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"Rethinking Gender from the south"

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Abstract

This thesis is a theoretical exploration of "southern theorists", with special focus on their contribution to re-thinking, challenging and expanding western conceptualizations of gender. The aim is to identify scholarship that promotes decolonizing and liberatory ways of constructing gender. Hegemonic knowledge production in social sciences and gender theorizations will be criticised with a special focus on Eurocentric knowledge and its consequences. The south as a location from where to think will not be reduced to concrete geographical locations, but will refer to epistemological locations as well. The focus will be on authors and historical analyses from Latin America and particularly Chile.

Postcolonial understandings of gender constitutions developed by Latin American scholars will be of special interest. It will be argued that gender constitutions need to be theorized from anti-capitalist and anti-racist perspectives in order to serve liberatory and decolonizing purposes.

Key words:

Gender, coloniality, coloniality of power, Latin America, Chile, intersectionality, capitalism.

Contents

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to rethink gender from the south, with a special focus on Latin America in general and Chile in particular. Taking southern contributions seriously is motivated by a particular understanding of gender, as impossible to grasp and define in any transhistorical or unitary way (Mohanty, 2003, p. 47). Departing from this perspective it is argued that it is necessary to constantly rethink gender as an analytical category from particular perspectives and locations in order to multiply the potentialities of seeing (Eisenstein, 2004) and to promote decolonizing and liberatory ways of constructing gender.

To rethink gender from the south is also seen as a contribution to what the Chilean anthropologist Sonia Montecino (1997) has identified as the importance of analysing how in Latin America theoretical perspectives developed in other contexts regarding women and gender have been re-read and re-interpreted from these particular colonized and *mestizo* conditions.

In order to contribute to this task a variety of issues have to be addressed. In the second chapter the question of what is meant by thinking *from the south* will be analysed by examining contributions of different scholars. In the first part of this chapter the production of knowledge in social sciences and critiques of hegemonic ways of producing knowledge will be examined. These hegemonic ways of producing knowledge are considered as having oppressive and exclusionary effects that reproduce and promote inequalities on a global scale. Here the northernness of general theory (Connell, 2007) and Latin American critiques of Eurocentrism in knowledge production will help understand the south not only as a particular geographical, cultural and social location, but as an epistemological location as well. This means that understanding hegemonic ways of theorizing gender as predominantly western or northern does not refer solely to theories being developed in concrete countries and continents but to a *way of thinking* that is reproduced globally as well. Who has had the privilege to think, speak and be heard in terms of particular locations in multiple systems of oppression will be further analysed by differentiating between hegemony and epistemic privilege.

In the second part concrete proposals on how to think from the south will be examined after the south as a location has been problematized. That the south is not reducible to geographies, cultures or societies, but refers to a way of thinking otherwise

as well means that the southern contributions reviewed are not chosen because they where elaborated by Latin American authors or in Latin America solely. It is therefore not intended to idealize or homogenize southern contributions, because many scholars located in the south are reproducing hegemonic thinking as well. Concrete propositions of how to think otherwise, how to challenge Eurocentric knowledge production, will be further scrutinized after the dominant ways of thinking and the ambiguity of locations have been considered. The notion of geopolitics of knowledge (Mignolo, 2005), border thinking (Anzaldúa, 2007) and thinking from the perspective of coloniality (Mignolo, 2005; Walsh, 2007; Lugones, 2007, Quijano, 2000) will be presented and analyzed serving as a basis of how to re-think gender from the south.

The thirds chapter deals with methodological aspects. Here the purpose and motivations for writing this thesis are explained. The research process will be described; focusing on which grounds the authors reviewed where chosen and what kinds of secondary sources where used. I will discuss aspects regarding my own positionality and how my multiple locations influenced the research process.

In the fourth chapter gender will be rethought from the south taking up the theoretical framework presented in the second chapter and through engaging in a critical dialogue with southern feminist scholars. From the perspective developed here it is not possible to identify or locate *gender* as an objective and concrete entity existing *out there* in the world, independently of the theoretical perspectives that have constructed gender in particular ways in specific social, historical and geographical contexts. For explanatory purposes the rethinking of gender will be developed in three parts, departing from a more narrow and gender-centred to a more holistic and contextualized analyses of gender from the south.

The task of rethinking will begin with first looking at gender as a concept and analytical tool in itself in the first section of the fourth chapter. At this level attention will be paid to the fact that gender itself has been naturalized, and that western notions of gender have become universal and imposed upon the rest of the world, highlighting the importance of place and being critical when it comes to acknowledge how gender is being conceptualized and from which perspective. Here it will be questioned if gender can really be taken as a universal category of analysis, if it is plausible to assume that gender really is everywhere, taking a closer look at how gender is constructed in different ways, and which gender conceptualizations have become hegemonic under

which historical conditions of possibility. Critiques from African and Latin American scholars will be examined and why and how to think gender will be argued for.

By acknowledging that the rethinking attempted here is not possible from a gender-centred perspective, gender will be further thought of as necessarily related to other social categories in the second part of the fourth chapter. Gender, as an analytical category, is considered relevant and necessary. However the risks of considering gender as primordial and its separation from other analytical categories, such as class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and race, which inevitably intersect with gender, means that these should not be taken as separate or simply additive. The notion of intersectionality and mestizaje will be further examined and analyzed. Mestizaje will serve to understand how gender, class, race, sexuality and ethnicity have intersected in specific ways during and after the experience of colonialism in Latin America. How mestizaje has been theorized from different perspective serving purposes of both oppression and liberation will be analyzed.

To complete the fourth chapter the need of a historical framework of analysis, which stresses the importance not only of other intersecting categories, but also of situating gender in its historical, political, social and economical context will be argued for. Gender constitutions will be contextualised from a southern perspective, with a special focus on Eurocentrism, capitalism, racism and coloniality. It will be stressed that when analysing gender relations an anti-racist, anti-heterosexist and anti-capitalist consciousness is vital. The notion of coloniality of power developed by Quijano (2000) will serve as a basic model to situate gender constitutions in their particular contexts. Quijano's theory will be enhanced by criticism elaborated by other Latin American scholars with a focus on gender. Here it will be stressed that gender cannot be theorized in any transhistorical or transcultural manner.

In order to argue for the strength of the theoretical arguments developed previously the rethinking of gender from the south will be further exemplified by constructing a historical analysis in the fifth chapter. Historical analyses about Latin America and Chile developed by different scholar (sociologists, anthropologists, historians and feminists) will be reviewed in this chapter dealing with the constitutions of races, masculinities, femininities and sexualities in different historical moments. These analyses are meant to help illustrate how gender theorizations need to be aware of hegemonic ways of thinking about gender, how gender intersects with other social categories and the historical, social, cultural, geographical context in which genders are

being constructed. The constitution of diverse masculinities and femininities throughout history will be analysed. Special focus will be given to raced, classed and heterosexist aspects. How these gender constitutions have been understood from different perspectives and in different historical moments will be explored as well. I hope that this chapter will clarify how to rethink gender from the south. In the concluding remarks both strengths and limitations of this theoretical framework will be discussed.

This is by no means an attempt to run out the possibilities of thinking from the south, because this is not considered possible or desirable. The production of knowledge is a never-ending process, and every standpoint contributes to widen our perspective without ever being able to complete the picture. Believing that there is only one correct, authentic, objective and true way of seeing or knowing leads inevitably to hegemony, domination and oppression. The constant risks involved in rethinking from the south are idealizing and romanticizing certain ways of thinking and falling into the trap of simplifying a much more complex process of ongoing change and transformation. This thesis is also intended as a contribution to a cause promoted by many social scientist and feminist who argue for the need to practice solidarity with the ongoing struggle for a better world. In this case the contribution is made from the academy, stressing the need to think of it as a space of struggle, and be aware of how it has been serving oppressive and antidemocratic purposes in stead. It is also a personal attempt to recover hope in the possibility of change in a world in which racism, sexism, heterosexism, capitalism and neoliberalism are being naturalized and taken for granted, making it difficult to believe in liberation in such dark and hopeless times.

1.1. Research Question

The general research questions being addressed can be formulated as follows:

- How can the contributions of southern scholars enable a rethinking of hegemonic gender theorizations?
- In which way can these theoretical contributions promote liberatory and decolonizing purposes/projects?

In order to answer these general questions a number of more specific issues need to be dealt with:

- How have hegemony and epistemic privilege according to postcolonial scholars operated in the process of knowledge production in social science and gender studies?
- How have these scholars defined the connection between particular locations and knowledge production?
- How have hegemonic gender theorizations been re-read and re-interpreted in southern contexts?
- What kind of theoretical framework can enable a better understating of multiple gender constitutions?

2. Rethinking from the South?

The motivation to rethink gender from the south arises from a critical understanding of ethnocentrism within social sciences, and consequently within feminist theorizations. Critiques of ethnocentrism, in this case more specifically Eurocentrism, are however elaborated from diverse perspectives and enable different ways of conceptualizing what it means to think from the south.

The authors reviewed in this essay share certain points of departure, such as the claim that Eurocentrism continues to be present and problematic within social sciences, arguing for the hegemony of certain locations. How these locations are understood, how to challenge these ethnocentric knowledge productions and why it is important to do so is however conceptualized differently. For the feminist sociologist Raewyn Connell (2007) the south seams to be more clearly located in non-western geographical locations. Her concerns are therefore related to work towards a more inclusive and democratic social science, one that represents global diversity and complexity. She argues for the importance of developing different way of thinking and theorizing in social science, but from a critical modernist framework of analysis. Issues of interdependency between core and peripheral countries, unequal opportunities, domination, exploitation and a critical approach to capitalism and development theories are present as well in her arguments.

For Lander (2000, 2002), Walsh (2007), Mignolo (2005) and Grosfoguel (2008) locations are above all epistemological, and they are concerned with shifting a Eurocentric way of thinking. They are criticising a logic that constructs and promotes a

Eurocentric capitalist world, based on the problematic naturalization of inequalities, hierarchies and values. This episteme is reproduced on a global scale, and serves purposes of domination and exploitation. Their proposals on how to challenge this current state of affairs are more complex and go beyond including knowledge produced in different parts of the world. They are trying to construct other ways of thinking, and argue for the need to think from subaltern epistemological positions, from the borders, from other logics and concerns. These authors interest in going beyond modernity is reflected in a focus not only on scholarly production, as it is the case for Connell, but a special interest in other logics and cosmologies to be found in indigenous knowledge, for example.

2.1. Eurocentrism, the northernness of general theory and their implications in defining the south

The main locales for social science activity identified by Wallerstein (1996) in the report of the Gulbenkian Commission (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and the United States) continue to be in a position of power when it comes to knowledge production and claims of universality. The Gulbenkian Report historically contextualizes the construction of social sciences into the fragmented disciplines currently known, arguing for the need to restructure social science in a more unified and interdisciplinary matter. The main countries producing social science activity reproduce a world seen through western eyes, dealing with problems specific to their contexts presented as universal, reifying an ethnocentric way of interpreting and constructing the world. Non-western societies where not integrated into mainstream social sciences and where segregated to be studied by disciplines such as anthropology, defining them as others and essentially different, promoting a dichotomous differentiation between modern-civilized societies and backward-traditional ones. It is useful here to take a closer look at how these complex power relations are operating in the current context, establish why it is important to think from other perspectives and how these other ways of thinking should and can be carried out.

In her book *Southern Theory*, Raewyn Connell (2007), argues for the need to construct and reconstruct social science in a way that enables helping democratic purposes on a world scale. This ideal is however far from the current state of affairs, where the dominant representation of the world is male, capitalist and middle-high class, picturing "the world as seen from rich capital-exporting countries of European

and North America" (p. vii). She claims, "that colonised and peripheral societies produce social thought *about the modern world* which has as much intellectual power as metropolitan social thought, and more political relevance" (p. xii). Connell (2007) states that her use of the term "southern" emphasises relation between intellectuals and institutions in the metropole and those in the periphery, relations of authority, exclusion, inclusion, hegemony, partnership, sponsorship and appropriation (p.ix). The south does not necessarily refer to a distinct group of states, societies, or peoples, but a more complex and fluid idea of non-hegemonic, excluded and peripheral locations from which knowledge has been constantly developed, but not become known or taken seriously as it is the case for many western, northern, European or metropolitan knowledges.

Connell (2007, pp. 44-47) has identified central aspects of the northernness of general theory. She first refers to the *claim of universality*, understood as a claim to universal relevance. Those speaking from the north do not consider it necessary to locate themselves and rarely social scientist position themselves as, for example, white, male or western and problematize the implications of the intersections of these locations. This implicitness is highly problematic, naturalizing and invisibilizing these forms of producing knowledge, in contrast with theories developed in the periphery which have to localize their knowledge's by adding "Latin American" or "African", immediately focusing on their specificity and non-universality.

Reading from the centre is the second characteristic identified by Connell, referring to the fact that most northern intellectuals address problems particular to the metropole, which are not necessarily relevant in other contexts and historical circumstances. They usually refer to problems constructed by other northern authors, reifying a world read through the metropole.

A third aspect is what Connell names *gestures of exclusion*, referring to the fact that theorists from the colonized world are rarely cited in metropolitan texts of general theory, even if immensely rich discussions about, for example, modernity, capitalism, globalization have been formulated in Islamic and Latin American contexts. Ideas from the periphery are not included to be part of an intellectual dialogue of theory.

Finally, Connell refers to the *grand erasure*, the fact that most empirical knowledge used to build theory derives mainly from the metropole, where theorists concerns arise from problems of metropolitan society erasing the experiences of the majority of human kind from the foundations of social thought. This erasure also

operated in the way experiences from the south are referenced, by ignoring colonialism, for example.

Connell emphasises the need to take southern theories seriously, to include those peripheral, non-hegemonic knowledges that have been historically excluded. Including these knowledge productions means being critical of generalisations that are based on abstract universals (p. 207). Knowledge production needs to pay attention to the specific social context from which generalisations grow and in which these are being made (ibid.). She argues for the importance of multiplying the theoretical ideas we work with. The issue of how to think differently and the importance of differentiating epistemological locations is not as emphasised and clarified by Connell (even though she does argue for other ways of thinking). The contributions of certain Latin American scholars will help a better understanding of viewing the south not only as geographical, social and cultural location, but as an epistemological locations from where to think differently as well.

The Venezuelan sociologist Edgardo Lander[1] (2000; 2002) has elaborated a critique of Eurocentrism and its relation to Latin American thought. He characterizes the dominant conception of knowledge as Eurocentric and analyzes its four basic assumptions and multiple consequences (Lander, 2002, pp. 246-247). Firstly, he refers to the assumption that Eurocentric knowledge is based on the construction of multiple and recurring oppositions and hierarchical dualisms such as reason/body; subject/object; culture/nature and masculine/feminine. Secondly, Eurocentric knowledge assumes that their local knowledge production serves as a model for every other history being understood as universal, representing the higher point of human progress. The third assumption is that the differences from others are converted in value differences, and hierarchies serving to define Europeans and their thought as superior, serving race as central instrument of classification. Finally, scientific knowledge is assumed to advance in an upward linear direction, creating more sophisticated and developed forms of knowledge and abilities to transform the environment.

These assumptions have multiple consequences according to Lander (ibid.), such as the notion of a disembodied knowing subject with pretensions of objectivity, detached from space and time able to create universal knowledge. At the same time an

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[1] Lander is part of the Modernity/coloniality research programme, in which a variety of interdisciplinary Latin American intellectuals participate. Other authors participating and reviewed here are Quijano (2000), Walsh (2002, 2007), Grosfoguel (2008), Mignolo (2000, 2002), Shiwy (2007) and Escobar (2002, 2004).

exteriority to nature is established, serving as a justification for appropriation and exploitation grounding the Western paradigm of unlimited growth. Another consequence is that by ignoring the impact of colonialism and imperialism and how these have made the modern world system possible, modernity is understood as an *internal product of European genius*, disconnected from their relation to the rest of the world. Others backwardness and poverty is thus a result of insufficient capitalist development and the mutually constitutive relation between modernity and coloniality[2] is ignored. A mayor consequence is the naturalization of the current status of liberal capitalist societies, their *possessive individualism* (Macpherson, 1970, cited in Lander, 2002, p. 247), conception of wealth, accumulation and good life as universal standards for differentiating between rich, developed and poor, backward societies.

Both Connell (2007) and Lander (2000; 2002) agree that certain locations have become hegemonic (Europe and North America) when it comes to knowledge production, that these locations have been able to present their knowledges as universal even though they are producing knowledge related to their local realities, and that these hegemonic knowledges are excluding knowledge produced in the periphery. However, Connell is concerned with democratising social science by including knowledge produced in the periphery because their contributions are as valuable as those from the metropole and because social science has to deal with local problems and their diversity. Lander, on the other hand, elaborates a critique that goes further by analyzing how Eurocentric knowledge promotes and naturalized the current Capitalist world-system. He focuses on Eurocentric knowledge and its underlying logic that sustains the current hegemonic worldview (dichotomous, hierarchical, liberal, individualistic, capitalist). Lander recognizes that the implications of this way of producing knowledge are immense and go beyond the fact that knowledge's produced in certain metropolitan context are unproblematically applied to other contexts, which they should not be presumed to be representing. These Eurocentric and northern interpretations of the world have been naturalized and constructed as superior and more sophisticated, and are as such reproduced in the periphery as well. These hierarchies are replicated on a global scale, reifying a world, which distinguishes between more advanced, developed,

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[2] Coloniality will be further analyzed in the upcoming sections, it is s central concept used by the Latin American intellectuals participating in the modernity/coloniality research programme, and their contributions are of special interest in this thesis.

superior and modern societies, on one hand, and less developed, backward, inferior and more traditional or folkloric societies, on the other.

The problematic implications of Eurocentrism have been widely discussed in the Latin American context. In the same line of argument as Lander, Walsh (2007) argues:

"as most everywhere in the globe, the production of knowledge in Latin America has long been subject to colonial and imperial designs, to a geopolitics that universalizes European thought as scientific truths, while subalternizing and invisibilizing other epistemes. This dominant geopolitics of knowledge extends to both the Right and the Left, present even in the theoretical and ideological frames that orient many of those recognized (by the academy) as the producers and proponents of critical thought and theory. (…) The problem is in the ways that critical thought in Latin America tends to reproduce the meta-narratives of the West while discounting or overlooking the critical thinking produced by indigenous, Afro, and mestizos whose thinking finds its roots in other logics, concerns, and realities…"(p. 224).

Thinking from the south and challenging Eurocentrism has quite different implications for these authors. A more democratic and inclusive social science is not sufficient if a same logic is maintained and if Eurocentrism is considered in epistemological terms as well. Lander and Walsh point to other forms of inequalities within southern contexts, complicating the notion of thinking from the south, because those located in the south also tend to think in Eurocentric ways. At the same time Walsh points to the fact that the south is no homogeneous location, and that creoles, indigenous peoples, people of African descent and mestizos are all inhabiting common southern locations. This racial and ethnic diversity is also classed and gendered, among other differentiations. According to these authors the subaltern locations inhabited by indigenous peoples, afros and mestizos whose experiences, logics and concerns can be different from those trapped in a naturalized capitalist world striving for modernity and development, can enable other ways of thinking about the world. Similar arguments have been developed by standpoint feminists and will be addressed later on when considering concrete proposals on thinking otherwise.

Before trying to establish how to think, it is useful to distinguish between different forms of power inequalities when it comes to knowledge production that have been implied so far. On a global scale the hegemonic position of European and North American worldviews and epistemologies is recognized as representing standards of quality and value. But when it comes to consider who has had the epistemic privilege of thinking, speaking, being heard and recognized as creating knowledge it is possible to

visibilize other hierarchies as well. Connell's interest in southern theories is highly valuable and necessary, but it is also adequate to question who has had the privilege to speak within the south. Those who have had access to higher education, to become intellectuals are usually representative of the most privileged sectors of society. The meritocratic system imposed by the capitalist world-economy, in which the unequal distribution of rewards is falsely justified on the basis of merit is also a highly racialized and gendered system (Wallerstein, 1992). This form of labour division rewards only certain types of people with the privilege of accessing higher education, being paid for thinking and constructed as intelligent beings whose thoughts are worth being heard. The social scientists from Latin America visibilized by Connell belong to the Creole-descent, middle-high class sectors of society, and are therefore not inhabiting subaltern positions within their contexts. They also tend to belong to those, who as Walsh argues, tend to reproduce the meta-narratives of the west, with very valuable and critical contributions to theories about, for example, postmodernity, capitalism and gender equality, but not necessarily from another perspective. Other cosmologies and logics that could be found in indigenous cultures, for example, are still relegated to the status of folkloric or primitive and less developed forms of knowledge. Even though knowledge's developed by indigenous peoples are being recognized as sophisticated systems of knowledge by some, they still appear as collaborators and narrators in the dialogical creation of knowledge and their contributions as intellectuals have not been incorporated into mainstream discourses in social sciences (Bacigalupo, 2003, p.45).

By differentiating between global hegemony and epistemic privilege, it is possible to recognize that within the periphery other hierarchies are visible, and that a same way of thinking is being reproduced as well. When trying to define the south departing from the scholars discussed here contradictions arise. Peripheral locations are not reducible to geography, because there are historical, cultural and epistemological aspects to be considered as well. By arguing that hegemonic ways of thinking are reproduced in the periphery as well it could be deduced that geographical location does not matter at all. But that is not exactly my point. I argue that locations have to take these multiple aspects into consideration, and cannot be defined only in relation to one dimension because they are more complex. Social locations in relation to class, ethnicity and other possible social categories are important as well and relate to other forms of privileges. This is why the south cannot be defined in any fixed and concrete way, and has to be analysed taking these contradictions and ambiguities into consideration.

But why is it important to construct other forms of knowledge, other ways of thinking? What could the implications of other theoretical perspectives be? And how should this other way of thinking be done?

2.2. Thinking otherwise, thinking from the south

The issue of location, of establishing from where to think, is far more complex than one could initially think. The risks of romanticising, idealizing, essentialising, but also of satanizing are always present, and it is important to keep in mind that locations are never fixed, but fluid, ambiguous and changing. Even though it is important to recognize the dominance of Eurocentric and northern forms of knowledge, it is at the same time necessary to avoid rigid dichotomous oppositions between west and east, north and south, or to define these locations as limited to geography.

When trying to establish what it means to *think from the South* and to decolonize Western hegemony it might be useful to consider Zillah Eisenstein (2004) and her problematization of the West. While constructing an enlightening critique of the West, she simultaneously unravels its complexities and contradictions, reminding us that the "the so-called West is as much fiction as real; as much appropriation as originary; as exclusionary as it is promissory" (p.xv), arguing for a need to dislocate the West/non-West divide. She urges us to re-think that what is now established as Western, a hegemonic way of thinking which invisibilizes its inherent contradictions and ambiguities. She further argues that "Western democracy, as well as Western feminism, was never simply Western: it grew out of global struggles of resistance, at multiple sites, like the slave trade. Equality and freedom are early on envisioned by those punished and excluded from Western notions of freedom" (p. 2). When disregarding that which is supposedly western we should remember: "ideas that are said to be of the West are often initiated and located elsewhere. Terming democracy as of the West already gives too much credit to the West" (p.32).

Being critical of the West and at the same time acknowledging that there is no simple reality we can refer to as undeniably western, we are faced with an apparent contradiction in terms. Eisenstein reminds us that it is the language of colonialism that has taught us to name geographical places as if they were simple realities, and that words like "West" and "East" distort a mix and flow that is part of each. But at the same time we cannot deny "in the power driven world of global capital, there is a West, even

while it distorts the complexities of its own origins with its imperial gaze. The US was anticolonialist at its start, yet while being so, used and allowed the slave trade. Today's "West" was racist before" (p. 32). Eisenstein (2004, p. 74) defines the West as

"a state of mind, a set of privileged cultural values-identifies a singular location of power across various geographic sites. These sites are sometimes located in colonial spaces and sometimes in colonized spaces; sometimes in imperialist and sometimes in imperial locations. Most difficult is that the West is simultaneously a sliding symbol that misrepresents itself, changes meaning in order to obscure its homogenizing power, and promises what all humans want: freedom, equality and justice".

But what does it mean to think otherwise, to think from the south? If many located in the south reproduce the same universalist, Eurocentric and North American epistemes, how can this narrow minded form of creating knowledge be overcome to enable decolonizing and liberating forms of knowledge? When trying to answer these questions the trap of wanting to identify authentic southern voices is always present. Lets not forget that the intention here is not to identify or construct the way of thinking from the south, but one of many ways of thinking otherwise.

Lets take a closer look at some Latin American thinkers who have been actively trying to resolve this issue by proposing alternative ways of producing knowledge, such as shifting the geopolitics of knowledge, thinking from the borders or thinking from the horizon of coloniality.

According to Grosfoguel (2008) the decolonization of knowledge would require a serious consideration of the epistemic perspectives and cosmologies of critical thinkers from the south thinking from and with subalternized, racial, ethnic, sexual spaces and bodies. One of the main concerns of the Latin American modernity/coloniality research programme has been to enable a shift in the geopolitics of knowledge. Taking knowledge produced in the South seriously, means paying attention to the geopolitics of knowledge, the local historical groundings of knowledge (Mignolo, 2005, p. 10). Shifting the geopolitics of knowledge is a necessary step towards decolonizing knowledge, to pay attention to the principles of knowledge, to who has had the privilege to speak and be heard in terms of geographical, social, historical, cultural and imagined locations (Walsh, 2002, p.61). Being aware of the geopolitics of knowledge means recognizing how the principles of knowledge and rules of the game are geo-historically located in the structure of power of the modern colonial world. Once we understand that

the West has been the only location and perspective privileged with "possessing dominant categories of thoughts from which and where the rest of the world can be described, classified, understood and "improved"" (Mignolo, 2005, p. 36), we can recognize the urgency of shifting this perspective. A central distinction is that between *thinking from* and not just *about* the south (Connell, 2007, p.viii), as it has been the case of most western research about the "others".

The shift that Walsh (2002; 2007) and Mignolo (2005) are striving for is conceptualized as thinking from the perspective of *coloniality*. Coloniality is the untold and unrecognized counterpart of modernity, modernity is the predominant location from which the world is approached. A classical illustration of the difference of these perspectives is evident in the theories coming from Latin America (Mignolo, 2005). From the perspective of modernity, Latin America was *discovered*, and history began when the West wrote the story of the "New World". From the perspective of coloniality, and those Indigenous people inhabiting the land later re-named America, what happened when Europeans arrived was *Pachakuti*, a total disruption of space and time, violent destruction, relentless invasion, disregard of their way of life and founding moment of the *colonial wound*. With *Pachakuti* the *invention* of a new continent occurred and the logic of coloniality was revealed hidden behind the mask of modernity. It is thereby imperative to "rewrite the colonial history of modernity from the perspective of coloniality" (Mignolo, 2005, p.14).

The rethinking from the south intended here goes beyond being formulated from a southern geographical location. It intends to think differently, being conscious on one hand of hegemonic ways of producing knowledge, which are Eurocentric and northern, and reproduced from all kinds of geographical locations around the globe, because they have succeeded in being naturalized as superior, more developed and sophisticated forms of creating knowledge in the current world-system. On the other hand, it is important to be aware of who has had the epistemic privilege of producing knowledge, paying attention to the intersections of social categories, such as class, race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. This picture is further complicated by the fact that positionalities are always partial and ambiguous. Feminist such as Dorothy Smith (1999), Sandra Harding (1991), Patricia Hill Collins (1991) and Donna Haraway (1991) have been dealing with this issue as well, developing what has been know as standpoint feminism and situated knowledges. These feminists have stressed the importance of acknowledging the standpoint from where the world is being viewed, and how this

position will influence different worldviews. Standpoint epistemologists have considered it more appropriate to start from the perspective of marginalized lives, what has been known as *seeing from below*. "Knowledge claims are always socially situated, and the failure by dominant groups critically and systematically to interrogate their advantaged social situation and the effect of such advantages on their beliefs leaves their social situation a scientifically and epistemologically disadvantaged one for generating knowledge. Moreover, these accounts end up legitimating exploitative "practical politics" even when those who produce them have good intentions" (Harding, 1993, p.54).

Standpoint theory has not been exempt from debate and criticism. Arguing that the perspectives of the most marginalized and oppressed can create a more objective view of the world runs the risk of searching for more authentic voices, essentialising certain locations as more authentic than others by establishing fixed identities. Claiming that some people have better and more objective view of reality is problematic as well (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2004). Postmodern feminists have criticised the possibility of a unified standpoint of women or a unified experience of women (ibid). Standpoint feminism has absorbed this criticism and contemporary expressions stress the relational and heterogeneous and multiple constitutions of standpoints, recognizing that there are no homogeneous experiences we can access. It is possible to recognize a common interest here for constructing other worldviews, for recovering subaltern knowledges and creating less oppressive and exploitative accounts of reality.

How is it possible to cope with the recurrent issue of ambiguity, fluidity and its apparent contradictions when it comes to construct locations to think from otherwise? How to argue for the importance of thinking from subaltern perspectives without essentialising and romanticizing them at the same time?

A call for decolonizing the Western Canon and Epistemology should not be understood as an anti-European, essentialist or fundamentalist critique. "It is a perspective that is critical of both Eurocentric and Third World fundamentalism, colonialism and nationalism" (Grosfoguel, 2008). The point is that a decolonial epistemic requires a broader canon of thought than simply the Western one; it should be the result of a critical dialogue between diverse critical epistemic/ethical/political projects towards a *pluriversal* world (ibid.).

Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) was as well concerned about dealing with ambiguity and the struggle of borders, she therefore constructed the idea of a consciousness of the

Borderlands, the new *mestiza* consciousness. She writes from her location as a chicana lesbian feminist living in the US, her experience of being a women of colour rejected by a "white" society, of being a lesbian rejected by a catholic heterosexist Mexican society, of being torn between cultures, of having to deal with multiple and opposing messages. The new *mestiza* has to cope by developing a tolerance for ambiguity, for contradictions. Anzaldúas *mestiza* has to constantly shift out of habitual formations, she is critical of western rationality, which moves towards a single goal, she is searching for a more whole perspective, a inclusive one, she is learning how to juggle cultures, operating in a pluralistic mode (p. 101). She writes:

> "At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react" (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 100-101).

Rethinking from the south means dealing with the contradictions and ambiguities we have been discussing, it means being conscious of our multiple, fluid, contradictory and ambiguous identities. It means thinking otherwise, thinking from other locations in order to visibilize that which has become naturalized and hegemonic, that what we have been taught not to see.

Mignolo (2002; 2005) has also taken up the notion of border thinking, which he defines as an epistemology from a subaltern perspective (2002, p.71). It is through thinking from a double framework that a differential in power relations is revealed, "border thinking is the consequence of the power differential under modern/colonial conditions, a power differential that constitutes the *colonial difference*" (Mignolo, 2005, p. 10). Border thinking is articulated as a response to both hegemonic and marginal fundamentalism (Grosfoguel, 2008).

Given the impossibility to establish fixed and stable identities and locations, being conscious of this ambiguity, multiplicity and contradictions enables another kind of positionality, one that urges us to confront this uncertainty, but at the same time will open new possibilities of thinking, a more inclusive and human way of thinking. Border thinking points towards a different kind of hegemony: a multiple one. Mignolo (2000, pp. 310-311) refers to *diversality as a universal project*, which means that people

and communities have the rights to be different precisely because "we" are equals. He complements the idea of border thinking with the notion of *plurotopic hermeneutics*, the possibility of thinking from different spaces, which finally breaks away from eurocentrism as a sole epistemological perspective (Mignolo, 2000). The point is the importance of developing a kind of thinking that moves along the diversity of historical processes, to establish a dialogue between diverse critiques established from Western critical discourse and those arising from the colonial difference, entailing both displacement and departure (Escobar, 2004).

There are many borders to be spoken from, many voices to be heard, many locations to be constructed and reconstructed. The task of multiplying the potentialities of seeing (Eisenstein 2004), of constructing a pluriversal world and shifting the geopolitics of knowledge (Mignolo, 2005), of constructing a consciousness of the Borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2007) is an ongoing process, with a long journey ahead. The task of rethinking gender from the south attempted here, wishes to collaborate with the enormous responsibility that social scientists and feminist have in overcoming hegemonic Eurocentric and northern ways of thinking, in stressing the importance of identifying our location in multiple systems of oppression and enabling a new way of thinking that deals with the multiplicities, pluriversalities, ambiguities and contradictions that inhabit diverse subaltern locations. To recognize this responsibility as social scientists means recognizing the potential of academic spaces as spaces of struggle, and to stress the need to participate in the construction of decolonizing and libratory ways of thinking and doing theory.

The purpose of this chapter was to define the south as a location from where to think differently. Because thinking from the south is intended to be critical of hegemonic ways of thinking, critiques of northern and Eurocentric knowledge production had to be presented and analysed. To identify Eurocentric knowledge and its consequences will be central to this thesis, because this form of knowledge naturalises inequalities and a hierarchical worldview, where capitalism and values of domination are promoted. By recognizing the hegemony of a complex interaction of geographical, social, historical, cultural, and epistemologies locations the south had to be defined in a fluid and complex manner. Thinking from the south is not an exclusive property of Latin American thinkers, but refers to a way of thinking otherwise. Possibilities of how to think from the south where explored. The importance of shifting the historical groundings of knowledge and of thinking from subaltern racial, ethnic and sexual

locations and bodies was discussed. It was argued that a view from below enables a more inclusive view of social justice, not serving only hegemonic and elitist interests. By being located in the borders, through the conscious embodiment of contradictory, multiple and fluid identities critical border thinking can also enable other ways of thinking. The aim is to construct a world where diversity and pluriversality are possible, where we can open our eyes to see what we have been taught not to see.

3. Methodology

The question of how to produce valid knowledge is approached from a critical and feminist perspective in this thesis. There is however methodological diversity within feminism (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2004). How social reality is understood is based on critical feminist perspectives such as postcolonial, poststructuralist and standpoint feminism. Central aspects are a critical attitude towards science, objectivity and hegemonic knowledge production. The importance of challenging universal knowledges, exclusionary practices within knowledge production, criticism of dualisms and androcentrism have been central to feminist knowledge as well (ibid). A postcolonial understanding of social reality relates to the adoption of an intersectional perspective and a focus on issues such as racism, colonialism and Eurocentrism. Third world feminist perspectives and their critical view of western feminism and Eurocentric knowledge production (Mohanty, 2003) have been central to the methodological perspective adopted here. The centrality of location, and situating oneself in relation to the study is central as well.

I first decided to explore and analyse how gender constitutions can be thought of differently from the south, with a special focus on Latin America and particularly Chile. I considered rethinking from the south as a contribution to both decolonizing and promoting liberatory purposes in gender theorizations.

The south as a particular location from where to rethink gender was motivated by my particular location as a Chilean student interested in critical social theories and knowledge developed in Latin America. Once I decided to think from the south I was faced with the question: What and where is the south? I realized that I wanted to focus on Latin American authors with whom I shared interests and values, and that being Latin American or living in Latin America where not exclusive criteria. Once I established that the south would not be a concrete geographical location I felt free to

incorporate other authors whom where critical of western hegemony or where thinking epistemologically *from the south*. My choice of authors was not premeditated, but a process of much reading and selecting those who shared certain ideas and who I thought could contribute with thinking about gender otherwise, being aware of hegemonic constitutions of gender. The central method can be described as traditional close reading of texts, carried out through multiple readings and interpretations.

My case study included close reading (Spivak, 1999) of two types of secondary sources. On one hand text produced by scholars within the Latin American postcolonial tradition. Through Walter Mignolo's (2005) "The idea of Latin America" I became familiarised with the modernity/coloniality research project, a group of interdisciplinary researchers from Latin America trying to think otherwise. I looked for central concepts developed by these postcolonial scholars that could help me analyze how genders were/are constructed in different ways in the Latin American context. I chose these scholars because I considered the notions of coloniality of power and thinking from coloniality compatible with postcolonial and standpoint feminism, as well as an intersectional understanding of society. Their critical awareness of hegemonic knowledge production and their strong anti racist and anti capitalist commitment was another appealing factor.

In order to link these theoretical perspectives with concrete historical examples from the southern context and specifically Chile I reviewed a second type of literature. I searched for historical analyses dealing with gender systems in Latin America and Chile and their different constitutions in different historical moments, focusing both on postcolonial understandings of genders and on indigenous gender constitutions (Mapuche specifically). I chose scholars whose analyses would strengthen an intersectional understanding of gender constitutions paying attention to the historical moment and social context in which they were situated.

During the research process I had to reflect upon my own positionality, my *southerness* and my status of being an outsider-within when it comes to try to figure out where I belong. Even though I think of myself as Chilean, this identification has been quite ambiguous and contradictory. I was not born or raised in Chile due to my parent's exile in Germany. This experience has always made it difficult for me to state where I am from. In Germany I was Chilean, and this was also my parents input, who where always talking about going back to Chile and stressing that we where Chileans (they did not know that dictatorship was going to last 17 years). I was 12 when I first moved to

Chile to live, and was not considered Chilean in Chile. Chileans think of nationality as related to the place one is born in, in Germany however citizenship is linked to blood. . I did not have any citizenship to either German of Chile for about a year, because I did not have German blood and I had to live in Chile for some time to become Chilean. My parents not being married also complicated the issue and my last name changed with my location.

My friends in Chile where of course raised differently and had experienced the dictatorship directly. I did not experience it and I was considered strange, too liberal and open minded. I did not have a religious upbringing and did not share prejudices towards homosexuality, abortion, sexual freedom and the lower classes. My odd personality was linked to being considered *gringa*. I read this experience now as a form of being racialized in different ways, by different people in different contexts. In Chile I was placed in the prestigious private German School, where upper class right wing students were the majority (alternatives of good schools where either religious or linked to some European country). It was quite a tough experience and I had trouble understanding Chilean social stratification and inequalities. I believe that because I was not raised in Chile I did not internalize and naturalize dominant social classifications in the same way as other people of my class and ethnic background in Chile. I remember when I started to be able to differentiate social classes more clearly, but I never conformed to my social position and I have been able to move between and become friends with people of different classes and backgrounds. I never felt like I fit in with the people of my social class, especially those from my school. Political beliefs are important for me when I choose my friends and I do not have right wing people who are close to me, especially in Chile. I know these prejudices are linked to my upbringing and my coming to Chile immediately after the dictatorship ended, when being pro or anti Pinochet was a primary question you asked to everyone you first met. But I still believe that a different understanding of the world comes with your political positioning.

My focus on Chile relates to my interest in understanding the gendered, racialized and classed nature of Chilean society. I feel that writing this thesis did contribute immensely to this understanding. It also made be more conscious of my privileges, my "white" skin (having black hair is not so bad if your skin is "white" according to the Chilean context), my social class, my private education, my scholarship, and my Spanish and Italian descent last names. I have to confess feelings of guilt and cynicism while I was writing. I had to think about me, my privileged position

writing in a Swedish context, in an internationally recognized University attended by other privileged students from around the world and writing in English! How can I be writing of the importance of subaltern perspectives and knowledges from my privileged position? And are not all the authors I am reading privileged in some kind? I have not been able to resolve this issue, but as I wrote in the introduction I believe that writing this thesis is also a way for me to regain hope in change and in the academy as a space of struggle.

4. Rethinking Gender

In the first part diverse critiques of hegemonic Eurocentric and northern ways of thinking that have been predominant and considered more prestigious within social sciences have been presented. It was then established why it is important to construct other ways of thinking and how this could be done without relying on concrete and fixed locations from where to think. Now it is time to address the main issue of this thesis, which is situated in the discipline of gender studies: *the re-thinking of gender from the south*.

It has been argued that location matters, but also that there is no homogeneous or fixed location that can be identified as southern, and the attempt of rethinking from the south will have to deal with this apparent contradiction. By rethinking gender from the south attention is drawn to the claim that gender cannot be thought of as a separate or non-situated category, arguing for the impossibility of establishing transhistorical or unitary definitions of gender (Mohanty, 2003, p.47). This means that hegemonic ways of constructing gender should not be universally applied, but that gender as an analytical category is still useful if theorized adequately. This means elaborating an analysis of how gender is constructed in specific historical, social, cultural and geographical contexts. Such an understanding of gender helps multiply the potentialities of seeing gender constitutions, visibilizing both diversity and commonalities on a global scale, hence the contribution of the Latin American and Chilean perspective. The possibilities of seeing from the south, from Latin America or Chile will not run out here. This is by no means an attempt to identify the correct or real way of thinking gender from the south, because this is not considered possible or desirable, as well as it

is not the purpose to expose the complete plurality of seeing, because this is an ongoing and never ending process.

The issues being addresses separately in every subtitle are not actually divisible; dealing with them separately serves only explanatorily purposes. Recurring issues are constantly overlapping and the rethinking is not complete on any level of analysis (I use complete here referring to the completion of the rethinking task attempted here, not as actual possibility of completing the ongoing process of re-thinking gender from the south).

4.1. Gender

Which have been the hegemonic ways of conceptualizing and constructing gender? What are the implications of considering gender as a universal category? Is gender in itself a colonial concept and imposition? Should gender be rejected as a theoretical concept in the south because of its western origin? Is it possible to think of societies where gender is not relevant or where gender is not identifiable? What have been the historical conditions of possibility that have made gender a relevant category of analysis? Why is it important to see the world through gendered lenses and how should we practice this way of seeing? These are some of the questions that scholars reviewed here have tried to answer and that are important when it comes to rethinking gender from the south.

Believing in the importance of rethinking gender means not only being critical towards hegemonic gender constitutions, but also believing in the relevance and potential of gender as an analytical category. Many feminists critical of western feminism are contributing to thinking about gender in different ways and visibilizing how in spite of the good intentions of most western feminists their theoretical developments can have oppressive and exclusionary effects on women. A critical awareness of the effects of particular ways of theorizing about gender continues to be necessary.

The idea that gender is a social construction has been widely accepted by feminist theorists, but what does this actually mean? It means that gender is not something that actually exists out there, something we can grasp and clearly identify. Gender is an analytical category constructed in order to be able to explain the world in certain ways, usually in order to explain inequalities between men and women in different societies and historical contexts. Gender as an analytical category has been and

continues to be conceptualized in different ways from diverse theoretical perspectives with different effects in society. Lets consider some criticism developed by African and Latin American scholars.

4.1.1. Gender as a western concept

Oyeronke Oyewumi (1998) criticizes western notions of gender, claiming that not all human cultures organize their social world in biologically deterministic ways. She criticises feminist for insisting that all cultures do and must construct gender, basing her analysis on Nigerian Yoruba culture, who according to her do not construct gender before colonization. Oyewumi claims that researchers will always find gender when they are looking for it and western feminist are seeing gender hierarchies everywhere. She claims that:

> "The notion that all cultures across time and space do and must construct gender introduces an incorrigible proposition in feminist thought. In spite of contrary evidence from other cultures, scholars continue to seek gender and male dominance in other cultures without first establishing whether gender as a social category is transcultural. This question has been bracketed off. If gender is indeed a social construction, as a dominant group of feminists unequivocally and correctly affirm, then logically it cannot be transcultural" (Oyewumi, 1998, p. 1054).

It would be adequate to agree with Oyewumi if one beliefs that the meaning and use of the concept is fixed and inevitably westocentric. By arguing this matter it is understandable that she does not see gender in Yoruba culture because she does not want to see it, because seeing it would mean accepting a western way of constructing the world. Wanting to rethink gender from the south, one could easily sympathize with her argument and just reject the notion of gender altogether. Oyewumi's criticism is worth reflecting about, and contributes to a critical awareness of westocentric knowledge construction in gender theorizations. But if gender does not exist outside of theoretical perspectives that construct gender in specific ways in specific contexts, this means that gender can and is necessarily constructed in different ways and it also means that constructing gender can serve different purposes, which can be both liberatory and oppressive. This means that maybe it is more adequate to criticise how these western scholars are seeing gender and not the fact that they are seeing it, which is of course motivated by a wanting to see it. But lets complicate this critique a little further and argue for why there is still use in seeing gender and why gender should be always

analyzed as a situated category to avoid oppressive and hegemonic ways of constructing gender.

Another Nigerian scholar, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf (2003), has criticised Oyewumis approach when analyzing Yoruba culture, claiming that the gender neutrality in Yoruba language does not necessarily prove the absence of sex based inequalities in Yoruba culture, as Oyewumi claims. Bakare-Yusuf problematizes Oyewumis understanding of language, and her lack of analysis when it comes to consider relations between power and meaning, and the way meanings change over time, and the importance of taken the unsaid seriously. According to Bakare-Yusuf (2003, p.133) Oyewumis "desire to uncover a pure Oyo-Yoruba cultural framework that is anterior to colonial projects is deeply problematic and against the grain of the cultural system she wishes to uncover". Taking more information about Yoruba culture into consideration Bakare-Yusuf is able to see gender based inequalities in Yoruba culture, which are identifiable in other linguistic forms and silences.

The question being addressed here is not if gender actually exists in Yoruba or all cultures, but what the implications are of seeing gender and how to see it. Despite the disagreement among these African scholars, these conflicting perspectives or interpretations of Yoruba culture are very interesting and helpful when it comes to think about the consequences and effects of introducing a gendered perspective in order to analyze any given culture or society.

Shifting the focus away from the actual existence of gender, and asking instead why it is important to choose to see gender and how to see it, means recognizing gender as a social construct, which is constructed in different ways in diverse contexts and in its relation to other social categories. Seeing gender enables recognizing how social relation are gendered, how the division of labour is gendered, how reproduction is organized in gendered ways, among other potentials that have enabled a better understanding of society.

The way gender is constructed can have different effects and serve different purposes. The purpose intended here is to contribute to the construction of a more socially just and free world, by decolonizing gender theory and thinking gender in libratory ways. This is not an easy task considering the western origin of the concept, which faces us with an apparent contradiction. By arguing however, that meanings are not fixed, and that gender can be re-thought from different perspectives, it is possible to argue that gender does not need to be constructed in a western matter, even if its origin

is western. At the same time it is not intended here to reject everything that is western. Gender is not being rejected per se, because gender does not exist outside the theoretical perspectives and locations constructing it in specific ways, meaning that gender can be a useful category enabling a more complex and diverse understanding of societies. Gender as a theoretical concept is not rejected, because it can enable us to multiply the potentialities of seeing, in this case of seeing inequality and injustice, and of seeing how social relations are constructed in gendered ways and how genders con be constituted differently across time and space.

4.1.2. Critique from the south

When it comes to Latin America, gender and feminism are more likely to be associated with Women's movements, not with knowledge production. Referring to a context where activism has been more urgent and necessary, where thinking, theorizing, philosophising are not supposed to be priorities, naturalizes this idea. Schiwy (2007) and Richard (1996, cited in Schiwy, 2007) stress the importance of place and argue that it is the multiplicity of feminist activism and the heterogeneity of Latin American women, which allows the construction of theoretical productions capable of destabilizing dominant and hegemonic knowledge productions regarding gender and feminism.

The cultural theorist and feminist Nelly Richard (1996, cited in Schiwy, 2007, p. 277) has criticised the subalternization of Latin American theorists by paying attention to the geopolitics of knowledge. She argues that because of the Latin American experiences of oppression, misery and exploitation activism and political commitment has been favoured instead of knowledge production and theorizations.

Without disregarding the importance and necessity of political activism, it is also vital to be conscious of the problematic association of Latin American feminism with activism and Women's movements. Through this association knowledge production capable of visibilizing and criticising hegemonic gender theorizations is being put aside, regarded as less important. Unproblematically assuming that Latin America is more prompt to acting than thinking can also be related to the control of knowledge and subjectivity, that has been identified by Quijano (2000) as one of the main domains of the coloniality of power. This would reinforce the logic of coloniality where the West is the only geopolitical location capable of producing intellectually valuable knowledge.

The focus here will not be on feminist activism in Latin America, but on how gender has been criticised as a theoretical concept in the southern context. Two main critiques are going to be addressed, those coming from the mestizo-colonized condition of Latin America and those coming from indigenous communities.

The Chilean feminist anthropologist Sonia Montecino (1997) has analyzed the construction of Latin American and Chilean gendered identities. Even though she clearly uses the concept, recognizing its utility in analyzing Latin American societies, she also questions the unproblematic use of gender conceptualizations constructed in western contexts. First, there is the issue of translation, having gender been translated as *género* into Spanish, assuming the English meaning of the term. The meaning in Spanish is however associated not with grammatical distinction of sexes as it is in English, but with textile, adding confusion to its use in Spanish speaking contexts. Other criticism in the Latin American context have been directed at the use of the concept, according to Montecino, because it could promote cultural determinism and because it promotes the invisibility of the subordination of women, by referring to gender instead of women specifically. The latter issue will be discussed further in the upcoming section dealing with intersectionality, arguing that both men and women are located in multiple systems of oppression, and that the subordination of women should not be taken for granted as a universal condition. Associating gender only with women, serves to essentialise the dichotomous distinction between the sexes as a biological reality.

Montecino (ibid., p. 23) claims that it is necessary to consider how in Latin America the discussions and theoretical perspectives surrounding women studies and gender studies have been re-read and re-interpreted from what she defines as *our* mestiza and colonized condition. Montecino is thereby not rejecting gender as an analytical category or concept, but recognizing the need to rethink its use in the specific contexts in which it is being applied. The risks of unproblematically assuming a worldwide definition of concepts developed in other contexts, especially hegemonic ones, are to serve domination and oppression instead of liberation and justice, and to assume the universality of specific realities. However, when a theoretical concept developed in one context is applied in another it is inevitably being re-interpreted. Clearly this re-interpretation will not necessarily serve the purposes of decolonization and liberation.

When the re-interpretation is made from a perspective that assumed western rhetoric's as more developed and sophisticated, this can lead to a desire to identify with problems experienced in supposedly *more advanced societies*, disregarding local differences. This form of (re-) interpretation is also related to the fact that these theories are presented as universal, assuming that there is no need to localize them. From this perspective notions of gender equality promoted by governments and NGOs in Latin America can be viewed as unproblematically applying western ideals of gender relations to another context. Here the universality of patriarchal oppression could be assumed invisibilizing differences among women and the oppression of men, and gender equality could be primordially defined in terms of economic independency and access to the market based on capitalist values.

Indigenous peoples in South America have articulated the second critique of the use of gender as a theoretical concept and feminism as a cause. Many indigenous peoples have criticised the imposition of gender perspectives to analyze inequalities in their cultures. Patricia Richards (2004) analyses this conflict when working with Mapuche Women in Southern Chile. She argues that Mapuche women, who have created movements to support the cause of their peoples, have had to struggle with the notion of feminism as a western imposition, even as they recognize subordination as indigenous women. Richards stresses that "Mapuche women consistently link their priorities as women to the struggle against the exploitation of the Mapuche peoples as a whole; their gender identity is mediated by being indigenous" (2004, p. 125). Talking about "Mapuche Women" has been faced with criticism from part of the Mapuche Movement, because of the notion of gender being considered a western imposition and the apparent compartmentalization of women in an inconsistent manner with Mapuche worldview, which is seen as emphasising the complementarity of women and men's roles (Richards, 2004, p. 153). Talking about women would just serve to divide the movement and distract from historically based demands. Richards further argues that "women who focus on gender issues and women's rights risk losing the respect and confidence of others in the movement" (2004, p. 153). Here the rejection is directed above all to the label feminism and gender, being their use stigmatized because of their association with western and oppressive perspectives. Feminism and gender are here seen as necessarily based on a dichotomous understanding of genders, as opposed to each other, separate and where male dominance is the rule. These ways of constructing gender relations cannot be assumed to be universal and transcultural. However,

rejecting western notions of gender and feminism does not mean that in practice their struggles are not coherent with other forms of feminist struggles, such as promoted by anti-racist and postcolonial feminist, for example. It is important to develop a more inclusive feminist theory, were other contextually specific ways of constituting genders can be constructed, and where other aspects than gender can be considered primordial. This criticism elaborated from Indigenous communities and the notion of complementarity will be further developed in the illustration chapter.

In the criticism towards gender as an analytical concept and feminism elaborated from Latin America presented here it is possible to identify a central issue. It is the problem of treating gender as a predominant category of analysis, and the possibility of disarticulating it from other social categories that inevitably intersect with gender and shape it in diverse matters. It is therefore necessary to further analyse the notion of intersectionality.

4.2. Intersectionality and mestizaje

Criticism towards western notions of gender and feminism elaborated by African, Latin American and indigenous activists and scholars have shed light on the problem of considering gender a primordial category of analysis. Focusing on gender separately creates the illusion of a unified and homogenous group of women experiencing oppression and exploitation in a same way, invisibilizing differences and the experiences of men as well.

Black, third world and postcolonial feminist have seriously criticized the promotion of gender as a primordial and separate category of analysis. Early attempts to deal with this multiple oppressions constructed an additive model, a triple oppression approach which, for example, claimed that black women suffer from three different oppressions (Yuval Davis, 2006). This additive model was however further criticised and the notion of intersectionality has proved helpful to deal with this irreducibility of social divisions. Kimberlé Crenshaw first introduced the term *intersectionality* when discussing the issue of black women's employment in the United States (Yuval Davis, 2006). Now many feminists are stressing the importance of taking intersectional analysis seriously, being conscious of how, for example, gender is racialized and classed, and how class is gendered and racialized. As Lugones (2007) argues

"intersectionality reveals what is not seen when categories such as gender and race are conceptualized as separate from each other" (p. 192).

According to Crenshaw (2000, p. 13): "Intersectionality is a conceptualization of the problem that attempts to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axes of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create background inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and the like". Yuval Davis further ads, "the point of intersectional analysis is not to find "several identities under one (…) this would reinscribe the fragmented, additive model of oppression and essentialize specific social identities. Instead the point is to analyse the differential ways in which different social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities" (2006, p.205).

When arguing for multiple oppressions and multiple identities, these are easily enumerated without being able to analyze or understand how they are mutually constitutive. The risk than is to homogenise identities such as "black poor women" or "White middle class men", and to construct a world where these identities are equally oppressed or dominate. The point here is not that intersectionality serves only as a personalized account of oppression, because it is a model for recognizing structural constraints and how women and men are positioned differently in multiple systems of oppression. However, the fluid and changing nature of identities complicates the possibility of identifying transhistorical intersections of categories that are experiences as equally oppressive anywhere. As Anne McClintock (1995) points to some of the complexities and ambiguities to be found in an intersectional analysis of societies:

> "race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor con they be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other-if in contradictory and conflictual ways. In this sense, gender, race and class can be called articulated categories"(p. 5).

The contradictory and conflictual aspect stressed by McClintock is central, because it is problematic to assume that the intersection of specific categories will necessarily be experienced in any specific and fixed way. Structural constraints due to class, race, gender and sexuality are assumed to have relation to specific forms of oppression in society, however not as separate realms but in the way they interact and

constitute each other. Being conscious of how these categories are articulated enables an understanding of difference and commonalities in oppression. Assumptions regarding the universal oppression of women can be criticised because women are not seen as homogenous category and all women are not equally oppressed. However, intersectionality opens up the possibility for other forms of solidarity and struggle that do not rest on simplified accounts of people as equal, but as different instead. But difference is not understood as homogeneous either, but as something that needs to be embraced and recognized as inevitable. Difference and commonalities are not regarded as opposites, but as mutually constitutive. Lets consider now how intersectionality can be thought of from the Latin American context.

4.2.1. Mestizaje and marianismo in Latin America

As mentioned before, the intersections of same categories can be lived differently in diverse contexts and historical moments, by different individuals. This means that any intersectional analysis cannot rely solely on the interaction of categories such as class, race and gender, without situating them in the particular context in which they are being articulated. Being white has very different meanings in Europe than in Latin America, and in every country or part of the country as well. Chileans for example tend to think of themselves as white, but they are surely not considered white in a European context. Being white and blond, but poor in Chile, for example, is usually referred to as "*rucio/a de pobla*", which means "*blondie of the slums*", stressing that these categories should not be intersecting and promoting a norm where different classes are racialized in a specific matter. Here a contradiction appears, Chileans think of themselves as white, but this whiteness is not homogeneous, they are not *all as white*, and they should not be, being exceptions identified as out of the norm. Also this self-identification can be better understood from a historical perspective that incorporates the whitening process part of the Chilean nation building discourse, which relates to the racist imaginary promoted through colonialism and maintained through an ongoing logic of coloniality. Further examples will be analysed in the final illustration, this simplified example is intended to serve to explain the importance of contextualizing intersectional analysis.

In the Latin American context the use of intersectionality as a concept has not become extended. The triple oppression model (being women, indigenous and poor

seems to be the most common) has been of wider usage, when it comes to specifically address the issue of indigenous women. In general analyses of Chilean society the focus has been more on issues regarding class, and less regarding raced gender aspects, for example. This means that the actual consideration of how multiple categories of oppression constitute each other and are not analysable as separate seem to be less.

Analyses that are coherent with an intersectional perspective however are to be found. Theorizations regarding *mestizaje*[3] have been elaborated from an intersectional perspective by some authors, paying attention to the complex articulation of races, genders and classes in the configuration of Latin American mestizo cultures.

The Chilean anthropologist Sonia Montecino (1992; 1997) has analysed ideas regarding the plural constitutions of feminine and masculine beings in Latin America, focusing on Latin American culture in general, and trying to unravel the particular ways in which gendered identities are constituted in Chile. Among the general characteristics of Latin American culture she identifies the experience of *mestizaje* and *marianismo*. Mestizaje would be the foundational moment of Latin America, the mostly illegitimate sexual relation between colonized indigenous peoples and Spanish colonizers. Being mestizo, of mixed origin, would also imply belonging to the dark side, the non-white part of this new society. This relates to the will of not recognizing mestizaje, of rejecting the pain of being considered less, and wanting to wear the mask of the white other.

Marianismo, on the other hand, the veneration of female virtues that characterize the Virgin Mary, is an ideal imposed by the Spanish colonizers Catholicism, which has been pervasive in every aspect of Latin American life. *Marianismo* has constituted the ideal of the female virtues such as purity, moral strength, self-sacrifice, and the acceptance of women's faith as mothers and wives. Montecino stresses the importance of understanding that these general aspects of Latin American culture have particular expressions in each country and that they are experienced in contradictory and ambiguous ways. She is critical of simplified understandings of *marianismo* as opposed to *machismo*, for example, because these have been constructed from ethnocentric perspectives and reify a dichotomous and binary understanding of society. She is also aware of the risk of reductionism when presenting *marianismo* as the primary female identity, reducing female identities to the sphere of mothers and wives. The roles of

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[3] Refers to experience of racial and cultural mixing.

mother and women are also experienced in contradictory ways, in a permanent conflict between power and powerlessness that should not lead to the assumption that women are necessarily subordinated in al aspects of life or that all women are equally subordinated in society. In chapter five the different ways *marianismo* is signified and promoted in Chilean society depending on women's class, race and ethnicity will be explored in order to explain the complex and contradictory ways in which *marianismo* serves as an apparent ideal of femininity. It is therefore possible to argue that in order to understand *marianismo* in its complexities and contradictions it need to be analyzed from an intersectional perspective.

Montecino (1992; 1997) has explored the different constructions of women and men, femininity and masculinity from the perspective of coloniality, paying attention to the intersections of gender, race and class in the constitution of the current mestizo culture. She stresses the importance of recognizing that women and men did not experience colonialism in the same way, and that different modes have to be recognized: we have to differentiate the experience of indigenous women, Creole women, black women, indigenous men, Creole men, European men, etc. Without homogenising each category Montecino identifies certain trends in Chilean gender constructions, tracing them back to colonial times and the experience of *mestizaje*, simultaneously visibilizing their relevance in current Chile. Even though the mestizo discourse was adopted during the war of Independence referring to the origins of a common Chilean society, it later vanished and Chileanness emerged as the predominant category. Montecino (1992) repositions herself from the mestizaje perspective, highlighting the importance of reminding us of a mixture that has been ignored, negated and lessened through the continuous *whitening* process adopted by leaders, intellectuals and politics throughout Chilean history. She argues that precisely because Chilean society is of mixed origin, being one of the cultures dominant and prestigious and the other one dominated and despised, it has developed an enormous resistance to recognize its mestizaje (Montecino, 1997, p. 117).

Mestizaje is understood as a social process that supposes particular identities for those subjects that emerged as its products. In this case certain conditions of the female and male gender are specified. The foundational moment, the illegitimate sexual relation between Spanish men and indigenous women, consensual or by force, has led to a maternal presence and a paternal absence, which relates to the still predominant role of the single mother who is the basis of social origin, and the illegitimate and orphan

child, which related to the imaginary of men as sons, absent fathers and *huachos*. In Chile genders are still constituted in relation to this founding relation, being women represented as mothers and men as "huachos", which in the Indian language "Quechua" means committing adultery, designating the orphan or illegitimate child. Mestizaje is complex process, involving the interconnection of biological, historical, social, economical and cultural aspects that are still intermeshing and part of an ongoing transformation (Montecino, 1997, p.118).

Montecino (1997, p. 119) differentiates between what she refers to as *mestizaje al derecho* (mestizaje forward) and *mestizaje al revés* (mestizaje backward). *Mestizaje al derecho* was the most common type, occurring when an indigenous women (she refers to Mapuche in particular) and a Spanish man had an illegitimate child, a *huacho*. This form of mestizaje has left a mark still visible, a stigma, in current Chilean society, being descendent of an indigenous mother, not recognized by their father (considered bastards) and being positioned in the lowest social strata. The other form of mestizaje, having a Spanish mother and an Indigenous father (usually a *lonko*, of high status among the indigenous culture) meant prestige and was of value within the Indigenous culture, they had a place in the family and were recognized as part of a family lineage. I believe that this analysis developed by Montecino exemplifies the complex intersections of gender, race and class in specific historical moments, and the endurable effects they can have on societies. She goes beyond a simplified understanding of mestizaje as a biological and cultural encounter and mixture, and tries to unravel the complexities and how mestizaje was experienced in a gendered, classed and racialized matter, enabling a historical understanding of current gender relations in Chile. Here mestizaje does not serve as an homogenising principle for Latin American identities.

Montecino's understanding of gendered identities and mestizaje relies on a heterosexist framework of analysis with a focus on reproduction. This focus in understandable because she is interested in exploring how sexual reproduction among different people in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, cast and class can lead to a variety of trends that continue to have an impact on current masculinities and femininities in Chile. When it comes to sexuality, her focus is in heterosexuality and non-heterosexual practices and relations are not mentioned in her work. A more complete and complex understanding of the constitution of gendered identities should include the role of non-heterosexual practices and how these have been signified. An understanding of gender

in terms of sexual dimorphism is already a Eurocentric understanding of gender. An better understanding of how genders are constituted means also considering pre-colonial gender arrangements and how these where altered in the interaction with colonial ones, creating a new gender system (this idea will be further developed in the next section). For now it is important to keep in mind that genders need not to be organized in binary terms, and that intersexed people, homosexual practices, cross-dressing and co-gendered identities where recognized and not assumed as problematic in many Indigenous communities[4]. The aspects of precolonial gender arrangements taken up by Montecino are related to a heterosexist framework of analysis, she refers to polygamist relations among Indigenous peoples for example, but does not take up other sexualities.

Another issue that is worth highlighting is that Montecino's approach to mestizaje is, as briefly argued earlier, not coherent with the dominant understandings and uses in Chilean history. She refers to mestizaje in a way intended to visibilize the actual mixture and complex articulation of genders, races and classes in specific historical moments and in the context of specific power inequalities. Mestizaje has however served as a nation building discourse in Chilean history, appropriated by the Creoles of European descent serving the illusion of a homogeneous society. In this case mestizaje has served the construction of a supposed homogeneous and white race of Chileans, hiding what it was supposed to reveal, invisibilizing how class is both gendered and racialized in Chilean society. The indigenous and African people are invisibilized as part of the mestizo culture, and as peoples co-habiting "Chilean" territory. Montecino has re-appropriated the notion of mestizaje to highlight those aspects that had been invisibilized by the hegemonic use of this concept. Among Chileans racism has not been promoted as a social problem in society, as it has been the case for classism, because Chileans have been taught not to see race as constitutive of class and gender among Chileans. The discourse of mestizaje was no longer of use once Chileaness was established. The discourse of multiculturalism has emerged in the current neoliberal context, based on an understanding of diversity serving market interests. This issue will be further analysed in the illustration part.

Mestizaje as well as gender can be signified differently depending on the perspective adopted, the historical moment and context. Different discourses can serve liberation or domination, reinforce the logic of coloniality or visibilize diversity. Paying

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[4] Bacigalupo (2004) explores non- hetersexual practices in Indigenous communities.

attention to the ways gender, race, ethnicity and class intersect helps see that which is hidden and silenced. The mestizaje discourse is a clear example of how a concept intended to illustrate the mixture of cultures and races can serve the exact opposite purpose. Intersectionality is a concept created with the purpose to visibilize how gender, race, class, sexuality are articulated in complex ways under specific historical conditions of possibility. Mestizaje is a concept that implies these intersections, but is not necessarily used with the purpose of visibilizing them. Lets hope that intersectionality will not be used to serve purposes of homogenisation and promote blindness.

4.3. Contextualizing gender and its intersections

When arguing for the relevance of an intersectional understanding of gender constitutions the importance of paying attention to historical conditions of possibility and specific social and cultural contexts was already explained. Here a southern understanding of the historical contexts is sought, paying attention to colonialism and capitalism. In this section an understanding of how gender is constructed in the current global capitalist system of power is sought, because the theorizations of gender revised and analysed are intended to serve libratory and decolonizing purposes deeply rooted in an anti-capitalist perspective. The Latin American modernity/coloniality project has developed a particular understanding of the constitution of capitalism as a new global power. The mutual constitution of modernity /coloniality and the notion of Coloniality of Power will be further examined and feminist insights from the south will be used to expand this model. This section hopes to serve as a means to identify how gender is being theorized and which purposes are being served, in order to elaborate adequate anti-capitalist criticism. An understanding of why genders need to be analyzed in a historical matter is sought, as well as its constitution in the current capitalist world system.

4.3.1. Eurocentrism and Coloniality of power

Aníbal Quijano (2000) conceives the current form of capitalism as a Eurocentric form of global power beginning with the constitution of America. He identifies two fundamental axes of capitalism. One is race as a mental category establishing an

instrument of basic social classification. The idea of race was established in relation to the difference between conquerors and conquered, being the first ones valued as superior and the second placed in natural condition of inferiority. The second is the constitution of a new structure of control of labor, its resources and products revolving around the capital-salary relation and the world market. Here a new global model of control of work was established: Capitalism.

The category of race produced new historical social identities in the Americas such as Indians, blacks and mestizos. European identities acquired a new racial connotation in reference to these new identities and social relations of domination where configured, because these identities where constitutive of hierarchies, places, corresponding social roles and of a new model of colonial domination being imposed (Quijano, 2000, p 534). "Both race and the division of labor remained structurally linked and mutually reinforcing" (ibid, p. 536), because the new social identities where associated with social roles and geohistorical places and a "systematic racial division of labor was imposed" (ibid). Europeans associated non-paid labor with the dominated races because of their "natural" inferiority and wages where almost exclusively associated with whiteness. Blacks where used exclusively as slaves and Indians where first used as disposable manual labor, forced to work until death and later assigned the status of unpaid serfs, working both for the profit of their owners. The same dominant race continued to expand its colonial domination on a worldwide scale, being the same criteria of social classification imposed on the world population, producing new historical and social identities. This racist distribution of new social identities was combined with a racist distribution of labor and forms of exploitation of colonial capitalism (ibid., p 536-537). According to Quijano, global capitalism started with America and was from then on colonial/modern and Eurocentred.

Being critical of hegemonic conceptualizations of gender, acknowledging Eurocentrism in knowledge production and in feminist theorizations and arguing for the necessity of an anti-capitalist critique are invested with new meaning from Quijanos perspective. He enables an understanding of hegemonic gender theorizations in a context of Eurocentric capitalism. Here capitalism is not naturalized, and accepted as the global order of societies, but understood as a product of Eurocentric thought and values constituted under particular historical conditions. The connection between decolonizing gender theorizations and anti-capitalist critique is therefore made more

explicit. Hegemonic gender theorizations need to be understood in a context of global Capitalism and Eurocentrism. Lets further develop this idea.

To better understand the actual role of gender and how it is constituted in his theorizations it is necessary to understand his notion of *coloniality[5] of power*, one of Quijano's main theoretical developments (Mignolo (2005) refers to the same notion as *Logic of coloniality*). The current model of capitalist Eurocentred power (based on the social classification of the world population in terms of race) is according to him the first effectively global one, in which each sphere of social existence and all historically known forms of control of social relations are articulated. Each sphere of social existence is under the hegemony of an institution produced within the process of constitution of that same model of power (pp. 543-545). He identifies the following spheres of social existence and corresponding hegemonic institutions operating as intersubjective models:

- The control of labor, its resources and products (Mignolo (2005, p. 11) refers to the economic appropriation of land, exploitation of labour and control of finance). The dominant institution in this sphere is the capitalist enterprise.

- The control of authority, its resources and products, corresponding the nation-state to the hegemonic institution.

- The control of sex, its resources and products (Mignolo (ibid.) refers to the civic control of gender and sexuality), the institution here corresponds to the bourgeois family.

- The control of knowledge and subjectivity (intersubjectivity), being Eurocentrism the dominant institution.

This model of coloniality of power is configured as a system, imposed on the entire planet, where Europe is promoted and reproduced as the most developed and sophisticated stage of humanity, where rationality and modernity are imagined as exclusive European products and experiences. Mignolo (2005) argues that this logic has

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[5] Mignolo (2005) stresses the importance of differentiating between *colonialism* and *coloniality*, the first concept "refers to specific historical periods and places of imperial domination" (p. 7) and the latter one refers to "the logical structure of colonial domination underlying the Spanish, Dutch, British, and US control of the Atlantic economy and politics, and from there the control and management of almost the entire planet"(p.7). In this sense *coloniality* is not over, power just changed hands, the same logic of domination is at play, but the imperial/colonial country in power has been changing and the manner of *coloniality* has also transformed. Also *coloniality* cannot be fully understood without its counterpart modernity. *Coloniality* is seen as constitutive of modernity, there is no modernity without *coloniality*.

been at play from times of colonialism until the war in Iraq, up to the present. The notion of coloniality would point towards and intend to "unveil an embedded logic that enforces control, domination and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization, and being good for everyone" (p.6). The logic of coloniality is invisibilized through the rhetoric of modernity, which emphasized issues such as development, democracy and strong economy.

The coloniality of power serves as a basic framework to understand how racism, sexism, classism, Eurocentrism and capitalism are mutually constitutive and interconnected. However, the four spheres of social existence identified by Quijano are not equally developed in his theory, his focus has been on the constitution of race and racialized division of labor. However I argue that by establishing all four domains as articulated and mutually constitutive, his model is equipped with a wide range of possible theoretical uses and flexibility. Race, class, gender, knowledge, subjectivity and capitalism are all incorporated and interrelated in this complex model. He enables an understanding of how the elements constituting the Eurocentric model of global power are not pre-existing entities, but constituted in and through this model. In this sense race, gender, class do not exist prior to their constitution in and through this complex process of power. After a basic presentation of Quijano's model of coloniality of power it is time to focus more specifically on gender and on how this model can be enhanced.

4.3.2. Taking the coloniality of power some steps further: the modern colonial gender system and the role of military and Christian values

A clearer understanding of how gender is constituted in and through the coloniality of power is provided by the criticism and contributions developed by Maria Lugones (2007) and Ramón Grosfoguel (2008). Both have taken up the notion of coloniality of power and enhanced it by incorporating feminist insights and by widening or detailing the entanglement of power structures taken into consideration. Lets first take a closer look at how sex and gender have been theorized in this model and how to expand its understanding.

There has been self criticism among the participating authors of the modernity/coloniality research project when it comes to adequately addressing the issue of gender, being a more thorough understanding of how gender is constituted identified

as a site of tension and necessary task (Escobar, 2002). Sex and gender are named but how they are conceptualized is not clearly explained by Quijano or Mignolo. However, understanding sex in the context of the family, and the control of its products and resources, insinuates a reference to man and women as biologically differentiated categories in a heterosexist frame of analysis, based on male domination in the labor and family sphere.

Maria Lugones (2007) criticises Quijanos conceptualization of sex and gender, while preserving his understanding of coloniality of power. For her Quijano´s critical understanding of the invention of race should have been applied to gender as well. However it seems like he accepts a hegemonic understanding of gender, which is heterosexist, sexually dimorphic and patriarchal. It is therefore necessary to see that this conceptualization of gender is coherent with a Eurocentric definition, and that gender arrangements do not need to be heterosexual, dichotomous or patriarchal. According to Lugones, his conceptualization of gender is limiting the aspects of gender shown. She interprets his notion of the coloniality of gender relations as presupposing that solely men are the ones disputing over the control of sex and its resources. For Lugones (ibid), men cannot be understood as resources here and women are not considered as part of the dispute of control over sexual access.

Lugones criticism to how gender is conceptualized in Quijano's model seems adequate, when it comes to its heterosexist and biologically dimorphic definition. Quijano actually refers to sex, as a biological category, and Mignolo referes to gender, without further defining or problematising how gender is actually conceived. However, race is considered an organizing principle structuring all other axes, and the mutually constitutive character of the coloniality of power model can be understood as affecting the global gender hierarchy as well. This means that class and race are also structuring gender, and that not all women should be considered in a same position of subordination and without access to resources, and that these are differentiated in a raced and classed matter.

Maria Lugones insights are useful in recognizing the importance of not to limiting the conceptualization of gender to its Eurocentric understanding. She takes the intersection of gender, race, heterosexism and colonialism as part of a critical framework that enables us to see that:

"Colonialism did not impose precolonial, European gender arrangements on the colonized. It imposed a new gender system that created very different arrangements for colonized males and females than for white bourgeois colonizers. Thus, it introduced many genders and gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing" (p. 186).

She takes up Quijano's understanding of race as an historical invention, constituted by the interaction of Europeans and those who where colonized and racialized as inferior, and uses the same logic to understand the constitution of genders. This means recognizing that a new gender system was created from the interaction of colonized and colonizers. This new gender system was imposed because of the position of power and domination of the colonizers culture and the predominance of their values, cosmologies and forms of knowledge. This is an understanding that goes beyond the dichotomous opposition of two cultures to a more serious consideration of the interaction of cultures, in different positions of power and the intersection of multiple categories with the assignment of differentiated values in a specific context of colonialism. Focusing on how the current gender system was constituted, how it has changed and maintained itself over time, how its underlying logic of coloniality and origin have been invisibilized can enable a different way of seeing gender.

Lugones recognizes the importance of the coloniality of power when it comes to understand how genders are constituted in a historical framework. Focusing on gender she elaborated the notion of *Modern/colonial gender system*. She argues that,

"The reason to historicize gender formation is that without this history, we keep on centering our analysis on the patriarchy; that is, on a binary, hierarchical, oppressive gender formation that rests on male supremacy without any clear understanding of the mechanisms by which heterosexuality, capitalism, and racial classification are impossible to understand apart from each other. The heterosexualist patriarchy has been an ahistorical framework of analysis. To understand the relation of the birth of the colonial/modern gender system to the birth of global colonial capitalism—with the centrality of the coloniality of power to that system of global power—is to understand our present organization of life anew." (pp. 186-187)

The importance of understanding pre-colonial gender arrangements is also recognized in this conceptualization of gender. The actual impact of colonialism cannot be understood without taking the interaction of both cultures and cosmologies seriously. It also means understanding other possible gender relations and why Indigenous

communities, who claim to have lived or live according to other logics, values and cosmologies have used the idea of gender complementarity discussed earlier, as a symbol for decolonization. How gender systems have been constituted from this historical perspective will be further analyzed through concrete exampled in chapter five.

A particular aspect I consider vital in understanding gender arrangements and that has not been as explicitly developed in Quijanos model is the role of Christianity. It is implicit in the sphere of control of knowledge and subjectivity, but Grosfoguel's (2008) re-interpretation and more detailed broadening of Quijanos model can enable a better overview of the different aspects being visibilized through this model.

Grosfoguel (2008) criticises diverse forms of reductionism coming from different disciplines; for example, theories focusing on global capitalism alone are privileging class and economic relations over other forms of social relations. He argues that what arrived in the Americas was a broader and wider entangled power structure than an economic reductionist perspective is able to account for: a "European/capitalist/military/Christian/patriarchal/white/heterosexual/male" world system arrived establishing simultaneously several intersecting global hierarchies. The author separately exposes these hierarchies as it follows combining the contributions of a diverse set of international scholars:

- A particular class formation composed by a diversity of forms of labour;
- An international division of labour of core and periphery where capital organized labour at the periphery around coerced and authoritarian forms (Wallerstein, 1974, cited in Grosfoguel, 2008);
- An inter-state system of politico-military organizations controlled by European males and institutionalized in colonial administrations (Wallerstein, 1979, cited in Grosfoguel, 2008);
- A global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileged European people over non-European people (Quijano, 1993, cited in Grosfoguel, 2008);
- A global gender hierarchy that privileged males over females and European Patriarchy over other forms of gender relations (Spivak, 1988 and Enloe, 1990 cited in Grosfoguel, 2008);
- A sexual hierarchy that privileged heterosexuals over homosexuals and lesbians;
- A spiritual hierarchy that privileged Christians over non-Christian/ non-Western spiritualities;
- An epistemic hierarchy that privileged western knowledge and cosmology over non-western knowledge and cosmology, institutionalized in the global university system (Mignolo, 1995 and Quijano, 1991, cited in Grosfoguel, 2008);
- A linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non European languages that privileged communication and knowledge/theoretical production in the

former and subalternized the latter as sole producers of folklore or culture but not of knowledge/theory (Mignolo, 2000, cited in Grosfoguel, 2008).

Grosfoguel (ibid.) links Quijanos notion of coloniality of power with the notion of "intersectionality" developed by Third World Feminists, and conceptualized the *coloniality of power* as a intersection of multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation. This perspective challenges us to think about social change and social transformation in a non−reductionist way (ibid.). He further argues that:

> "Contrary to the Eurocentric perspective, race, gender, sexuality, spirituality, and epistemology are not additive elements to the economic and political structures of the capitalist world−system, but an integral, entangled and constitutive part of the broad entangled "package" called the European modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world−system" (p.7).

It is not possible to fully understand and change the current capitalist world order unless we acknowledge, "that the ceaseless accumulation of capital has been entangled with racist, homophobic and sexist global ideologies" (Grosfoguel, 2008). It is therefore necessary to stress that the European colonial expansion was led by European heterosexual males, who exported their cultural prejudices and formed hierarchical structures of sexual, gender, class, and racial inequality (ibid).

Given the dominant order of societies, it seems reasonable that in order to construct gender in decolonizing and libratory ways the subaltern side of the colonial difference need to be taken seriously. This means incorporating those historically excluded from the process of hegemonic knowledge production: workers, women, racialized/colonial subjects, homosexuals and lesbians, among others.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) has been another important voice in the decolonization of feminist theory and the necessity of an anti-capitalist critique. She claims that feminist theorizations need to be attentive to the material complexity, the reality and agency of third world women's bodies and lives (p. 230). A notion of social justice, of liberation needs to be constructed from these perspectives in order to be inclusive and visibilize the actual operations of discrimination, exploitation, oppression, exclusion and subordination. A criticism of Eurocentrism and Capitalism is vital do understand how societies are currently operating, and how these hegemonic ideologies are exacerbating racist, patriarchal, heterosexist, classist relations of power.

To construct gender in decolonizing and liberatory ways means recognizing the possibilities of many genders, it means that no particular way of constructing gender should be hegemonic. Recognizing how gender has been constructed from Eurocentric and Capitalist perspectives means opening up the possibility of thinking genders differently. It means recognizing that gender cannot be theorized as separate from other social categories because of their mutual constitution, because people are situated in the intersections of multiple categories of oppression and because oppression operated and is experienced in complex and contradictory ways. How gender is constituted in relation to other categories cannot be understood without an adequate historical framework of analysis.

In order to argue for the analytical potential of this way of thinking gender, the upcoming illustration will take up this theoretical framework to analyse concrete situations of Chilean society.

5. Analysis of Latin American and Chilean gender systems from the south

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the strength of the theoretical approach to gender presented previously. This chapter deals with concrete historical analyses of Latin America and Chile with the purpose to help visibilize the complexity and ambiguity inherent in applying this kind of understanding of gender constitutions. These kinds of analyses are not common. Historical analyses dealing with raced aspects of gender and sexuality seem to have been less theorized in Chile, given the centrality of Marxist analyses focusing on class and state formation in the context of progressive political struggles. The illustrations are based on analyses by historians, anthropologist, sociologists and other social scientist who have studied, analyzed and interpreted Latin American and Chilean history considering the intersections of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, paying attention to the historical context and geopolitics of knowledge. These are authors who in my opinion have contributed to a different understanding of history, an analysis *from the south*. The complex operations of the power of coloniality will be explored considering how masculinities and femininity have been constituted throughout Chilean history going beyond simplistic binary and heterosexist understandings of gender. Special attention will be given to ethnicity and

race, illustrating the relation between Chileans and Mapuche, the larges indigenous group inhabiting "Chilean" territory.

The analyses presented here deal with concrete interpretations of Chilean history (I use the world interpretations because I do not believe in one, unique and objective account of history). The illustrations are presented in the form of patchwork of different gender constitutions in different periods of history.

5.1. The Invention of Latin America: raced, classed and gendered aspects

If one wishes to rewrite the history of what is now Latin America from the perspective of coloniality, one cannot refer to the discovery of a new continent. Assuming that America was discovered, means conforming to the hegemonic version propelled by European colonizers[6], where America had to be discovered in order for those people inhabiting the continent to have a history, to be saved and given the opportunity to develop. This primary version is based on a Eurocentric knowledge production that has been object of extended criticism by the authors presented in this thesis. It is intended here to narrate history otherwise.

From the perspective of coloniality it is possible to view how the process of colonization, appropriation of land and exploitation experienced in the Americas required a simultaneous construction of a racist ideology (Quijano, 2000). The Spanish crown wanted to avoid the marriages of different races, whites were supposed to marry whites; Indigenous people should procreate with other Indigenous and blacks with blacks. However, the actual sexual intercourse that took place lead to complex hierarchies of racial difference. The European colonizers elaborated a racial classification by blood mixture, also known as *castas,* a hierarchical differentiation in which a higher status was given to "whiteness". The *whites* (Europeans) where on the top of the hierarchy, followed by *Creoles*, then *mestizos* (mixture of Indian with Spaniard), then *zambos* (Mixture of Indian and Blacks), then *pure Indians* and at the bottom *Blacks* (mostly slaves). This form of scientific racism has to be understood as constructed from the perspective of White, Christian, European males who where positioned as able to classify people around the world. In chapter two Lander's (2000) analyses of Eurocentric knowledge stressed how the construction of oppositions and the

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[6] The difference between the discovery narrative and pachakuti was already addressed in the second chapter, when referring to shifting the geopolitics of knowledge.

assignment of hierarchical values to differences are central to this form of knowledge production. The classification elaborated in terms of *castas* is a clear example of how European superiority is constituted by opposing themselves to other different and inferior races. Lets explore how these differences are also classed and gendered.

Montecino (1992) helps clarify this point by exploring how for indigenous women the union with white men was not as problematic, because it was a way of climbing higher in the racial hierarchy and change their social status. Women of high class, where expected to value sexual decency, according to Christian family values. Lower class women saw sexual intercourse with higher cast men as a way of improving their economic and social position. Indigenous women where portrayed as over sexualized, always willing to embrace white men. The higher value assigned to white race and male gender explains these differences experienced in colonial sexual relations.

Racialisation is applied not only to people and according to skin colour, but also to languages, religions, knowledges, countries and continents (Mignolo, 2005). From the perspective of Eurocentric knowledge every expression of the less developed races was considered inferior. This classification of peoples, cultures, geographies and knowledges has been naturalized and constitutes as the normal order of the world, where certain people, cultures and places are considered more developed than others, due to their own internal characteristics. Hegemonic interpretations of Latin American history still use the notion of discovery, and even if violence and domination are recognized, discovery by Europeans is what gave Latin America the possibility to become civilized and more developed.

When exploring the historical process that led to current gender inequalities in Latin America and Chilean societies, the Chilean historians Salazar and Pinto (2002) point to the patriarchal characteristics of colonization. They argue that two patriarchal traditions converged in the process of colonization: the monarchic and the Catholic. The monopolies constituted in this process where also masculine, represented by the conqueror (who enacted the violence of discovery and conquest) and the marketers in charge of commerce. The public space constituted in this process was different from the European one, more open and wide. Its territory included oceans and continents, the imperial power of the monarchs, the economic power of the marketers, the armed power of poor men trying to improve their social status and the ecclesiastic power of the church (ibid., p.110). This public space was of course based on the violent

expropriation of indigenous territory. Women did not have a protagonist role in the public sphere. Especially indigenous, black, slave and *mestiza* women where subjected to abusive and violent relations enacted by male soldiers mainly. Genders where constituted in very different ways during the colonial period. This differences relate to how genders where racialized and classed in this specific historical context of colonization. The next sections will explore different experiences of women and men, and how femininity and masculinity where constituted in particular ways in what is now known as Chile.

5.2. Different experiences of women in colonial Chile

The different forms of subordination of women during the colonial period in Chile serve as an example of how these differences are not adequately comprehensible if the focus would rely primarily or solely on gender. It has been argued before that the logic of coloniality can be broadly described as patriarchal, being men able to inhabit both public and private spheres. This general level of patriarchy does not however translate into a general and homogeneous subordination of women, and neither a general and homogeneous domination of men. In order to understand these contradictions and complexities an intersectional understanding of gender constitutions and the mutual constitution of the different aspects of the coloniality of power (capitalism, Eurocentrism, Christianity, racism, family values, control of authority) need to be considered. Lets review some historical interpretations to further ague for this point.

Salazar[7] and Pinto (2002) describe the private sphere in colonial Chile as constituted in a European manner, in coherence with Eurocentric social classifications, such as those explored in the previous section on Latin America. The case of the *patronas,* the landladies, who where white European or Creole women married to elite men is an enlightening example. Given to their higher status acquired through the hegemonic system of social classification these white, European colonizing women would occupy positions of higher power then they did in Europe, adopting the same patterns of abusive power as their male partners (ibid., p.112). These women would

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[7] Gabriel Salazar is one of the most renowned exponents of contemporary social and political history in Chile. He has studied philosophy and sociology as well and has rewritten the History of Chile with a special focus on subaltern subjects and perspectives in over 20 books. He has been very active in the political left in Chile, was tortured and exiled during the dictatorship. He was recently awarded the Nation History Prize.

collaborate in the construction of a stable landlord culture of violent and abusive characteristics. Historical examples such as the famous *Quintrala,* (a landlady called Catalina de los Ríos y Lisperguer whose story is very known in Chile), who murdered at least 39 servants and slaves are not rare exceptions (ibid). The violent abuse of servants, slaves and lower cast people in general was a recognized and justified practice among the colonial elite, and usually no punishment was applied. A combination of racist, Christian, patriarchal and capitalist ideologies would justify the abuse, slavery and even death of those considered dispensable on one hand, but also necessary to maintain the elite order.

From a Eurocentric perspective the conception of wealth and accumulation were central for a good life (Lander, 2000). The mercantile patrimony had to be protected by al means in a society filled with risks posed by external and internal enemies represented by Indians, slaves, indigenous women, mestizos, servants and vagabonds. This is why elite families had to arrange marriages among themselves to protect their wealth. The landladies would be in charge of administrating the fortunes. Elite women would rarely remain single, because of the relation between marriage and the protection of wealth among the elite.

Salazar and Pinto (2002) argue that the main frustration of elite women was experienced in the sphere of their sexuality. They where expected to conform to catholic standards of purity and chastity and had to engage in arranged marriages at early age. This moral code would however not apply to their husbands or to poor women who lived their sexuality with more freedom. Elite women did not spontaneously internalize *Marianismo*, and some did rebel against this moral code, but they mostly had to conform due to social stigmatization. Without disregarding the importance of *marianismo* as argued in chapter four, it is important to recognize the problematic universal or homogeneous association of *marianismo* with Latin American or Chilean culture. From an intersectional perspective it is possible to analyze how the values and moral codes of *marianismo* where experienced and promoted differently according to class and ethnicity (cast). *Marianismo* was an ideal for white women of the dominant classes, and served both as a model for purity and chastity as well control and their roles as guarantors of order (Salinas, 1992). In the Imperial exaltation of Mary her perfect image of white beauty and heavenliness was combined with her representation as a violent fighter supporting Christian warriors (ibid). Marianismo then promoted and

justified elite women's devotion to marriage and fidelity as well as to domination and abuse of lower cast women and men who were in need of salvation or simply inferior.

The colonial family in Chile is characterized as polygamist, a custom coming from Indigenous cultures. Women of lower casts, such as Indigenous, black, slave and mestizas where represented as overtly sexual and wild, justifying their sexual encounters with white men and their sexual abuse as well. Racist fantasies were legitimated through scientific discourses stating, for example, that the aborigine women was pushed by the dark instinct of her species to search for the male of the superior race, even being married to an Indian husband (Montecino, 1992). From a European, Christian and patriarchal perspective these lower cast women were represented as dangerous, lustful, untrustworthy, dishonest and incapable of perfection, which made them unfit as nuns as well (Salinas, 1992).

Salazar and Pinto (2002) point to the fact that elite women where the ones initiating civil rights movements in Chile. They argue that their interest in equal rights with men was mainly based on their sentimental and erotic frustrations. They where not interested in changing the general state of affairs, or fighting for women in general, because they did not want to loose the privileges of their dominant status and of being heirs of the mercantile patrimony (ibid, p. 116). Poor women did not feel the need to equal their men because they where living a complete different reality (ibid). There was no need for stable relationships and marriages among the lower classes. Indigenous, black and *mestiza* women where subjected to erotic aggression, they where lovers, prostitutes and generally remained single for long periods of time. Virginity and faithfulness where not valid norms or moral codes for these women, even though they where criticised and lessened because of not being virgins nor faithful. I believe that here we have a clear historical example of how women's movements led by elite women are not representing different interests among women, and why feminist labels are in these cases rejected by subordinated women who do not feel and are not represented.

An understanding of gendered aspects of colonial Chile needs to be aware of racialized and classed aspects. Through such and understanding it is possible to explore how women where positioned differently in this period and how even under a patriarchal system not all women are equally subordinated. The coloniality of power serves as a model to understand these complex hierarchies and inequalities in non-reductionist ways, by highlighting how capitalism, Eurocentrism, particular classed

family values, patriarchy and Christianity are intimately linked and mutually constitutive.

After analysing the different experiences of women in colonial Chile lets take a closer look at the constitutions of Chilean masculinities.

5.3. The constitution of Chilean masculinities and the coloniality of power

How can the constitution of masculinities in Chile be analysed considering the coloniality of power and which aspects are clarified from this perspective? In the process of Chilean State formation a diversity of masculinities emerges through a process of mestizaje and social classification. Even though hegemonic masculinities are being increasingly problematized and in process of change, a historical perspective enables the recognition of colonial legacies in current society. Chile is seen as a highly socially stratified and *machista* society (male chauvinistic), where male violence is seen as a historical problem. The privileged position elites of "White" creole-descent men has been maintained and naturalized in Chilean society. Lets try to understand the constitution of hegemonic Chilean masculinities from a historical perspective.

As probably most histories of Nation constitutions, the history of Chile is one of ongoing violence. The Chilean coat of arms reads: *"Por la razón o por la fuerza",* meaning "By reason or by force", representing the naturalization and justification of violence in Chilean society. Historical processes of violence, authoritarianism, domination and subordination seem to be necessary to understand the constitution of Chilean Society and its masculinities (Bengoa, 1998). Salazar and Pinto (2002) explain how masculinity has been historically linked to war throughout Chilean history. Wars fought against external (Spaniards, Peruvians, Bolivians) and internal enemies (Indigenous peoples, the marginalized poor, peasant rebels) have shaped a national consciousness and obedience to authorities and commanders. Violence has been has been physically executed by males, being armed violence associated with the preservation of the oligarchic interests and executed by the poor. Violence has been justified as a means to preserve the market monopoly and defend it from threats imposed by external competition, internal competition (middle and small enterprises), liberal intellectuals and the marginalised, poor, indigenous minorities (ibid). Salazar and Pinto refer to a mercantile patriarchy, a form of power sustained by the family, military

glory, patriotism and the accumulation of capital. Here it is possible to understand how male violence has served as a means to preserve capitalist and elite men interests.

Salazar and Pinto (ibid) argue for the recognition of an internalized masculine hegemony. Here certain social values are promoted as superior, serving the interests of the oligarchy and the subordination of the masses. The patriotic values constructed and promoted are the defence of the family, of an optimal lifestyle (in coherence with class, and I suggest adding race and gender) and the accumulation of capital. Those in the elite live in constant fear or robbery and plundering by the dangerous "others". It is also worth noting that this fear and extreme embrace of wealth and feeling of superiority was enacted by second class Europeans who came to the Americas and experienced a sudden increase in their social status (Bengoa, 1998). Here they could be what they could never strive for in their home countries. Past economic frustrations and unattained desired for wealth and nobility probably exacerbated practices of domination in this new life context.

The coloniality of power is articulated in particular ways to promote elite interests. Here a Eurocentric worldview where capitalism is naturalized and where "white", heteosexual, Christian males conform an elite according to a way of thinking about the world (patriarchal, catholic, capitalist, militarized) that suits their particular interests is presented as superior. How these particular values are presented and promoted as universal is the key to maintain a system with such brutal inequalities. In this case the males of the lower classes are the ones risking their lives in military battle in the name of values that do not benefit them at all. Somehow this system needs to be naturalized and internalised by those positioned in different social locations. This is of course inconceivable to avoid any resistance coming from below. The coloniality of power needs to operate through sophisticated systems of oppression and domination, where the entanglement of multiple actors and institutions needs to be in place. Resistance is of course inevitable as well. The internal enemies have been main actors of social movements over the years and subjected to systemic violence from the state without much success.

The way violence is legitimated to protect the interests of the ruling elite can be describes as promoted through a "school of patriotic masculinities destined to discipline man of the lower classes[8]" (Salazar and Pinto, 2002, p. 23). The masculinity of Chilean

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[8] My translation

homeland and the enduring power of the Chilean oligarchy have been defined as a unique trait within Latin America (ibid). The Chilean philosopher José Bengoa (1998) defines the Chilean state itself as an expression of masculinity, power, authority and authoritarianism. Chileans continue to be labelled as generally respectful of authority and used to having someone in charge with a firm hand.

Another main component of the coloniality of power relating to Chilean masculinities in a particular manner is religion. Once the mercantile system had been institutionalized the State and National Army needed an ally who could contribute with moral prestige (ibid). It is through the allegiance of churchmen that the mercantile system was further legitimized and backed up. These *holy men* would go where they where needed after the military exercises to alleviate misery, hunger, pain and death, to support orphans and widows, forming the hypocrite facade that the system itself constructed to deal with its own conscience (ibid., p. 36). During the nineteenth century the relation between Catholic Church, State and Army was permanent and organic. The combination of two conflicting logics, the authoritarian and violent State and Army and the humanitarian and charity logic of the Church, led to a necessary separation of state and Church. This was a logical step for men needing to act in ways consistent with their beliefs (ibid). But this of course did not mean an actual separation of power relations. Most aristocratic families had one or more male members of their families who joined the church. These men founded hospitals, schools, condemned individuals and practices of the lower classes in the name of morality, collected inheritances, donations and participated directly in politics, among many other activities.

The relation between historical masculinity of power and the *holy men* can be summarised as based on their continuous participation in family issues (political, social, commercial, military sphere), their respect for patriarchal leadership and their use of family patrimony in non-accumulative ways, in coherence with a charity spirit, promoting the "genuine oligarchic generosity" (ibid). This combination of ethical consistency and political ingenuity served to maintain the ongoing system of domination and had very low performance when it came to eliminating misery (ibid., p. 39).

By paying attention to the different axes constituting the coloniality of power a different and more complete understanding of the constitution of diverse and particular gender relations is possible. The historical analyses presented illustrated how a capitalist and Eurocentric logic is presented as universal, serving as a basis for the control of

lower classes, their exploitation and indoctrination. Authority is patriarchal, military and enacted by the State, the Army and the Church through their mutually favourable relation that serves to legitimate the state of affairs. Chilean hegemonic masculinities are patriarchal, heterosexual and Christian, reinforced through violence and a sexist promotion of conservative family values, where women contribute to the surplus value. To focus on either aspect separately or as predominant does not enable an understanding of the mutual constitution of these spheres of power. It is not my intention here to create a fixed and universal understanding of masculinities in Chile. This historical analysis however can help identify general trends in Chilean history, which are in a constant process of transformation, but are also still visible in the current society where a same logic continues to be in place.

I would like to continue by addressing some specific historical aspects of the relation between European colonizers, indigenous peoples and how the idea of Chile came about. This historical perspective is needed for have a better understanding of current relations between Mapuches and Chileans.

5.4. Chilean Nation building process and the Mapuche

This section is meant to help contextualize the analyses of gender constitutions in the Chilean. Gender aspects are not directly analysed, but the impossibility of discussing gender constitution without references to the historical context serve as a reason to include the issues discussed here regarding historical relations between Chileans and Mapuches.

As it is common in Latin America it was the Creole descent habitant who fought for independence and autonomy from the European colonizers. For Mignolo (2005) "white Creole and Mestizo/a elites, in South America and the Spanish Caribbean Islands, after independence from Spain adopted "Latinidad" to create their own postcolonial identity (…) *Latin* America is not so much a subcontinent as it is the political project of Creole/Mestizo/a elites" (p.59). The whitening process of Chileans relates to Creole consciousness and their desire to be recognized as white. Mignolo (ibid.) identifies its contradictory nature:

> "Creole consciousness was indeed a singular case of double consciousness: the *consciousness of not being who they were supposed to be* (Europeans). That being as not-being is the mark of the *coloniality of being*. Afro-Creoles and Indians do not have the

same problem. Their critical consciousness emerged from not even being considered *human*, not from not being considered *Europeans*" (p.63).

The history of Mapuche ("people of the land") and Chileans is considered unique in Latin American history, because the Mapuches are the only Indigenous peoples whom where never conquered by the Spanish (or by the Incas before). Mapuches rights to independence and sovereign territory where recognized through the signing of official treaties establishing a specific border between Chile and Mapuche territory (Richards, 2010).

As argued in the section discussing intersectionality, *mestizaje* (denoting racial and cultural mixture) served as a Nation building discourse during the war of Independence led by the Creole elite. How mestizaje was signified changed according to the purposes being sought by those making the claims. How Mapuches incorporation and representation in the *mestizaje* discourse changed in different contexts and historical moments serves to illustrate this point. During the war of Independence, the Mapuche served as a symbol of braveness (because of their struggle and not being conquered by the Spaniards) and justification for war against the dominant Spaniards. The Chilean patriots also wanted the Mapuche to be on their side, and in this context "the rebel Indian represented love of the soil of the fatherland and irrevocable liberty, high values that had impelled them to fight victoriously during long centuries against the Hispanic conquistadors and against the royal army[9]." (Casanueva, 1998, cited in Richards, 2010, p. 61). From a Eurocentric perspective Mapuches are more valued by associating them with traits of hegemonic masculinities such as braveness, patriotism and warrior skills. This symbolic incorporation failed and "most Mapuche sided with the Spanish during the war of Independence, preferring existing treaties to an unknown future with the "patriots"" (Richards, 2007, pp 3-4).

During the nation building process *mestizaje* became an assimilationist ideology that sought to dissolve minority ethnic and racial identities into a homogeneous Chilean identity (Richards, 2007). Mestizaje served as a nationalist discourse serving as a base for *myth of a common origin* (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Lighter skin continued

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[9] How colonial representations of hegemonic masculinities related to violence and war was explored in the section dedicated to the constitution of Chilean masculinities. I believe that it can be assumed that the higher visibility and respect of Mapuches in Chilean society in comparison to many other Indigenous peoples inhabiting Chilean territory relates not only to them being majority, but also to their unique history of undefeated warriors and the value assigned to this identity.

to be privileged in accordance to the earlier racial hierarchies (Richards, 2007). The shift from Spanish to Chilean domination can be conceptualized as a shift from external to internal colonialism, the power changed hands, but the same *logic of coloniality* remained in place.

Mapuche autonomy was initially respected, but after efforts of incorporating them into the nation failed, and the emergence of economic and geopolitical interests combined with scientific racist ideology, they were depicted as an impediment for Chilean progress. The uncivilized, barbarous Indians had to be conquered. In 1859 the leading newspaper, El Mercurio, referred to Mapuches as underdeveloped being, whose "intelligence has remained at the level of scavenging animals", comparing them to a wild horde whom it is urgent to "chain or destroy in the interest of humanity and the good for society" (Pinto, 2003 cited in Richards, 2007). In coherence with this discourse the State began a war of extermination, known as the "pacification of the Araucanía[10]" (Richards, 2007). The Mapuche control of lands in the Chilean south created a territorial discontinuity, seen as an obstacle to national integration and the determination of borders between Chile and Argentina (Sznajder, 1995, p.20). "Two extremely violent waves of military conquest (…) finally achieved de facto Chilean sovereignty and created territorial continuity in the south of Chile" (ibid., 1995, pp.20-21), putting an end to their control over their ancestral lands, being forced into reservations, or so called *indigenous reductions*. These reservations have been heavily declining over the years, being lands usurped by landowners and collective property privatized (Calbucura, 2008).

"Since the loss of control over their lands, the Mapuche's main concern has been their integration into Chilean society-and its corollary, the loss of their ethnic identity" (Sznajder, 1995, p. 21). They have still not been recognized as peoples in the Chilean constitution, being considered just another citizen. Before the harsh victimization that occurred during the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990) they benefited from the socialist agrarian reform, being however portrayed "as peasants like other rural Chileans, not as indigenous peoples with collective and cultural rights" serving the socialist and Marxist discourse of class struggle (Richards, 2007, p.5).

In contemporary Chile the discourse of mestizaje has been replaced by the discourse of multiculturalism. Patricia Richards (2010) has been studying the Mapuche

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[10] Southern territory in Chile inhabited mainly by Mapuches, who are also referred to as *Araucanos*.

for over ten years and has written extensively about gendered, racialized and classed aspects in a historical and contextualised perspective. She refers to the current state policy as neoliberal multiculturalism. Multiculturalism usually refers to the effort of liberal democratic governments to accept and embrace ethnic differences and remedy past wrongs, promoting indigenous participation (ibid. p. 65). Racist hierarchies are not dealt with, being diversity recognized without taking any actions to deal with power inequalities entailed by racial structures (ibid).

It is important to notice that the shift towards multiculturalism took place during a neoliberal reform in Chile[11], "broadly characterised by an export-based economic strategy, elimination of trade barriers, decentralisation and the elimination of universal social services" (p. 65). Richards argues that "multiculturalism has become an important means of generating consent for neoliberalism" (p.66), being "rights and recognition are granted to the indigenous only insofar as they do not threaten state goals in the global economy" (ibid). Neoliberal development is thus privileged over indigenous rights, and indigenous peoples and their concerns have been constructed as irrelevant. This related to the tendency of seeing Mapuche as peasants instead of ethnic minorities, addressing their problems as a class issue, being redistribution privileged over recognition (ibid). Mapuche communities are struggling against Transnational and national companies constructing Hydroelectric dams, airports, highways, corporate fisheries and garbage dumps in ancestral territory. Richards (ibid, p. 68) points to the fact that national and foreign timber companies own three times more land than the Mapuche in ancestral territory.

It seems that "to the extend that citizens demands conflict with the economic and ideological goals of the state, they will not be met" (Richards, 2004, p. 10). The relationship between indigenous peoples and the state has been historically distinct, considering that "the state is the contemporary representative of the entity that usurped their territory, killed many of their ancestors, and had altogether devastating effects on their way of life" (ibid., p.13). From the states perspective the goal of the citizenship discourse is the creation of a common sense of national identity as part of a nation building process. The conflict between these two perspectives is evident.

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[11] During the dictatorship (1973-1990) Chile began a process of Neoliberal reform carefully planed by the US and their famous Chicago Boys. This extreme right wing Neoliberal reform was both prior and more severe than any other in Latin America (Richards, 2010, p. 67). This extreme neoliberal policies continue intact alter the dictatorship.

Neoliberal multiculturalism emphasises indigenous access to the market promoting ethno tourism, marketing of handcraft products, etc. The creation of a chain of Mapuche pharmacies is another interesting example of the ongoing commodification of indigenous culture. In this sense Mapuche culture has become a brand to be sold (p. 69).

CONADI, the National Corporation of Indigenous Development has been criticised for elaborating their programmes and policies without Indigenous input, currently they are supposedly promoting participation. The policies and programmes are market oriented and indigenous peoples are encouraged to look towards the future, to embrace development. Their main problems are defined as poverty-based and ameliorative polices have been prioritized (ibid., p. 70).

The official discourse of the Chilean State regarding indigenous peoples can be exemplified through the discourse of CONADI. When explaining the purpose and objective of this State Corporation they claim that they intend to "protect and promote the conservation and recognition of the contribution that ancestral cultures have done and continue to make in the conformation of our Nation[12]". CONADI urges indigenous peoples to "feel proud to bear the blood of those who where the first inhabitants of this corner of the world". Referring to the importance of creating opportunities and spaces for indigenous peoples, they state that: " indigenous peoples and those who do not belong to any originary community should recognize and feel proud of the roots that gave life to our Chile". In this quote it is possible to identify patriotism and Eurocentrism prevalent in Chilean discourse. Indigenous peoples are seen as a contribution to Chile, the Chilean Nation is the primary and hegemonic actor. As Quijano (2000) and Lander (2000) have argued regarding Eurocentric thought, Europeans generated a new temporal perspective of history where colonized people where relocated with their histories and cultures in the past of the historical trajectory. This way of thinking is still recognizable in this exampled, where indigenous peoples represent the roots, the past, the origins of Chile, but no apparent relation to the present or future which belongs to the Chileans.

Recognition of autonomy claims is nowhere visible, and they are supported as long they conform to the dominant culture. Richards (2010) further develops the process through which Indians are currently portrayed as Terrorists, and

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[12] My translation. Original Spanish text available at www.conadi.cl

incarcerated under a Terrorist law created under the military regime the former Dictator Augusto Pinochet. Drawing on Hale (2004, cited in Richards, 2010), Richards explores how the Chilean state represents Indigenous peoples as either authorised, embracing integrationist policies and participating in governmental programmes, or as insurrectionary, representing those indigenous peoples who defy neoliberal multiculturalism by "pursuing recognition of ancestral rights and redistribution of power and resources" (ibid, p 72). Those defying state policies are subjected to state violence or persecuted as terrorists. The terrorist label serves as a justification for state violence. Violent conflicts and even deaths of indigenous peoples by State police are a common reality in southern Chile, Mapuche are represented as dangerous and their demands as illegitimate, especially by the right wing media (the conservative right is in charge of the media monopoly in Chile). Under the recently elected conservative rights wing President the situation can only get worse. Embracing republican and patriotic values the indigenous conflict is represented as in need of a *firm hand* able to control the situation.

Lets now refocus on gender aspects within indigenous communities in Chile. Their defence of an ideal of gender complementarity needs to be further examined.

5.5. Mapuche notions of Gender complementarity and rejection of western notions of gender and feminism

Rethinking gender from the south means opening the possibility for a diversity of gender constitutions. It means being aware of hegemonic, especially Eurocentric ways of thinking about gender and their naturalization. When discussing gender as an analytical category critiques elaborated by indigenous women where addressed. Some Mapuche women specifically have rejected the notion of gender and feminist causes promoted by Chilean women. Here I wish to analyse both the hegemonic conceptualization of gender being promoted by Chilean women and the notion of complementarity defended by Indigenous women as incompatible with western notions of gender.

Gender conceptualizations promoted by most Chilean women and by the State are based on Eurocentric understandings of gender equality. Women are seen a unified group suffering under male domination, priority is given to issues regarding economic

equality and male violence. Certain women are considered more vulnerable, but from a patronising perspective, as in more need of help. From an intersectional perspective the priority attributed to gender has to be questioned. Not all women identify in relation to their sex in a primary way, especially those of subordinated ethnicities, sexualities, races and classes. The ideal of social justice of most Mapuche women does not necessarily cohere with that of Chilean women, especially creole descent and middle class ones who are leading the feminist movement. When criticising the non-identification of indigenous women with feminist causes the particular constitutions of gender being promoted need to be scrutinized.

But which aspects of feminism and what particular understandings of gender are being criticised and rejected by some Mapuche women and on which grounds? The Peruvian born-Chilean anthropologist Ana Mariella Bacigalupo (2003; 2004) has been studying Mapuche identities and colonial politics of gender, sexuality and power in southern Chile. She has encountered similar reactions among Mapuche women.

> "Rural Mapuche women have often found "First world" feminist theory and Chilean feminism irrelevant, misguided, and ethnocentric because of its claims that female subordination, powerlessness, and the way gender is constructed are universal. They react negatively to feminist notions of a self-making, selfdetermining subject. Mapuche women and particularly *machi* do not define themselves solely in relation to women but in connection with an indigenous community, a worldview, a practice, a way of healing Rural Mapuche women do not work individually or as a group against native men, but with them. If feminist theory is going to be diverse and inclusive of the voices and experiences of native women, it must attend to the contextually specific ways in which they represent themselves and the way ethnicity, class, and education interact dynamically with gender in their self representation. (…)This involves working together with their menfolk to eliminate oppression and violence (sexual, racial, class), strengthen their communities, and foster grassroots development projects" (Bacigalupo, 2003, p.49).

Given that the feminist movement in Chile has been mostly middle class and "white" (within the Chilean context), it is understandable that not all women, especially indigenous and poor women wish to identity with their ideas. Gender equality is presented as an already elaborated ideal not open to re-construction and re-articulation in an on-going inclusive critical dialogue between different women and men. If gender equality is presented as necessary for a more developed society, this conceptualization is prompt to be faced with discontent, given the already dominant view of indigenous communities as less developed. It is useful to further analyze how a hegemonic

understanding of gender, has been imposed as part of a *developmental fallacy* (Dussel, 1995)*,* being gender mainstreaming associated with more developed and conscious governments, being gender itself naturalized, without interrogating its colonial legacy, universalist assumptions and contextualized nature. It seems like a developed country has to function according to *western* standards of gender equality.

Many indigenous communities in Latin America, among them the Mapuche in Chile, argue for the idea of gender complementarity as the colonial difference that distinguishes western patriarchal gender relations from indigenous ones. For some who argue for the idea of complementarity as a pre-colonial reality, gender equality as promoted by western standards is considered as not applying to them, because they would not relate to each other in these unequal gendered ways. Here a dichotomous opposition between pre-colonial indigenous and (post-) colonial western gender relations is constructed and the first ones are being idealized because of their non-violent, non-hierarchical and romantic nature. Gender conceptualizations are crucial to decolonization, but arguing for the return to an idealist past and the duality reaffirmed through the notion of complementarity are problematic. Mapuche are also a highly heterogeneous group, where a minority can be considered as trying to live according to pre-colonial costumes. Many Mapuche are now Catholics, and others have assimilated to Chilean culture. Discussions surrounding authenticity are quite complex, and who is a real Mapuche has been defined in different ways, from different perspectives and in different historical moments.

Freya Schiwy (2007) points to the difference between arguing for complementarity as *reality* or as an *ideal* that was compromised by the colonial experience. She affirms that many indigenous women are questioning gender paradigms in the process of decolonization and are understanding indigenous cultures as necessarily dynamic and in need of re-invention, in stead of hanging on to an idealized past. How gender complementarity is being promoted by indigenous communities is therefore in the process of change as well, and it is important not to simplify this ideal, as well as it is necessary not to romanticise it. Others are arguing for complementarity in fundamentalist terms, arguing that a complete return to past ways of living and relating is the only solution for a better existence and for living according to their *real* traditions.

Following Lugones (2007) understanding of the modern/colonial gender system presented in chapter four its is important to analyse how in the interaction between different cultures, where one is dominant and imposed, new racialized and classed

gender arrangements where created. This means going beyond a simplistic opposition between indigenous gender relations and European ones, because the encounter created different gender arrangements with a complex differentiation where heterosexism, capitalism, racial classification, and patriarchy interact under particular historical circumstances. This could mean that an understanding of gender relations in pre-colonial societies has to be valued in order to understand changes in social structures, but that these should not be idealised, homogenised or seen as separate and purely accessible gender relations.

Any reference to the past is rooted in the current perspective one is situated in; history is not an objective reality accessible to anybody. And how something is *remembered* or how historical events are narrated is a changing process, and it is important to be conscious of how one sees that which we want to see, and how what we want to see positively makes us blind as well. Because it is not possible to access the past in any direct way, it is more adequate to analyze the effects of these forms of constructing reality, and what kind of world and gender relations they construct and promote. How something is remembered, how reality is constructed and represented to be needs to be understood as serving specific purposes in society. Idealizing gender complementarity as a concrete pre-colonial reality can serve the purpose of viewing societies that have been historically constructed as less developed and inferior, as originally living according to an ideal that is now strived for by *developed* societies, constructing them as superior in a way. The need to romanticise pre-colonial gender relations by Indigenous communities can be viewed as a form of *strategic idealism.* If not defended in fundamentalist terms and as a reality, but as an ideal serving the purpose of decolonizing oppressive gender constitutions, it could serve to promote other ways of constructing gender and to value indigenous knowledge and cosmologies.

The notion of complementarity has however certain problematic aspects. It is based on a heterosexual model promoting binary thinking. The construction of dualisms and oppositions has been itself identified with Eurocentric knowledge and colonialism (Lander, 2002; Schiwy, 2007). Gender complementarity has also been promoted by Catholicism arguing for the natural division or male and female roles, justifying women's association to the private sphere and their inferior participation in public roles and specific labours. Indigenous communities have argued that the difference lies in the values assigned to these opposites, and the notion of complementarity promotes the binary, but not the hierarchical assignment of values, therefore none of the parts is

constructed as inferior. The inherent heterosexism however, seems not been as criticised because of its colonial nature by Indigenous communities, even though research suggests that many indigenous peoples did not share the ideals of masculinity, femininity and heterosexuality promoted by colonizers. In the next section dealing with pre-colonial masculinities in Chile the constitution of genders in non-binary or heterosexist terms is explored presenting the research of Anna Mariella Bacigalupo (2004). This analysis could suggest that not all past gender relations are being idealized in the same way. It would be adequate than to ask why gender complementarity is embraced but Indigenous communities and not the constitution of non-heterosexist sexualities and genders.

5.6. Pre-colonial and colonial masculinities in Chile: Mapuche and Spanish masculinities

Bacigalupo (2004) has made a unique contribution to an understanding of gender identities of male and female *machi* (Mapuche shamans) in the colonial period, paying attention to the contextualized intersections of gender, ethnicity and power. She rereads "machi gender identities in the colonial period by taking colonial power dynamics into consideration" (p. 495). Here I wish to draw on certain aspects analyzed and reinterpreted by Bacigalupo in order to illustrate how gender constitutions need to be critical of hegemonic knowledge production, historically situated and understood in their interaction with other social categories. Her research is far more complex and wider than the aspects taken into consideration here, and only specific and simplified examples will be taken from her investigation.

Taking the theoretical framework introduced earlier into consideration I argue that she contrasts Mapuche[13] and Spanish perceptions of *machi*, visibilizing how these representations are situated in different geopolitics of knowledge. She presents how these different perspectives necessarily produce different understandings of gender constitutions and misinterpretations of specific practices, when these are separated from the historical and contextual frameworks that construct them with specific meanings. How colonial Mapuche practices and culture are interpreted is particularly problematic

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[13] Bacigalupo (2004) refers to *Reche* in stead of *Mapuche*, because they were not known as Mapuche until mid eighteenth century. I use Mapuche to avoid confusion for the readers.

when constructed from hegemonic knowledge positionalities, serving domination, oppression and the naturalization of a Eurocentric world.

Ana Mariella Bacigalupo (2004) analyses how different perceptions of Mapuche sexuality and gendered identities where used to justify different purposes of domination and political agendas. According to their Christian, binary and heterosexist ideals of masculinity male *machi* shamans where represented as devil worshipers, gender inverts, effeminates, sodomites and perverts. This representation served as a justification of evangelization and Spanish colonization. Mapuche warriors, on the other hand, where represented as brave, masculine, barbaric and dangerous. This representation served to justify Spanish military defeat and Mapuche enslavement. Both representations of Mapuche men where contradictory and posed serious questions for Spanish colonizers and their ideals of masculinity and femininity.

Bacigalupo (ibid) explores how Spaniards arrived in Chile with their Eurocentric system of social classification that served as a rationale for domination. They represented Indigenous males in ways that would reinforce their superiority and their notions of masculinity. They admired only those male characteristics coherent with necessary association of sex, gender and power. In this case they admired Mapuche warriors, their strength and bodies, this admiration has to be situated in a context of defeat, considering that Mapuches where never conquered having developed sophisticated warfare skills since their defeat of the Incas.

The gendered identities of *machi* shamans described by Bacigalupo are a particularly interesting case. *Machi weye,* male shamans in Mapuche culture, where highly valued and respected. *Machi weye* where co-gendered males who combined feminine spiritual power with masculine political power, they practiced cross-dressing, had homosexual practices among men, invoked hermaphroditic warrior spirits and "oscillated between embodying femininity and masculinity in varying degrees" (ibid. p. 498). The fact that these (according to Spanish representations) devil worshipers, gender inverts and perverts where so valued and respected in Mapuche culture was incomprehensible for the colonizers. In Mapuche ideology the association of co-genderism, spirituality and warfare was not conceived as problematic or contradictory, on the contrary, it enabled co-gendered *machi weye* to combine feminine spiritual power and masculine political power.

Even though sexual practices among men have been reported as common and not stigmatized in colonial Mapuche culture, Spaniards would regard a variety of

practices and costumes as unmanly and proper of sodomites. Particular gender assumptions and observations about colonial *machi* where made (and continue to be made) from a Eurocentric logic, recognized as universal, transhistorical and transcultural. Spaniards would naturalize a relation between sex and gender, where each sex is naturally associated with specific gender performances, dress codes and manners (ibid., p. 503). Clothing, body adornments and jewellery considered only appropriated for women in European culture where therefore perceived as signs of effeminacy and sexual inversion in the Mapuche context. The co-gendered identities of *machi weye* where interpreted as necessarily performed by hermaphrodites, even though most *machi weye* had "normal" male genitals. Bacigalupo points to the fact that *Machi weye* had a co-gendered status, but this did not mean that they had both male and female genitals. They could become masculine and feminine but never women. This co-gendered status allowed them access to spiritual and political power.

The relation between genders and genitals was signified differently by Spaniards and Mapuches, even though both recognized the categories of women and men, only these two categories where considered natural by the Europeans. Europeans also valued masculinity and men over femininity and women. Bacigalupo argues that "the value placed on co-gendered identities and gender transformation and the Spaniards abhorrence of gender inversion, were founded on the two groups different valuations of masculinity and femininity" (p. 514). In Mapuche culture a men "who abandoned his male gender to become a machi weye, a nonman, did not undergo a profound loss of status, privilege, or power, because womenhood and femininity where socially valued. A Spanish men who became effeminate and lost his manhood, however, lost the privilege men held over women and effeminates in Spanish society" (p. 514). It is said that according to Mapuche cosmovision equilibrium and harmony are basic principles, therefore the notion of complementary genders and equal vale assigned to both parts.

The relation between sex, gender and sexuality was also understood differently by both cultures. Mapuche recognized and valued at least one gender identity aside from women and men and accepted many different sexual acts (ibid., p.513) Bacigalupo interpreted their view of sexuality and gender as performative, and not as natural consequence of their biological sex (ibid., p. 513). Mapuche men engaged in same sex acts, but it was Spaniards who labelled them as sodomites. At that time homosexuality as a concept did not exist, neither was it constructed as a permanent identity. Current interpretations of Mapuche culture and *machi weye* label them as homosexuals, but this

label does not make sense if we situate these sexual practices in the historical moment and social context in which they were enacted with specific purposes.

With time and through experience Mapuche learned to suppress, deny and criticize the sexual practices abhorred by colonial agents and priests (ibid., p. 509). From the hegemonic Christian Eurocentric perspective these sexual practices where considered unnatural, because they did not lead to reproduction, and where therefore sinful and despicable. The label of sodomites served Mapuche inferiorization and constructed Spaniards as more masculine in comparison. The persecution of sodomites promoted by the Spanish Inquisition also justified the extermination of those presumably engaging in these acts. Another colonial differentiation and association is the one constructed between passive and active sexual intercourse, where penetration and activity are associated with masculinity, and being penetrated and passive with femininity.

Bacigalupo (2004) further explores the colonial legacy in contemporary understandings of homosexuality and gender in Chile. She argues that contemporary Mapuche and Chileans assume colonial meaning of homosexuality, being popular Chilean male homosexual identities associated with passivity and effeminacy. In this sense Spanish understanding of sodomy colonized Mapuche ideology. Many Mapuche claim that that homosexuality was a colonial introduction, possibly wishing to avoid negative labels associated with homosexuality in the current Chilean heterosexist context. However, it does not make sense to refer to homosexuality in colonial contexts, because sexuality was not signified in those terms. This does not mean that sexual relation among men did not occur of course. The point here is that gender constitutions are interpreted differently because they are constructed from different geopolitics of knowledge. From a Eurocentric understanding gender constructions are more likely to be pathologized and to be put out of context, which means changing their meaning and interpreting them as non situated transhistorical categories. The binary and heterosexist understanding of gender hegemonic in Eurocentric thought distorts other ways of constituting genders in other contexts and historical moments.

It was my intention to relate the southern gender perspective with concrete illustrations of Chilean history to argue for the strength and necessity of such an understanding of gender constitutions. In order to conclude a closer consideration of the limitations and strengths of this theoretical framework has to be developed.

6. Concluding Remarks

By reviewing and analysing the theoretical developments of the authors presented in this thesis I have wanted to explore southern understandings of gender. Thinking from the south was motivated by a critical understanding of hegemonic knowledge production and gender theorizations and the consequent need for decolonization in social sciences and gender theories.

One of the main strengths I see in this theoretical approach to gender is that it enables an understanding of contemporary racialized, classed and gendered inequalities with special focus on the historical legacy of colonialism. By not focusing on gender alone its complex articulation with other social categories and different gender regimes at the cross-roads of the colonial experience are explored and a wider range of differences, ambiguities and contradictions are visible. For example, the location of Mapuche women among the poorest sector of society in contemporary Chile can be explained in different terms. Instead of representing them as unskilled, uneducated, backward, lazy and in need of help, an understanding of historical social classifications constructed from a Eurocentric racist perspective can be seen as still dominant and reinforcing this stereotype. An intersectional perspective and recognizing the different values assigned to the articulation of these categories from a dominant Eurocentric knowledge visibilizes structural constraints and how Mapuche women's situation has been historically promoted through this logic. The context of global Eurocentred capitalism further locates their experiences and how interests of transnational corporations and different elites are being favoured in market driven world, further promoting the poverty and exclusion of Mapuche women.

Another strength is that this theoretical framework is flexible and by highlighting mutual constitution of different spheres of social existence and historical contextualization in places it enables a better visibilization of differences and exceptions, as well as commonalities.

It is also a world perspective from the south, with a critical understanding of Capitalist values and Eurocentric notions of development. It challenged the dominant conception of more advanced societies and the naturalization of inequalities in terms of internal social and cultural characteristics of given societies. In this sense it serves not only for a different understanding of Latin American reality but it urges developed

societies to be critical about their status as well. If one sees the world in these terms one might think twice before complaining about immigrants taking ones work or enjoying supposedly own privileges. How the privileges of developed societies are naturalized and promoted as not dependent on others suffering and poverty needs to be criticised.

I also see certain limitations or complicated aspects in this theoretical framework. Of course because of its flexibility and the numerous aspects considered there is no clearly identifiable way of empirical operationalisation. Clarifying the contradictory and ambiguous ways genders are constituted under different historical conditions of possibility also means complicating its understanding. But I do believe that grand theories trying to simplify a complex world are not useful if they do not serve social justice from below.

How power is understood from the logic of coloniality can act as both a strength and a limitation. I did not get into this issue before because I am myself ambivalent about my own position regarding power. It seems that here power is understood as possessed by dominant groups. The coloniality of power refers to a global Eurocentric capitalist form of power serving hegemonic interests. This particular form of power is reproduced on multiple levels, institutions and through social relations of people located in different social positions. The notion of power as something possessed by an elite has been criticised from poststructuralist understandings of power as a process. I believe in the importance of being able to locate hegemony and domination, but at the same time I recognise the risks of essentialising and homogenising. Even when epistemological aspects of hegemony, a way of thinking about the world that has been naturalized have been stressed, this model can still promote a negative perception of everything European and western. Perhaps this could be more a problem of how to interpret this theoretical frame than an actual limitation.

Another risk related to the previous one is the idealization of subaltern perspectives, relations and knowledges. The idea here is not to promote anti-European perspectives, but to be critical of all forms of fundamentalism, including indigenous fundamentalism and nationalism. However the recognition of Eurocentric knowledge and capitalism as global complicated the search for other forms of thinking. Resistance against such forms of domination tend to take the form of fundamentalist and nationalist struggles.

The focus on pluriversality and diversality however means that no particular way of thinking, no form of gender constitutions should become hegemonic and that

many worlds should be able to coexist. This can again be labelled as a form of idealism. In order to participate in a pluriversal world where many worlds coexist none of the coexisting worldviews can consider itself superior or barer of absolute truth. This again excludes the possibility of incorporating many forms of knowledge in this critical dialogue; especially religions that are trying to become universal and function in fundamentalist terms. Does this make this an inclusive or exclusive ideal?

The need for decolonization can be interpreted in different ways. As discussed in relation to gender complementarity, decolonization can be viewed as a return to an idealised past. Especially when colonialism is viewed as a destructive experience and the origin of all problems. When colonialism is seen as having produced a complete change in the previous way of life, decolonization can be equalled with returning to a different and better past. The problematic nature of this ideal has already been discussed when arguing for the difficulty in separating past and present and the need to focus on interaction as well as domination. I interpret the need for decolonization as the importance of recognizing hegemony and domination that has been naturalized through the process of colonization. Here the notion of coloniality of power serves as an excellent model to understand the enduring and invisibilized impact of colonialism. The change we should strive for should however be situated in the current historical conditions of possibility considering the ongoing process of change.

To locate the possibility of real change in the different logics and cosmologies of the subordinated might be a form of idealism. Here social movements and the subordinated masses play a key role, however they cannot be seen as necessarily having a liberatory or decolonizing impact. I agree that from subordinated perspectives a more inclusive view of social justice is possible. But everybody should have the possibility to see the world from below, to practice solidarity and to regain different locations as spaces of struggle. The academy should also be such a space of struggle and be more critically aware of how hegemonic and dominant interests have been served. Gender studies should remain a particularly potent discipline when it comes to think and act in favour of social justice and liberation.

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