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Crafting Affect through Memory: Venezuelan Narratives of Belonging and Exclusion in Chile

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Crafting Affect through Memory: Venezuelan Narratives of Belonging and Exclusion in Chile

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Abstract

The economic and political crisis in Venezuela has led to a large influx of Venezuelans living abroad, and Chile is a significant receiving country. By analyzing ethnographic interview data as well as literature on the meanings of home and belonging, I argue that the element of loss experienced by many Venezuelan emigrants and everyday exclusions in Chile combine in narratives highlighting longing, uncertainty, and alienation. Venezuelan migrants articulate a duality between wanting to return to the country that cannot provide a home for them and being excluded in the country that can provide a home for them. As a result, ideas of home and belonging juxtapose their experiences in Chile.

Introduction

In the last few years, Venezuelan migrants have been making their way to Chile in large numbers. The situation in Venezuela, which has been categorized as "one of the worst economic crises in Latin American history", has resulted in mass insecurity and violence (Hanson, 2018, p.356; c.f. Guizardi, 2021). As one economist, Ricardo Haussman, notes, the fall of the Venezuelan GDP has resulted in the most significant economic crisis not caused by war. He explains, "The GDP has fallen by well over 50 percent. That is double the size of the U.S. Great Depression. It is double the size of the Greek crisis…The consequence of that collapse is expressed in the fact that the minimum wage today is $6 a month. That means that the minimum wage does not buy two eggs a day" (Walsh, 2019, Q&A, para. 1). With devalued currency, restricted electricity, limited running water, as well as rising levels of extreme poverty and the inability to purchase food or find services becoming more common, migration has become a vital strategy to foster greater stability (Kurmanaev, 2019; Gandini et al., 2020; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). The huge influx of Venezuelans abroad—numbering around 5.2

million in 2020—has resulted in a significant migrant crisis for several Latin American countries (Finn & Doña-Reveco, 2021, p.8). Chile, one receiver of Venezuelan migrants, has watched its immigrant population change tremendously. Migration had increased prior to the recent flows of Venezuelan migration, with growth in the migrant population quickening in pace with the settlement of Venezuelans—resulting in the migrant population growing from 1% in 1990 to 8% in just 2019[i] (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021, p.2). There were around 455,000 Venezuelans living in Chile in late 2019 and 30.5% of foreigners in Chile are Venezuelans (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021, p.2; OAE, p.5). Although Chile was once understood to be an "emigrant-sending country," its status as an "immigrant-receiving" and economically stable country has been confirmed with the growing arrival of Venezuelan migrants (Finn & Reguero, 2020, p.45; c.f. Doña-Reveco & Mullan, 2014).

From 2019 to 2021, the Chilean state utilized a specific visa, called the Democratic Responsibility Visa, to administer Venezuelan immigration. Although this visa was framed as an example of the Chilean government doing its part to assist with the migration crisis, it meant that those who entered the country as tourists could not apply for a longer-term visa from within Chile, making it more difficult for Venezuelans to flee their home country[ii] (Finn & Reguero, 2020; Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021). Furthermore, the most recent immigration law—which was signed in April 2021—allows the Chilean state to deport any unauthorized migrants without review (Ink, 2021). Doña-Reveco & Gouveia (2021) write, "most Venezuelans are entering Chile at the precise moment when migration policies and immigrants' rights are at the forefront of political debates" (p.2). Thus, these challenges of entering Chile and the public debates over migration are formative in shaping Venezuelan experiences as they settle in the country.

The context of Venezuelan migration and everyday experiences of immigration frame how Venezuelans understand their presence in Chilean society, often prompting desires to return to Venezuela. Many Venezuelan migrants engage in transnational practices that keep them connected with family members or friends who are still in Venezuela or other neighboring countries, and many migrants voice deep emotional and physical distance between themselves and their country of birth. The element of loss within Venezuelan migration, the bureaucratic hurdles of entry to Chile, and the everyday experiences of exclusion exacerbate feelings of uncertainty, longing, and alienation, complicating what it means to be at home and what it means to belong for Venezuelan migrants, especially when they want to belong in a place that does not allow them to return. As a result, many Venezuelan migrants feel as if they do not belong anywhere, juxtaposing longing to return to Venezuela with concerns that belonging in Chile is an insurmountable challenge.

Methods

This thesis draws on ethnographic data collected by Dr. Megan Sheehan, Maria Schrupp, and Patricio Carrasco. Fieldwork in Santiago, Chile, was conducted between May and August 2019. Drawn from a larger data set, here I analyze twenty-three semi-structured interviews done with Venezuelan migrants living in Santiago. Using these transcribed interviews, I identified recurring themes and created a codebook. In summer 2021, I coded all the interviews according to broader topics such as discrimination, time, belonging, and memory, and began analyzing the coded interviews for salient themes, taking a grounded theory approach to data analysis (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012). In my analysis, I paid particular attention to the narrative form that migrants used to describe their settlement and feelings of belonging in Chile. This research

builds upon work that examines Venezuelan migration and migrant experiences in Chile. By specifically analyzing belonging and the transnational nature of Venezuelan migration, I argue that migration coupled with loss of home and everyday exclusion exacerbates feelings of uncertainty, longing, and alienation.[iii]

Migration and the complex nature of belonging

Home and belonging are often thought to be linked. It is assumed that being at home automatically results in feelings of belonging. Yet, some scholars work to unlink this and explain that "home(s) can, in fact, elicit a range of feelings and responses, among which belonging is but one possibility" (Andits, 2015, p. 314; c.f. Ahmed, 2003). Thus, Rapport and Dawson (1998) write, "Home is rather a contested domain: an arena where differing interests struggle to define their own spaces within which to localize and cultivate their identity" (p.226). Home is paradise for some and "a prison for others" (Rapport & Dawson, 1998, p.236). Thus, it cannot be assumed that the idea of home brings about belonging. Moreover, "the English word *belonging* is a fortuitous compound of *being* and *longing,* of existential and romantic-imaginary significations and associations" (Hedetoft & Hjort, 2002, p.xi). As a result, belonging can be split into two parts: "'being' in one place, and 'longing' for another" (Hedetoft & Hjort, 2002, p.vii). Many Venezuelans are forced to make a new home for themselves in Chile after the economic collapse of Venezuela. Yet, their migration and settlement bring up the idea of home and what kind of home Venezuelans experience in Chile.

Furthermore, place and situatedness is one aspect of belonging that is often particularly impactful for immigrants. Lovell (2003) explains that "Belonging itself also appears to be at least partially predicated upon locality or a memory of locality. In addition, belonging to a place is

viewed as instrumental in creating collective identities" (p.4). Feelings of belonging can result in a deeper connection with a place or location. However, these sentiments of belonging cannot manifest without a connection to a space. Raffaetà and Duff explain (2013), "Indeed our data suggest that belonging is a social and affective achievement that is *necessarily linked* to the materiality of specific territories. It follows that the material and social capacities associated with identity and belonging cannot be performed without an affective dimension, and without some affective attachment to place" (p.341). In addition, belonging affects the notion of space. Lattanzi Shutika (2011) writes, "Sense of place also recognizes that locales are not necessarily limited by the physical world but can be bounded cognitively through perceptions of belonging and exclusion" (p.15). Separated and yet still emotionally bound to Venezuela even while in Chile, many migrants struggle to connect to Chile and feel as if they belong in this new place.

As migrants navigate a shift in country, accompanied by new social environs, political contexts, and everyday efforts to settle into life in the host country, transnationalism and transnational connections are often engaged to foster connections with places both near and far. Schiller et al. (1995) defines transnational migration as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (p.48). Many people practice transnationalism through the sending of funds to family or friends in their home country or by building homes in their place of birth (Schiller et al., 1995). Transnationalism allows people to exist in two places simultaneously and provides them with the opportunity to still identify with the place they once left. However, transnationalism is not always a positive experience. As Andits (2015) writes of Hungarians in Australia, "Rather, transnational connections can be empowering, alienating, disorienting, or even have no significant impact at all…Instead of transcending the distances that have separated

Hungarians in Australia from their communities of origin, transnational connections have sometimes alienated people and made these distances seem ever greater" (p.327). Furthermore, transnationalism cannot fully encompass every migrant experience. As seen with Lattanzi Shutika (2011), "the experiences on the ground in Kennett Square and Textitlán reveal a complex expression of binational existence that does not easily fit into the conventional understanding of transnational processes" (20). It is important to note that not all migrants engage in transnational practices, but they take on deep meaning and significance for many Venezuelans. The separation from loved ones and ongoing wishes to return to Venezuela influence migrants' ongoing connections with the country and transnational practices.

Loss of home and wishes to return

For many Venezuelan migrants, their entry to Chile is marked by the loss of opportunity, certainty, and the land many called home. In fleeing Venezuela, migrants left behind their houses, life savings, family connections, friendships, and the life they once knew. Left with these overwhelming feelings of loss and the memories of the old Venezuela, many migrants are unsure of what to make of the idea of home and how to start over in Chile. Many Venezuelans do not view their migration as something completely voluntary. As Koechlin and Eguren (2018) argue that in the current context, the risks linked to the movement of the Venezuelan population have increased because of the need to seek options to ensure daily survival. In an interview, María, a Venezuelan migrant who had been living in Santiago for two years, was asked about the Venezuelan migration experience. She struggled to explain the differences in migration experiences between Bolivians, Peruvians, Argentinians, and Venezuelans.

"There is a big difference between leaving home and finding something better…and having nothing when you leave home…without wanting. I mean, because they compel you, you know, rather, they are two totally different things. I believe that if you ask any Venezuelan, 'did you leave because you wanted or because you felt obliged to?' and they are going to tell you, 'Because I just couldn't anymore, or rather, I could no longer be, or rather, I could no longer have a stable life, I could no longer support my family.'"[1]

María directly defines Venezuelan migration as forced, contrasting the Venezuelan experience with other migration experiences in Chile. The loss within the Venezuelan experience is deeply felt in this quote. Not only is it painful to remember, but it is difficult to articulate—seen with María's pauses and her attempts at finding the correct words to explain the situation. Moreover, by suggesting that one can ask any Venezuelan and receive the same answer, María implies the widespread nature of collective loss and reduces diverse Venezuelan experiences as similar.

Furthermore, the collective experience of loss contributes to the acknowledgement of Venezuelan nationality in Chile. In an interview with another Venezuelan woman, Carmen, who had been in Chile for around three years, after being asked about her experience in Chile, she mentions the number of Venezuela flags and the persistent Venezuelan pride, explaining:

"That the…no, because…I feel that the Venezuelan lost everything. That the only thing that they can remember is…where they come from. Do you understand me? And nobody can take that away, I mean. Do you understand me?"[2]

[1] "Hay una gran diferencia entre salir de tu casa y buscar algo mejor… y no tener nada al salir de tu casa… sin querer. O sea, porque te obligan, sabes, o sea son dos cosas totalmente diferentes. Y yo creo que si tú le preguntas a cualquier venezolano, '¿tú saliste porque querías o porque te viste obligado?' y te va a decir, 'porque ya no podía', o sea ya no podía estar, o sea ya no podía tener una vida estable, ya no podía mantener a mi familia.'"

[2] "Que los... no, porque... yo siento que el venezolano perdió todo. Que lo único que le quedó recordar que... de donde viene ¿me entiendes? Y nadie te puede quitar eso, o sea ¿me entiendes?"

By presenting nationality as permanent, the depth of the Venezuelan loss is apparent. So many Venezuelans have experienced losses, and migrant narratives emphasize that the only thing that many have left is their nationality. Carmen's hesitation and questioning demonstrate how particular this loss is to the Venezuelan experience and how hard it is for people on the outside to fully understand the depth of the loss.

This loss is often tied to the remembered national prosperity. According to Walsh (2019), Venezuela was "once one of the richest countries in Latin America" and many Venezuelans migrants continually referred to this[iv] (intro, para. 2). At one point in another interview, a Venezuelan explained, "I tell you my country was a prosperous country."[3] Thus, many Venezuelans migrants idealize their memories of Venezuela and remember the time before the fall through rose-colored glasses. Leonardo, a Venezuelan migrant who had only been in Chile for 23 days at the time of the interview, responded to a question asking if he would ever return to Venezuela in the future. He says:

> "I plan to return to my country when the levels stabilize, maybe it is going to cost a little, more than I think. I plan to return to my country, I am just passing through, I am on loan, the Chilean government lent me. In fact, my Visa is temporary, and suddenly, another temporary one will arrive and the other permanent one will arrive but that one for me is not permanent."[4]

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[3] 'Te digo mi país era un país próspero."

[4] "Yo pienso volver a mi país, cuando los niveles se estabilicen, a lo mejor va a costar un poco, más de lo que yo pienso. Yo pienso volver a mi país, yo estoy aquí de paso, estoy prestado, lo que hizo el gobierno chileno conmigo es prestado. De hecho, mi Visa es temporal, y de repente vendrá otra también temporal y vendrá la otra permanente, que para mí no es permanente."

As seen with Leonardo, many Venezuelan migrants refer to Venezuela as “my country” and have this ongoing attachment to Venezuela. In doing so, they classify their migration as something impermanent and view their time in Chile as a situation in which they are being loaned.

As a result, many migrants frame Venezuela as their home—one that has ceased to exist except in memory. Hedetoft and Hjort (2002) explain, “‘home’ and ‘belonging’, thus conceived, are affectively, rather than cognitively, defined concepts; the indicative, seemingly neutral, and very simple statement ‘home *is* where we belong’ really means ‘home is where we *feel* we belong” (p.vii). Many migrants feel as if they belong in Venezuela and thus consider Venezuela to be their home. However, the Venezuela that exists now cannot be an adequate home. As Patricia, a migrant who had been in Chile for two years, notes, “There is no longer a country left for us. We have nothing left, that which was our country, that disappeared.”[5]

However, even with the knowledge surrounding the current state of the country, many migrants consider Venezuela to be their home. Like Leonardo and Patricia, another migrant Antonio, who had been in Chile for eight months, classifies Venezuela as “my country.” He explains:

> “Because I know that the situation in Venezuela is not going to change from one day to the next, it is going to take years, even if this government leaves. I would like to return to my country…that I miss so much. It is not going to be the same because all my friends have already left as well. And being in the same Venezuela I know that I will miss my friends so much like I miss them here, because they already emigrated. And that is going

[5] “Ya no nos queda país. A nosotros no nos queda nada, eso que fue nuestro país, eso desapareció.”

to be the most difficult part of returning to Venezuela, of not having the same people either."[6]

Antonio's explanation raises the question of what makes a nation a nation and how social connections impact feelings of belonging. For him, it will be difficult to return to Venezuela knowing that the people that were there are dispersed now, and yet, he still wishes to return to the country that he considers to be his home, weighing social and spatial considerations of home.

Returning to Venezuela is not currently feasible and this inability to return to Venezuela places migrants into a transnational existence that revolves around a constant state of uncertainty and longing. Although transnational connections can be positive or affirming for migrants, I view the transnational experiences of Venezuelans migrants as emotionally demanding. Leaving family and friends behind, many migrants feel the weight of the responsibility to help those still in Venezuela or feel distraught to be separated from them. Crystal, who had been in Chile for one year and seven months, responds to the question of if she would return. She says:

> "I think, but over there is my mom, there is my dad, I mean it is difficult…I am separated, but emotionally I am with them, my physical location separates me, but my mom and my dad are always going to be my mom and dad and they are far away."[7]

Loss and leaving mark the Venezuelan experience. However, the rosy memories and wishes to return to the country complicate the notion of home for Venezuelans living in Chile. Andits (2015), from her ethnographic research with Hungarian migrants living in Australia after the fall

[6] "Porque sé que la situación en Venezuela no va a cambiar de un día para otro, va a llevar años, aun saliendo este gobierno. Me gustaría regresar a mi país… que extraño muchísimo. No va a ser lo mismo porque ya todos mis amigos también ya se han ido. Y estando en el mismo Venezuela sé que voy a extrañar a mis amigos tal como lo extraño aquí, porque ya todos emigraron. Y eso va a ser lo más difícil de regresar a Venezuela. De no tener la misma gente tampoco."

[7] "Yo pienso, pero allí está mi mamá, allí está mi papá, o sea es difícil…pero emocionalmente estoy con ellos, a mi lugar físico si me desapegue, pero mi mamá y mi papá siempre van a ser mi mamá y mi papá y están allá lejos."

of the Berlin Wall, writes, “the persistent longing for a Hungary long gone and the repulsion provoked by its contemporary form complicates the feeling of being at home somewhere in the world” (328). Venezuelans cannot go back to Venezuelan, and yet, they long to return and wish to belong in this place that cannot be their home. As a result, their notions of home and belonging become juxtaposed, suggesting that full belonging anywhere may be a foreclosed dream.

Everyday exclusion in Chile

In addition to the overwhelming feelings of loss, the everyday experiences of Venezuelans work to reinforce the notion that Venezuelan migrants are often not fully accepted in Chile. Although some speak positively of their experiences, noting that “Chile has welcomed me with open arms,”[8] many acknowledge feeling anti-immigrant sentiment in Chile, even if it is not directed towards them. Everyday experiences, especially those regarding labor, housing, and visas, create barriers to social integration and make it difficult for migrants, especially Venezuelans, to feel as if they are wanted or welcome in Chile.

As a starting point, migrant groups are often lumped into the stereotypes of their national identity, especially regarding labor and skills, and find themselves treated differently depending on their country of origin[v] (Sheehan, 2021; Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021; Stefoni et. al, 2017; Rojas Pedemonte and Dittborn, 2016). Venezuelan migrants are usually separated into two groups: “professionals” and “‘criminals’”. Those who are “professionals” are associated with a higher level of education and are contrasted with “‘reserved and hardworking’ Peruvian domestic laborers’” and “‘impoverished’ Haitian janitors” (Sheehan, 2021, p.2). Thus, in comparison to

[8] “Chile me ha recibido con los brazos abiertos.”

the Venezuelan "'criminals'" and other racialized migrant groups, professional Venezuelans are desirable and "'good immigrants'" (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021, p.10). As a result, Venezuelans can voice anti-immigrant sentiment about other migrant groups and even other Venezuelans—complicating notions of who belongs in Chile. Furthermore, Venezuelans with professional degrees often find easier pathways into higher wage jobs, positioning them in competition with Chileans and complicating their ability to integrate into Chilean society (Sheehan, 2021; Doña-Reveco & Mullan, 2014). In an interview, a Venezuelan migrant, Sofia, explains a message she received over LinkedIn after being asked about her working experiences in Chile. She says:

> "Last week, just last week a person was telling me that they are not hiring Venezuelans, that they don't like to work with Venezuelans, that we were unpleasant, that it was the worst thing that ever came across the border."[9]

Since 2016, xenophobic responses towards Venezuelan migrants—whether they be over social media or in-person—has been on the rise (Guizardi, 2021). As "professionals" and migrants, Venezuelans are accused of stealing jobs and taking work away from Chileans. However, as migrants, Venezuelans are desired for the cheap labor they provide. In general, migrants are often willing to accept lower-paying and more strenuous work in comparison to Chileans, which can cause concern regarding unemployment. Thus, Venezuelans migrants are caught in a paradox where they are simultaneously sought after as inexpensive professional work but are also not hired because of their nationality (Sheehan, 2021, p. 9; Stefoni et. al, 2017; Rojas Pedemonte and Dittborn, 2016). As Sofia goes onto explain:

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[9] "La semana pasada, justo en la semana pasada que una persona me estaba diciendo que los venezolanos no los estaban contratando, que no les gustaba trabajar con venezolanos, que nosotros éramos desagradables, qué era lo peor que había ingresado a Chile lo que está pasando en la frontera en este momento."

> "I believe that Chileans look at the foreigner, like that they came to take away their work because there's a lot of people that they tell you in companies, and you see the whole deal, that they tell you that the Chilean is too lazy to work, while as a foreigner you will work maybe double what the Chilean works for half the money."[10]

Yet, it is important to recognize the fact that migrants can often be exploited by bosses, companies, and organizations. As Guizardi (2021) argues, migrants are hugely significant in the job insecurity and informalization of the economy that is successful in both developing and more modestly growing countries in terms of production. Many migrants are underemployed in Chile, and many are quite aware of the inequalities between themselves and Chilean workers regarding pay, labor, and overall inclusion (Sheehan, 2021). According to Muñoz (2019), 62% of highly educated migrants—who are mostly Venezuelans and Peruvians migrants—work in lower grade jobs while in Chile.

Moreover, many Venezuelans migrants struggle to find housing and adequate living arrangements in Chile. Immigrant discrimination in the unregulated market of Santiago not only determines where migrants can live, but also if they can get housing at all (Torres, 2013). In addition to having the necessary documentation, identification, and money for housing, getting an apartment often involves a prior connection or current contacts in Chile. Furthermore, migrants note that apartments and housing in Chile "costs a lot."[11] Sofia, who had been living in Chile for 2 years, explains again:

> "For example, us in the apartment where we are now, we paid $310 and it is an apartment of two rooms, two bathrooms, with a storage room, so for us when we saw how much

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[10] "Yo creo que igual los chilenos ven al extranjero, como que viene a quitarle el trabajo porque hay mucha gente que te dice en empresas que tú vas y todo el tema, que te dicen que el chileno es muy flojo para trabajar, mientras que un extranjero te va a trabajar el doble quizás de lo que trabaja un chileno por menos plata."

[11] "Cuesta mucho."

another apartment of the same caliber it is cheap but for a Chilean it is expensive because they say that they can get a same lease for 250. So, I believe that that yes, that is what complicates it for us, how they always want to collect more because you are a foreigner."[12]

As a result, many migrants end up living with other migrants in cramped, small apartments—some Venezuelans mention six or eight people living together in one two-bedroom apartment. Torres (2013) explains that being a foreigner complicates the ability to find dignified housing and living (p. 322). Moreover, many Venezuelans live in clustered settlements with significant numbers of fellow migrants, making informal contacts and significant engagements with Chileans more challenging. A Venezuelan said: "this floor has 31 floors and many apartments per floor, I don't know…I have not seen a Chilean."[13] Although some migrants have Chilean friends or partners, or feel generally close with Chileans, others do not. When asked about his impression of Chileans, Alberto, explains:

> "Look, no, until now I have not had the luck of having a good friendship or a relationship with a Chilean, like I told you earlier, they are reserved, or maybe it is their culture and those that I have connected with in the jobs I had before, look, terrible relationship, terrible, terrible."[14]

The repetition in this narrative demonstrates the depth of sadness for this migrant in failing to have an amicable relationship with a Chilean. Furthermore, the Democratic Responsibility Visa

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[12] "Por ejemplo, nosotros en el departamento donde nosotros estamos, nosotros pagamos 310, $310.000 y es un apartamento de dos cuartos, dos baños, con bodega, entonces para nosotros qué vemos cuánto cuesta otro apartamento del mismo calibre, es barato pero para un chileno es caro porque ellos dicen que ellos pueden conseguir un arriendo igual como en 250. Entonces yo creo que eso sí a, eso es lo que más nos complica, que siempre como que te quieren cobrar más porque eres extranjero."

[13] "Ese edificio que tiene 31 pisos y como miles de apartamentos por piso, no sé, todos son, no he visto un chileno."

[14] "Mira, uno no, hasta el momento no he tenido suerte de tener una buena amistad, ni relación con ningún chileno, como te lo dije anterior, son como cerrados, o sea debe ser su cultura y los que me he relacionado en los empleos que he tenido antes, mira fatal la relación, fatal, fatal."

leaves many migrants and their families stuck in "limbo" and unable to migrate. By requiring documents that involve the participation of the Venezuelan government, migrants recognize that the government is trying to prevent them from emigrating (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021). Finn and Reguero (2020) argue that "the actual purpose of increasing pre-migration bureaucracy (requiring a visa and a criminal background check issued by the undemocratic country from which the individual is trying to emigrate) is an attempt to reduce the number of Venezuelans choosing Chile as a destination country" (p. 57). Additionally, most applications are ultimately denied. According to the OEA, the Organization of American States (2020), from April 2018 to December 2019, 55,300 out of 207,038 applications were successful in securing a visa (p.11). As a result, Venezuelans migrants can be barred from reuniting with their family and friends, further hindering their ability to consider Chile as a home (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021).

Overall, many migrants feel as if their status as a Venezuelan and as a migrant closes the door on them—literally and metaphorically. With the barriers surrounding labor, housing, and visas, Venezuelans struggle to connect to the land and make a home for themselves in Chile. These experiences, which could successfully make a home in Chile for Venezuelans, rather reinforce the idea the Venezuelans do not quite fit in Chile. This, in combination with the element of loss in their migration and wishes to return, worsen their feelings of belonging and bring about even more exclusion, making Venezuelans migrants feel as if they do not fit anywhere.

Conclusion

Stuck in a duality of an existence, Venezuelan migrants in Chile often voice longing to go back to a place that they cannot return to paired with narratives of their experiences of alienation

and exclusion in Chile. Many migrants voice a desire to belong in a place where they cannot stay and are unable to belong in a place where they often experience rejection. Many of the Venezuelans interviewed noted that they wanted to go home to a place that no longer exists and at the same time, sharing that they do not want—and so often, are unable—to make a new home for themselves in Chile. Hedetoft and Hjort (2002) define belonging as "'being' in one place, and 'longing' for another" and I argue that this aligns with what many Venezuelan migrants experience in Chile (p.vii). Due to the infeasibility of return to Venezuela and widespread exclusion in Chile, currently, full belonging anywhere is often impossible to realize.

Moreover, Chile's most recent immigration law further complicates feelings of belonging for migrants in Chile—both Venezuelan migrants as well as other prominent national groups. According to Ink (2021), "Under the new law, Chilean authorities do not need to have a criminal complaint against a foreign national to deport them. Anyone who entered without inspection can be deported en masse – without a review of their case or an asylum screening" (Law Reform Section, para.3). With these new set of laws, many Venezuelans may feel further excluded and unwelcome, worsening their already precarious feelings of belonging. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic, which has taken a toll all around the world, has worsened anti-immigrant sentiment in Chile (Ramírez, 2020). Thus, I will conduct further in Santiago, Chile from June to December of 2022, further exploring how feelings of belonging and exclusion have changed in the three years since the data presented here was collected. In light of the framing of longing for a place that no longer exists with narratives of everyday exclusions, my research will address the questions: Have Venezuelan migrants and communities have been able to foster connections to Chile over the last few years or has longing for Venezuela deepened over time? Have migrant perspectives on "home" changed with the most recent situations in both Venezuela and Chile? Lastly, I

wonder, are these narratives particular to Venezuelan experiences in Chile or do they exist in other countries as well?

Notes:

[i] According to Finn & Reguero (2020), "For more than three decades (1970–2002), immigration originated from five main countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Spain" (p,45). Most Peruvians, Argentinians and Colombians arrived before 2017 whereas most Venezuelan and Haitian immigrants started to arrive after 2017 (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021, p.4).

[ii] For the Democratic Responsibility Visa, the Chilean government requires "a visa and criminal background check issued by the undemocratic country from which the individual is trying to emigrate" (Finn & Reguero, 2020, p.57). Since Venezuela must provide these documents, many are delayed and "'Venezuelans are at a standstill [not knowing whether to wait for the visa or immigrate without the visa]" (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021, p.4).

[iii] All the names are pseudonyms, and all the translations are my own.

[iv] During the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, Venezuela was an ideal destination for Chilean exiles and many Chileans "'sought refuge'" in the country (Finn & Reguero, 2020, p.56; Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2021, p.11).

[v] Many migrants note that Haitian immigrants are particularly targeted and experience more anti-immigrant discrimination in Chile.

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