

## Gender violence in northern Chile: intergenerational narratives of Aymara women

### Violencia de género en el Norte chileno: narrativas intergeneracionales de mujeres Aymara

Andrea Álvarez Díaz\* 

Facultad de Salud y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Las Américas, Santiago, Chile ([nalvarez@udla.cl](mailto:nalvarez@udla.cl))

Isidora Miranda 

Independent researcher, Iquique, Tarapacá, Chile ([isidora.c.miranda.h@gmail.com](mailto:isidora.c.miranda.h@gmail.com))

\*Corresponding author.

**Received:** July 20, 2023

**Accepted:** March 01, 2024

**Published:** March 15, 2024

**Recommended citation:** Álvarez Díaz, A., & Miranda, I. (2024). Violencia de género en el Norte chileno: narrativas intergeneracionales de mujeres Aymara. *Psicoperspectivas*, 23(1). <https://dx.doi.org/10.5027/psicoperspectivas-vol23-issue1-fulltext-3030>

#### Background

Violence against women is a transversal phenomenon that depends on their ethnic-racial origin, age, and social class, among other structuring situations. In indigenous contexts, it has been established that marital violence intersects with other expressions of gender violence, which has not been systematically explored with Aymara women. However, recent statistics from the Chilean Network against Violence Towards Women (2023) show that northern regions have the highest rates of women affected by domestic violence.

#### Aims

In this article we analyze the narratives of three generations of an Aymara family from an intersectional and decolonial feminist perspective with the aim of understanding their biography and the meanings associated with gender violence and ethnic-racial discrimination.

#### Method & procedures

Based on a qualitative research design, life stories were constructed focused on the transmission of experiences linked to their gender, recapitulating different moments of the life cycle, own culture and milestones sociohistorical. Four women self-identified as Aymara participated, all residents of Northern Chile and related to each other by kinship ties, such as: maternal grandmother, mother, oldest granddaughter and youngest granddaughter.

#### Results & discussion

Conceptually, an intersectional and decolonial perspective was assumed to analyze gender violence in an intertwined manner with ethnic-racial inequalities. Patterns of generational change in an Aymara family are described, and variations with respect to the gender mandates prevailing in each historical era, as well as tensions, agencies, and resistances that each narrator exercises individually and collectively in the face of gender violence. Life stories of the interviewees refer to intimate partner violence, domestic violence, ethnic-racial violence, symbolic violence, psychological violence, gynecological-obstetric violence, and sexual violence. All of them are characterized, in their stories, by the imbrication between the categories of gender, ethnicity/race and class, that overlap with each other in their experiences. The stories convey the importance of territoriality, closely linked to the meanings that they attribute to the place, permeated by emotions and experiences that make the place they inhabit, a part of themselves and their personal, family, and cultural identity. The possibility to recognize themselves, or not, as Aymaras is linked to the socio-historical context in which they are situated, and to the migrations they assumed as a family group, related to “chilenization” and subsequently to the family trans locality between the inland Valleys towards Arica, and later between Arica and Iquique. Regarding gender mandates, one of the greatest expectations that we observed in the narratives was to take responsibility for care and household tasks from an early age, determined in part by economic precariousness. The gender mandate regarding care was repeated from one generation to the next, although with critical and reflective questioning. Female sexuality is represented as a taboo, with restrictions on its

expression and little information management, except for the instructions transmitted from woman to woman about menstruation. Regarding love relationships, each one has questioned the meaning to establish a relationship, straining the gender mandates on marriage and the emotional bonds that they defend in discursive terms, but that in practice they don't fully assume. Women's agency is transmitted intergenerationally around mandates linked to work and effort, which is redefined as economic autonomy and a tool for their independence and to face gender violences.

### Conclusion

These women biographies are articulated with the family narrative and some sociohistorical milestones that relevantly mark each era. In each period, different expressions of violence are observed in family, educational, work, health, and community spaces, denoting an intersection of oppressions and resistances. Gender patterns are transformed intergenerationally, opening the way to processes of female emancipation, strengthened by the valorization of their Aymara identity. The reappropriation of their cultural identity is seen as they are reflecting on the structural origin of inequalities, and with their labor development, as a promise of social mobility. We hope to continue advancing in the understanding of meanings that racialized women construct about their daily lives, making visible new categories of intersectionality, such as sex-gender diversity and functional diversities, barely explored in Aymara women.

**Keywords:** Aymara, decolonial, gender violence, intergenerational transmission

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**Credit:** Conceptualization: IM, AA; Methodology: IM; Formal Analysis: IM, AA; Investigation: IM; Resources: AA; Writing - original draft: IM, AA; Writing - review & editing: IM, AA; Supervision: AA; Project Administration: AA; Funding acquisition: AA.

**Financial support:** FONDECYT Iniciación Project No. 11201128; Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo (ANID), Chile.

**Conflict of interests:** The authors declare to have no conflict of interests.



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