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Older Women and Situated Knowledge: A Contribution from the Narrative Productions Methodology

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Abstract

This article offers a reflection on the value of narrative productions methodology (NPM) for the field of old age studies, relying on a research experience with older women activists from the group Bordadoras por la Memoria (Chile). First, we describe the social exclusion that affects older people and older women in particular, who are characterized in conventional science as passive and vulnerable subjects. Second, we refer to NPM research, exploring its potential and innovation in the field of the study of ageing, as well as its contributions to the recognition of the agency of participants and their visibility as subjects of knowledge. Third, we provide an empirical description and theoretical-methodological reflection on this experience of working with NPM. Finally, we argue for narrative productions as valid forms knowledge among older women that challenge conventional understandings of old age, renders older women visible, and recognizes them as political and knowledge subjects.

This article offers an important contribution for ageing studies and social policies. On the one, this proposes an innovative methodological approach in to the study of old age by focusing on older women as political and knowledge subjects. On the other hand, the

study can guide policy and program design that they recognize of the heterogeneity and needs of older people.

Keywords: Feminist gerontology, Ageing, Narrative productions, Old age

As one ages, the likelihood of experiencing multiple forms of exclusion increases (Scharf & Keating, 2012), making it difficult for people to participate fully in society (Walsh et al., 2017). The risks of social exclusion are even more pronounced for specific groups of older people, such as women, dissidents and people with disabilities as a result of the accumulation of mechanisms of discrimination such as gender, race, ethnicity and class that are exacerbated at this stage, while the avenues to avoid them diminish (Serrat et al., 2021). This has been a phenomenon scarcely addressed in the international agenda and the scientific literature has focused on the exclusion of other age groups or on responding to the poverty and unemployment affecting the older population (Scharf & Keating, 2012; Serrat et al., 2021). At the same time, a public discourse has been established that describes increasing longevity as a risk that threatens economic stability and socially available resources based on a rhetoric that places older people as dependent, unproductive and a burden on the social system (van Dyk, 2016).

In this context, in recent years a broad debate has been developing around human rights that advocates for the recognition and dignity of historically excluded groups such as women and the elderly, while encouraging the state to actively intervene in reversing and transforming processes of social exclusion. These efforts have been translated into regulations that seek to recognize situations of vulnerability and specific discrimination affecting these groups, and to guarantee and protect their rights, as well as to strengthen

their recognition as subjects of rights (Gullette, 2017). In this scenario, the demands of the older population have begun to be integrated into the public agenda; however, the problems and specific needs that affect older women continue to be unaddressed. Older women are conceived only as passive beneficiaries of public policies (González & Lube, 2020) leading to the perpetuation of the marginalisation of this group in scientific, public and cultural debates (Freixas, 2021).

Western liberal thought, which has been the foundation of modern democracies from the 18th century onward, conceives the relation of subjects to state authority in the form of a contract between the state and free and equal individuals. However, since its origins, this pact has excluded women and has defined the male subject as the hegemonic subject, that is, as the referent of modern and Western scientific thought, making him the model of the human, of enunciation and of knowledge (Segato, 2016). This modern binary pact requires the subjection of women as an 'other', marginalizing them from public and political space and limiting their actions to the domestic-private sphere. Feminism has a long tradition of denouncing this exclusion of women and other oppressed bodies throughout human history. One of the main challenges for contemporary feminism, as a social, political and cultural emancipation project, is to try to transform the material conditions of life these groups experience.

Nancy Fraser (2008) has written extensively on the subordination and injustices that affect certain groups, contributing to feminist politics a two-dimensional conception of justice. Her theory of justice proposes as inseparable both a paradigm of redistribution, which responds to the demand for equality in the distribution of resources and wealth, and a paradigm of recognition of differences (i.e., cultural change to revalue identity struggles). In the case of older women who have been configured as a 'subaltern subject for social thought

(González & Lube, 2020, p. 6) and who have been invisible in Western thought and have been dismissed as political subjects, this conception of justice helps resignify traditional notions of the modern Western hegemonic subject and propose a substantial shift towards their emancipation and recognition as a collective (Segato, 2016).

Furthermore, conventional models of ageing often reinforce a universal and homogenous representation of older people, promoting a one-size-fits-all approach to ageing and old age (Van Dyk, 2016). Along with researching women using men as a reference group, this also involves including gender as a fixed variable that does not interact with other variables and limiting the study of gender to women, as if they were the only group whose gender is in question (Gullette, 2017; Freixas, 1998). As a result, an androcentric and masculine view of ageing has been reproduced, based on a linear pattern of the life cycle that does not take into account the specificities of women's life courses or the cultural context in which they live their lives (Gullette, 2010). At the same time, the production of gerontological knowledge focuses on an approach to the organic-functional dimensions of deterioration in old age that is not very innovative. This approach reproduces ageism and a relationship of subordination with the elderly that barely recognizes the transformative political will and agency of older women (Navarro & Danel, 2019). In recent decades, feminist research has denounced male bias in the production of knowledge and has called for the need to transform traditional models of science, while highlighting the absence of feminist methodological references that are contributing to this production (Martínez et al., 2014).

The narrative productions methodology (NPM) can be construed as a social justice project that makes older women visible and recognizes them as subjects of knowledge, while at the same time contributing to the creation of an alternative knowledge that challenges the uniformity of hegemonic discourses on old age and conventional

gerontological production. In this article we reflect on NPM in the field of old age studies, focusing on a research experience that explores the construction of old age among older women activists in Chile. This methodological option is characterized by the intention to engage in an ethical research praxis committed to social change, by building horizontal relationships between researcher-participants and by promoting the co-creation of knowledge starting from the agency of the participants.

To address this objective, we approach the dominant narratives of ageing, old age and women and explore the contribution made by feminist gerontology. Subsequently, we delve into NPM and situated knowledge as a transformative feminist political research approach. We then focus on the NPM procedure and its application in a remote format as used in the research project “Old women and activists: the deconstruction of hegemonic old age from agency and associativity”. Finally, we reflect on the use of NPM, the legitimate knowledge produced by older women and how it can help expand gender justice and equality in research practice.

Ageing, Women and Feminist Gerontology

Dominant narratives about old age act as cultural scripts that guide social representations of older people, as well as guiding how older people themselves self-perceive (Gullette, 2017; Villar & Serrat, 2015). The hegemonic discourses that have been produced, distributed and consumed on this topic unify a normative old age (Fairclough, 1992). To the extent that the adaptations that individuals develop to the physical and functional changes of this life stage allow them to continue being productive for the neoliberal system, they are seen as successful by these discourses (Van Dyk, 2016). They reinforce a homogenization of this group based on the stereotype of the old–young and deny and render invisible an old age that does not meet the normative standards of success–autonomy (Freixas, 2021; Van Dyk, 2016). These discourses also enforce the white,

European, male, heterosexual bias with which older people are represented in conventional gerontology, a bias which is replicated in public policies that constitute this group as universal and as opposed to the ‘other’ or deviant/different old person (Van Dyk, 2016).

In general, the scientific discourse has described older women as ageing in more precarious and vulnerable conditions than men concerning areas like care, access to health, services, economic assets, security and social protection systems, as well as well as a higher degree of disease and disability (Freixas, 2021; Gullette, 2017). In this discourse, old age is considered the stage in which gender and age inequalities are concentrated and experienced most starkly (González & Lube, 2020; Navarro & Danel, 2019). This assumption contributes to the reproduction of stereotypical and normative images of women’s ageing such that a discourse of the ‘old woman’ as the loving, passive, patient, submissive and tolerant grandmother who does not represent a threat to the system (Freixas, 2021; Gullette, 2010) coexists with another discourse that characterizes older women as fragile, dependent and weak with wide-ranging problems and needs (González & Lube, 2020; Freixas, 2021).

In the face of these hegemonic narratives, the resources and skills that older women have deployed throughout their lives and with which they confront old age and social exclusion are often made invisible (Freixas, 1998-2021; González & Lube, 2020). Feminist gerontology contributes to more complete and complex interpretations of women’s lives, investigating their life trajectories and the effects that sexual difference and patterns of domination have had and continue to have on their life experiences (Freixas, 2008). The analysis of gender in women’s experiences from this dynamic conception makes it possible to distinguish the differential effects produced by the gender order and their impact on women’s trajectories (Navarro & Danel, 2019).

In Latin America, older women as a generation have played a leading role in the resistance to dictatorships and the return to democracy in the Southern Cone countries, and

have followed trajectories linked to political action from their everyday-community contexts (Schild, 2015), something which cannot be excluded from their experiences as they grow older (Mazzucchelli et al., 2021). In this paper, we seek to broaden the understanding of women's ageing by proposing an alternative discourse that begins from the knowledge that older women activists of the *Agrupación Bordadoras por la memoria* produce collectively. Through their social practices, they construct subjectivities, realities and fictions that allow them to interpret, reproduce and transform the dominant system (Cabruja et al., 2000).

Narrative Productions and Situated Knowledge: A Transformative Praxis

In recent decades, feminist critiques of science have contributed to a profound epistemological and methodological redefinition of research, allowing it to be questioned as a hegemonic mode of production of truth (Martínez et al., 2014). In this paper, we understand feminist research as that research which includes among its assumptions the conviction that sex/gender difference affects, in some way, the elaboration of science and knowledge (Martín & Muñoz, 2014). Feminist research draws on a variety of methods and tools to offer an alternative science. Some of its features include: (a) valuing women's experiences as a resource for social analysis; (b) posing new research objectives (incorporating women's concerns); and (c) reflexivity about the researcher's position and the elements of inequality and power that affect knowledge production (Harding, 1998; Martín & Muñoz, 2014). However, the contributions of feminist epistemology to the debate are often concentrated at a theoretical rather than a practical level, which makes it difficult for other researchers to rely on them to guide their work (Martínez et al., 2014).

With this in mind, and with the goal of recognizing and making older women visible as subjects of knowledge, we proposed in our investigation a theoretical-methodological scaffolding between situated knowledge (Haraway, 1995) and the NPM as collective constructions with multiple voices (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003). Situated and embodied

knowledges are about partial knowledges, about limited localizations, about those of us who do the research taking a position, revealing our own interests, histories, prejudices and categories of oppression/privilege, and so on. To bet on situated knowledge is to emphasize that we do not pursue an ultimate truth, nor a universal or objective knowledge about female old age, but rather the partiality, the connections, articulations and unexpected openings that will make possible a broader vision stemming from the encounter between multiple agents (Haraway, 1995). From this perspective, the idea of an 'objective' object of study – the old age of that other/woman – is rejected, because its motivation does not lie in decoding, discovering or representing reality, but rather in pursuing diverse versions of the world (Haraway, 1995–1999).

In affinity with Haraway's proposal (1995-1999), we assume a socio-constructionist vision of reality, in opposition to the realist character of science. We consider that narratives have a constructed and constructive character "from and in the encounter" with different subjectivities. From this framework, the words are not collected from their textuality (i.e., what is said), but rather the way in which the participants want to convey their vision is recovered (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003). Thus, NPM offers an understanding of the story, beyond its registration, as an embodied narrative of collective construction that recognizes the agency of the participants and how they re-signify from their material and semiotic position while constructing their reality. In other words, they have a constructed and constructive character, in which the relativistic dimension, their pragmatic character and the action that is jointly developed intersect (Cabruja et al., 2000).

In the same way, the narratives produced as a whole are considered a valid vision and knowledge of the subject explored. They do not seek to represent essential features of the subjects who speak, nor to describe their position or experience exhaustively (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003), but rather the interest is in diffracting – that is, broadening

understandings, explanations and meanings about the phenomena by diversifying and complexifying the dominant discourses (Haraway 1999). In short, by positioning ourselves in terms of the production of situated knowledge and NPM, we set out to question the participants themselves, emphasizing their capacity for agency and authorship in the knowledge produced (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003).

Activist Oldies: A Research Experience¹ with NPM

To recognize older women as subjects of knowledge, we used NPM which considers the joint elaboration of a text that is constructed in different meetings between participants and researchers (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003). Furthermore, we adapted the methodological design to the COVID-19 contingency scenario, in particular given the health measures that focused on the elderly as a risk group, and severely restricted their movement outdoors and confined them to their homes (Mazzucchelli et al., 2021). This adaptation entailed immersing ourselves in the potential of virtual designs, adopting a remote format and incorporating other inputs for the realization of NPM in digital format. Initially,² and prior to the production of the narratives, we offered support and training to the participants in the use of a platform for virtual meetings with which, as it turned out, they were already familiar (zoom.es).

In a second stage, we met with the older women of the Agrupación for the joint elaboration of the narratives, holding a total of four virtual group meetings in which we co-constructed a hybrid narrative. Each session was recorded and lasted an average of 2.5 hours. At the beginning of the first session, we shared the objectives of the NPM and the procedure to be developed in each meeting. This consisted in discussing some topics and

¹ The research was approved by the Ethics and Biosafety Committee of the University of affiliation of the first author. It was carried out between March 2018 and June 2022, in Valparaíso, Chile. We worked with six older women from the group Colectiva Bordadoras por la Memoria, a women-only group that has been meeting regularly since 2016.

² It should be noted that, prior to conducting the NPM, we had conducted biographical interviews with each of the participants, a situation that made it possible to develop links and affect relations.

jointly constructing a narrative (valid knowledge) based on their knowledge and experiences. Subsequently, to introduce ourselves to the discussion, we reviewed a video of the programme “Adulto mejor”,³ and continued the conversation with the question: ‘Tell us about old age and your experience as older women’.

For each meeting we started the conversation by using images and/or videos with the purpose of provoking and awakening reflection on specific topics in the interaction with the others (Corredor & Íñiguez, 2016). The material used included references to the older population of a sexist and ageist nature or reflected on the official discourses of the National Service for Older Persons (SENAMA) about Chile’s positive ageing policy. Considering the turbulent social-political context in which we conducted this research, following the massive citizen mobilizations of October 2019, or the 18-O revolt, on other occasions we included relevant news items that were under public scrutiny. These were added to other news items or reviews that the participants themselves brought up or to which they had made reference in days prior to our meeting. These visual resources were of great help, as they facilitated the generation of dialogue and favoured the treatment of different themes that emerged spontaneously and that appealed to the interests and political involvement of the participants. Thus, the women narrated milestones, concerns, criticisms, expectations, actions, longings and projects for the political future of Chile.

On the basis of what was discussed, we drew up a first textualization of the discussion, which we worked on in the following three sessions by discussing and re-editing it. After the first session, the main researcher drafted the first text, which was then complemented and edited with everyone’s contributions. The main thread of the text, plus the fragments incorporated into it, were defined on the basis of those topics that were most

³ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jg69UAcdzlc>

debated and which the participants devoted most of their time discussing. All the members of the group participated in the first two sessions, and one member was absent from each of the subsequent two sessions for health reasons. However, these members gave their excuses through a group WhatsApp that we had set up for the research work. Likewise, through this group chat and by email, we shared the text produced together with the modifications that we had incorporated after each meeting. In this way, the participants who were absent from one of the sessions sent their contributions and comments in writing, and requested that they be included in the group debate and integrated into the text. This is the procedure we followed to elaborate, expand and edit the text until the narrative was approved by all participants.

During our sessions, each participant gave her opinion spontaneously, complementing what the other participants had said, exchanging points of view or expressing disagreement. As the main researcher, I tried to mediate so that each of the participants had the opportunity to speak and to prevent the discussion from turning into a monologue. I also expressed my own opinions, which interacted with theirs. Although I engaged in taking notes of the central ideas, I also tried to participate in the conversation along with the other agents. Therefore, following the NPM proposal, we managed to promote spaces of agency and collective resistance among older women in the face of a highly ageist and exclusionary social context (Freixas, 2008). In line with feminist epistemology, we claim with confidence that the NPM proposal aims to give a voice to older women, starting from their own points of view.

The Diffraction of Old Age as a Horizon of Social Justice

In view of the social exclusion of older women as subjects of rights and their marginalization from spaces of recognition and power we discussed above (Freixas, 2021), in this section we share some conclusions from the research carried out and the ethical-

political potential that the NPM offers to help broaden dominant knowledge of old age by introducing other versions ageing. To this end, we focus on some elements that allow us to contribute to this purpose.

As already mentioned, conventional science produces and legitimizes a homogenous discourse of older people, one which characterizes older women in particular in terms of frailty and passivity (Freixas, 2021). Our research experience with NPM suggests that this methodology helps to challenge this discourse by articulating and rendering visible women's experiences and voices, promoting their active participation throughout the research process, and recognizing their agency. In this way the narratives constructed through this process constitute valid knowledge in themselves, and a form of knowledge on which the researchers do not engage in subsequent interpretation. Moreover, our work with NPM was not circumscribed to a specific moment of the research, but rather it implied rethinking the way of doing science including the question of subject-object relationship of knowledge, the agency of the participants, the expert role of the researcher, the place of subjectivity-impartiality, and the topic of methodological purity. Given the virtual context through which we conducted the research, the use of narrative-visual-audiovisual resources in dialogue with NPM allowed us to incorporate other modes and elements of sensitive communication from the repertoire of visual and auditory language. Clearly, the process of constructing narratives was not linear and in the articulation of NPM with these resources, and through the questioning that was generated as a result, it was possible to deepen the discussion of some themes, nourishing and making the content discussed more complex, in addition to enriching our own understandings of the phenomenon. In this respect, we would argue that NPM favours the fluidity of textualization over the reproduction and interpretation of a conversation that is generated (García & Montenegro, 2014).

Following this research approach also made it possible for our initial positions to

shift and for us to develop reflections based on our personal and collective experience. Talking about the changes experienced in old age and how these were experienced most starkly under a pandemic and giving space to emotions such as sadness, anguish and concern about the future (Bordadoras, 2021) mobilized affect, collective support and allowed participants to reflect on each other's experiences. This, in turn, connected them to processes of greater vulnerability that some were experiencing and about which they were unaware as a group. In this way, they also used the NPM space to coordinate and establish other resources for mutual support and to generate strategies that would allow them to face the changes that as members of the group they were experiencing. We thus affected each other, which leads us to affirm that narratives are producers of meaning and are directly linked to action-transformation that, from the vantage point of an epistemology and science of objectivity, would not have been allowed (Cabruja, et al., 2000; Gandarias, 2014).

Our research also made it possible for us to deploy connections with the participants – partial, situated, embodied and non- transcendent – starting from different locations and in different forms. These connections were neither intended to represent nor to be about “the other” old women, but rather to enable us as researchers to join the participants and seeing together with them (Haraway, 1995). Undeniably, the articulation of subjectivities marked by the recent history of Chile,⁴ characterized by an ongoing social-political crisis, and the current constituent process, favoured the construction of a bond based on mutual affect, a shared recognition as women who, inhabiting differentiated positions in the social structure, could jointly elaborate other versions of the world and of old age, thus reproducing, dialoguing and transforming hegemonic knowledge. Although each participant came from a

⁴ This article is set against a backdrop of the social and political crisis in Chile and the struggles against institutionality that began on 18 October 2019. The mobilizations of the 18-O (social revolt) reflect a generalized malaise in society against inequality and the government's failure to implement structural reforms to unblock the enclaves of Pinochet's civil-military dictatorship (Heiss, 2020).

specific social context and with different activist trajectories, they did not all manifest the same intensity-openness, nor did they share the same referents and meanings in the debates that took place. This aspect was key, because from the vantage point of feminist practice, we need to recognize that we have also fallen into rigid and homogenizing definitions of oppressed groups – contributing to the reproduction and perpetuation of fixed identities.

In this line, we value NPM as useful for counteracting power relations in the research context and helping articulate (us) from a polyphony of voices based on the agency that we deploy (Gandarias, 2014). We opted for a textualization that, although it accounts for a narrative of collective production in which different voices are intertwined, enabled a polymorphic vision of the knowledge produced. It also helped integrate fragments that expose a differential view of each participant, regarding personal experiences or situations that the group wanted to highlight by giving them a special place in the text, as noted:

One of us also says that she has had unkind or hurtful behaviors toward her partner, unaware of this behavior within her prior to the pandemic. This has led her to know and confront herself from a place she had not previously meant. Reflecting on our old age confronts us with our own history, deep fears and the fear of thinking about the fragility of getting older [...] (Bordadoras, 2021, p. 2)

This type of assemblage in the narrative gives an account of a methodological approach that privileges the process over the product and the agency of the participants and their decision-making over the authority of the researcher during the process. In the same way, the narratives broke with the logic of data collection and subsequent analysis, assuming instead that the text produced is a place of theorization and joint construction, a critical knowledge that epistemologically disputes conventional knowledge. In this way, NPM contributes to women's experiences and voices being expressed, helping systematically excluded groups such as older women to contest spaces of recognition and

academic power.

On the other hand, recognizing the research field as a relational, dynamic space under construction, we forged an affective bond over the months of work. This bond was not idyllic, as there were tensions and difficulties. However, from the perspective of feminist praxis, conflict is not omitted or neutralized, and we recognize how the voice of the researcher is questioned during the research process, in our daily lives and also in the inside/outside position in which we place ourselves and the impact that this generates in the relationships we build (Gandarias, 2014). In this sense, there were occasions that generated discomforts, which stressed/affected and confused the main researcher in charge of the process. This situation was evident when the participants asked her to act in the role of a professional expert in the field of old age (to clarify doubts regarding public-health guidelines aimed at older people in pandemics) and not from the usual role of the researcher. Discomfort also arose when, from her corporeal experience that does not embody old age, she considered it pertinent to exclude herself from the debate on some topics, or it was the participants who removed her by arguing her lack of experience: 'when you have children you will understand' or 'you were not born under the dictatorship'. These situations led the researcher to recognize her dual role (as researcher and feminist-activist for the rights of older people) and its implications, and to appreciate this dual role, its articulation and the responsibility it implied in the fieldwork beyond the research in progress.

But they also contributed with new articulations and assemblages between the agents themselves, which led to shifts towards other modes and made it possible to problematize the power relations and effects that were being produced. Thus, these discomforts (Gandarias, 2014) prompted a review of the frustrations, fears and emotions that arose in the encounters with the participants and how these affected the research process itself. One of these reflections was about the boundaries between researcher/participants and how these

were extended or blurred by the sharing of a symbolic and valuable universe with the older women. This ideological affinity allowed for a great deal of proximity, although the participants did not share the same experiences and biographical milestones as a generation. Another relevant dimension to consider involved the cultural capital and the professional/technical training that participants possessed, because, based on this, they granted the researcher legitimacy as a professional researcher. Participants also recognized that, rather than being constituted as an expert requirement, as was initially interpreted by the researcher, this background and training could be read as what was expected from her in her technical role, based on the previous experiences they had had with other professionals or experts.

Our conclusion from this research process is that borders can thus be diluted or widened through a dynamic articulation that we construct in the field, which also shows how our own experiences and embodiments are manifested, produced and transformed in these contexts. These reflections also aim to recognize the importance of being honest and sharing with participants the disquisitions and discomforts generated by the research process. Particularly in this research experience, it also helped the participants to share with the researcher the roles she was playing – in terms of facilitating for the group – and at the same time allowed them to re-examine/evaluate their own work as a group in the context of the pandemic. It was precisely in the blurred boundaries between research and activism that bridges were built which further strengthened the links we were constructing during the research process, and that subsequently nurtured the textualizations and narrative work that were being produced. In this sense, it was not a matter of crossing the bridge and returning to the place of origin with the message of the other/old. Instead, bridging the gap allowed us to come together, link politically from the place of a common struggle and produce partial knowledge about old age from the standpoint of the experience of women activists.

In the context of our investigation, we use the metaphor of diffraction proposed by Donna Haraway (1999) to indicate that the forms of knowledge production, rather than representing reality as a reflection of it, offer a diversity of views that contribute to the phenomenon under study; therefore, they do not produce a displacement of ‘the same’, as reflection and refraction do. Thus, the results of our research propose displacements in the hegemonic discourses of old age which do not seek to represent ageing “as it is”, but rather to contribute to its understanding from perspectives produced by situated subjectivities. In this case, the narratives constructed challenge the social order and analyses of the situation of older people in Chile and the world that describe them as a marginalized group, abandoned by public policies, and about which a homogeneous image is disseminated exclusively on the basis of their vulnerability (Bordadoras, 2021). The narratives of the participants are thus constituted as practices of resistance, which confront the hegemonic discourses of conventional science that define older people as a passive group, with little commitment and few projects (Villar & Serrat, 2015). In this way, as they point out: ‘We hope to see the fruits of the revolt of 18 October and to be able to move forward in changing this perverse model that conditions and dehumanizes us (Bordadoras, 2021, p. 6). Meanwhile, they confront the hegemonic representation of older women (passivity, tenderness, quietness) through their own activism:

In this way we remain faithful to our values, to our history, socially committed to the processes of memory and to contributing to the transformation of a fairer Chile for new generations. (Bordadoras, 2021, p. 6)

Thus, NPM contributes to counteracting the power differences that are reproduced in the scientific endeavour and stands as a theoretical point of departure offering other visions of old age, women and activism.

Conclusions

This article addressed a research experience with older women activists in Chile based on NPM, pointing out the contribution of this approach to the recognition of women as subjects of knowledge and as a non-conventional approach to the production of gerontological knowledge. Feminist research makes visible, and values, women's knowledge and experiences to contribute to mitigate inequalities and to move towards necessary social transformation which dominant science has excluded (Martín & Muñoz, 2014). With this objective in mind, we developed a NPM with some specificities: we produced collective narratives, we made them in a remote (online) format facing the health context and social confinement prompted by the COVID-19 health crisis. We also adapted it by including other resources (visual-audiovisual-social networks) that enabled the development and continuity of the work in this exceptional context, as well as the inclusion of the participants from their different positions and roles. Through NPM, different voices emerged and were not reduced to a homogeneous and unique thought and account of old age. This approach helped generate partial and situated knowledges about ageing and the social-political context of Chile and the world. It also made clear that these forms of knowing give space to a broader knowledge produced by women and at the same time contribute to legitimizing it as a valid knowledge that can dispute the hegemonic and ageist assumptions about older people.

Finally, this article offers an account of a specific research experience with NPM, describing its procedures, tensions, adaptations, discomforts and displacements. Consequently, it contributes both to the research work of a feminist science, serving as a guide and orientation for other researchers (Martínez et al., 2014) and to feminist activism by making a strong case for the inclusion of older women in the feminist agenda, rendering them visible and recognizing the value of their contributions (Navarro & Danel, 2019). Thus, we conclude that this research experience with NPM highlights the transformative

potential of this approach, both in its content and in the relationships, it makes possible, highlighting the capacity for action through these and the mutual affect that a horizontal and committed scientific praxis fosters (Balasch & Montenegro, 2003; Gandarias, 2014). This methodological approach clearly leads to the production of a situated knowledge that confronts the persistent discrimination against older women, a group that has been systematically excluded from social recognition and rendered invisible.

In her theory of justice, Nancy Fraser (2008) adds a third political dimension to her two-dimensional understanding of justice – that of representation. In doing so, she tries to explain how demands for representation and recognition of justice in a globalized world break away from nation-state borders and point to cross-border emancipatory projects that articulate different demands beyond a specific territory, thus reconfiguring the traditional political space. NPM values the agency of the participants, their knowledge and experiences and generates conditions of possibility for them to influence the public sphere at the local-transnational level. The exposure and dissemination of this partial knowledge has the potential to contribute to the circulation of older women's demands (representation), transforming them and creating scenarios for wider struggles and demands.

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