

## Article

# FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE ACADEMIC: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AS AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR RESEARCHING THE EFFECT OF MIGRATION PROCESSES ON MIGRANT WOMEN'S IDENTITIES

## De lo personal a lo académico: La autoetnografía como herramienta esencial para investigar el efecto de los procesos migratorios en la identidad de las mujeres migrantes

BEATRIZ MACÍAS-GÓMEZ-ESTERN & VIBIAN ANDREA TARAZONA-OCHOA<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The article analyses the advantages and convenience of using autoethnographic methodology in researching the impact of migration processes on migrant women's identities. It compares autoethnography with other qualitative and quantitative methods, highlighting autoethnography's ability to capture personal and subjective experiences, empower the researcher and encourage reflexivity. Autoethnographic methodology is contrasted with phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis and quantitative methods, with concrete examples of each approach. Previous studies using autoethnography in similar contexts are presented and a research design specific to the phenomenon under study is proposed, addressing methodological justifications, challenges and ethical considerations. The analysis shows that autoethnography is an essential and highly interesting tool for understanding the complexity of migrant identity from a gendered and decolonial perspective.

**Keywords:** Autoethnography, Migration, Woman, Identity, Social psychology.

**Resumen:** El artículo analiza las ventajas y la conveniencia de utilizar la metodología autoetnográfica en la investigación del impacto de los procesos migratorios en la identidad de las mujeres migrantes. Compara la autoetnografía con otros métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos, destacando la capacidad de la autoetnografía para captar experiencias personales y subjetivas, empoderar al investigador y fomentar la reflexividad. La metodología autoetnográfica se contrasta con la fenomenología, la etnografía, la teoría fundamentada, el análisis narrativo y los métodos cuantitativos, con ejemplos concretos de cada enfoque. Se presentan estudios previos en los que se utilizó la autoetnografía en contextos similares y se propone un diseño de investigación específico para el fenómeno objeto de estudio, abordando las justificaciones metodológicas, los retos y las consideraciones éticas. El análisis muestra que la autoetnografía es una herramienta esencial y de gran interés para comprender la complejidad de la identidad migrante desde una perspectiva de género y decolonial.

**Palabras clave:** Autoetnografía, Migración, Mujer, Identidad, Psicología social.

---

<sup>1</sup> Universidad Pablo de Olavide. Main contact: bmacgom@upo.es.



## **1. Introduction.**

Research on the impact of migration processes on migrant women's identities requires an approach and methodology that captures the complexity and depth of migrants' experiences, particularly those of migrant women. This article explores how autoethnography, a methodology that allows for deep and reflective introspection, is particularly suited to this purpose. The advantages of autoethnography over other qualitative and quantitative methods are compared and analysed, highlighting its unique ability to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of female and migrant identity.

### **1.1. Problem statement.**

Migrant women's identity is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a deep and detailed understanding. Migrant women face significant challenges in their integration process, ranging from cultural adaptation to combating stereotypes and discrimination, both on the basis of gender and issues related to difficulties in integrating into the host society (Terrón-Caro et al., 2022a).

Migration not only implies a geographical change, but also has a profound impact on the identity of migrants. In the specific context of Colombian migrant women living in Seville (Spain), which is the subject of our research, this issue acquires relevance due to the different cultural, social and personal dimensions involved. More specifically, Colombian migrant women, upon moving to Seville (Spain), experience a process of identity reconstruction that is influenced by their interaction with the new culture, nostalgia for their country of origin, and the power dynamics present in the host society. Our research focuses on exploring how migration processes affect the identity of these migrant women from the perspective of social, decolonial, feminist and gender psychology. Positioning this research work's author's self, as a migrant Colombian academic woman, has portrayed the autoethnographic methodology as an essential and useful tool for analysing and studying the deeper aspects and nuances of this impact on Colombian women's identity (Cuklanz & Rodríguez, 2020; Cubero & Garrido, 2023).

### **1.2. Objectives of the article.**

The main objective of this article is to highlight the advantages and convenience of using autoethnographic methodology in researching the impact on the identity of Colombian migrant women living in Seville (Spain), when the researcher involved is experiencing the same migration path. It shows how this methodology allows for a richer and more nuanced

understanding of the personal and subjective experiences of migrant women compared to other qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Specifically, this article aims to:

1. Examine the characteristics of autoethnography and its ability to capture deep subjective experiences.
2. Compare autoethnography with other qualitative methods such as phenomenology, narrative analysis, ethnography and grounded theory.
3. Compare autoethnography with quantitative methods.
4. Provide concrete examples of research that has used autoethnography in similar contexts.
5. To propose a specific research design using autoethnographic methodology to study the impact of migration processes on the identity of Colombian migrant women living in Seville (Spain) from the perspective of social, decolonial, feminist and gender psychology.

### **1.3. Relevance of the autoethnographic methodology.**

Autoethnographic methodology is particularly relevant to the study of migrant women's identity because of its ability to capture the complexity and subjectivity of personal experience. Unlike other methodologies, autoethnography allows the researcher not only to observe and analyse, but also to actively participate in the research process. This active participation allows for deep introspection and critical reflection on lived experiences, resulting in a more complete and enriched understanding.

In the context of migration processes, where individual experiences vary widely and are influenced by multiple factors, autoethnography provides a powerful methodology and tool for exploring how migrant women perceive and reconstruct their identities. It is particularly useful for addressing issues of nostalgia, culture shock, integration and resilience, and offers a unique perspective that complements and enriches findings from more traditional methodologies. In particular, autoethnography overcomes a clear shortcoming specific to traditional studies of women's migration, namely the difficulty of acknowledging the difficulties faced by these women but focusing on their capacities and agency to overcome them, abandoning a perspective that victimises them and hides the value they bring to both their immediate environment and society (Macías-Gómez-Estern et al., in press).

Autoethnography also encourages reflexivity, allowing the researcher to question their own assumptions and biases and to consider how these may influence their research.

This reflexivity is crucial in gender and migration studies, where power dynamics and social inequalities play a central role in identity formation.

In addition to the above aspects, the Colombian nationality and origin of the main researcher of the study, and her identification as a migrant woman for love, study and professional development in the city of Seville (Spain), make the application of the autoethnographic methodology as a qualitative research method particularly relevant and interesting for the phenomenon under study.

#### **1.4. Description of comparative qualitative and quantitative methodologies.**

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of autoethnographic methodology, this article compares this methodology with other qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Qualitative methods to consider include phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory. Phenomenology focuses on describing lived experiences from the perspective of the participants to understand the essence of these experiences. Ethnography, on the other hand, involves deep immersion in the culture and context of the subjects of study, allowing for a holistic understanding of their lives and everyday practices. Grounded theory is a systematic approach that generates theories based on rigorously collected and analyzed qualitative data.

In terms of quantitative methods, experimental and correlational studies are discussed. Both allow the collection of data from large samples, facilitating statistical analysis and the generalization of findings. Statistical studies provide a way of analyzing quantitative data in an objective and systematic way, identifying patterns and relationships between variables.

Comparing these methods with autoethnography allows us to identify and highlight the strengths and limitations of each approach, and to show how autoethnography offers an extremely rich and deep understanding of the experiences of Colombian migrant women living in Seville, Spain.

## **2. Theoretical framework.**

The theoretical framework of this study provides the conceptual and contextual foundations necessary to understand, from different perspectives, the impact of the migration process on the identity of Colombian migrant women living in Seville (Spain). This section explores theories of identity and migration, as well as approaches from social psychology, decolonialism and feminism. These theoretical approaches underpin the choice of autoethnographic methodology and highlight its relevance for this type of research.

## 2.1. Identity studies and migration.

Identity is a dynamic and multifaceted construct, especially in the context of migration. According to Erik H. Erikson (1994), identity develops throughout life through interaction with the social environment. In the case of Colombian migrant women, their identity is influenced by the culture of origin, the host culture and the migration process itself.

John W. Berry (1997) proposes the acculturation model, which describes how migrants manage the relationship between the culture of origin and the receiving culture. This model includes four strategies: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. Colombian migrant women may adopt different acculturation strategies that affect the way they reconstruct their identity.

Integration involves maintaining aspects of Colombian culture while adopting elements of the new culture. Assimilation involves abandoning the culture of origin to fully adopt the new culture. Separation involves maintaining the Colombian culture and rejecting the new one, while marginalization involves rejecting both cultures.

These strategies are not static and can vary according to context and time. Factors such as social support, employment opportunities and discrimination influence the choice of strategies, which may also vary according to dimensions or areas of experience, as developed by Navas et al. (2006). The reconstruction of Colombian migrant women's identity is a complex process that involves constant negotiation between their cultural roots and new experiences in the host country.

Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital is relevant to understanding how migrant women use their cultural resources in the process of adaptation and integration. These resources may include language, social networks and cultural competences, which influence their perceived identity and sense of belonging.

Bourdieu distinguishes three forms of cultural capital: embodied (skills and dispositions), objectified (cultural goods) and institutionalized (educational credentials). In the context of migration, Colombian women can mobilize these different types of capital to negotiate their position in the new society.

For example, mastery of the host country's language (embodied capital) can facilitate labour and social integration. Colombian culinary or artistic traditions (objectified capital) may be valued and shared in the new environment. Academic or professional qualifications (institutionalized capital) may be recognized or require homologation, affecting employment opportunities.

Bourdieu's theory underlines how these cultural resources interact with the social structures of the host country, influencing the adaptation strategies and identity reconstruction of Colombian migrant women.

## **2.2. Social psychology perspective.**

Social psychology offers valuable tools for understanding how Colombian migrant women perceive and construct their identity in a new environment. Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1979) developed the theory of social identity, which suggests that a person's identity is derived, in part, from their membership of social groups. For migrant women, their social identity is influenced by both their Colombian origin and their integration into Spanish society.

This theory postulates that people tend to categorize others and themselves into groups, comparing these groups to establish a positive social identity. In the context of migration, Colombian women may experience a tension between maintaining their identity of origin and adapting to new social groups in Spain.

Social identity theory also explains how stereotypes and prejudices can affect self-perception and intergroup relations. Migrant women may face stereotypes about their nationality or gender, which can influence their adaptation process and how they negotiate their identity in different social contexts.

Furthermore, this theory helps to understand how migrant women can develop multiple and flexible identities, adapting to different social situations while maintaining a sense of continuity in their personal identity.

Leon Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance is also relevant, as it describes how people manage the tension resulting from holding contradictory beliefs or behaviors. Migrant women may experience cognitive dissonance when trying to reconcile their cultural identity with the expectations and norms of the receiving society.

This theory postulates that people seek consistency between their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. When faced with inconsistencies, they experience psychological discomfort that motivates them to reduce the dissonance. In the context of migration, Colombian women may find themselves in situations where their cultural values clash with the practices of Spanish society. To reduce this dissonance, they may adopt strategies such as reinterpreting their beliefs, seeking information to support their new situation, or gradually modifying their behaviors.

Cognitive dissonance theory helps to understand how these women negotiate the internal conflicts that arise during the acculturation process, and how these conflicts can

catalyze changes in their identity and behavior. It also explains why some women may resist change, clinging to their original beliefs to avoid dissonance.

### **2.3. Decolonial approach.**

The decolonial approach critiques the power structures and historical narratives that perpetuate cultural and social domination. This approach is essential to understanding the experiences of Colombian migrant women, as their identities are shaped by the power dynamics between the global North and South.

Aníbal Quijano (2000) introduces the concept of "coloniality of power", which describes how colonial hierarchies persist in contemporary social and cultural structures. Migrant women confront these hierarchies as they navigate their identity in a post-colonial context.

The coloniality of power is manifested in the way Western societies categorize and value people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. For Colombian migrant women in Spain, this can translate into experiences of discrimination, stereotyping and unequal opportunities based on their Latin American origin.

This concept helps to understand how historical relations between Spain and Colombia continue to influence social interactions and perceptions of migrant women. These women may find themselves dealing with expectations and prejudices that have roots in the colonial past, affecting their integration process and the reconstruction of their identity.

The coloniality of power is also reflected in power dynamics within migrant communities and in the receiving society. Migrant women may face multiple layers of oppression, based not only on their gender and migration status, but also on the persistence of racial and cultural hierarchies inherited from colonialism.

In this context, the concept of social imaginaries plays a crucial role. Cornelius Castoriadis (1975) defines imaginaries as collective constructions that give meaning to social reality. In the case of Colombian migrant women, imaginaries about Latin America and about migration influence how they are perceived and how they perceive themselves in Spanish society. These imaginaries are not mere representations, but have a performative power, shaping expectations, behaviors and social relations. For example, the imaginary of Latin America as an "exotic" or "underdeveloped" region can lead to the exoticization or underestimation of migrant women's capabilities. On the other hand, Néstor García Canclini (1997) points out how imaginaries of migration can oscillate between the idealization of the "European dream" and the stigmatization of the migrant as a threat. Colombian migrant women find themselves navigating these contradictory imaginaries, constantly negotiating



their identity and their place in the host society. Furthermore, Arjun Appadurai (1996) highlights how in the era of globalization, imaginaries become increasingly transnational, influencing migrants' aspirations and life projects. Thus, migrant women not only confront the imaginaries of the host society, but also bring with them and reformulate their own imaginaries of Spain and of their own identity as migrants.

The place of enunciation, a concept developed by decolonial feminists such as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), is fundamental to understanding how Colombian migrant women construct and express their identity. This concept recognizes that knowledge and experience are situated in specific social, historical and cultural contexts. For migrant women, their place of enunciation is marked by their experience as Latin Americans, women and migrants in a European context. The place of enunciation refers not only to who speaks, but also to where they speak from, considering the multiple intersections of identity and power that shape the perspective of the subject. In the case of Colombian migrant women, their place of enunciation allows them to articulate unique experiences that challenge dominant narratives about migration and Latin American identity in Spain. Recognizing and valuing these places of enunciation is crucial for a richer and more nuanced understanding of migration experiences and for challenging the power structures that silence or marginalise certain voices.

Walter D. Mignolo (2007) suggests that decolonial thinking offers a critical perspective that challenges Eurocentric narratives, promoting the valorization of marginalized knowledge and experiences. Ochy Curiel (2022), in her analysis of Afro-descendant identities and migratory narratives, also contributes to this discussion by highlighting the importance of recognizing and validating migrant women's experiences as an act of resistance and cultural revalorization.

Like Mignolo, Curiel strongly criticizes the hegemony of Western knowledge in academia and research. They argue that there is a "coloniality of knowledge" that privileges knowledge produced in the West while marginalizing knowledge from the Global South. Curiel advocates a decolonization of knowledge production, emphasizing the importance of "situated knowledge" that emerges from the specific realities of Latin America.

Although Curiel is critical of certain forms of international collaboration that reproduce colonial power relations, she does not completely reject cooperation with Western researchers. However, she proposes more horizontal and equitable collaborations. She emphasizes the need to value Latin American perspectives, to develop their own methodologies and to adopt an intersectional and decolonial approach to research. It seeks



to empower Latin American researchers to develop their own theories, while promoting greater autonomy in the production of knowledge in the region.

Decolonial thinking provides a framework for understanding how Colombian migrant women can resist total assimilation and maintain valuable aspects of their cultural identity. This perspective invites us to question established hierarchies of knowledge and to value the ways of knowing and being that migrant women bring with them.

Curiel emphasizes intersectionality in migrant women's experiences, considering how gender, race, class and migratory status intertwine to form complex identities. Her work underlines the importance of creating spaces where migrant women can share their stories and knowledge, thus contributing to a richer and more diverse narrative of migration.

These decolonial perspectives offer tools for migrant women to reaffirm their agency in the process of identity reconstruction, challenging expectations of assimilation and promoting a more equitable intercultural dialogue, while at the same time valuing science and research led by researchers from other, not necessarily Western, latitudes.

#### **2.4. Feminist and gender perspective.**

A feminist and gender perspective are central to understanding how migrant women experience and negotiate their identity. Judith Butler (1990) proposes that gender is a social and performative construction, suggesting that migrant women's gender identity is constructed and reconstructed through their migration experiences.

This view implies that Colombian women can reinterpret and redefine their gender roles when confronted with new cultural norms in Spain. Migration can offer opportunities to challenge traditional gender expectations and adopt new forms of expression and behaviors.

Butler argues that gender is repeatedly "performed", creating the illusion of a stable gender identity. In the context of migration, women may find themselves "performing" different versions of femininity according to social contexts, negotiating between the expectations of their culture of origin and those of the receiving society.

This perspective also highlights how power structures and dominant discourses influence the construction of gender identity. Migrant women may face specific gender stereotypes based on their ethnicity, which adds complexity to their process of adaptation and self-definition.

Bell hooks (2000) introduces the concept of "intersectional feminism", which considers how different systems of oppression, such as racism, sexism and classism,

intertwine and affect women in unique ways. For Colombian migrant women, their identity is shaped by the intersection of their gender, ethnicity and migration status.

This intersectional approach reveals how these women's experiences cannot be understood simply by adding up separate categories of discrimination. Rather, these categories interact to create complex and often contradictory experiences.

For example, a Colombian woman in Spain may face discrimination not only because she is a woman, but also because of her Latin American origin and migration status. These layers of oppression may manifest themselves in limited access to job opportunities, cultural stereotypes or language barriers.

Hooks' intersectional feminism provides a framework for understanding how these women navigate and resist multiple forms of marginalization while reconstructing their identity in a new social and cultural context.

Ochy Curiel (2022) also addresses these intersections in her work, highlighting how the narratives of migrant women of African descent are essential to understanding the dynamics of power and resistance in migration contexts. The feminist approach highlights the importance of personal narratives and life stories, which are powerful tools for understanding migrant women's experiences. Autoethnography aligns with this approach by allowing women to narrate their own stories from a personal and subjective perspective.

These narratives reveal the adaptation strategies, challenges faced, and identity transformations experienced by migrant women. By telling their stories, women not only document their experiences, but also actively participate in the construction and reconstruction of their identity.

Autoethnography, as a research method, allows Colombian migrant women to critically reflect on their experiences, situating them in a broader social and cultural context. This approach validates their voices and experiences, challenging dominant narratives about migration and female identity.

### **3. Autoethnographic methodology.**

Autoethnographic methodology is notable for its ability to capture the depth and subjectivity of personal experiences in specific contexts. This section describes in detail autoethnography, its data collection and analysis process, and presents previous studies that have used this methodology in similar contexts.

### 3.1. Definition and characteristics.

Autoethnography is a qualitative methodology that combines elements of autobiography and ethnography, allowing researchers to use their own personal experiences as a source of data. According to Ellis et al. (2011), autoethnography focuses on introspection and self-reflection, facilitating an in-depth understanding of social phenomena from an insider's perspective.

The main characteristics of autoethnography include:

1. **Reflexivity:** The researcher critically reflects on his or her own experiences and how these influence the research. This process involves constantly questioning one's own assumptions, biases and social position, recognizing how these factors shape the interpretation and representation of experiences.
2. **Personal narrative:** Personal stories and narratives are used to illustrate and analyze social phenomena. These narratives go beyond mere description, serving to theorize and understand broader social realities through the lens of individual experience.
3. **Contextualization:** Personal experiences are contextualized within a broader framework of cultural and social meanings. This involves situating individual experiences in relation to social structures, cultural norms and dominant discourses, exploring how the personal is intertwined with the political and social.
4. **Emotionality:** The emotional dimension of experiences is recognized and valued as a legitimate source of knowledge. Autoethnography embraces subjectivity and emotional vulnerability as fundamental aspects of research, challenging traditional notions of scientific objectivity.
5. **Accessibility:** Autoethnography seeks to produce accessible and evocative texts that can resonate with a wider audience, transcending traditional academic boundaries.
6. **Relational ethics:** Particular attention is paid to the ethical implications of telling stories that involve others, recognizing the relational nature of personal experiences.
7. **Multiplicity of voices:** Although focused on the researcher's experience, autoethnography often incorporates multiple voices and perspectives to provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study.
8. **Cultural criticism:** Autoethnography serves as a tool for cultural criticism, challenging dominant narratives and offering alternative perspectives on social phenomena.

Autoethnography is particularly useful in identity studies, as it allows us to explore how individual experiences and social contexts interact to shape personal identity. In the specific case of migration processes and their impact on migrant women's identities, this methodology offers a unique and valuable perspective.

According to Chang (2008), autoethnography allows researchers to examine how their own experiences are intertwined with broader social and cultural structures. In the context of female migration, this can translate into an in-depth exploration of how gender expectations, family dynamics and social structures in both the country of origin and destination influence the construction and reconstruction of identity.

Moreover, autoethnography facilitates the visibilization of marginalized voices, as Boylorn (2017) points out. In the case of migrant women, whose experiences are often overshadowed in dominant migration discourses, this methodology offers a space to narrate and analyze their experiences from an intimate and authentic perspective.

The application of autoethnography to the study of migration processes and female identity also allows us to address intersectionality more effectively. As Crenshaw (1989) argues, identities are shaped by the intersection of multiple social categories. Autoethnography, by focusing on lived experience, can capture how factors such as gender, ethnicity, class and migration status are intertwined in the formation of migrant women's identities.

It is important to note that while autoethnography offers significant advantages, it also presents challenges. The inherent subjectivity of the method requires a careful balance between personal experience and rigorous analysis. As Wall (2006) and Méndez (2013) suggest, it is crucial that researchers maintain a reflexive and critical stance, constantly contextualizing their experiences within broader theoretical and socio-cultural frameworks.

In this sense, the researcher's place of enunciation, as a Colombian migrant woman in Seville (Spain), takes on enormous relevance, placing her in a unique position that can enrich the research, but also poses additional challenges. On the one hand, her personal experience can provide a deep and nuanced understanding of the realities she studies, facilitating an empathetic connection with the participants and a richer interpretation of their narratives. However, this same proximity can make it difficult to distinguish between your own story and those of the participants, requiring a conscious effort to maintain analytical objectivity.

In addition, the intersection of sites of enunciation can generate complex power dynamics within the research process. The researcher must be aware of how her dual role as

a member of the community under study and as an academic can influence interactions with participants and the interpretation of the data. This involves a constant exercise in self-reflection and transparency, making explicit her own experiences and biases, and how these may affect the research.

On the other hand, the diversity of places of enunciation among the participants offers an opportunity to capture the heterogeneity of migration experiences and identity processes. The researcher must be sensitive to these differences, avoiding simplistic generalizations and recognizing the multiplicity of voices and perspectives within the community of Colombian women in Seville (Spain).

Ultimately, the ethical management of these intertwined sites of enunciation requires a dialogic and collaborative approach, where researcher and participants co-construct knowledge. This involves creating spaces for the negotiation of meanings, the validation of interpretations and joint reflection on the implications of the research for the community under study.

This approach not only enriches the quality and depth of the autoethnographic study, but also contributes to a more ethical, respectful and empowering research process for all women involved in the research.

### **3.2. Data collection process.**

The data collection process in autoethnography is based on introspection and the collection of personal experiences. This process may include:

1. Personal diaries: Keep a detailed diary of experiences, thoughts and emotions related to the phenomenon under study. These diaries can include daily reflections, notes on significant events, and descriptions of sensations and perceptions.
2. Narratives and stories: Write personal narratives and stories that reflect lived experiences. These can be short stories, poems, or reflective essays that capture pivotal moments or epiphanies related to the research topic.
3. Participatory observations: Participate in the social and cultural environment of the study, observing and recording relevant interactions and events. This may involve immersion in specific communities or situations, taking detailed notes on the social dynamics, conversations and behaviors observed.
4. Reflective interviews: Conduct interviews with other individuals who can offer complementary perspectives on the researcher's experiences. These interviews can be structured, semi-structured or open-ended, and serve to contrast and enrich the researcher's personal narrative.

5. Cultural artefacts: Collect and analyze objects, photographs, letters, e-mails or other material items that have meaning in relation to the experience under study.
6. Audio and video recordings: Use recordings to capture moments, conversations or reflections in real time, which can then be transcribed and analyzed.
7. Field notes: Take detailed notes on preliminary observations, reflections and analysis throughout the research process.

These techniques allow rich and detailed data to be collected, which can then be analyzed to identify patterns and recurring themes. The triangulation of these various data collection methods strengthens the validity and depth of the autoethnographic study.

An example of this data collection is the work of Ellis (2004) in "The Ethnographic I", where she uses her own experiences to explore themes of love, loss, and research ethics. Ellis combines personal narratives, reenacted dialogues, and theoretical reflections to construct a rich autoethnography that illuminates both her personal experiences and the complexities of ethnographic practice (Pando-Azmecua, 2022).

It is important to note that the process of data collection in autoethnography is continuous and reflexive, where the researcher constantly evaluates and reinterprets his or her experiences in the light of new understandings and theoretical perspectives.

### 3.3. Autoethnographic data analysis.

Data analysis in autoethnography involves a combination of personal reflection and thematic analysis. This process may include:

1. Reflective reading: Review and reflect on the diaries, narratives and observations, identifying recurring themes and patterns. This stage involves a deep dive into the data, reading and re-reading the collected material to become intimately familiar with its content and context.
2. Coding: Use qualitative coding techniques to organize and categorize data, facilitating the identification of key themes. This may include open coding to identify initial concepts, followed by axial coding to establish relationships between categories.
3. Narrative analysis: Examining personal narratives to understand how experiences and identities are constructed and represented. This analysis can focus on the structure of narratives, the use of language, and the implicit and explicit meanings within stories.
4. Triangulation: Comparing personal data with other sources of information, such as interviews and observations, to increase the validity of the analysis. This technique

helps to corroborate findings and provides a more complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

5. Thematic analysis: Identify and explore recurring themes that emerge from the data. This involves looking for patterns of meaning and experience that recur across the different types of data collected.
6. Cultural contextualization: Situating personal experiences within a broader cultural context, exploring how social norms, power structures and dominant discourses influence individual experiences.
7. Critical analysis: Critically examine the researcher's own assumptions, biases and social position, considering how these factors may influence the interpretation of the data.
8. Writing as analysis: Using the writing process as a form of analysis, where the construction of the autoethnographic narrative becomes a means of discovering and articulating new understandings.
9. Dialogical analysis: Involve other researchers or participants in the analysis process, fostering a critical and reflective dialogue on interpretations.
10. Emotional analysis: Examining the emotions evoked and expressed in the data, considering how these emotions inform and shape experiences and understandings.

Reflective analysis is fundamental to autoethnography, allowing the researcher to question his or her own assumptions and consider how his or her personal experiences influence the interpretation of the data. This process of ongoing reflection helps to maintain the transparency and integrity of the study.

It is important to recognize that analysis in autoethnography is not a linear process, but iterative and cyclical. Researchers often move between data collection, analysis and writing, allowing new understandings to emerge and develop throughout the research process.

Finally, autoethnographic analysis must balance academic rigour with creativity and personal expression, seeking to produce work that is both analytically sound and emotionally resonant and accessible to a wider audience.

### **3.4. Previous studies and applications in similar contexts.**

Autoethnography has been used in numerous studies to explore personal experiences in diverse contexts. For example, Ochy Curiel's (2022) research on Afro-descendant identities and migration narratives uses autoethnography to highlight the importance of personal experiences in understanding dynamics of power and resistance.



Another example is the work of Ellis and Bochner (2000) who use autoethnography to explore issues of trauma and recovery, showing how personal narratives can offer a deep and emotionally rich understanding of these phenomena.

Autoethnography has also been applied in studies of gender identity and sexuality. Adams (2011) uses this methodology to investigate the construction of gay identity, providing an introspective and personal insight into the unique challenges and experiences of the LGBTQ+ community.

These studies demonstrate the versatility and depth of autoethnography, highlighting its ability to capture the complexity of human experiences and provide a rich and nuanced understanding of social phenomena.

#### **4. Comparison with other qualitative methodologies.**

To provide a comprehensive analysis of the advantages of autoethnography, it is crucial to compare it with other qualitative methodologies. This section examines phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and narrative analysis, highlighting their characteristics, advantages and limitations in comparison to autoethnography.

##### **4.1. Phenomenology.**

Phenomenology is a qualitative methodology that focuses on the description of lived experiences from the perspective of the participants. Edmund Husserl (1970), one of the founders of phenomenology, proposed that the main goal of phenomenology is to capture the essence of human experiences.

The main characteristics of phenomenology as a methodology of qualitative analysis are the following:

1. Descriptive: Seeks to describe experiences as they are perceived by individuals, without external interpretations.
2. Essentialist: Attempts to identify the essence of experiences, that which is fundamental and common to all individuals who share a similar experience.
3. Introspective: Use introspection to understand experiences from the inside.

In terms of the main advantages of phenomenology as a methodology for qualitative analysis, we can highlight the following:

1. Depth: Allows for a deep and detailed understanding of human experiences.
2. Rigor: The search for the essence of experiences adds rigor to the analysis.

Finally, these are the main limitations of phenomenology as a methodology for qualitative analysis:

1. Lack of reflexivity: It does not always consider how the researcher's experiences influence interpretation.
2. Less subjectivity: It does not allow for the integration of the researcher's personal experiences into the analysis.

Compared to autoethnography, phenomenology provides deep insights but may lack the reflexivity and subjective richness that autoethnography offers. Autoethnography allows the researcher to be part of the study, which can enrich the interpretation of experiences.

#### **4.2. Ethnography.**

Ethnography is a qualitative methodology that involves the researcher's immersion in the cultural and social environment of the subjects of study. Clifford Geertz (1973) popularized this approach with his concept of "dense description", which seeks to understand cultural practices in context.

The main characteristics of ethnography as a methodology of qualitative analysis are the following:

1. Immersive: The researcher is immersed in the participants' environment to observe and understand their practices and beliefs.
2. Descriptive: Provides detailed descriptions of cultural and social practices.
3. Contextual: Analyses practices in their cultural and social context.

In terms of the main advantages of ethnography as a methodology for qualitative analysis, we can highlight the following:

1. Contextualization: This allows practices to be understood in their natural context.
2. Richness of data: Immersion provides detailed and contextual data.

Finally, these are the main limitations of ethnography as a methodology for qualitative analysis:

1. External observation: The researcher is an external observer, which may limit the subjective understanding of experiences.
2. Ethical challenges: Immersion may raise ethical challenges related to intrusion into participants' private lives.

Compared to autoethnography, ethnography focuses more on external observation and contextual description, while autoethnography allows the researcher to integrate his or her own experiences, providing a more internal and subjective view of the phenomena studied.

### 4.3. Grounded theory.

Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) that seeks to generate theories based on systematically collected data. This methodology uses an iterative process of data collection and analysis to develop emerging theories.

The main characteristics of grounded theory as a methodology for qualitative analysis are the following:

1. Inductive: Generates theories from empirical data.
2. Iterative: Involves a continuous process of data collection and analysis.
3. Systematic: Uses systematic procedures to collect and analyze data.

In terms of the main advantages of grounded theory as a methodology for qualitative analysis, we can highlight the following:

1. Emerging theories: Enables the development of theories based on concrete data.
2. Flexibility: The iterative process allows the research approach to be adjusted according to the data collected.

Finally, these are the main limitations of grounded theory as a methodology for qualitative analysis:

1. Time and resources: It is a time and resource intensive process.
2. Less subjectivity: Focused more on the generation of theories than on the exploration of subjective experiences.

Compared to autoethnography, grounded theory is more structured and theory-driven, while autoethnography focuses on deep, subjective exploration of personal experiences, providing a richer and more emotional view of phenomena.

### 4.4. Narrative analysis.

Narrative analysis is a qualitative methodology that focuses on the stories people tell about their lives and experiences. Catherine Kohler Riessman (2008) has highlighted the importance of narratives as a means of understanding how people construct and communicate their identities.

The main characteristics of narrative analysis as a qualitative analysis methodology are as follows:

1. Narrative: Focuses on personal stories and narratives.
2. Constructivist: Considers that narratives construct and reflect identities.
3. Contextual: Analyses narratives in their cultural and social context.

In terms of the main advantages of narrative analysis as a qualitative analysis methodology, we can highlight the following:

1. Descriptive richness: Provides detailed and rich descriptions of personal experiences.
2. Understanding identity: Helps to understand how people construct and communicate their identities through their stories.

Finally, these are the main limitations of narrative analysis as a qualitative analysis methodology:

1. Subjectivity: Narratives can be subjective and selective.
2. Complex interpretation: Requires advanced interpretative skills to analyze narratives.

In comparison to autoethnography, narrative analysis focuses on the stories of the participants, while autoethnography integrates the personal experiences of the researcher, providing an introspective and reflective view that enriches the understanding of the experiences studied.

## **5. Comparison with quantitative methodologies.**

To provide a comprehensive analysis of the advantages of autoethnography, it is crucial to compare it not only with other qualitative methodologies, but also with quantitative methodologies. This section examines quantitative correlational methodologies using surveys and questionnaires as the most used techniques in the field of social sciences, highlighting their characteristics, advantages and limitations in comparison with autoethnography.

### **5.1. Surveys and questionnaires.**

Surveys and questionnaires are quantitative techniques used to collect data from large numbers of people in a systematic and standardized way. These tools allow the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically.

The main characteristics of surveys and questionnaires as a data collection technique are as follows:

1. Standardization: Use standardized questions to ensure comparability of data.
2. Breadth: They allow data to be collected from a large sample of participants.
3. Quantitative: The data collected are numerical and analyzed using statistical techniques.

In terms of the main advantages of surveys and questionnaires as a methodology for quantitative analysis, we can highlight the following:

1. Generalizability: Results may be generalizable to a wider population if the sample is representative.

2. Efficiency: They allow data to be collected from many participants in a short time.
3. Objectivity: Numerical data are perceived as objective and accurate.

Finally, these are the main limitations of surveys and questionnaires as a methodology for quantitative analysis:

1. Superficiality: They may not grasp the depth and complexity of human experiences.
2. Decontextualization: Data may lack context, limiting its interpretation.
3. Lack of reflexivity: They do not allow for the integration of the researcher's experiences and reflections.

Compared to autoethnography, surveys and questionnaires provide a broader but less in-depth view of human experiences. Autoethnography, by focusing on personal narrative and reflexivity, allows for a richer and more detailed understanding of individual experiences.

## 5.2. Statistical analysis.

Data collected through surveys or questionnaires are usually analyzed using statistical data processing software.

The main features of the statistical analysis are as follows:

1. Descriptive: They describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon.
2. Correlational: They analyze relationships between variables.

As for the main advantages of statistical analysis, we can highlight the following:

1. Accuracy: They allow precise and mathematically sound analysis.
2. Repeatability: Studies can be replicated to verify results.
3. Generalizability: Results may be generalizable to other populations if representative samples are used.

Finally, these are the main limitations of statistical studies as a methodology for quantitative analysis:

1. Reductionism: They can oversimplify complex phenomena.
2. Lack of context: Statistical data may lack cultural and social context.
3. Emotional disconnect: They do not capture the emotional dimension of human experiences.

Compared to autoethnography, quantitative studies offer a more general, objective but less subjective look at social phenomena. Autoethnography, by integrating the personal experiences of the researcher, provides a richer and more emotionally connected view of the experiences studied.

## **6. Specific advantages of autoethnography.**

Autoethnography is a methodology that stands out for its ability to capture the complexity and depth of personal experiences. This section discusses the specific advantages of autoethnography, including its ability to capture personal and subjective experiences, the empowerment of the researcher and the importance of reflexivity and self-reflection.

### **6.1. Capturing personal and subjective experiences.**

Autoethnography allows the researcher to use his or her own experiences as a source of data, which facilitates a deep and nuanced understanding of the phenomena studied. This methodology focuses on personal narratives, allowing the richness and complexity of subjective experiences to be captured.

In this sense, autoethnography offers us the following main advantages when dealing with research based on personal experiences, as in the case of the study of the effect of migratory processes on the identity of migrant women and, more specifically, applied to the case of migrant women of Colombian origin in Seville (Spain):

1. Emotional depth: It allows for the exploration and communication of emotions and feelings associated with personal experiences, which enriches the understanding of the phenomenon.
2. Contextual details: The personal narrative provides a rich and detailed context that helps to better understand the circumstances and factors that influence experiences.
3. Insider's perspective: This provides an insider's view, allowing an understanding of how experiences are lived and perceived from the researcher's perspective.

As an example of the above advantages applied to this type of research with an important personal and social component, we can highlight the work of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) in her book "Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza". In this autoethnographic work, Anzaldúa explores her identity as a Chicana woman on the US-Mexico border, weaving together poetry, essay and personal narrative to examine issues of identity, culture and gender. Her work illustrates how autoethnography can be a powerful tool for exploring and articulating complex identities and experiences of migration and transculturation.

### **6.2. Empowerment of the researcher.**

Autoethnography empowers the researcher by allowing him or her to be an active part of the research process. This methodology recognizes and values the researcher's personal experience, allowing him or her to reflect on his or her own role and influence on the study.

In this sense, autoethnography offers aspects of great interest for the investigation of certain individual and social phenomena, among which it is possible to highlight the following:

1. Critical reflection: Allows the researcher to critically reflect on their own experiences and how these influence the research.
2. Personal empowerment: By using their own experiences, the researcher becomes an active subject of the study, which can be empowering and transformative.
3. Visibility and voice: It provides the researcher with a platform to share their own stories and experiences, giving them visibility and legitimacy.

As an example of these aspects of great interest in research with an important personal and social component, we can highlight the case of T. E. Adams (2011) in his work on gay identity using autoethnography to explore his own experiences, demonstrating how this methodology can empower the researcher and provide a deeper understanding of identity and sexuality.

### **6.3. Reflexivity and self-reflection.**

Reflexivity is a central feature of autoethnography, which involves the researcher reflecting on his or her own role and experiences in the research process. This reflexivity allows for a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the phenomena studied.

In this sense, it is possible to highlight the following advantages of this self-reflective approach offered by autoethnography

1. Questioning assumptions: Allows the researcher to question his or her own assumptions and biases, which enriches the analysis and interpretation of the data.
2. Transparency: Reflexivity increases the transparency of the research process by allowing the researcher to share how their own experiences and perspectives influence the study.
3. Analytical depth: Deep self-reflection allows for a richer and more detailed analysis of personal experiences and their context.

As an example of the advantages of the self-reflective approach offered by autoethnography, we can highlight the case of Ochy Curiel (2022) in her analysis of Afro-descendant identities and migratory narratives, in which she uses autoethnography to reflect on her own experiences, providing a richer and more contextualized understanding of the dynamics of power and resistance in migratory contexts.



## **7. Research approach using autoethnographic methodology.**

This section outlines a proposed research design to apply autoethnographic methodology in the study of how migration processes affect the identity of Colombian migrant women in Seville (Spain). It aims to justify the selection of this methodology, detail the proposed research design, develops some expected implications for social intervention, and address ethical considerations and potential challenges. While the study has not yet been conducted, the proposal highlights the potential of autoethnography to explore this complex phenomenon, in which gender, ethnicity, migration and other psico-social dimensions make an EMIC perspective especially necessary (Harris, 1976).

### **7.1. Justification of the autoethnographic approach.**

The choice of autoethnography as a proposed methodology for this research is based on several key considerations. Firstly, autoethnography has the potential to capture the complexity and depth of migrant women's personal and subjective experiences. As Ellis et al. (2011) highlight, autoethnography allows researchers to use their own lived experiences as a lens through which to understand broader social phenomena, making it particularly suited for exploring how Colombian migrant women construct and reconstruct their identity within a new cultural, social, and geographical context. Through this approach, it becomes possible to delve into the nuanced experiences that shape identity during the migration process.

Autoethnography is also particularly valuable for fostering reflexivity, as it encourages the researcher to critically examine how her own experiences might influence the research. Chang (2008) emphasizes that this reflexive dimension of autoethnography enables researchers to be mindful of their positionality and the ways in which their background informs their interpretation of the data. Since the researcher shares a similar background as a Colombian migrant woman living in Seville (Spain), autoethnography enables a unique integration of her personal perspective into the study. This could provide a richer and more contextualized understanding of the dynamics at play in the identity reconstruction process. However, the researcher must remain aware of the need to maintain a balance between personal involvement and analytical distance to ensure the rigor of the study (Wall, 2006).

Moreover, autoethnography appears well suited for addressing issues related to identity, culture, and migration, given its focus on personal and emotionally resonant narratives. This methodology allows for the exploration of not only the observable aspects of migration but also the underlying emotional and subjective dimensions that often accompany such transitions (Ellis et al., 2011). It is particularly apt for giving voice to

experiences that might otherwise remain marginalized in traditional academic discourses, shedding light on nuances that more distanced approaches might overlook (Macías-Gómez-Estern et al. in press).

The intersectional nature of the identities of Colombian migrant women, involving gender, ethnicity, class, and migration status, aligns well with the strengths of an autoethnographic approach. By focusing on how these different facets of identity intersect and are renegotiated in the context of migration, this methodology can provide valuable insights into the ways in which identity is continuously shaped and reshaped. Additionally, autoethnography has the potential to facilitate a deeper exploration of acculturation and adaptation processes, enabling the researcher to document and analyze the gradual shifts in identity and perspective that may occur over time. This focus on continuous transformation is particularly relevant in the context of migration, where adaptation is a dynamic and multifaceted process (Chang, 2008).

## **7.2. Research design.**

The design of the proposed research on the impact of migration processes on the identity of migrant women of Colombian origin living in Seville (Spain) includes several stages aimed at ensuring detailed and rigorous data collection and analysis. Although the study has not yet been conducted, the following design outlines how autoethnography could be effectively applied to explore the complexity of identity reconstruction in this context.

### **1. Data collection tools:**

- Personal diary: The researcher would maintain a detailed diary documenting her experiences, thoughts, and emotions related to the migration process and identity. According to Ellis et al. (2011), keeping a personal diary allows researchers to capture the subtleties of daily experiences that might otherwise go unnoticed, providing rich data that can be revisited and analyzed reflexively.
- Narratives and stories: The researcher would write personal narratives and stories reflecting on her experiences in Seville (Spain). These may take the form of short stories or reflective essays that capture pivotal moments or epiphanies related to identity and migration. This aligns with the approach outlined by Chang (2008), who suggests that crafting personal narratives can reveal deeper insights into how identity is shaped through significant events.
- Participatory observations: The researcher would immerse herself in the Colombian community in Seville (Spain), observing and recording relevant

interactions and events. This involves active participation in social and cultural contexts, taking detailed notes on social dynamics, conversations, and behaviors. This method allows the researcher to contextualize her personal experiences within broader community practices, enriching the autoethnographic account.

- Reflective interviews: Semi-structured interviews would be conducted with other Colombian migrant women in Seville (Spain) to gain complementary perspectives and enrich the analysis. These interviews allow for the exploration of themes that emerge from the researcher's own experiences, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding through comparison and contrast (Wall, 2006).
- Cultural artefacts: Objects, photographs, letters, or other material items that hold meaning in relation to the migration experience and identity would be collected and analyzed. This helps to ground personal narratives in tangible representations of cultural memory and identity.
- Audio and video recordings: These would be used to capture moments, conversations, or reflections in real time, providing an additional layer of data that can be transcribed and analyzed to reveal nuances of the migration experience.

## 2. Data analysis strategies:

- Reflective reading: The researcher would engage in an in-depth review of the diaries, narratives, and observations to identify recurring themes and patterns. This process involves reading and re-reading the collected material, as emphasized by Ellis et al. (2011), to allow new insights to emerge from the reflective engagement with the data.
- Coding: Qualitative coding techniques, such as open and axial coding, would be used to organize and categorize the data, facilitating the identification of key themes. Open coding would allow initial concepts to emerge, while axial coding would establish relationships between categories, helping to structure the complex experiences described in the data.
- Narrative analysis: The analysis of personal narratives and interview data aims to understand how experiences and identities are constructed and represented by migrant women. As noted by De Fina (2000), examining the structure of narratives and the use of language is essential for uncovering the

ways in which individuals frame their experiences and make sense of their migration journeys.

- Triangulation: The research design incorporates triangulation by comparing the researcher's personal data with insights from interviews and observations. This approach, recommended by Wall (2006), strengthens the validity of the findings by providing a more balanced and multi-faceted perspective on identity reconstruction.
- Thematic analysis: This stage involves identifying and exploring recurring themes across the various types of collected data, seeking patterns of meaning and experience that emerge repeatedly. Thematic analysis helps to synthesize insights from the diverse forms of data, such as diary entries and interviews, into a coherent understanding of the identity transformation process.
- Cultural contextualization: The researcher would situate personal experiences within the broader cultural context of Seville and Spain, exploring how social norms, power structures, and dominant discourses influence the experiences of Colombian migrant women. This allows for a deeper understanding of how identity is shaped by the interaction between personal and social forces (Chang, 2008).
- Critical analysis: A crucial aspect of the research involves critically examining the researcher's own assumptions, biases, and social position, as suggested by Ellis et al. (2011). This reflexive practice ensures that the interpretation of the data remains transparent and acknowledges the potential influence of the researcher's perspective.
- Writing as analysis: Autoethnographic writing would be employed as a form of analysis, where the process of constructing narratives becomes a means of discovering and articulating new understandings of identity and migration. As highlighted by Ellis et al. (2011), writing itself can be a powerful tool for analysis, allowing researchers to make sense of their experiences and the broader social context simultaneously.
- Validation: Preliminary findings would be shared with interview participants to obtain their feedback and ensure an accurate representation of their experiences. This collaborative process helps to validate the interpretation of the data and ensures that the voices of other migrant women are faithfully represented.

This research design will allow for an in-depth and nuanced exploration of how migration processes affect the identity of Colombian women in Seville (Spain), offering a unique perspective from within the studied community.

### **7.3 Practical application of the findings.**

The findings of this proposed study could have important practical implications for the formulation of policies and the implementation of support programs for migrant women, as previous experiences portraying migrant women voices have shown (Terrón-Caro et al., 2022b). Although these applications in our study remain speculative until the research is conducted, they highlight how the insights derived from autoethnographic narratives might inform and shape interventions. The following initiatives, informed by our ongoing research findings, might enrich their intervention processes by integrating the voices and experiences of Colombian migrant women into local support strategies:

1. Development of Support Programmes:

- Create support programs that consider the personal and emotional experiences of migrant women, providing safe spaces for them to share their stories and receive emotional and psychological support. This approach aligns with the emphasis on capturing subjective experiences through autoethnography, as noted by Ellis et al. (2011).
- Implement support groups run by and for Colombian migrant women, facilitating the exchange of experiences and adaptation strategies. These groups could draw on the findings of the study to foster a sense of community and mutual understanding.
- Develop mentoring programs that connect newly arrived migrant women with those who have been in Seville (Spain) for longer, encouraging mutual learning and support. Such programs can benefit from the deeper understanding of adaptation processes that autoethnography provides (Chang, 2008).

2. Integration policies:

- Develop integration policies that recognize and value the cultural diversity and unique experiences of migrant women, promoting inclusive and respectful integration. Findings from the study could help policymakers understand the nuanced ways in which identity and culture interact during migration.

- Promote the active participation of migrant women in local policy formulation, ensuring that their voices are heard in decision-making processes. The autoethnographic focus on personal narratives can serve as a basis for representing the experiences of migrant women in policy discussions (Boylorn, 2017).
  - Implement labor integration programs that recognize the skills and previous experiences of migrant women, facilitating their insertion into the local labor market. These programs can be designed with a better appreciation of the challenges and strengths identified through the study.
3. Cultural Awareness Training:
- Implement cultural awareness training programs for professionals working with migrant communities, helping them to understand and value the experiences and needs of migrant women. Using real-life narratives, as suggested by Ellis et al. (2011), could deepen the empathy and understanding of service providers.
  - Develop training modules based on the narratives and experiences of Colombian migrant women, offering a richer and more empathetic understanding of their realities. Such training could be tailored for sectors like education, healthcare, and social services.
  - Extend this training to key sectors such as education, health, and social services to improve the quality of care and support provided to migrant women, ensuring that their specific needs are recognized.
4. Strengthening Support Networks:
- Encourage the creation and strengthening of community support networks that include migrant women, facilitating the building of connections and a sense of belonging in the new community. Insights from the proposed study could inform the development of these networks.
  - Support the creation of Colombian cultural associations that serve as meeting and support points for migrant women, fostering a sense of continuity and community.
  - Promote intercultural events that allow migrant women to share their culture and establish connections with the local community, fostering mutual understanding and cultural exchange.
5. Education and Training Programmes:

- Develop educational programs that address the specific needs of migrant women, adapted to their specific contexts and real needs. The study could identify challenges that these programs should address.
  - Offer workshops on labor rights, the health system, and education in Spain, empowering women with practical knowledge about their new environment. This aligns with the need to provide practical support alongside emotional and cultural integration.
6. Mental Health Services:
- Implement culturally sensitive mental health services that understand the specific challenges faced by Colombian migrant women. Such services can be informed by the study's exploration of the emotional dimensions of migration (Ellis et al., 2011).
  - Train mental health professionals on migration, cultural identity, and migration trauma, ensuring that they are equipped to provide adequate support.
7. Promotion of Cultural Expression:
- Support artistic and cultural initiatives that allow migrant women to express their experiences and identities through art, literature, music, or theater. Autoethnography's emphasis on storytelling (Chang, 2008) could guide the development of these initiatives, offering a means for migrant women to narrate their experiences.
  - Facilitate spaces for the celebration of Colombian festivities and traditions, fostering cultural continuity and a sense of community within Seville (Spain).
8. Economic Empowerment Programmes:
- Develop microcredit and business training programs specifically aimed at migrant women, fostering their economic independence and entrepreneurship. Insights from the study could identify areas where economic support is most needed.
  - Establish partnerships with local businesses to create employment and internship opportunities for migrant women, based on a deeper understanding of their skills and potential.
9. Local Community Awareness Raising:
- implement awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the local population of Seville (Spain), promoting understanding and appreciation of the cultural



diversity that Colombian migrant women bring. Findings could be used to design messages that address common misconceptions and foster empathy.

- Organize cultural exchange events that foster dialogue and interaction between the local community and migrant women, contributing to a more inclusive social environment.

#### 10. Continuous Research:

- Establish a women's migration observatory that continues to research and monitor the changing experiences and needs of Colombian migrant women in Seville (Spain). Such an observatory could build on the initial insights gained from the proposed study.
- Encourage collaboration between academic institutions and community organizations to conduct participatory research that informs policy and practice. This aligns with the autoethnographic approach's emphasis on involving participants in the research process (Ellis et al., 2011).

The implementation of these recommendations would require an intersectoral and collaborative approach, involving governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, migrant communities, and civil society. By basing these interventions on the real experiences and voices of Colombian migrant women, more effective and meaningful support can be achieved, facilitating their integration and well-being in Seville (Spain) nourishing a more diverse society.

### 7.4. Ethical considerations and challenges.

Autoethnography, like any qualitative methodology, presents several ethical and practical challenges that must be carefully addressed in the proposed research. While the study has not yet been conducted, it is crucial to anticipate and plan for these challenges to ensure that the research process remains ethical, transparent, and respectful of the participants involved. The following ethical considerations are central to this research proposal:

1. Confidentiality: Protecting the identity and privacy of participants is essential, especially when dealing with personal and sensitive narratives. As Ellis et al. (2011) note, autoethnographic research often involves sharing intimate stories that can reveal the identities of individuals or groups. Therefore, particular care must be taken to anonymize data and secure participant information throughout the study.
2. Informed consent: All participants must be fully informed about the purpose of the study, the methods of data collection, and how their stories will be used. This ensures

that they give their free and informed consent to participate. The process must be ongoing, allowing participants to withdraw or modify their consent at any stage of the research.

3. Ethical reflexivity: A key component of autoethnographic research is the continuous reflexivity of the researcher. The researcher must critically reflect on her role and how her own experiences influence the research process. As highlighted by Wall (2006), maintaining an ethical stance requires transparency about how personal perspectives shape data interpretation, ensuring that the research remains credible and self-aware.

Given the nature of the proposed study, several challenges related to the application of the autoethnographic methodology to the field of migration and identity need to be considered:

1. Personal bias: The researcher's emotional and personal closeness to the subject may introduce bias into data collection and analysis. This is a common concern in autoethnography, as noted by Chang (2008), who emphasizes the importance of adopting strategies such as triangulation to mitigate bias. By comparing the researcher's reflections with the perspectives of other participants, the study aims to achieve a more balanced analysis.
2. Balance between distance and proximity: The researcher must navigate the delicate balance between being part of the phenomenon under study and maintaining the analytical distance required for rigorous interpretation. As Ellis et al. (2011) suggest, this balance is crucial to ensure that the researcher's engagement with her own experiences does not overshadow the broader analysis. It is important to continuously evaluate this balance throughout the research process to avoid over-identification with the subject matter.
3. Emotionality: Exploring deeply personal experiences can be emotionally challenging for the researcher, potentially leading to emotional distress or fatigue. Wall (2006) points out that autoethnographic researchers must be prepared to manage the emotional toll of revisiting personal narratives. To address this, it is essential to establish support mechanisms, such as access to counseling services or peer support networks, to help the researcher navigate the emotional challenges that may arise during the study.

All these ethical considerations and challenges are intricately linked to the researcher's place of enunciation and how it intertwines with the perspectives of the other

migrant women participating in the study. This intersection of personal and collective narratives creates a complex web of stories that requires a careful and reflexive approach. The researcher's responsibility is to ensure that the study remains respectful and inclusive of diverse voices, allowing the lived experiences of all participants to be represented with integrity and sensitivity.

## **8. Conclusions.**

In this section, we summarize the conclusions of the article while offering recommendations for future research that may wish to use the autoethnographic methodology for studies based on personal experiences. Although the proposed study has yet to be conducted, the following conclusions and recommendations outline the potential contributions of autoethnography to the understanding of migrant women's experience and identities.

### **8.1. Advantages and suitability of the autoethnographic methodology.**

Autoethnography is proposed as a particularly promising methodology for investigating the impact of migration on the identity of Colombian migrant women in Seville (Spain) for several key reasons. Firstly, it has the potential to capture the depth and complexity of personal experiences, which may lead to a richer and more detailed understanding of how these women perceive and reconstruct their identity within a new cultural and social context. As noted by Ellis et al. (2011), autoethnography allows researchers to use their own lived experiences as a source of data, offering an insider's EMIC perspective that can enrich the analysis.

The reflexivity inherent in autoethnography encourages researchers to critically examine their own role and assumptions throughout the research process. This process of self-reflection can enhance the transparency and validity of the study by making explicit the ways in which the researcher's perspective shapes the analysis (Chang, 2008). By integrating personal experiences and emotions into the analysis, autoethnography can provide a more nuanced view of the dynamics of power, resistance, and adaptation that characterize the migration process. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that this approach requires careful attention to maintaining a balance between personal engagement and analytical distance to avoid potential biases (Wall, 2006).

Autoethnography is well suited to gender and migration studies, as it offers the potential for an in-depth exploration of how identities intersect and transform in response to migration experiences and power dynamics in the host society. While this approach

appears promising for capturing the nuanced aspects of identity reconstruction, its suitability in this specific context would benefit from further exploration, combination and comparison with other qualitative methodologies, such as narrative analysis (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015) and critical participatory action research, which also emphasize the importance of engaging with the lived experiences and voices of participants (Kemmis et al., 2014).

It is thought that findings and insights obtained through autoethnography, in the case of migrant women, could help overcome a central shortcoming in most of the Western countries' public policies and social intervention programs. This is because these are often designed without deeply acknowledging the actual migrant women's experiences, needs, agencies and capabilities (Terron et al. 2022b).

## **8.2. Contribution to the understanding of the migrant identity.**

Autoethnography has the potential to be a powerful methodology for understanding migrant identity from a personal and contextualized perspective. By allowing migrant women to narrate their own stories and experiences, this methodology can provide unique insights into how identity is constructed and lived in the context of migration. These narratives, combined with the researcher's first-person perspective, offer valuable insights that might be difficult to achieve through more distanced approaches.

The proposed use of autoethnography in this study aims to identify and explore key themes such as nostalgia, culture shock, adaptation, resilience, and the struggle against discrimination. These personal narratives can shed light on how Colombian migrant women in Seville (Spain) negotiate their identity, blending elements of their culture of origin with those of the host culture. Additionally, autoethnography may facilitate a deeper understanding of how power dynamics and social hierarchies shape the migration experience. By reflecting on their own experiences, researchers can reveal the tensions and contradictions they face, potentially offering a richer and more nuanced view of the complexities of migrant identity.

It is also important to recognize the value of migrant women's voices and agency, which autoethnography can help to highlight. Through their personal narratives, migrant women can assert their identity and agency, using storytelling as a means of resistance and self-affirmation within often challenging social environments. However, the extent to which these insights can be generalized or applied to broader contexts remains to be determined through empirical study.

### 8.3. Recommendations for future research.

Based on the reflections and anticipated insights from this proposed study, several recommendations can be made for future research that aims to use autoethnographic methodology:

1. Broadening the focus: Future research could broaden its scope to include migrant women from diverse backgrounds and contexts, allowing for a more comparative understanding of migration experiences. This could help to identify commonalities and differences in how identity is shaped across various cultural settings.
2. Integration of multiple perspectives: Incorporating interviews and testimonies from other members of the migrant community, alongside personal narratives, could enrich the analysis and provide a more holistic view of the migration experience. This approach aligns with the call for greater triangulation to ensure the validity and depth of autoethnographic studies (Wall, 2006).
3. Exploring different dimensions: Future research could investigate other aspects of identity, such as work identity, family identity, and linguistic identity, and how these intersect with cultural and gender identity. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple layers of identity that are influenced by migration.
4. Longitudinal studies: Conducting longitudinal studies that follow migrant women over time could provide a more dynamic and evolutionary understanding of how identity develops and changes throughout the migration process. Such studies would allow for a deeper exploration of the long-term impacts of migration on personal identity.

These recommendations emphasize the need for a careful and reflexive approach to autoethnographic research, acknowledging its potential strengths while remaining aware of its challenges. By continuing to explore how autoethnography can be applied to the study of migrant female identities, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of the diverse experiences of female migration and the complex processes of identity transformation, for better informing public policies and socio-educational interventions in the field.

### Bibliographical references.

- Adams, T. E. (2011). *Narrating the wardrobe: An autoethnography of same-sex attraction*. Left Coast Press.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Hooks, B. (2000). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. South End Press.
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5-34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.
- Boylorn, R. M. (2017). *Sweetwater: Black women and narratives of resilience*. Peter Lang. <https://doi.org/10.3726/b11027>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.
- Cuklanz, L., Rodríguez, P. (2020). Feminist methodologies: new perspectives. *Investigaciones Feministas*, 11(2), 201-209. <https://doi.org/10.5209/infe.70122>
- Castoriadis, C. (1975). *L'institution imaginaire de la société*. Éditions du Seuil.
- Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Left Coast Press.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139-167.
- Cubero, A., Garrido, R. (2023). "Ain't I a Woman?": Feminist Participatory Action-Research with African Migrant Women Living in Spain. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 24(4), 1611-1634. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-023-01020-0>
- Curiel, O., Pión, R. (2022). The Contributions of Afro-descendant Women to Feminist Theory and Practice: Deuniversalizing the Subject "Women". *Hypatia*, 37(3), 478-492. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2022.45>
- De Fina, A. (2000). Orientation in immigrant narratives: The role of ethnicity in the identification of characters. *Discourse Studies*, 2(2), 131-157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445600002002001>
- De Fina, A., Georgakopoulou, A. (2015). *The handbook of narrative analysis*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118458204>
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography*. AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C., Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 733-768). Sage.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical social research/Historische sozialforschung*, 273-290.

- Erikson, E. H. (1994). *Identidad, juventud y crisis*. Taurus Ediciones.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford University Press (pp. 58-63).  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503620766>
- García Canclini, N. (1997). *Imaginarios urbanos*. EUDEBA.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Basic Books.
- Glaser, B. G., Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-196807000-00014>
- Harris, M. (1976). History and significance of the emic/etic distinction. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 5, 329-350. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.05.100176.001553>
- Husserl, E. (1970). *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Northwestern University Press.
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., Nixon, R. (2014). Introducing Critical Participatory Action Research. *The Action Research Planner*. Springer, Singapore.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4560-67-2\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4560-67-2_1)
- Macías-Gómez-Estern, B.; Tarazona-Ochoa, V.A. & Seco-Martínez, J.M. (in press). Latinas migrants in Europe (Spain and Portugal), from vulnerability to social agency. In Machín, R. (Ed.): *Pathologisation, Depathologisation and Mental Health in Ibero-América*. Palgrave MacMillan. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-70043-9\_8
- Méndez, M. (2013). Autoethnography as a research method: advantages, limitations and criticisms. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 15(2), 279-287.  
<https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.calj.2013.2.a09>
- Navas, M., García, M., Tejada, A. (2006). Acculturation strategies and attitudes of African immigrants in the south of Spain: Between reality and hope. *Cross-cultural research*, 40(4), 331-351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397105283405>
- Quijano, A. (2000). Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina in Lander, Edgardo (comp.) *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*. CLACSO.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2007). *The idea of Latin America. The colonial wound and the decolonial option*. Barcelona: Gedisa, 241 pp., trans. by Silvia Jawerbaum and Julieta Barba (Iván Carrasco M.).
- Pando-Amezcu, S. (2022). *Identidades migradas: representaciones sociales, desafíos y resistencias identitarias de las mujeres mexicanas en Madrid*. Doctoral thesis. Complutense University of Madrid.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Sage.



- Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33-47). Brooks/Cole.
- Terrón-Caro, T.; Cárdenas-Rodríguez, R., Ortega de Mora, F. (2022a). Voices of migrant women. Gender approach in migration analysis. *Cuestiones pedagógicas*, 1 (31), 3-20. <https://doi.org/10.12795/CP.2022.i31.v1.01>
- Terrón-Caro, T., Cárdenas-Rodríguez, R., Ortega-de-Mora, F., Aleksic, K., Bergano, S., Biligha, P., Chiappelli, T., Di Grigoli, A. R., Díaz, R., Fouskas, T., Frelih, M., Giron, T., Guo, W., Koulierakis, G., Lapov, Z., Lyberopoulou, L., Mancaniello, M. R., Martins, C., Moreira, B., Selim, M. (2022b). *Policy Recommendations Ebook: Migrations, Gender and Inclusion from an International perspective. Voices of Immigrant Women*. [https://doi.org/10.46661/rio.20220727\\_1](https://doi.org/10.46661/rio.20220727_1)
- Wall, S. (2006). An autoethnography on learning about autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(2), 146-160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500205>