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Recreated practices by Mapuche women that strengthen place identity in new urban spaces of residence in Santiago, Chile

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of migration to cities by indigenous Mapuche people of Chile is associated with various consequences, such as the loss of ethnic identity and cultural practices. This study aims to describe how ethnic identity is maintained through the recreation of ancestral cultural practices that Mapuche women promote in their families, generating identification to new spaces of residence. This qualitative research draws on analyses of forty-eight interviews conducted with twelve families from four neighbourhoods in Santiago. The study reveals ways in which key traditional Mapuche practices are translated and recreated through the processes of place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity in new urban areas of residence which in turn express variant forms of ethnic identity and everyday politics of care that extend beyond folkloric notions of rural indigeneity and more static political ideologies of ethno-national autonomy.

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Introduction

A challenge for many migrants in new countries and provinces is how to modify spaces in urban contexts so as to accommodate, re-signify, and provide continuity to cultural rites, practices, and everyday activities (Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston 2003; Berry 2005; Fredericks 2009; Main 2013; Lewicka 2014). Mobility from rural to urban areas, whether for education, job opportunities, or quality of life, promotes both social and spatial changes in people's lifestyles as a form of self-mobilization and identity transformation (Corbett 2007). Urban environments thereby extend beyond physical dimensions, acquiring symbolic significance through the social

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interactions between people, objects, and landscapes sharing the same space (Castells 1974).

To understand migratory processes and individuals' capacities to feel at home in new surroundings, we employ two conceptual approaches. From a social constructionist framework, identities are emergent and context dependent being built and negotiated within specific interactional occasions and communication processes that are both context shaping and context shaped. We therefore draw on the centrality of discourse in the constitutive relations between language in action and the construction and negotiation of identities (see, for example, Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Bucholtz and Hall 2005; De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg 2006). Along a similar line, we draw on discursive environmental psychology with particular reference to the concept of place identity by Dixon and Durrheim (2000, 2004) who highlight the role of discourse in the construction of place identity and define it as "landscape of meaning". In this way place identity becomes dynamic "arenas" socially constituted and at the same time socially constructed through discourse, that allow people give new spaces a sense of belonging, legitimizing their social relations and practices through rhetorical-discursive resources (Durrheim and Dixon 2005; Di Masso, Dixon, and Durrheim 2014). According to these authors, place identity not only looks to the ways landscapes and their socio-cultural meanings influence people's behaviours, identities and group norms, but also how the agency of individuals can re-shape and enact upon those existing landscapes (Dixon and Durrheim 2004).

To understand the ways Mapuche women articulate landscapes and environments from their place of origin within initially unfamiliar urban areas, we draw on the concept of "place continuity" (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996) expressed in two forms: "place-referent continuity" and "place-congruent continuity". The first alludes to places with natural characteristics that possess emotional significance for the individual and are specific to people's sending communities, such that, they provide continuity in a new space. These places are to be recreated within new, adapted natural and environmental elements to which the original meanings are transferred. On the other hand, place-congruent continuity applies to moments when the characteristics of the place of origin are generic and transferable from one place to another like landscapes as lakes, rivers, and mountains. This allows individuals and groups to transform new environment through recreated cultural practices, generating a mutual on-going exchange with this location and thus contributing to place identity development.

Processes of acculturation and cultural preservation among migrant populations have been amply studied, detailing the situational agency employed by specific actors to maintain or blur ethnic boundaries. Gans' (1979) seminal essay on third-generation migrants in the U.S., and Water's (1990) articulation of ethnic options among white middle class second- and third-

generation European migrants both emphasize the specific role played by culinary and religious rituals and festivals in providing individuality and ethnic communal ties. While setting the agenda for situationist accounts of ethnic identity, neither study fully considers gender as an intersecting social position (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1993), the importance of place as a multi-sited construction process of transnationalism, or the political meanings of cultural preservation as an act of resistance. More recent studies have brought out the ways women create moments of control and authority, even within the patriarchal hierarchies of domestic labour, to constitute transnational communities and ties to new spaces of residence (Das Gupta 1997; D'Sylva and Beagan 2011). Similarly, acculturation models are inadequate for understanding the development of place identity among the Mapuche women in Santiago involved in our case study. Attention is given to the ways that discourses of continuity are made meaningful through the micro-management of the home and everyday items such as plants and food items brought from the Chilean south. We argue that articulations of collective belonging and women's constructions of place-based identities challenge both folkloric notions of rural indigeneity, but also more static political ideologies of ethno-national autonomy and ethnic identity, through everyday practices in the home.

Santiago, as a front-runner of neoliberal projects in Latin America, is a contested site for indigenous politics; where cultural recognition is supplanted by, or contained within, a racially ambivalent citizenship of individual responsibility (Richards 2013). Following the broader discussion of neoliberal multiculturalism, Warren (2017) also argues that Mapuche urban organizations co-exist uneasily alongside Chilean state policies of multiculturalism on the one hand, and denials of indigenous identity and politics on the other. In this same context, we consider the importance of understand how individuals – away from these more formal associations – re-construct indigenous identity and its relation to these economic, political, and social landscapes.

According to Census (2012 in process) the Mapuche population in Chile has reached 1,183,102 out of the total Chilean population 18,123,444 (CASEN 2012). While these demographic and socio-political changes have been ongoing since the early twentieth century, only during the last thirty years has the residential distribution of the Mapuche population turned urban-majority (CASEN 2006; Imilan 2010). Contemporary literature has shown that rural–urban relocation processes impact ethnic identity, requiring adaptation to new scenarios (Bengoa 1999, 2002; Aravena 2001; Gissi 2004a; Antileo 2006; Oteíza and Merino 2012, among others). The emergence of cultural practices adapted to urban areas among the Mapuche have drawn attention to the multifaceted articulations of contemporary indigenous identity, and particularly to changing notions of authenticity, territory, and spirituality (Aravena 1998; Cuminao and Moreno 1998; Gissi 2004b; Antileo 2008). The

shift towards urban-led identity work and political activism through the development of Santiago-based collective organizations have scrutinized the conceptual limits of ancestral territory. These processes have opened possibilities for constructing diasporic political vindication not solely restricted to the Chilean south (Imilan 2010). The maintenance of ties with communities of origin and the incorporation of religious ceremonies in cities, for example, have been analysed as breaking down dichotomized rural–urban identities (Gissi 2004b).

The political and agentic role of female Mapuche leaders and feminist intellectuals in this process has also been documented, including the iconic role of the *machi* and her symbolic representation of traditional Mapucheness within urban spaces (Bacigalupo 2004; Richards 2005; Warren 2009). According to Richards (2013), although Mapuche women have played important roles in struggles for autonomy and recognition, Chilean politics has also portrayed Mapuche culture as demeaning to, and exploitative of, women's rights.¹ While Mapuche women have been used as the keepers of tradition or authentic indigeneity, even by Mapuche organizations, Bacigalupo notes that the internal process of agency among Mapuche women is far from static:

It is only recently that native women are being acknowledged as thinking politically active subjects and theoreticians with particular ways of intervening in their historical situations ... They are creating their own space to express their agency and discourses of resistance. (Bacigalupo 2003, 48)

Given this general context, we consider the ways Mapuche women interact with the private domain of the home, and specifically to the cultural (re)valuation attributed to “domestic labour” and other practices – despite their low status in society – that occur there as an everyday form of micro-politics. We argue that upon establishing themselves in Santiago, Mapuche women generate affective ties and attachment to spaces in the home, culturally modifying and adapting them through interaction with non-human agents so as to articulate their place identity to the recreated surroundings in Santiago. Mapuche women who migrate to the Chilean capital city bring with them meanings, images, memories, wisdom, customs, and practices that constitute the basic inputs to recreate cultural practices, generate attachment, and mobilize place identity with the new urban scene. The materials and items used to transform these spaces are not soulless matter, but rather are non-human agents, such as plants and foods. In accordance with Mapuche worldview, everyday interactions with these agents enable place-referent continuity and place-food congruent continuity re-articulating ethnic identification within the surroundings of Santiago.

To this end, we examine how Mapuche women articulate and perform place identity through the local environment of their community and homes in ways that express ethico-political concern. These practices, albeit

less explicit than more formal cultural revitalization or political resistance enacted by Mapuche actors in Santiago (including women leaders), express alternate forms of spatial reorganization and communalization, as well as ethnic identity formation (Briones 2007). We thereby contribute to existing literature that has sought to explore the ways Mapuche women's subjectivities and collective identities are worked out and performed within communities and organizations, (Bacigalupo 2003, 2004; Richards 2005, 2013; Warren 2009). These authors underscore gendered tensions that exist within predominantly male-led organizations, and resistance to Western-imposed ideologies and representations of feminism, womanhood, and equality. We argue that women in more "traditional" roles within the home are not situated outside ethico-political issues concerning Mapuche rights, autonomy, and territory. Instead the spaces of home and community are narrated by Mapuche women as providing an alternate identity politics to resist straight-line assimilatory processes in urban centres, providing everyday forms of authentic Mapuche belonging in Santiago. Such analyses enable us to engage with how and when categories of belonging become relevant amid mundane social events and practices in the everyday life of the city, and hence, the ways in which ethnicity is constructed situationally "from below" among Mapuche populations (Webb 2014).

The objective of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, we describe the role of indigenous Mapuche women in the recreation of everyday cultural practices within the home and local community in Santiago and how these contribute to processes of place identity within new post-migration urban surroundings. On the other, we reveal how such practices are enacted in women's discursive narratives highlighting the importance of discourse in the construction and negotiation of identities and in the formation of person-environment relationships.

Methodological framework

The research on which this article is based is qualitative and descriptive in nature. The sample consists of twelve Mapuche families from each of the four neighbourhoods of the city of Santiago with the greatest share (according to the 2002 census) of Mapuche population. These neighbourhoods are Cerro Navia (6.5 per cent of total inhabitants), La Pintana (6.12 per cent), Peñalolén (4.8 per cent), and Lo Prado (4.75 per cent). Three families were chosen from each neighbourhood, and each family participated in a family focus group and three individual interviews, resulting in a total sample of forty-eight interviews.

The analysis presented in this paper is representative of the entire sample, though length limitations prevent a larger selection of participants' narratives being presented. The inclusion criteria for the selection of the participants considered members' identification as Mapuche people, that at least one of the

adult members had migrated to Santiago, and controlling for different levels of educational attainment (elementary, high school, university, and/or technical training) and different types of labour activities (professional, technical, wage-based, or independent). Consideration was given to equitable representation across age ranges. Interviewees' participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were assured through informed consent. Interviews and focus groups were directed by a Mapuche interviewer and held in the home, complying with the conditions of privacy, to sustain a conversation in an environment of trust and with quiet conditions that would allow for optimum audio recording. The purpose of the interview and focus group was to generate a conversation among Mapuche participants that would provide knowledge about how ethnic identity and place identity are constructed and maintained in an urban environment. The relevance of conversation topics were established through a pilot study. To ensure cultural appropriateness, the interviews were conducted according to the customary protocol for meetings in the Mapuche culture, which includes *chaliwün* (greeting), *pentukun* (personal introduction by each one of the participants), *tuwün* and *küpan* (presentation of territorial origin and lineage), and the offering of a *yewün* (gift) for each subject participant and his or her families. A brief prayer or *llessipun* was also performed to ask the spirits for a smooth and successful conversation.

The analysis draws on emic-based understandings of Mapuche identity which incorporate participants' *in vivo* terminology (from the native *mapuzungun* language). They account for actions and narratives that transfer meanings from indigenous communities in the Chilean South² so as to symbolically redefine their urban surroundings. The results are indicative of the diversity of opinions and practices among the respondents interviewed, but cannot be generalized beyond the research sample. We acknowledge that place identity is fluid, context-specific, and constructed along individuals' discursive interactions; hence among other sections of Mapuche families with less clearly defined ethnic self-identification, practices may be quite different. Information about interviewees' age and neighbourhood of residence in Santiago is provided.

Results

The three main practices Mapuche women engage in are the appreciation of nature through the cultivation and use of medicinal plants, the preparation of Mapuche traditional food, and the practice of *ngütram*³ (family conversation) around the *matetun*⁴ (drinking of *mate*) and the *pewma*⁵ (retelling of dreams)⁶ (see Figure 1).

Our analysis focuses on the actions and interpersonal transactions that women engage in, considering their own cultural needs and the physical

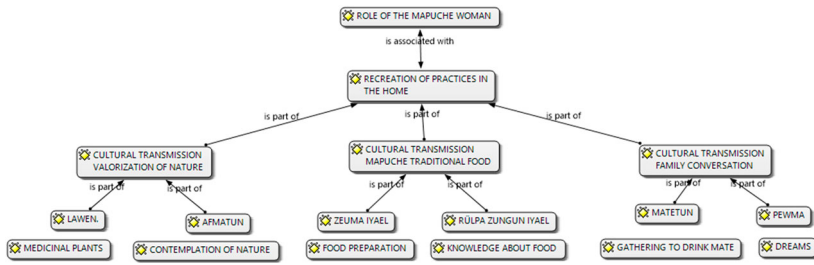


Figure 1. The role of the Mapuche woman in urban migration context.

nature of their new place of residence. In other words, which reference points from their biographies and places of origin (Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff 1983) give continuity and meaningful identifications with their urban homes and communities, allowing them to perform cultural practices and develop place identity with such spaces.

Appreciation of nature

The practices of valuing and appreciating nature are observed in the use of *lawen*⁷ (medicinal plants) and *afmatun* (contemplation of nature). Each one of these subcategories is subsequently described.

Lawen: the use of medicinal plants

The Mapuche women who were interviewed recreate the ancestral practice of using elements from nature for medicinal purposes, a tradition they uphold in Santiago by preparing infusions from herbs that they cultivate on a small scale in the patios of their homes. In response to a question about the use of medicinal herbs, an interviewee responded as follows:

Yes, I'm always telling my daughter, give this to them [her small children] for a stomach ache, if they have a cold, give them camomile, and I make them little infusions with *canelo* leaf or *palo santo*. I have medicinal cures for everything. And I also send for plants from the south. (Woman, age 45, Peñalolén)

Many of the Mapuche families interviewed use *lawen* to treat ailments or minor sicknesses such as stomach aches, colds, and fevers, before turning to the public health system. Our participants' narratives facilitate a de-territorialized notion of belonging, transferrable from traditional communities to wherever the *nwen*⁸ that the plants possess to combat ills, can be grown or consumed. For example, according to our respondents, the green colour of the leaves of the plants helps banish the *wecha nwen* (negative evil energy) associated with illness or bad spirits that afflict people. Moving away from scientific and rational-oriented explanations for well-being, these Mapuche women play a key role in de-objectifying non-human agents such

as plant leaves so as to emphasize their active role in restoring biological and spiritual order. We emphasize that away from more public and politicized displays of Mapuche worldview of which many women are vital activists, private and domestic ethico-political practices of care in the home also provide individualized forms of ethnic continuity in Santiago.

Further examples of the use of medicinal herbs in Santiago are evidenced in the following narratives.

Regarding medicines, we always have herbs: mint, pennyroyal, peach leaves for a stomach ache, and pennyroyal for a cold. My daughter is accustomed to drinking herbal infusions. If her belly hurts, she says to me, "Make me a little herbal tea". (Woman, age 29, Cerro Navia)

When my son gets sick, we go to the home of an older woman who cures him. Afterward, we give him a little water with lemon, oil, and grated potato. We also use camomile when his stomach hurts, or for a fever, we put *canelo* leaves on him or place thin slices of potato on his forehead. (Woman, age 22, Peñalolén)

In recent years, intercultural health practices in Chile have gained limited recognition as a part of the neoliberal capitalist state project, resulting in niche consumerist health markets such as Mapuche pharmacies. While this is consistent with a global trend towards the commodification of ethnic culture, and cultural assimilation, these Mapuche health products are simultaneously rendered culturally relevant and valuable (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). While certain overlap exists with alternate (naturalist) forms of medicine that contrast normative healthcare practices in Santiago, the importance of plant cultivation practices for Mapuche women is the place-referent continuity these non-human agents provide, given their symbolic association with ancestral territories and knowledges.

Participants emphasized the role that Mapuche women play in passing on *kimün* (ancestral knowledge and wisdom) to their children. The practice of *ngütram*, nature contemplation, and plant use, beyond socializing the next generation, discursively distinguish everyday home-based – and often home-grown – practices from more consumerist health products. Instead, they emphasize a politics of care that is concerned to maintain an order in the spiritual and biological world. Plants are used in different ways, either to make infusions, rubs, and poultices or for steam treatments and are also burned to scare away bad auras or negative forces. As noted in the second narrative, the private maintenance of *feyentun* (faith in ancestral medicine) is performed through particular cultural rites that focus on socialization in the home – an interaction between persons and non-human agents – rather than impersonal, procedural ingestion of prescribed or commercialized medicines.

The above place-based ties developed by the families interviewed such as cultivating or enculturating plants, regarded as non-human agents, improve

well-being. Spiritual connections to the territorial *ngen* and knowledges originating in the south are literally transplanted into Santiago homes, and the act of constant care and attention to these agents ensures both ethnic identities and place identity building with the new place of residence. This is confirmed through these Mapuche women's approaches to using medicinal herbs and plants, extracting only the necessary amounts.

I take little leaves from my *canelo* plant when I go on a bus trip, and I put leaves on myself here and there. I bring them with me to protect me because my faith is really strong. We must also pray to the *ngen*; I greet my plants each day in the morning, and when I pick a *canelo* leaf or when I come to take a little piece, I ask, "You're not going to get mad, are you?" I ask for permission. (Woman, age 70, La Pintana)

Beyond more public and group identity-based enactments of belonging such as *ngillatun* and *we tripantu* ceremonies in Santiago (see Cuminao and Moreno 1998), we suggest that this woman's daily routine of greeting her plants and praying before picking leaves allows place-referent continuity, facilitating adaptation to urban residence and maintaining a sense of equilibrium with nature. This means that spiritual connections to "the land" are transferable to Santiago (such as planting a *canelo* tree at their new home). In the testimony, this is discursively emphasized by the use of direct speech reproduction to clarify how the woman asks the plants' *ngen* for permission to pick leaves from them. Practices like these make the physical ruptures from ancestral territories less aggrieving, as further narratives in the following section demonstrate.

Afmatun: contemplation of nature

The Mapuche women interviewed play a key role in the cultural transmission of the appreciation of nature to younger generations, recreating the practice of contemplating and gaining spiritual nourishment from the plants and herbs in the spaces that they inhabit in the capital.

You tell me, where in the city can you see a gumbo limbo tree? Not even a little plant, nothing. And so, all of a sudden, I say I'm going to plant that little plant even if it's in a flowerpot so I can see the green because it kind of gives you life. I identify with nature. I bring plants from the south, I bring them to my sister's house, or I say, "Here, take this little plant". (Woman, age 59, Peñalolén)

The need to be in contact with green things is demonstrated constantly through the act of cultivating herbs, plants, and flowers in small pots. The testimony above reflects how, in urban contexts severely different from the natural landscape of the indigenous communities of the south, women generate place-referent continuity through essential practices. People bring the concept of "sowing" in open expanses such as gardens and small farms in the south to their small containers such as flowerpots, jars, and plastic

bottles, which they arrange in rows or hang on walls. This referent continuity of native medicinal practices is performed despite the limited space available in the participants' homes in the capital, which these women adapt and modify to be surrounded by "green" and "life". We highlight the participant's direct question addressed to the interviewer to include her in evaluating the difficulty of finding ancestral Mapuche plants in the city.

Another example for the *afmatun* is the desire among some Mapuche women to seek out micro-habitats in the capital city.

The ravine in Macul is a large and very attractive place which a lot of varieties of trees, it's like countryside. It's a park and there's a stream, the current flows down and salmon swim there in that part (...) there are different trees, and you can breathe air there, and when you see some green there you feel better because you're in contact with that which means life. (Family from Peñalolen neighbourhood)

Many of the participants from our study reiterated a similar idea of re-creating the "countryside of the south" in the capital city. Such imaginaries are imperfect, since in the south the countryside is synonymous (in their own narratives) with broad open expanses, freedom, humid, and leafy landscapes. While Santiago parks tend to be much drier and sparser in regards to foliage, these substituted surroundings, however dissimilar, permit a sense of reference continuity. In particular they provide a break from the more visual and tangible aspects of urban living. The participant's affirmation that "you can breathe air there" is particularly fanciful given the proximity of the relatively small ravine to industrial sites and a motorway. In this regard, the parks are a projection and transferral of ideals and characteristics that constitute Mapuche identity in their new urban residence. Everyday practices, such as strolling in the parks and breathing air "like the countryside in the south", are micro-forms of providing continuity with ancestral territories beyond more official group-based organization such as the creation of Mapuche cultural parks for cultural events. Indeed, the urban Mapuche who participated in the study recreate the practices of appreciating and contemplating nature through the contemplative action of *afmatun*, thereby articulating a sense of cultural belonging in the capital.

Cultural transmission of traditional Mapuche food

A broad array of postcolonial and feminist literature⁹ has challenged the doubly stigmatized role of indigenous women and their role in traditional culture. In line with this, we seek to further problematize the private/public dichotomies that position domestic Mapuche women as non-political actors. A large proportion of the Mapuche women interviewed assume the role of re-valuing domestic labour such as the preparation of ancestral foods by emphasizing their cultural and nutritional value in spite of alternate

options in Santiago. This role is present in the concepts of *zeuma iyael* (food preparation) and *rülpa zungun iyael* (transmission of knowledge about diet). We interpret this transmission as a form of politics of care that articulates domestic labours as identity work, enabling sociability, collective welfare, communication, and dialogue with the younger generations so as to understand the symbolic significance of particular knowledges. As we demonstrate below, decisions about *what* to cook, *where* to obtain ingredients, and *how* to cook extend domestic labour beyond care for physical needs, to the task of improving the environment of the home with place-referent and food-congruent continuity practices.

Zeuma iyael: food preparation

The recreated practice of preparing traditional Mapuche food in urban contexts was frequently referred to by various age ranges of the Mapuche women interviewed; specifically their preparation of *tortillas*, *sopaipillas*, *harina tostada*, *catutos*, and *muday*.¹⁰

I make kneaded bread, I make tortillas over ashes, I make the food from the south for the children because they don't eat a lot of this food in the capital. In winter, I make them *pantrucas*, *sopaipillas*, legumes from the south, all the food from the south, and I make it here for them because I think it's healthier. (Woman, age 45, Peñalolén)

In this narrative, a strong association is observed between food and the southern region of the country where traditional Mapuche communities reside. We note the reiteration of the word "south" in the woman's narration to emphasize the presence of the south in her memories. The consumption of foods and ingredients from the place of origin strengthens cultural identity, as emphasized in the woman's discourse above, maintaining cultural food patterns and revitalizing this tradition in the younger generations. These patterns among sections of the Mapuche population are related to the vital cycles of nature; foods from each period of the year are eaten according to the season. In winter, for example, people eat high-calorie foods such as *ulpo* (toasted wheat with milk), *pizku* (legumes), *wañaka* (hot soups), and *pantxuka* (stew). In summer, it is common to prepare fresh products such as *awar* (broad beans), *wülpüz* (toasted wheat with cold water), and seasonal fruits and vegetables. In Santiago, these seasons are much less marked; winters are milder and summers hotter, hence these food practices make little sense from a purely nutritive sense. Rather they reveal desires for place and cultural practice continuity with these vital cycles; similar to the uses of plants in the household so as to connect those private spheres to the South.

The narratives also reveal that, as above in relation to medicinal plants, to facilitate the preparation of native foods Mapuche, a significant proportion of the families interviewed make the effort to bring basic ingredients from the

communities in the south to Santiago. This practice is expressed in the following quote:

And here, as well, we make things like *sopaipillas*, *tortillas*, and *mote*¹¹ with ashes. Whenever someone goes to the south, my mother sends for some ashes because the ashes from there are better because of the trees. The hualle is the best firewood there is, and the tree that produces the most, as well. (Woman, age 22, Peñalolén)

The preparation of traditional foods in the capital is made possible by the knowledge maintained by these Mapuche women. The interviewees invariably made reference to the quality of natural materials in the south (in this testimony “ashes” from the “hualle tree”), while the capital is viewed as deficient or lacking in these regards. Although most interviewees recognized the convenience and resourcefulness of the capital in regards to everyday items, those aspects related to ethnic identity remain firmly connected to the south and therefore become place-congruent continuity practices made possible by transporting food. These are not commercial ventures but the repeated nature of these nine-hour bus journeys – though uncomfortable and arduous maintain important connections to the indigenous communities of the south, as well as connecting families in Santiago.

Rülpa zungun iyael: transmission of knowledge about diet

The recreated practice of transmitting knowledge about food and diet appeared frequently in the participants’ narratives. These Mapuche women take charge of and pass on to younger generations, especially daughters and female relatives, the food preparation practices and techniques for the use of ingredients and items that are specific to native recipes.

I make my kids eat everything, and I teach them where [the Mapuche food] is from, how it’s made. I tell them that, if one day I am not here and they want to make something, at least they will know how to do it and what to make. Nobody is going to tell them it’s done this way or that way. (Woman, age 45, Peñalolén)

The practice of cooking Mapuche traditional foods in the city shows that there has been a mobilization of native knowledge within the new urban space of residence and from the elders to the younger generations. While this is a common “ethnic option” between first- and second-generation migrants (Waters 1990), what is specific to this Mapuche practice is the emphasis on place-based narration and transmitting knowledge of their *tuwün*¹² (lineage) and the native territory (*küpan*) while teaching these traditional recipes. This practice also highlights the importance of sharing Mapuche knowledge or *kimün* regarding native recipes, as a central tenet of cultural identity. It highlights that in the Mapuche culture it is chiefly women who are involved in passing on to their children the *kimün* and the elements of the natural environment in which these women were raised. Such learning

occurs through the observation and preparation of foods in the family setting. Mapuche traditional food products, food preparation, and the sharing of knowledge about food practices contribute to the maintenance of cultural beliefs and values such as the *yafü tuwün*, which involves valuing the diet as a source of spiritual energy, motivation, and strength (Sutton 2001; Holtzman 2006).

Moreover, the role of food in narratives overlaps with the narratives of place identity (Dixon, Durrheim, and Di Masso 2014) in that Mapuche families gather to eat together in everyday life as they talk about self-in-place relationships and the interactions embedded within broader cultural and ideological traditions that regulate person–place relations. In this context, Mapuche women’s practices of cooking extend to the ethics of care that create and maintain sociability within the community. Furthermore, the narratives reflect how women in the capital, through food-congruent continuity, cook Mapuche typical dishes as prepared in their communities of origin, taking care to bring or send for ingredients from the south, such as ashes to prepare *mote* or *kayana*¹³ to toast wheat for various food preparations. The practices involved in recreating native Mapuche food customs in small patios are performed upon a fireplace resembling the original *kütral* placed in the centre of the Mapuche *ruka* (traditional home), creating a place-referent continuity site in urban homes.

Yafü tuwün, according to the interviewees, is the responsibility that Mapuche women have towards their families in providing them strength and energy. This role is linked to Mapuche cultural worldview in which the *mapu* or earth represents the feminine quality of giving life. We argue that in accordance with the matriarchal social structure of precolonial Mapuche society,¹⁴ the Mapuche women interviewed, who provide domestic labour such as cooking, enact private and embodied politics of resistance against cultural absorption. While many traditional culinary Mapuche dishes have been incorporated into Chilean society, such as the consumption of *mate* and *sopai-pillas*, the research participants emphasized the authentic forms of preparing and sharing those foods.

In the final empirical section of results, we detail some of the communal and dialogic practices of *ngütram* (conversation) associated with native activities as *matetun* (gathering to drink *mate*) and the narration of *pewma* (dreams) before noon, and their implicit place-referent features.

Cultural transmission: valuing family conversation

Matetun: meet to converse while sipping a collective mate

According to the interviewees, the *matetun* recreates the native practice of gathering around the fireplace (*kütral*) in the *ruka* which, according to traditional Mapuche rites, is characterized by gregarious, relaxed, affectionate,

and empathic gatherings that involve discursive practices such as *pentukun*¹⁵ (learning about the guest and his or her family and key concerns). This practice, recreated in the urban context, revives the native custom of *mangel*¹⁶ (the act of inviting another) and the *mañum*¹⁷ (reciprocal thanking for the invitation), observed in the following testimony:

And that is a cultural practice, drinking mate, talking and gathering as a family, that is a practice because, in non-Mapuche families they don't do it, they just eat and stand up. Our custom is to drink mate, talk, share something, and hear the news about the other person, eat *sopaipillas* ... our culture is like that, and when people go to the south, it's like that, they sit down to eat and converse. (Woman, age 29, Cerro Navia)

This narrative highlights the role of *matetun* and its contribution to cultural identity and place identity, as a social practice. That is, *matetun* constitutes the primary sphere of encounter for indigenous people from the south, as depicted by this woman by the three key verbs: "sit down to eat and converse". In participants' homes we observed how, through place-referent continuity, they have adapted their living areas into communal spaces for dialogue despite the reduced number of rooms or living areas available in government subsidized Western-style Chilean urban homes. The female Mapuche participants generate these environments of encounter, inviting family members, relatives, and friends, to share a moment of sociality around the drinking of *mate* so as to encourage communal ties of belonging in the capital city where they constitute an even smaller minority than in the south relative to Chilean residents.¹⁸ We suggest that these practices resist the regular speed of life in an urban capital, instead administering time according to the imaginaries and lifestyles of the south. Food cultural practices as *matetun* are made possible by place and food-referent continuity among these urban Mapuche families, since it facilitates traditional sociability such as *ngütram*, *pentukun* (conversations aimed at learning about the family lineage of guests), and *pewma*. In some of our participants' houses, three or four generations resided together, hence the recreation of the *matetun* plays an important role in the maintenance of the cultural concept of "extended family" that characterizes the organizational structure of the *lof*.¹⁹ Gathering together to drink *mate* in urban houses involves an extended family, including elders, adults, youths, and children around the kitchen table, mobilize place and practice-referent continuities to replace the *kütral* by the kitchen table or the *kütral* by the fireplace in the patio.

Conclusions

This study has revealed the multifaceted ways by which Mapuche women recreate cultural practices in the home in Santiago and how these enable the articulation of place identity in culturally modified post-migration urban spaces. Those women interviewed who had migrated to Santiago bring

with them meanings, images, memories, wisdom, customs, and practices that constitute the basic inputs to recreate cultural practices and encourage younger generations to value and strengthen their cultural identity, thereby generating feelings of attachment to the new place of residence (Lewicka 2011). Many of the rituals enacted in urban surroundings such as nature appreciation, medicinal plant cultivation, traditional food transmission, and family conversation (*ngütram*) have been transferred from communities of origin in the south. These recreated practices are enacted by the processes of place (and practice) referent continuity (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996; Main 2013) and also *food-congruent* continuity. The latter is made possible by transporting the ingredients for food preparation from the indigenous communities in the south to Santiago. These practices in the home and in the community, to some extent, resist forming client or consumer relationships within the strongly neoliberal-led markets and culture of Santiago. Equally importantly, they help maintain social configurations and ways of inhabiting public and private spaces that emphasize community solidarity, indigenous knowledges, and reciprocity, rather than (non-ethnic) state-citizen relations or individualized entrepreneurship.

We have also shown that place identity among Mapuche women in Santiago play a key role in the maintenance of cultural identity in the urban context which is strongly supported by the recreation of native practices, not only in more public spaces (Gissi 2004b), but also in the privacy of the home. Place identity in the home also allows the expression of cultural autonomy, territory, and spirituality through everyday home practices since the Mapuche women interviewed assume the role of re-valuing domestic labour. In fact, less politically intentioned affective-cognitions, such as the appreciation of nature and use of medicinal plants, the preparation of traditional foods, sociability, and conversations among family members constitute new and more fluid place-identities among the Mapuche participants in our research. Such practices extend beyond desires to beautify their homes, constituting politics of care, which implies that relational well-being can be achieved through the use of everyday objects and practices, privileging the devalued arenas of the body, the private and the emotional over the mind, the public and reason (Gilligan 1982).

Our study has also revealed how the agency of Mapuche women migrating to the capital can re-shape and enact upon the existing landscapes and Western-designed governmental subsidized houses in Santiago (Dixon and Durrheim 2004) to recreate culturally meaningful places.

Finally, the study has highlighted recreated practices and their impact on place identity construction among Mapuche women in Santiago which are channelled, externalized, and negotiated by our participants' narratives and the rhetorical constructions and meaning choices along the course of their interactional discourses.

Notes

1. Literature regarding Mapuche political struggle and the role of women is extensive, but we are unable to give sufficient attention to this subject in this article which focuses instead on less politicized everyday forms of ethnic identity.
2. The adult and elder women interviewed as part of the sample come from indigenous communities situated in rural settings in the south of the country, migrating to the capital in search of better economic opportunities.
3. Having a conversation to convey a teaching.
4. The act of drinking medicinal herbal infusions and, while doing so, engaging in conversation.
5. Dreams with meanings that can be understood and interpreted among family members to foresee future events.
6. Due to space restrictions, this practice is not discussed in the present article.
7. Medicinal plants that serve to cure different illnesses.
8. This word means "strength" or "good spirit". It refers to the "positive energy" that the universe possesses due to nature and all living things.
9. See Bacigalupo (2003) and Reuque and Mallon (2002) on Mapuche feminism and activism.
10. Mapuche traditional food and drink, made with wheat.
11. Wheat grain that is peeled and boiled with ashes.
12. Refers to the knowledge of paternal and maternal ancestry associated with the territory ("*lof*" of origin) and also related to the people, either dead or alive, on whom family members depend.
13. Kayana is a large flat metal spoon that is placed over an open fire for toasting flour.
14. Before the Quechua and Spanish invasions, Mapuche mothers enjoyed a high status in their families, producing almost matriarchal conditions that were common in early agricultural cultures. Chroniclers described a custom in which, upon entering into marriage, the husband was incorporated into the tribe of the wife and the children received the maternal last name. It was the influence of the patriarchal system of the Spanish conquerors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that led to women's being incorporated into the husband's clan.
15. The formal presentation of each person and family in a conversation.
16. Inviting someone to eat and drink.
17. Thanking the person who issues an invitation.
18. Although Mapuche population numbers are now roughly similar between the southern regions of Chile and Santiago, in the south they constitute a much larger proportion of the residents in those cities and towns.
19. The social organization of the Mapuche people, consisting of a family or lineage clan, composed of various families who share a single territory and common heritage, having descended from a common ancestor.

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