headed households

⁸¹ Bastia, Tanja. "Women's Migration and the Crisis of Care: Grandmothers Caring for Grandchildren in Urban Bolivia." *Gender & Development* 17.3 (2009): 389-401. Web. p. 391.

serve as comparative points for strategies used in Bolivia. Kinship and household strategies in the Peruvian Andes are similar to those in the Bolivian Andes; more literature exists on Peru than Bolivia with regard to household strategies and coping methods employed by transnational mothers. These examples demonstrate that transnational motherhood is not solely a poor, female, indigenous phenomenon in the Bolivian Andes, but that it is a global phenomenon within communities who face systemic poverty as marginalized peoples.

In her article “Outsourcing Care: How Peruvian Migrants Meet Transnational Family Obligations,” Jessaca B. Leinaweaver turns the focus of these consequences onto children’s roles in household strategies, arguing that in Andean peasant communities in Ayacucho, Peru

to consider child fostering in the context of transnational migration is to place into dialogue two kinds of mobilities: the transnational relocations of migrants, who maintain residences, social ties, and sometimes even children in their home countries and the flexible movements of children who must be cared for even as they care for their grandparents.⁸²

Leinaweaver’s argument leads to the understanding of the role children play in avoiding the extremely undesirable state of loneliness during old age in Andean “culture” as well as the more communal ways in which family is practiced. Leaving a child behind with grandparents is as much a migration strategy as a kinship strategy to ensure that aging parents are not left alone. In this way leaving children behind with aging parents eases the hardships of transnational motherhood allowing for one element of cultural traditions to be maintained. Leinaweaver states that: “this particular structural relationship-the

⁸² Leinaweaver, Jessaca B. "Outsourcing Care: How Peruvian Migrants Meet Transnational Family Obligations." *Latin American Perspectives* September 2010 37.174 (2010): 67-87. Web.p.81.

grandparental one-is so amenable to fostering that there is even a word in Quechua (the most widely spoken indigenous language in Peru), *apra*, for children fostered by their grandparents.”⁸³ The dichotomous implications and uses of child-sharing practices in traditional Andean “culture” further highlight the dangers of essentializing experiences and cultural practices. It alleviates those who are left behind and who suffer from the absence but it literally “enslaves” those who migrate and unable to return. The exacerbation of transnational motherhood by neoliberalism has unforeseen consequences which are complicated when put into conversation along side traditional Andean kinship practices.

The migrant and their family members left behind are all affected by new household strategies and formations that transnational motherhood necessitates. Although migration has always been a part of traditional Andean “culture,” it is now an exacerbated and forced reality similar to the colonial period. There is a new gap created by transnational migration and motherhood, as they do not function in the same ways as past patterns. They do not function or have the same context as pre-Inca notions of kinship or reasons for migration which worked to reap the benefits of a diverse ecology, yet poor indigenous Andean women, families and communities attempt to or are forced into adapting the *ayllu* so that it works in a transnational context; the regional becomes superimposed onto the transnational. Migration in the traditional Andean sense did not constitute leaving your community of origin to send remittances home nor did it include a tradition of migration for years with doubts of return. Poor indigenous Andean women

⁸³Leinaweaver, Jessaca B. "Outsourcing Care: How Peruvian Migrants Meet Transnational Family Obligations." *Latin American Perspectives* September 2010 37.174 (2010): 67-87. Web.p.74.

are channeled into job markets, channeled into migration networks, and channeled into coping strategies by neoliberalism. Coping strategies for fighting systematic poverty have always been part of rural, indigenous, Andean family strategies but neoliberalism now decides what these coping strategies are and how they function while legitimizing them by associating them with traditional and cultural ways of living; these survival methods now operate as national realities.

Leinaweaver argues that there is a “highly critical and sometimes even preventative stance toward local strategies that not only work as important buffers against the vicissitudes of poverty, but that actually make Andean kinship, from the ground up.”⁸⁴ I argue that child circulation and household formations that involve aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents helping to raise a child are part of Andean “culture” and resemble the traditional *ayllu*. Neoliberalism forces these household formations to be used as coping strategies in a system that channels women into certain job markets forcing them to leave their families behind. Indigenous Andeans have been forced to transpose the *ayllu* onto household and family strategies that now work under and conjunction with neoliberalism, in a transnational context. In Andean “culture” and “tradition” it is more about sticking together under the Tiwantinsuyu- *ayllu* and practices of kinship. Neoliberalism makes child sharing a necessary coping strategy in response to mothers migrating as a dire and last resort, or also being forced to migrate to take jobs that neoliberalism has created as their only means of survival; economic opportunities are no longer confined to national boundaries.

Additionally, Leineweaver argues that

⁸⁴ Leinaweaver, Jessaca B. "On Moving Children: The Social Implications of Andean Child Circulation." *American Ethnologist* 34.1 (2007): 163-80. p.164.

...child fostering is a traditional Andean caring practice that facilitates transnational migration, just as it has facilitated internal migration and the entry of women and men into wage labor. Engaging in child fostering on a transnational scale implies that this traditional Andean caring practice both fits within and contributes to this transnational social field.⁸⁵

Child sharing and fostering on a transnational scale is not comparable to child sharing in the traditional Andean sense. Leineweaver's argument is affirmed by authors Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila in "I'm Here, But I'm There: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood" as they argue that "reliance on grandmothers and *comadres* for shared mothering is well established in Latina culture, and it is a practice that signifies a more collectivist, shared approach to mothering...⁸⁶ This collectivism under neoliberalism emerges out of necessity and is not an essential characteristic of Latinas. The Andean *ayllu* used a communal approach to mothering but the context in which this operated during the pre-Inca period is not the same as transnational motherhood when it is a response to neoliberalism. Here the authors essentialize "Latina culture," not taking into account the race, class, socioeconomic and gender differences across Latin America and the Caribbean. What the authors use the broad term "Latina culture" they in argue that *all* Latina women are more equipped for transnational motherhood than women from other cultures. They do not historically or politically contextualize household formations and strategies used today which do not exist outside of history, politics and inter-national relationships.

⁸⁵ Leinaweaver, Jessaca B. "Outsourcing Care: How Peruvian Migrants Meet Transnational Family Obligations." *Latin American Perspectives* September 2010 37.174 (2010): 67-87. Web.p.69.

⁸⁶ Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette, and Ernestine Avila. "I'm Here, But I'm There: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood." *Gender & Society* October 1997 11.5 (1997): 548-71. Web.p.559.

In addition, mothering and child-sharing practices are not the same in, for example, the Bolivian Andes as they are in Central Mexico or even neighboring country Argentina's Amazon region. Although different countries can be used as reference points, it is important to be critical of essentializing "Latina Culture." To group together Latinas as part of one culture, allows for racialization and othering to take place only feeding further southern cone colonialism as well as U.S. imperialist and capitalist rationales. This essentializing of "Latina culture" and women allows for those who depend on the labor of these women to have a scapegoat in order to rationalize their exploitative use of other women. Although motherhood in "Latina culture" differs immensely from the individualized motherhood in "Anglo-American culture," transnational motherhood, I argue, is not a household strategy any family or culture is more equipped for than another. Transnational motherhood is not something indigenous Andean women are more outfitted for because of their traditional child-sharing and collective approach to motherhood. Child sharing and migration in the traditional Andean sense allows for the mother to return home more easily, as she is only migrating for short periods of time within Bolivia itself; there is no looming doubt of if and when the mother will return, no desperation to migrate as the very last resort in providing for her family.

The unforeseen consequences of neoliberalism and transnational motherhood are complicated because of traditional Andean systems and deserve a closer more critical analysis. Bastia argues that during her interviews with *Cochabambinas* that

Social perceptions of the impact of increasing migration by women includes moralistic, negative views about the psychological damage that migration metes out on children. These children with absent, migrant mothers are portrayed as being out of control, and living in dysfunctional families, and this is seen as leading to increased incidence of teenage pregnancies and participation in gangs. ...no evidence is generally provided for these statements and often, when probed

further, the interviewee acknowledged that these problems pre-existed large-scale migration.⁸⁷

The problem with this argument is that the incidences she categorizes as negative effects of “absent, migrant mothers” are only the tangible, visible ones and do not include systemic implications. She does, however, draw attention to the fact that many of these tangible effects were present before transnational migration. The implications and consequences of transnational motherhood are not exclusively perceptible on the surface. Although they were evident before “large scale migration,” neoliberalism exacerbates these changes. The new types of child sharing and motherhood used in response to neoliberalism have consequences for traditional Andean notions of childhood, motherhood and family as well as emotional, physical and psychological changes within communities.

The majority of scholarly work found focuses on migrant women and their coping methods used in dealing with transnational motherhood; there is little scholarship on the aging parents and young children that these mothers are forced to part with as they migrate to find better economic opportunities abroad. In *Dignity and Defiance*, Shultz and Draper focus on children of migrant mothers, stating that

A recent study in Cochabamba concluded that the increased feminization of Bolivian emigration is taking a particularly harsh toll on children. Of 180 cases of abused children, nearly half are children of recent women emigrants. Another study showed that eight of every ten adolescents in Cochabamba that are in trouble with the law are children whose parents have emigrated. Living without a mother or father can also force children to grow up very quickly.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Bastia, Tanja. "Women's Migration and the Crisis of Care: Grandmothers Caring for Grandchildren in Urban Bolivia." *Gender & Development* 17.3 (2009): 389-401. Web.p.391.

⁸⁸ Shultz, Jim, and Melissa Draper. *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California, 2008. p.284.

As Shultz and Draper point out, there are very serious consequences for children of migrant parents and more specifically migrant mothers. In Bolivia, aging parents and children have a unique role in transnational families and motherhood; abandonment and loneliness during old age are two elements of Bolivian “culture” that are very frowned upon and often times children are used in order to ensure that their grandparents are not left alone while mothers/daughters migrate. From 2002-2008, grandmother-grandchildren households rose from “none” to around 4.7%.⁸⁹ This not a large percentage of households but a nearly 5% increase in six years is not independent of the feminization of migration. This new type of household also can force children to grow up quicker than they would if they were not positioned to take care of their grandparents. When children must stay home to care for aging grandparents, watch after younger siblings or take on the role of household head, their educational and social opportunities become limited and are forced to grow up quickly. In a 2004 study conducted by UNICEF, it [was] estimated that over 3,700 children and adolescents live on the streets, in the cities of La Paz, El Alto, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Tarija and Sucre.”⁹⁰ While in Cochabamba, I had daily encounters with young boys known as *lustrabotas* or shoe shiners and through conversations with *Cochabambin@s*, I learned that these young boys often come from abusive homes or have been abandoned by their families. A report published by Consortium for Street Children, which is a network dedicated to the rights of street children, presents that 16% of Bolivian children live on the street because of abandonment and 40% live on the street

⁸⁹ Bastia, Tanja. "I Am Going, with or without You': Autonomy in Bolivian Transnational Migrations." *Gender, Place, and Culture* (2012). Web. 2 Apr. 2012. p. 8-9.

⁹⁰ The Situation of Children in Bolivia. Rep. UNICEF, 2003. Web.2012.<http://www.unicef.org/bolivia/children_1540.htm>.

because of physical abuse.⁹¹ The pressures to be a grown up at such a young age take both emotional and physical tolls on these children. I do not argue that these communities of street children did not exist prior to neoliberalism, merely that neoliberalism exacerbates the number of transnational mothers and therefore the consequences of this seen in Bolivia. Through this, we can see that not only does neoliberalism exacerbate the number of indigenous women migrating and the burdens placed on their families, it more deeply affects the very notions of “Andeanness” through its forced adoption of a capitalist and individualist way of being.

Poor indigenous women and their families use traditional Andean methods such as child sharing and assuring that elders are not left alone in a transnational context and in response to neoliberalism. The effectiveness of this superimposition or transposition of internal migration coping methods onto transnational long-term migration, I argue, needs to be questioned. Neoliberalism has created realities which now co-habit two worlds, the Andean and the Global, which most greatly affects mothers and children. Not only does neoliberalism weaken poor indigenous Andean women, but also the people who these women hold closest to them: their children. Traditions, culture and language are passed down through mothers and when transnational motherhood becomes a reality and stretches cultures across the globe the survival of these cultures becomes vulnerable. Not only are mother-child relationships perverted and made fragile under neoliberalism but so is the Andean way of life. By weakening the family structure and exacerbating transnational mothers, neoliberalism creates a mass supply of vulnerable women and children.

⁹¹ "BECOME A MEMBER." Welcome to Consortium for Street Children. StreetChildren.org. Web. 02 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.streetchildren.org.uk>>.

Conclusion

“la mujer está creciendo a todo nivel en todas las partes, la mujer está tomando un rol muy impactante en todo el mundo.”⁹²

When the process for this thesis began in December 2010 in a small community outside of Cochabamba City, Bolivia transnational motherhood and neoliberalism had not entered my vocabulary on the subject of indigenous Bolivian women migrating; the dots had not been connected as of yet. In Buenos Aires I immersed myself in the Andean Diaspora there and transnational mothers, sisters and daughters began to help me re-focus my lens and understand what was happening. Then, in the fall of my senior year during senior seminar, neoliberalism entered the stage and I began to understand its effects on poor indigenous women specifically. Neoliberalism as an economic and policy model is not neoliberalism “on the ground” where affects the daily lives of poor indigenous women and children, attacking and perverting the most natural and universally important relationship of mother and child. This is not only seen in Bolivia, but on a global scale.

Neoliberalism is reminiscent of colonialism, a form of political economy that forever alters communities and relationships, notions of kinship, motherhood, mother-child relationships and meanings of family. In the same ways that colonialism affected families and cultures, and in the same ways that empires/governments are patriarchal, neoliberalism has perfected, and perversely so, these power relations cutting further into specific relationships and not just societies at large; shaking the foundations of entire cultures and traditions. Neoliberalism weakens poor indigenous women by forcing them

⁹² "M, #1." Personal interview. 3 Dec. 2010.

to be transnational mothers and low wage laborers. It shifts previously placed importance on community to that of the individual; instead of communal “get ahead” strategies, neoliberalism forces families to create individual household survival strategies, sending mothers abroad. And whether these migrant women are stretching the *ayllu* and communal practice of motherhood across transnational borders or whether they are no longer conforming to what traditional motherhood in the western sense means, whether they are autonomous in one respect but still functioning through the system and the roles it prescribes for them in another, neoliberalism has changed relationships.

In Bolivia specifically, the history and tradition of migration was and is seen by neoliberalism as an open invitation for exploitation just as it was during the Colonial period. Neoliberalism has taken advantage of the Andean traditions of migration and perverted them in order to weaken entire communities and populations, deepening inequalities of class, race and gender. But as David Lehmann argues “... it is one thing to examine 'the use of kinship as a language to formulate social obligations, that is, as ideology,' it is quite another to take for granted 'its effectiveness as a principle of organization.'”⁹³ Just because these communities and more specifically women supposedly have the tools or strategies to cope with neoliberalism, does not mean that its effects and harms are any less impactful and detrimental. What used to be momentary crises (recalibration of households because of migration for seasonal purposes) have now become permanent, fixed realities and daily crises in the lives of poor indigenous communities in Bolivia, most severely affecting women and children.

⁹³ Larson, Brooke, Olivia Harris, and Enrique Tandeter. *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995. p.30.

Transnational motherhood has become a global phenomenon, leaving emotional and psychological scars in every corner of the globe. Neoliberalism separates poor women from their families in order to use them as disposable, cheap labor abroad; children are growing up not knowing their mothers on a face to face level, altering what constitutes mother-child relationships. If one considers that women and children are a fundamental basis of every community and that culture is maintained through the mother, these recalibrations and new relationships alter cultural maintenance as well. What happens when mother-child relationships are stretched across national borders? Family, language, tradition, and community are forever altered. Finally, in the words of Mujeres Creando, “ten cuidado con el presente que construyes, debe parecerse al futuro que sueñas.”⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Creando, Mujeres. “Ten cuidado con el presente que construyes, debe parecerse al futuro que sueñas.” Graffiti. La Paz, Bolivia.

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