The Place of The Stone Altar: Mapuche community-based tourism that empowers in Curarrehue, Chile

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Curarrehue: the place of stone altars:

As I looked through the glass of the bus window up into the foothills of the Andes, I was told how Curarrehue got its name. In Mapudungun, the language of the Mapuche people of Southern Chile, 'Curarrehue' means 'the place of the stone altar' (*Lugar del altar de piedra*). Its name refers to the spires of rock that jut above the Araucaria and coihue trees. Upon these altars of stone, Mapuche travelers crossing the Andes left offerings for the beings that guard the forest along the path. The story tells the listener that Curarrehue was a place of great importance to those who passed through it. Today, the altars stand above a rural Chilean Municipality of some seven thousand people, situated at the border drawn between Chile and Argentina. Until recently, Curarrehue has been a place in-between places on the map, eyed by loggers and developers, passed up by busses that carry tourists instead to 'better' destination places that await them on either side of the border.

Through community-based tourism, Mapuche entrepreneurs, Mapuche families, and the organizations that support them are working to redefine Curarrehue as a place worth noticing. Local Mapuche guides lead tourists up ancestral routes to gaze at the landscape. Local Mapuche businesses offer unique goods and services tied to their cultural heritage. Local Mapuche hosts welcome tourists into their homes to hear the stories and experience the traditions that are a part of Mapuche life and identity. This thesis is an attempt to examine the deeper meanings of these interactions between tourists and local peoples in a place that is called both home and travel destination. By listening to the stories of community members and their allies, I explore issues of accessibility, development, cultural representation, and community control in the community-based tourism network of Curarrehue. Although the dialogue between the tourist gaze and local peoples excludes some community members from participating, the Mapuche of Curarrehue utilize community-based tourism to both channel the reevaluation of their culture and to create a space for economic and cultural strength.

Methods:

The stories and information used to write this thesis were collected through participatory field observations together with formal and informal interviews. While conducting research much of my work was done through participation. Therefore, I recognize that many of the ‘research subjects’ in this thesis have equally contributed to the final product. I believe that this thesis serves to support and defend the efforts of these Mapuche entrepreneurs through the use of ‘glocal’ ethnographic data (See Salazar, 2010), while simultaneously making connections to academic conversations in Tourism Studies and a multitude of other disciplines in order to think critically about the situated and board issues being solved or provoked by community-based tourism.

During my fieldwork in Curarrehue, Chile I focused on three main groups: Mapuche entrepreneurs, Mapuche families (both involved in tourism and not involved in tourism), and the non-Mapuche allies that support tourism development and conservation. Through the structure of this paper, I situate the perspectives of each of these groups within abstract academic conversations on globalization, identity formation, and the ways local and indigenous peoples engage with global tourists. I also situate these stories within Chile, by connecting to the history of the Mapuche and their evolving relationship with the state.

In the first chapter, I highlight the diverse ways in which Mapuche entrepreneurs are using their engagement with the market to harness the reevaluation of their culture to rearticulate their culture in a hybrid way and to support collectively controlled community development. In the second chapter, I explore the complexities surrounding Mapuche identity and tourism in the Mapuche home, as well as the ways that the exchange produced by tourism can result in the revaluation of previously devalued aspects of culture. In my third and final chapter, I explore how global alliances are working to reverse colonial narratives of the exploitation of the Mapuche in Curarrehue and all of Chile. It is my hope that through my research the reader will rethink not only tourism and indigenous communities, but also begin to deconstruct the meanings of categories such as ‘indigenous,’ ‘authentic,’ and ‘local’ in our increasingly interconnected world.

Globalization and "The Local":

In the classic 1958 science fiction film "The Blob," an amorphous, indestructible, indescribable ooze absorbs everything in its path. Globalization can be understood as its own 'blob,' responsible for the destruction of the purity and authenticity of local cultures, local environments, and local places (Coleman, 2011). This extreme image of globalization reflects an asymmetry between what is considered to be "global" and what is considered to be "local"(Escobar 200o). Within this global-local nexus, the global represents capital and human action while the local represents the fragile environments and traditional cultures that need to be protected (Escobar 2000; Latham 2002). Yet, theorists that see globalized cultural homogenization as the modernization and Westernization of local distinctiveness, are both historically and geographically narrow minded (Pieterse 2009). Such grandiose

Figure 1 : Original Movie Poster: The BLob, 1958 http://www.impawards.com/1958/posters/blob_xlg.jpg

metaphors are tied to the assumption that culture is tied to territory and place in a static way (Massey 1991). Any attempt for local cultures to interact with such 'global' things as market capitalism would inherently render it 'inauthentic.' Although I acknowledge that cultural, social, economic and environmental 'effects' of globalization do exist, I echo the voices of many scholars that seek to complicate these simplistic metaphors used to understand culture in our increasingly linked world.

Pieterse argues for an understanding of intersection of cultures as ***hybridization***, or, "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (Rowe and Schelling 1991, 231 as cited by Pieterse). ***Hybridization*** is more than just the mixing of distinct cultures. It creates a translocal understanding of culture with an "*outward looking* sense of place," or what Geographer Doreen Massey calls a relational, "glocal sense of place"(Massey 1991; Pieterse 2009). In other words, within a hybridized place, strong bonds to local culture are held while

recognizing the value of global connections. In order to conceptualize these changes that are taking place, we must recognize the validity of these translocal connections and debunk the strict separation of what is local and what is global within the nexus. Contrary to the narrative of cultural homogenization through globalization, many scholars reveal how global connectivity can result in localization and the strengthening of local identities. (Appardai 1996; Wang 2007; Tomlinson 2000; Hermans and Dimaggio 2007). Hybridity re-conceptualizes the boundaries that define what is local and what is global in order to acknowledge the roles of both global and local social relations within a local place that remains distinct.

Touring the Local Destination Place:

The decision to pick up and go is a decision to take part in the fastest growing sector of the global economy and a major source of employment and investment in both developed and developing countries (Wearing et al). As a global phenomenon, tourism is seen as both the cause and the effect of globalization (Mowforth and Munt 1998 as cited by Palomino). "Tourism is a cause of global transformations because it induces the worldwide circulations of people, ideas, images and capital. As an effect it results from the increasing interconnectedness of economic, technological and sociocultural transformations" (Salazar 2010, 3). Despite its global scale, the 'socio-cultural transformations' triggered by tourists do not mean that all local tourist destination places inevitably turn into Sandals Resorts. As Salazar puts it, "Why would people care to choose different travel destinations if sights would all be the same? In other words the global circulation of people capital and information also stimulates localization or reterritorialization" (Salazar 2010, 11). However, local people do not necessarily always control the way a place is "localized" through tourism. Tourism is first and foremost is an industry about otherness or difference, in which the tourist seeks out local othered landscapes and local othered peoples. In exhibitions, postcards, and tourism literature, the places that are deemed tourist destinations are often exoticized, along with the people that live there (Smith 2003 as cited by Salazar). According to John Urry and Jonas Larsen, this exoticization is a product of **the tourists' gaze**. The tourist gaze is made up of the tourist's own personal frameworks and cultural lenses accompanied by circulating images

and texts(Urry and Larsen 2011). “In encountering place in tourism, our bodies are important mediators of what happens and what we comprehend to be there” (Crouch 2002, 207). Imagined frameworks have incredible power to both dictate how we understand the order of nature and the built environment and consequently determine both the physical landscape (such as architecture of the space or the landscape) as well as the cultural landscape (the culture of place) are constructed to meet the gaze. Because tourism is an industry of difference, those who are a part of tourism must in inherently engage with the tourist gaze in order to sell their place as a distinct ‘authentic’ destination. However, In the case of tourism that ‘markets’ indigenous cultures, perhaps this gaze can be controlled for the community’s benefit (Ruiz-Ballesteros and Hernández-Ramírez 2010).

Understanding Indigeneity Through Tourism:

Tourism involving indigenous people is often equated to colonial power structures, especially when non-indigenous peoples are in control. As difference and otherness become consumable commodities within the tourism industry, ‘primitive otherness’ as a part of indigenous identity is constructed through the representation of indigenous peoples in brochures and in travel magazines (See Amoamo and Thompson 2010). Even as the tourist gaze is continually attracted to indigenous tourism, there exists a general understanding/assumption within the tourism literature that the commodification of culture is inherently tied to the loss of authenticity and negative impacts on 'remote societies' (Cole 2007). It must be understood, however, that this abstract idea of authenticity is a Western notion that embodies ideas of what “the local” is and is not. As Amoamo and Thompson argue, indigenous peoples are beginning to take control over the way in which they are represented through tourism in order to reflect the hybrid nature of their identities. This thesis delves past community control of cultural representation, and into community control of the industry itself.

A self-proclaimed **Critical-turn** in Tourism Studies has shifted the focus of academic discussion away from economics and towards power relations, alienation, and lived experience in order to recognize the potential to engage in emancipatory sustainable tourism development (Bramwell and Bernard 2014). Although **ecotourism** is most

widely recognized form of sustainable tourism that promotes the empowerment of local communities, I choose not to define the tourism projects in Curarrehue as ecotourism. The popularization and problematization of ecotourism has made it relatively hard to define, as the term itself is often used as a marketing tool and is associated with the problematic "eco-lodge" as much as with sustainable development that is controlled by the community (Duffy 2002, Wearing) ecotourism also deprives the native people from using land in traditional ways (Sheyvens 2000; Okech 2011), ethnic groups are seen as the exotic backdrop to natural scenery and wildlife, and not the ones in charge. Although placing a single definition on tourism in Curarrehue difficult and slightly problematic, I believe that the category "**community-based tourism**" is the most applicable.

As the name suggests, **community-based tourism** refers to a bottom-up approach to touristic planning and development in smaller tourist destinations (Gossling and Hall 2005, 36). In indigenous territories, community-based tourism projects have been promoted as a strategy for the advancement of local indigenous groups. Yet the fact that community-based tourism is seen as a solution to be 'implemented' contradicts its own bottom-up nature. Despite the emphasis on community control, critics of the community-based tourism model are quick to point out potential flaws. Indigenous communities can advance through community-based tourism only when control is maintained (Salazar 2014). This can be difficult as, "It is clear that few communities have equal access to political and economic resources, especially indigenous minorities who are often politically, economically and socially disadvantaged" (Snyder and Sulle 2011, 8 as cited by Salazar). Also idealizing *community* within these projects ignores imbalanced local control and community hierarchies, which may deny opportunities to some who do not fit the mold (Meethan 2001; Beeton 2006). Salazar states that, "Because of the communicative power of tourism, representations of cultural heritage have direct and potentially significant influences on the peoples and communities who are being presented, represented and misrepresented" (Salazar 2014, 72).

Power dynamics at both the community level and the national level question whether entering into a neoliberal market economy through tourism or other forms of entrepreneurship can create autonomous development for indigenous communities. Yet, I believe that there is still hope to be found in tourism. Although

indigenous people may have to 'play the role' by interacting with the gaze, tourism is simultaneously giving these people a voice and adding social value to their culture. According to Wearing et al, when locals have a voice they can communicate the social value of their place. In other words, messages can be presented to tourists that provide an important point of interest and empathy for local communities (Cole, 2007 as cited by Wearing et al). Local communities are still interacting with the gaze and tourism imaginaries in order to sell their destination place as unique. Community control, however, allows for this commodification to create new cultural elements without neocolonial or exploitative relationships (Cohen 1988; Anoano and Thompson 2010).

Permitted Ideas of Indigeneity:

The continued relevance of the 'indigenous question' and the stereotypes surrounding what indigeneity means in a globalized world create ideas of indigeneity that rely on native traditions of ecological harmony in an untouched local reality (See Hames 2007). But, De la Cadena and Starn, argues, these notions of a fragile unchanged indigenous identity contrast the stories of, "...indigenous people dealing with the tense dynamics of being categorized by others and seeking to define themselves within and against indigeneity's dense web of symbols, fantasies and meaning" (De la Cadena and Starn 2007, 4). What it means to be indigenous has evolved. The indigenous subject that is painted as the ecologically noble savage (Harmes 2007) was once the backwards Indian that stood in the way of modern progress. The word indigenous itself is rooted in a history of European Colonialism (Batalla 1972), and lumps together culturally and geographically diverse peoples into one category. The people who fall into this category struggle to negotiate with these preconceived notions of difference placed upon them (Ramos 1998 as cited by De la Cadena and Starn). However, as I will continually emphasize in this thesis, notions of otherness that draw global attention can be controlled and used to benefit indigenous people that have been economically and racially marginalized.

A relatively new wave of **Neoliberal Multiculturalism** at national and international levels seeks to find new ways to incorporate the needs of indigenous peoples into 'multicultural' national identities and development plans (Andolina et al.

2009, Richards 2013). Although neoliberal multiculturalism is designed for economic development with identity, Hale and Mirimán suggest that it is only the **"indio permitido"** (the permissible Indian) that is deemed fit to participate, but simultaneously is incapable of exercising total autonomy (Hale 2002; Castillo 2006). Those who challenge the existing power structures that have produced centuries of inequality and racism, such as the Mapuche who perform violent acts of resistance, and Mapuche prisoners actively engaged in hunger strike, are left out of this thin multicultural veneer (Castillo 2006, Richards 2013). Critics therefore see neoliberal multiculturalism as a way in which indigenous people can be manipulated to conform to neoliberal global capitalism. Yet, to argue that indigenous peoples cannot work within capitalist market systems emphasizes the same problematic separation of the global and the local within the nexus. Perhaps tourism can be seen as a way to engage in market systems while promoting a 'global sense of place' that is economically and culturally empowering.

Prevailing reflections on tourism represent space as an inert medium, like a blank piece of paper that is scribed upon. The subject is rendered an object—an object of interest or an object that is decorated in tourism representations of the consumption process. (Selwyn 1996, Rojek and Urry 1997). My research contributes to the field of tourism studies in that it provides an example through rich ethnographic data of how the people that live in destinations are not just vulnerable local time capsules. Through my collaboration with local Mapuche actors and other organizations that stand in solidarity with these Mapuche entrepreneurs, I can hardly come to the conclusion that the Mapuche of Curarrehue are in any way submissive. The hybridity through community-based tourism in Curarrehue produces, "new politically-resonant definitions of peoples, places, and pasts through [the] everyday rhetoric and everyday communicative craft [of tourism]" (Hollinstead). Although certain controversies and limitations must be explored, tourism in Curarrehue does not exist at the expense of Mapuche identity or any intrinsically local way living. Through community-based tourism, the Mapuche of Curarrehue are channeling the reevaluation of their culture to create a space for economic survival, cultural strength, and international solidarity that breaks patterns of repression and racism that are imbedded within their history.

The Mapuche: The People of the Land:

Mapu means land, territory, or earth. **Che** means people. The Mapuche are the people of the land. For 300 years after the arrival of the Spanish to what is now known as Chile, the Mapuche maintained autonomous control over their land south of the Bío Bío River (Bengoa 2005, Castillo). With the construction of the Chilean nation came the pacification of this land, an ethnic cleansing of Mapuche territory to make way for European settlement. The Warriors of resistance were now deemed "backwards" Indians seen as obstacles to national progress that needed to either be illuminated or be pushed to the side (Richards, Crow). The descendants of those who survived now make up one of the largest indigenous population in the country of Chile—six percent of the total population, numbering close to 600,000 people. (Park and Richards 2007, 1321).

Within Latin America, Chile is thought to be a country that is economically prosperous (Haughney 2009), yet indigenous people forms a large portion of the country's growing income gap. The occupation of Mapuche territory, along with consecutive land subdivisions over time, low levels of formal education, difficult access to healthcare, and difficult climatic conditions have kept agrarian Mapuche communities in poverty (Vergara and Parraquez 2013). As more Mapuche leave their land for urban centers in search of work (Crow), more national and multinational corporations are moving in to harness the coveted natural resources (Carruthers and Rodríguez, 2009, 748). The open door neoliberal economic policy that Chile has kept in place since the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet allows for this type of development to occur continuously on a people that have already endured so much (Richards 2013 ; Krell 2012).

Many Mapuche have resisted the exploitation of their lands with violence, prompting the depiction of the Mapuche as barbaric in the media as well as the resurgence of anti-terrorist laws to keep Mapuche political prisoners incarcerated that were once used by a dictator. Arguably, the only way for the Mapuche to reverse these neocolonial trends of exploitation is to embody the indio permitido (Hale 2001; Rosas 2013). Neoliberal Multiculturalism is promoted by organizations like **CONADI** (The National Corporation of Indigenous Development), whose purpose is to coordinate state-sponsored development programs and projects that provide assistance to rural indigenous

communities (Haughney 2006, 94). Although the benefits and drawbacks of neoliberal multiculturalism for the political organization of the Mapuche are highly debated (see Park and Richards 2007; Millaman 2000; Aylwin 2000), it is apparent that there is limited room for deviation from government agendas. Those indigenous communities recognized by CONADI legitimately exist and lay claim to benefits from the state to support things like Mapuche tourism projects.

The Mapuche and their development is a topic of study in a growing field of scholarship situated throughout Chile of whose surface I have just barely scratched. Stephens' study situated in Curarrehue emphasizes the way globalization can create positive interactions between the Mapuche and the world, but also facilitate stronger connection and solidarity within their own communities (Stephens 2013). Though his studies do not focus solely Mapuche tourism, his work equally emphasizes the importance of hybridity for the future of the Mapuche. As Mapuche scholar José Millalen suggests, Mapuche actors have, under changing circumstances, been able to creatively negotiate the tensions between participating in government organizations and day-to-day resistances to the deep inequality that exists in Chilean society (Millalen et al., 2006).

Many of my findings parallel the arguments of other scholars who have done more extensive work in the field on Mapuche tourism. In her doctoral thesis on the *Trekaleyn* tourism project in Alto Bío Bío, geographer Marcela Palomino-Schalscha states that "...with tourism, members of the community are 'constructing an idea of Alto Bío-Bío that emphasizes its connections with the local and more than local elements and actors" (Palomino-Schalscha 2011, 178). In his study on Mapuche tourism, situated partly in Curarrehue, Ignacio A. Krell Rivera argues that while Mapuche entrepreneurs heavily rely on government programs, they are simultaneously "advancing strategies of re-territorialization—understood as the search for self-centered economic and eco-political narratives and practices as opposed to externally determined neocolonial ones" (Krell 2012, 18). My own argument also supports Mapuche tourism in a similar light. I differentiate my study however by focusing in on one place in particular and its intra-community relations .By incorporating more voices into the discussion, I am able to understand how tourism relates to identity construction in a more nuanced way.

Mapuche Entrepreneurship in Curarrehue

The sign for Anita's restaurant

Cocina Mapuche:

It was raining, as it normally does in the Arauancia through the months of June and July, when Anita agreed to meet. Inside her restaurant she was roasting and peeling piñones on the wood-fired stove in preparation for the high season. The piñón is the seed of the araucaria tree, which grows at high elevations near the border. For the past three years the araucarias did not produce in the zone, but this year piñones are plentiful. Many in the *comuna* of Curarrehue who climb to the gather piñones from the forest identify as Mapuche Pehuenche. The Pehuenche, the people of the Pehuen (the Araucarias), have gathered piñones as an important source of food. This tradition of gathering and cooking piñones from the Araucaria forests continues to be a part of Mapuche-Pehuenche life in Curarrehue. Boiled or roasted, its hard shell reveals a white starchy flesh that can be ground into flour for bread, made into purée, or left whole in soups and stews. These dishes are what Anita chooses to serve in her *Cocina Mapu Iyagl,* or Mapuche Kitchen.

One can find Anita's restaurant just up the road from Curarrehue's main plaza. It is a small home made from wood milled from the forest and painted yellow. Passing travelers are met by a sign that just barely kisses the highway. It reads: "Mapuche Kitchen: to know, to value, and to enjoy in Cuarrehue" (my translation). Anita's restaurant, where she both works and lives with her family, is a destination place closely tied to larger Mapuche cultural identity. Many who now flock to visit Anita define her food as "alimentos nativos con identidad cultural" (López 2013) native foods with cultural identity) (My translation). These types of cultural attractions make up part of a greater demand in understanding the local culture of Curarrehue, and has led to the growth of a tourism network on which my thesis. Yet, this connection between Curarrehue and its cultural heritage was not always visible at the surface. Through Anita's story and the stories of other Mapuche entrepreneurs in Curarrehue, I explore how Mapuche identity is connected to place in new ways by harnessing the reevaluation of the Mapuche culture through tourism.

The history of Mapuche repression, and their relatively recent recognition as a legitimate ethnic group, points to the continually changing construct of what it means to be Mapuche in Chile. Although the Mapuche resisted colonial rule for over 300 years after the arrival of the Spanish in the Americas, racial discrimination and the displacement of indigenous peoples created a lasting legacy on the Chilean nation-building project (Richards 2013, Bengoa 2005). European expansionism cleared Mapuche territories in its name, but guised under **the pacification of the Araucania**, as if the extermination of the supposed barbaric Indian would somehow pacify the landscape. The Mapuche communities of Curarrehue, of which there are now 36(Vergara and Barton), primarily descend from those who survived pacification by escaping into the foothills of the Andes. Don Alejo, an elder and lonko cultural (cultural chief), recounts how his grandfather started his community without even an axe to chop timber.

Many of the Mapuche to whom I spoke from older generations were taught to keep their cultural heritage private. Within the home, to be Mapuche was a part of your identity. In the public-sphere, conversely, "Mapuche" was something of which to be ashamed. For instance, Neftali was taunted by his fellow classmates for not being able to speak the language. He was told by his grandfather to go to the forest to cry so no one

could see his shame. Now, Neftali teaches Mapuche culture and language classes at the local public schools, which points to an ironic shift in the recognition of culture within governmental policy. Much of Anita's own cultural heritage was, too, hidden from her at an early age. But, through learning traditional Mapuche recipes in her grandmother's kitchen, Anita rediscovered a sense of pride in her Mapuche heritage. The idea to open a restaurant was born from those very experiences of time spent in her grandmother's kitchen. Anita wanted to fork over her own knowledge of Mapuche culture and tradition by means of the public setting of a restaurant. Yet, with the proposal to open a restaurant that brought Mapuche identity to meet the gaze of tourists, came harsh criticism from elders in her community. "There are some things that you cannot sell. You cannot sell our food; you cannot sell our culture; you cannot sell our identity." Anita's business promotes community involvement while reconciling with these controversies.

The success of Mapuche entrepreneurship is very much tied to 'the exotic'—the object for which the tourist gaze searches. Mapuche cuisine is something new and exciting, a product that catches the eye. Through tourism, Anita and other Mapuche entrepreneurs harness this gaze in order to ensure the health of their business. At the same time, she is doing so in a way that is both in-line with her personal and cultural values and creating more opportunities in the community. At Anita's a hamburger with an orange Fanta and a side of tortilla de rescoldo is simply not an option. Her vegetarian Mapuche cuisine changes with the produce that local Mapuche farmers bring to her restaurant. As more and more tourists come to Curarrehue, more and more opportunities are created for other locals to benefit. Tourists wanting to know, to value, and to enjoy Mapuche culture and food sparked both economic development and the creation of Curarrehue as a destination place tied to identity.

Along the same road through the center of the town, several local businesses have begun to market this connection between place and Mapuche identity. When Carmen Allapan opened her restaurant 10 years ago, she sold only French fries and other simple foods. Now, her menu consists of a mixed array of both traditional Chilean and Mapuche food items. Unlike Anita's self-initiation, Carmen began to sell traditional Mapuche foods, 'Cocina Mapuche,' like piñones, cazuela, and tortilla only in response to demand from both locals and foreigners. Foreigners in particular, who frequently go to her

restaurant during the summer months, are fond of the Mapuche food items. Her large guestbook, filled with messages scribbled by tourists from all over the world, is a testament to how tourists have arrived in greater numbers over the past four years and the positive responses given to Carmen's take on 'Cocina Mapuche.'

Both Anita and Carmen's stories raise questions regarding how to understand this change of the connection between place and cultural identity in these for-profit business models. Anita has created this demand while Carmen has lead her business to respond to the changing desires of her customers. Anita has become the face of local Mapuche politics within the communities. Conversely, Carmen's Mapuche heritage comes from one side of her family and she does not participate in, or live within, any of the 36 formally recognized Mapuche communities in Curarrehue. Are we simply seeing the re-articulation of identity in response to the tourist gaze? Does one entrepreneur embody Mapuche culture and values while the other appropriates it? The commodification of culture is a part of these entrepreneurial projects, but this thesis does not simply distinguish between what can and cannot be marketed. The Mapuche of Curarrehue engage in entrepreneurship through commoditizing cultural identity in diverse ways. Although some controversy exists surrounding how—or if—Mapuche culture should be 'sold,' I argue that the Mapuche of Curarrehue are employing tourism in a way that supports their culture and their community.

Beekeeping with Marisol

Marisol's Bees:

Before walking off of the gravel path and through the gate that leads into Marisol Coñuequir Panguilef, I could already hear the buzzing of the colonies. When her father gave Marisol a small plot of land in the Trancura valley as a wedding present, she and her husband bought five bee colonies. They wanted to see whether beekeeping in the Trankura valley could be a productive business that would allow them to live in the campo. Ten years later Marisol is still living on her land. She has several hundreds of bee colonies, and a small processing plant that produces tons of honey each summer. What began as a small business selling honey to few tourists who visited her home has diversified. Beyond the sale of honey in bulk to restaurants, local businesses and tourists, she has learned to make other products in response to consumer demand. The soaps, shampoos, and beauty creams she makes using the pollen, propolis, and the native aromatic plants, have become hugely popular. Past being a successful entrepreneur, Marisol is a successful *Mapuche* entrepreneur.

In 2012, Marisol was selected to travel to the United States, representing Mapuche women through the 10,000 Women Project, an international business school program supported by Goldman and Sachs and the U.S. State Department (Thunderbird

2014). Reflecting on her experience in the U.S., Marisol indicated that the most valuable tool she learned was how to market her products as unique. The label she created depicts Mapuche symbols mixed with iconic images of honeybees and the landscape of Curarrehue. Marketed as a distinctly Mapuche product, a singular notion of Mapuche culture, and Curarrehue as a destination place is, in turn, presented. There are complexities within this 'repackaging' of Mapuche identity that can be explored by broadening the notion of this type of entrepreneurship tied to cultural identity.

In her book, *Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Identity and Development Politics in Latin America*, Monica DeHart raises questions about how the mobilization of ethnic cultural identity and the practice for development solidifies, challenges, or transforms the way those ethnic agents perceive their own identity. Dehart highlights that the different ways that both migrant and indigenous communities that have been historically marginalized can come to represent diverse ethnic and entrepreneurial forms. What she means by this is that not all indigenous entrepreneurs engage with the market the same way, an idea that also permeates the indigenous communities of Curarrehue. "Indigenous entrepreneurs are a new type of subject that reflects a reconceptualization of ethnic cultural difference as a productive development resource relative to neoliberal development norms" (Dehart 2010, 98). One aspect of the 'norm' of neoliberal development is the inequality it reproduces. Although some inequality and disagreement over cultural representation surrounding tourism exist, as DeHart describes, development with identity embodies values, relationships, and forms of knowledge that encourage community-based participatory involvement.

Marisol has profited from the connection between identity, product, and place. Her business is expanding, and she hopes to soon be able to market her soaps and shampoos outside of Chile. While she dreams of reaching a broader market, Marsiol recognizes that not all Mapuche have the opportunity to engage in this type of development. One has to be willing to work hard, and put themselves out there publicly—something she believes not all of her community members are willing to do—or feel is right. Yet, she firmly believes that she is not the only one that benefits from her business. Marisol sees her own success as opening up more opportunities for others. She directs tourists to other local Mapuche entrepreneurs and artisans, and contracts various

community members to help her with her own business. Local Mapuche entrepreneurs in Curarrehue are re-articulating the connection between culture and place through a variety of differing channels. However, these differing efforts are knit together through local community organizing to encourage and support entrepreneurship while maintaining common goals. Carmen Allapan may not belong to a recognized Mapuche Community, but she does belong to the **La Asociación Feria Walüng**, a community organization that, I argue, is fundamental in constructing Curarrehue as a place where tourism empowers.

La Asociación Feria Walung:

La Asociación Feria Walüng began in 2004 with the Feria Walüng, a fair to support local Mapuche artisans and entrepreneurs. In 2014, the fair included activities with local Mapuche and campesino gastronomy, the sale of local and artisanal products, workshops in natural medicine and guided outings to the surrounding natural areas (ecossur 2014). With the creation of the association, it became far more than just the organization of a fair. Mapuche restaurant owners, business owners, tourist guides, and local artisans have knit themselves into a local network of support. They support each other by sharing goods and services in order to produce higher quality services and to involve more community members with diverse skill sets.

The very idea of having an annual fair in celebration of artisanal Mapuche products made in Curarrehue speaks to how tourism adds value to their culture. Monetary value is placed on the goods and services sold each year at the Feria Walüng. The association functions so that more people can be involved in the fair, in order to take advantage of the increased economic opportunities. However, the community solidarity within the association goes above and beyond mere economics. Younger Mapuche entrepreneurs are working to support each other to maintain their territory and to keep their history and traditions alive for the generations that succeed them.

An Outing with Rutas Ancestrales

Rutas Ancestrales With Local Guides:

The local guides of Curarrehue led us up the trail through the forest of coihue trees from the edge of the national park. We were headed up to Walalafquen, one of the high mountain lakes near the old growth *milenario* Araucaría forests that line the border between Chile and Argentina. It was to be the second collective outing of the newly formed guide company, **Rutas Ancestrales** (ancestral routes). Made up of local guides, both of Mapuche and non-Mapuche descent, Rutas Ancestrales is one of the newest additions to the Mapuche entrepreneurial community-based tourism network in Curarrehue (at the time of this study). Although their entrepreneurial efforts contribute to the further construction of Curarrehue as a destination for tourism, the money that financed the venture was a result of the existing tourism network, along with organizations that have formed partnerships with Mapuche entrepreneurs. La Red Reservas de Biósfera (The network for the biosphere of the Araucanía) is a non-profit organization that promotes the health of the region and helps the Mapuche Communities take advantage of outside resources. Scott and Kay, tourists from the United States that visited Curarrehue, were inspired by the Mapuche entrepreneurship that respected the cultural and natural heritage of the area. By partnering with the RRBA, the group set up a community cooperative bank (BanComunitario Kurarewe BCK) that resulted in an initial

grant of 800 dollars used to get the business off of the ground and into the mountains to restore the ancestral trails in order to be used for tourism.

Before entering into the Milenario Araucaria forests to collect piñones, we took a moment of silence to pay respect to the beings that guard the forest. Jeeyoh, one of the lead guides in the group, explained that by planting two piñones for every handful you collect, you are respecting the forest that provides your nourishment. The representation of Mapuche identity that is in line with conservation efforts contradicts the realities of many Mapuche people in Curarrehue. Villa Rica National Park has been an attraction for many tourists accessing the park from the nearby town of Pucón (Vergara 2013). When it was created, eighteen Mapuche families that lived within its borders were told that they were no longer permitted to live within the borders of the park. Even after these families were relocated from the reserve, eleven families eventually made their way back to the reserve where they had previously called home. This has been a major frustration for the RRBA and the local guides, who feel that conservation should be prioritized at all costs.

Rutas Ancestrales was born with the goal of employing young local guides to lead tourists through ancestral routes to sites of cultural significance near the national park. But, continuing to emphasize notions of sustainability and a harmony between Mapuche cultures and the environment downplays different understandings of what it means to be Mapuche. Those Mapuche who perhaps turn to the forest for food cannot afford to engage with the gaze as it connects indigeneity to environmental values. In this regard, the portrayal of Mapuche identity as it connects to wilderness can be seen as exclusionary. But this controversy does not limit the ability of Rutas Ancestrales to engage in community empowerment through their services. In addition to treks, Rutas Ancestrales engages with the wider community by bringing tourists to visit other local Mapuche businesses and connecting tourists with local families willing to host them. In the pages that follow, I explore the touristic encounter within the intimate space of the home and the perception of tourism in how it is felt by the wider community that does not participate.

The Mapuche Home and Community in Curarrehue

Pablo's Ruka

Ruka Trankura:

The Ruka is the Mapuche word for home. Coihue trees are split, hollowed, and layered to form its sturdy walls and a roof to shield from the rain. The fogón, large fire pit in the center of the ruka, is both a source of warmth and a source of heat for cooking. Benita remembers how when she was a young girl the ruka was the center of their lives. Her mother made tortillas del rescoldo in the ashes of the fogón and cooked over the open fire that stained the roof black with smoke and soot. The majority of the Mapuche of Curarrehue does not livein a ruka. Instead, their homes are like the homes of many campesinos that dot the valley floor, made from coihue and pinewood that has been milled and painted.

Contrary to the imaginations of many, their status as indigenous peoples does not mean that the Mapuche lead a life that is intentionally primitive or isolated. Most of the Mapuche houses that I visited had heat, electricity, and running water piped directly from winding streams that snake throughout the foothills. They do not wear 'traditional dress,' nor do they isolate themselves from modern technologies. They opt to wear jeans and sweatshirts, to call each other on their cell phones, and to occasionally connect with

friends on Facebook. Many live without things that others take for granted, but this is due to a lack of resources rather than to any inherent cultural values that are 'primitive' or 'authentic.' There is nothing intrinsic about the modern Mapuche home, as it can exist within a variety of physical and cultural landscapes (Crow 2013, Briones 2003).

The ruka no longer serves as a functional living space for most Mapuche people, but that is not to say it has become obsolete. Benita and her family still have a ruka. Built in the traditional way, their ruka sits proudly next to their home as a symbol of heritage—a space for community and tourist encounters. Pablo, the youngest of Benita's children, built the Ruka on his own only a few short years ago. It was part of a larger project to build his family home into a tourist destination tied to his family heritage. Inspired by what he learned while working in construction and adventure tourism in Austria, Pablo saw tourism as a way to support his family that both generates economic mobility and reaffirms a sense of cultural pride in the place of his origin. During this ongoing project, Pablo has rebuilt the family home to include a guest room and a quincho (a small restaurant with a separate kitchen, serving table, bar and indoor grill) in less than five years. He is also planning to expand his project by building cabins and a museum of Mapuche heritage.

The degree of change that has happened on their family land can only be understood if one knows what life there was like before. Pablo recalls how they lived practically without money in a house that was falling apart around itself. The kids had to work starting at a young age to be able to afford books and uniforms for school. I include this detail not to romanticize tourism as a tool for development. The amazing transformation of the Tankura Valley is not just a product of tourists arriving to the area. Pablo and Benita, along with other families engaged in tourism in the community, have worked hard to construct their homes into unique tourist destinations that combine food and culture with a sense of place that embodies the home.

Their success is a product of an active dialogue with the tourist gaze. Benita, uses the *fogón* of the ruka to teach visitors how to make traditional tortillas del rescoldo, a traditional bread made from *masa* cooked in the ashes of the fire mixed with sand from the river. Don Alejo, Benita's husband and the *lonko cultural (ceremonial leader)* of the local Mapuche community, shares stories of the history of the valley with tourists that

come. Pablo leads tourists into the mountains to the *saltos* (waterfalls) surrounding his land, and invites them to participate in the work of daily campesino life. In our imaginations this is probably what a Mapuche family does all the time, and indeed these activities have become a part of their lives and the way in which they define their cultural heritage. However, the role of tourists in transforming the connection between place and identity cannot be ignored. Tourists are looking for the ruka and other symbols that satisfy expectations of 'authenticity.'

Silverio lives with his wife Mary and youngest son on the far side of the Trankura Valley across from Benita and Pablo. His land supports a healthy potato crop each year along with other vegetables that he and his family use or sell to the local market. Their agrarian lifestyle, however, does not leave them disconnected. On one side of his house sits a small wooden schoolhouse. This is where the local Mapuche community, of which Silverio is now president, meets once a month for discussion. On the other side of his house is a guest room where tourists, mainly international and national university students, come to stay with his family. In terms of the relationship between the tourists and the hosts, many parallels can be drawn between the two households. Not unlike Benita and Pablo's experience, economically, these interactions have provided an extra cushion of money in their pockets—enough money to start thinking about building a new cabin that could potentially house more tourists in the future.

As in the case of Pablo and Benita, the tourist gaze influences the way in which these interactions between the tourist and the host take place. For both Benita and Silverio, Mapuche food traditions are central to the way they tie Mapuche culture into the touristic experience. For many of the Mapuche families that I spoke with, the idea of outsiders wanting to learn about Mapuche culture and taste traditional foods was unheard of before the introduction of tourism. "Why would foreigners want to come here to eat our food when their own recipes are better than ours? Why would a tourist want to come and stay in my home when their own home is so much larger and prettier than mine?" Mapuche culture was not a celebrated part of place until the tourist gaze came looking. Silverio's story tells the greater narrative of a shift in the connection between identity and place. For Silverio's family, tourism led them to place more value on their ancestral foods. As a family, they began to cook traditional recipes more often than they ever had before.

Silverio's is not the story of the resurgence of devalued and forgotten customs. Before multiculturalism and before the Mapuche became of interest to the gaze, to be Mapuche was to be backward. Now, the exchange between tourists and their Mapuche hosts has resulted in the revaluation of their culture that changes the way that Mapuche identity is perceived. Still, my research has shown that what it means to be Mapuche is not universal. It changes in response to tourism and the lived experiences of the individuals who choose to define themselves as Mapuche. In an effort to gain a better understanding of what it mean to be Mapuche in Curarrehue, and the role tourism can play in identity formation, I opened my ear to the stories of those community members who do not headline the presentation of Curarrehue as a destination place.

The Community:

Walking along dirt road, I led myself further and further away from the business, homes, and people that make up the community-based tourism network I was so familiar with. But this did not mean that the Mapuche people that I came across were any less friendly and inviting. On several occasions, I was invited into the homes of community members to discuss the ways in which they connect to their Mapuche identity, and the role of tourism for economic empowerment and cultural strength. Our conversations demonstrate the ways in which the Mapuche experience in Curarrehue is diverse, incorporating issues regarding religion, language, food, and ceremony. Despite this diversity of perspectives, the overarching sentiments were not dismissive of tourism as a way of creating a valuable economy or reconstructing a sense of pride in cultural heritage. The Mapuche community members did not engage in tourism, either due to concerns relating family privacy, or the absence of capital necessary to meet the needs of tourists. These barriers to tourism development do not mean that tourism was seen amongst community members as having negative impacts.

Ida and her family do not participate formally in tourism. She is Mapuche by blood, and is active within her the Mapuche community meetings, but her involvement in the Protestant Church forbids her from participating in religious ceremonies such as the Nguillatun, a Mapuche religious celebration that is specific to each community. Despite the choice not to participate, she feels that keeping the cultural traditions alive through

ceremonies and other forms of cultural expression is vital. Ida understands how sharing one's culture with tourists, by teaching them to cook Mapuche recipes for example, could preserve certain important cultural traditions. However, she does not want tourists living in her home as they do in the home of her neighbor, Silverio. She has talked with her family about the engaging in tourism, and has even started to build two small *canañas* on her property. The only thing that stands in their way is access to funds. There is just not enough money to get things established. This is a common theme throughout the community that limits the accessibility of tourism.

Ana lives in the Trankura valley with her husband and mother. As a Mapuche woman, she is skeptical of certain changes that have happened in the community, and therefore chooses not to participate in the traditional ceremonies such as the Nguillatun. For many years she lived off of a small store that she ran on her property, selling basic amenities and vegetables from her garden to local people. However, over the past eight months, conflict between neighbors over development and land titles has led her to close her business. She sees how tourism could create meaningful and respectable development in the valley. She would like to build a Ruka on her property and sell her artisanal products to tourists, but she does not have the title necessary to build on her land. The title to her land is shared with her half brother Don Alejo and she is concerned that her family may steal potential profits. What she needs in order to work in tourism is the funding from the government in order to get started.

Andres and his family mainly live off of the animals that graze his property and his son's carpentry business. They, too, have entertained the idea of building a camping site on their property, but a lack of resources and mixed feelings about tourist staying on their land has discouraged development. When I asked him about government funding for tourism as a way to relieve the poverty in the community, he seemed skeptical that such funds could create real change. When he was young poverty was real. People lived off of their potato harvest and the piñones collected from the forests, and prices in the supermarkets were controlled by a racist elite class. He feels that today that type of extreme poverty is unfamiliar. People rely on government support when they can get it. He feels that these government resources are not distributed properly, as many people who need support can't get it and those who have support don't use it efficiently

Juana and her daughters are wondering where government resources are. Despite her back injury that has left her unable to work, her family has not received any economic support through their community. Juana relies on the vegetables that she can grow in her garden, the meat and wool from her animals, and the wages that her eldest daughter can afford to send through her trucking job in the north. As a family, they have never even heard of tourism in Curarrehue, but they see its potential to generate economic wealth and pride in Mapuche heritage in Curarrehue. Juana would love to make crafts from her wool to sell to tourists, but she would need funding in order to begin. They want to know how they too can be a part of this tourism network.

My conversations with those community members who are not involved in tourism revealed controversy over who gets to be a part of the tourism projects. The majority of the people I spoke with wanted to be involved in tourism, but felt that a lack of government support would make participation difficult. Although the majority of local Mapuche entrepreneurs told me that they received little to no government support when they started their businesses, non-participants see a lack of funds to be a limiting factor that kept them from being able to have their homes met by the tourist gaze. The majority of people I spoke with also had differing ideas of What Mapuche meant. This diversity in opinion is a reality that needs to be accepted and discussed, but it does not mean that all expressions of culture through tourism are limiting.

Isabel's ethnic Kitchen:

The words, "Ethnic Kitchen," written in English, were weaved with sticks into the wooden gate at the edge of Isabel's property. A dog growled at me from a distance on the other side of the fence dissuading my entry, but the warmth that the smoking chimney promised propelled my legs passed the wooden gate to house I saw just across the field. The rain beat down so hard that water had soaked through my supposedly waterproof rain jacket. In the doorway of the house was an older woman, wearing a Chicago Bulls parka with a long grey braid protruding from the hood. She told me her story and her own experience with tourism in the comuna as I tried to dry my clothes by the fire.

She lives alone on her land, except for the spirits of her ancestors. Those who come to her are the sick who seeks her knowledge of natural medicine, or the tourist who wishes discover Mapuche culture in her 'Ethnic Kitchen.' However, she claims only to

welcome the tourist who will appreciate her lessons into her ruka, a reflection of the skepticism she holds concerning the supposed benefits that tourism is said to bring. Tourism leads the Mapuche people forget to take care of their animals and to neglect to plant seed. Tourism leads the Mapuche to abandon their language and dress only later to sell fragments of their heritage to foreigners for profits. These are some of the critiques of the way tourism has taken shape within the network of local tourism that has been dominantly represented in this study.

In contrast, Isabel sees herself as embodying what it really means to be Mapuche. She speaks the Mapuche language fluently, dresses in the traditional dress, works the land and engages in the Mapuche religious practices. She was “born wild and will stay that way.” Although she had to leave Curarrehue in search of work in the City, she returned to buy back the land that had once belonged to her family. She became a *Machi,* a Mapuche healer that serves the community. She strongly defends her local territory and culture, but she, too, is actively participating in the construction of the tourist destination place, and is forming connections to wider spheres through these global to local interactions. She even gets calls on her cell phone each year on her birthday from a kind Italian university student.

Isabel’s story serves to both problematize and praise Mapuche community-based. Overall, it reveals how experiences of identity and its connection to place can vary. Connecting relational place to identity through the tourist gaze does not necessarily reflect this diversity of experience, but does it discredit tourism as a tool for economic growth and the valuation of Mapuche culture? In my final chapter and concluding remarks, I will further develop how all Mapuche in Curarrehue are benefitting from the global network of connections that has resulted from community-based tourism. These connections result in the recreation Curarrehue not only as a destination place, but also as place with social value.

Concluding Remarks: Tourism as Resistance

Protesting the dam. Rutas Ancestrales. 2014

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The old logging road in this photo leads high up into the foothills near the Añihuerraqui River. The Spanish corporation "GTD Negocios," has submitted a proposal to the local government for the construction a hydroelectric dam on the river. It would be a 22 million dollar investment, generating annually an estimated 50 GWh of electricity (Mapuexpress 2013). For the Mapuche of the Trankura valley, the waters of the Añihuerraqui River are piped into their homes, and the foothills that surround the river are held as sacred. Amidst the hope and empowerment that tourism brings to Curarrehue, the exploitation of Mapuche Territories is still as real as it was during the pacification.

A closer look at the same picture reveals Mapuche community members with a group of American tourists. The tourists have come to engage in resistance. Together, they hold the Mapuche flag and a banner with the following message painted in bold

white letters: Tankura Pocolpén. No to the destruction of our rivers through the defense of Añihuerraqui. This photograph reveals how the creation of Curarrehue as a destination place through community-based tourism has formed national and global networks of solidarity and resistance to the exploitation of this Mapuche territory. Because tourism is an industry that markets 'otherness', the host initiates a dialogue with the expectations and preconceived frameworks that make up the tourist gaze. However, the tourism encounter also initiates a dialogue in which the host can disseminate knowledge about the challenges that the community faces to a wider audience. Tourism creates globalized activists networks, but this is not the only way we have seen the Mapuche of Curarrehue engage in resistance.

In her research, which has been inspirational in the development my own work, Marcela Palomino-Schalscha de-romanticizes what resistance means. She debunks the idea that all acts of resistance embody a David and Goliath type of heroism in which the local underdogs are resisting the 'blob' that is globalization and neoliberal development. In the case of Curarrehue, resistance is happening everyday through hybridization that is a part of their engagement in tourism and the market. Hybridization makes Mapuche actors both global and simultaneously localized. The daily resistances that we have seen manifest itself within the actions of local Mapuche entrepreneurs is a continual refusal the delicate fragile local sphere. Mapuche actors in the community-based tourism network of Curarrehue are instead asserting their status within what Massey calls a "glocal sense of place", that breaks through the limitations of the global-to-local nexus (Massey, 1991). Like Escobar states: "Perhaps it is time to revert some of these asymmetries as to focus again on the constant importance of place and the creation of place, for culture, for nature and the economy- from the perspective on place offered by the same critics"(Escobar 2000).

My research shows how Mapuche entrepreneurs are using the global nature of tourism and its fixation on local distinctiveness to create their own spaces for economic survival and cultural strength. Entrepreneurs like Anita, Marisol and the local guides of Rutas Ancestrales deliberately use tourism as a way to stimulate pride in the community's cultural heritage. The resulting construction of Curarrehue as a destination place means that Mapuche communities are more interconnected while simultaneously

more locally distinct. Although my research points to discrepancies regarding access to tourism, and the way in which Mapuche culture should be represented, control remains within the community itself. Among those who engage in tourism and those who do not, Community-based tourism in Curarrehue was noted to support cultural traditions that had previously been devalued or forgotten.

On My last day staying with Pablo, Benita, and Don Alejo at Ruka Trankura, a small tour bus drove into the valley. A Mapuche community from the neighboring province of Collipulli was visiting. In the ruka, the lamb we had slaughtered the night before was roasting over the coals in preparation the gathering. As we ate *cordero* (lamb) and drank *Chicha* (a sweet wine made from apples), the women of the community told me why they had come so far to see Curarrehue. In Collipulli they have nothing. Tree plantations of eucalyptus and pine now dominate the landscape and suck its soils of Collipulli dry. They have become completely dependent on government aid, using funds to build greenhouses on what little land they have left. CONADI had brought them to Curarrehue as an example for how community-based tourism could help them at home.

I do think that a similar type of tourism project may be able to help the Mapuche communities of Collipulli. But the goal of this thesis was never to directly 'evaluate' the community-based tourism model used in Curarrehue, or prescribe it to anyone else. The goal of this thesis was to ally with these community-based tourism projects through a critical scholarly lens. The broader implications of my reflections for the communities I worked with relate to issues of accessibility, and the recognition of differing experiences of Mapuche identity. However, the broadest of implications of this research, what the people of Curarrehue have taught me, are meant to travel further. This thesis is not just about a successful sustainable community-based tourism project. This thesis is about the real people who work and live within these hybridized spaces. Their stories have challenged me to redefine notions of authenticity, indigeneity and local place. Local peoples, cultures and environments are not stagnant or in need of protection from global contamination. The local peoples, regardless of whether or not they self-identify as indigenous, can actively use and shape what is global in order to cerate spaces for economic and cultural empowerment.

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