MIGRATORY AGES AND TRANSNATIONAL LIFE OF CHILOTE COMMUNITIES IN USHUAIA, TIERRA DEL FUEGO, ARGENTINA, FROM 1947 TO 2018[*] [1]

EDADES MIGRATORIAS Y VIDA TRANSNACIONAL DE LAS COMUNIDADES DE CHILOTES EN USHUAIA, TIERRA DEL FUEGO, ARGENTINA (1947 – 2018)

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ABSTRACT

The article present ethnographic findings on the transnational migration of inhabitants of Chiloe Island, Chile, to Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, in *three generational ages* from 1947 to 2018. The first age focuses on the closure of the Ushuaia prison as a driver of foreign migration, particularly in the case of early settlements of Chilotes seeking seasonal employment. The second age reflects a large-scale displacement of rural families associated with various ecological, political, and economic events which took place in Chiloe. A third age relates to permanent settlements of Chilotes on the outskirts of the town, the construction of the notion of «home», and the circulation of cultural practices that served to lend legitimacy to the community.

The key findings show how these displacements in Ushuaia occurred later in comparison to other Fuego-Patagonian towns —such as Río Grande and Río Gallegos, which had been receiving migrants from Chiloe since 1890—, especially those that inspired male migration associated with seasonal employment in places like ranches (*estancias*), meat-packing plants, and fat-rendering plants.

Keywords: Transnational migration; formation of communities; multi-situated ethnography; Chiloe, Ushuaia.

RESUMEN

El artículo muestra hallazgos etnográficos sobre la migración transnacional de habitantes de la isla de Chiloé hacia Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, en *tres edades generacionales* que van desde 1947 hasta el año 2018. La primera edad hace referencia al cierre del presidio como un factor que provocó las migraciones extranjeras, particularmente de los primeros asentamientos de chilotes quienes buscaban oportunidades laborales en sectores de temporada. La segunda edad muestra los desplazamientos de familias rurales asociados a diferentes sucesos ecológicos, políticos y económicos ocurridos en Chiloé. La tercera edad se

relaciona con los asentamientos permanentes de chilotes en las periferias de la ciudad, la construcción de la noción de «hogar» y la circulación de prácticas culturales que legitimaron a la comunidad.

Los principales resultados muestran cómo estos desplazamientos son tardíos en comparación con otras ciudades fuego-patagónicas, como Río Grande y Río Gallegos, lugares que recibieron migrantes procedentes de Chiloé desde 1890 en adelante, aquellas que inspiraban las migraciones masculinas relacionadas con las estancias, los frigoríficos y las graserías.

Palabras clave: Migración transnacional; formación de comunidades; etnografía multisituada; Chiloé; Ushuaia.

Introduction

This article focuses on the transnational migration of Chilotes to Ushuaia, and aims to acknowledge *three generational ages,* from 1947 to 2018: 1) *the prison closure*, beginning 1947; 2) *itinerant settlings*, from 1960; and 3) *the formation of transnational communities*, from 1990. Migratory age is a term coined by Abdelmalek Sayad (1977) to describe each of three distinct periods of Algerian emigration to France in terms of the diverse nature of the subjects who were displaced and their routines in their places of residence. Sayad's proposal is related to Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Zsanton's (1994) concept of transnational social fields, used to analyze migrations through continuity and the connections between itinerancy spaces, the fortification of networks, and the circulation of goods linking places of origin and residence.

Sayad's and Glick-Schiller's proposals are focused in different geographical, historical and collective settling processes. Nonetheless, these works are relevant to understand how transnational migrants develop creative strategies during their displacement and settling processes. Therefore, different processes of collective action, community formation and construction of a notion of home can be identified in those places where they are based. Our interest lies in a historical discussion of migration from an anthropological perspective that allows us to identify ethnographically the processes and cultural meanings surrounding the cross-border settlements of the Chilotes in Argentina, specifically in Tierra del Fuego as a space of analysis.

Thus, our initial explanation is that Chilotes migrated to Ushuaia later than to other southern areas —specifically, following the closure of the local prison in 1947—, due to the lack of work opportunities for foreigners in an area where tasks were performed by repeat offenders as part of their sentences. Chilotes in Ushuaia initially found work in the logging industry, the sawmills, and home construction, in addition to taking on seasonal work shearing on ranches in Río Grande and Río Gallegos in Argentina, mostly, but also in Porvenir, Puerto Natales, and Punta Arenas in Chile. After the 1980s, settled communities of people from Chiloe would hold cultural events celebrating national independence or religious traditions, among other community activities. This sparked major efforts to establish institutions, associations, clubs, churches, leisure spaces known as *lugares chilotes* (Chilote places)*,* broadcasting stations, and football teams, while promoting the movement of goods, cuisines and restaurants, and small shops offering goods from Chiloe.

The ages of the migration of Chilotes can be understood as a historical process of *hypertranshumance* as men and women pursued employment and a better quality of life. All these elements contributed to temporary and permanent settlements, and played a pivotal role in forming a transnational Chilote community distinct from other peoples and foreign communities in Ushuaia. The notion of *hypertranshumance* refers to the generational migration of Chilotes to Ushuaia, followed by the formation of communities, the construction of the notion of home, and

an understanding of migrants' experiences and their cultural representations in new places of residence.

In light of these ethnographic findings on the *ages of Chilote migration to Ushuaia*, it is worth understanding how Abdelmalek Sayad's perspective brings together a series of elements to recognize collective displacements, especially when these elements enable interaction over long distances. As Sayad (1977) points out, migratory ages are characterized by three stages: an "*émigration sur ordre*", then a "*perte de contrôle*", and lastly the settlement of "*une colonie*". The author characterizes ages as configuration systems that regulate dynamics and social transformations between places of origin and residence. In this sense, he applies the *generation* metaphor to explain differences in a migratory group after different stages that condition actions (motivations, aspirations, desires) at a given time, producing individual and collective transformations in communities. The notion of *transformation* is intrinsically linked to subjects' life stories as part of migrants' displacement and settlement processes and the relations and interconnections constructed between their places of origin and destinations, as well as in their subsequent return to the homeland.

One of Sayad's proposals is to understand the categories of emigrant and immigrant, which are subject to constant resignification, especially when subjects frequently change place of residence or return to their places of origin. Indeed, migrants find themselves in a permanent state of conflict on the borderline between their places of origin and residence. When they move to another place, they take with them the *illusion of the provisional*; in some cases, they decide to establish themselves and become a part of wherever they have deposited their illusions. The offspring of these communities, "*les beurs*", will experience these differences more intensely by living in parallel social spaces, which, in many cases, will become scenarios of dislocated meanings.

While it is true that Sayad's proposals in the mid 1970s focused on historical, political, and economic aspects of migration, his ideas are not far removed from what scholars like Glick-Schiller, Blanc, and Zsanton were proposing in the mid 1990s with the concept of *transnational social fields*. This concept gains relevance in any reflection on the displacements of communities and the processes by which they settle, transform, and establish long-distance connections between their places of origin and residence. These social fields are set apart by an understanding of how migrants enter their countries of residence and how they link back to their places of origin. All of this is influenced by continuous ties built between their countries and their social networks, which extend beyond national borders.

Transnational social fields are understood to be "a set of multiple interwoven networks of social relationships, through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004: 66). The authors claim that, in order to understand contemporary migration, it is worth considering the cultural, economic, and political impacts of networks, both in places of origin and in settlement spaces. These social fields are the fruit of individual migrants' activities and the recognition of a community by its members. The relationships built generate social connections across borders, strengthening networks that allow the circulation of symbolic, economic and cultural capitals between two or more nation states. Distinctive characteristics of communities include cultural —but also political and economic— practices. These might include observing their own holidays as a way of acknowledging their original traditions, the conservation of collective identities or the movement of goods.

Few studies cover Chilean immigration to Ushuaia. Our article is supported by a study developed in Argentina by Gobantes *et al.* (2011), which reported that after 1947, the largest flow of immigrants in the area came from Chiloe, even though many of them did not migrate directly but rather set out from frontier areas such as Aysén and Magallanes. The migrants were

mostly young males who intended to mingle in rural areas in the hope of securing work in the ranches, and later moved to areas where work was available in logging and construction. This is also consistent with findings reported by Horlent (2018), who claimed that the fall in population in Chiloe during the 1940s and 1970s was a result of the fact that the economy in the archipelago was falling behind due to a lack of employment opportunities. While it is true that after the penitentiary institution in Ushuaia closed in 1947, it was mostly Chilotes who settled in the city, other migrant communities from northern Argentina and abroad (Bolivians and Paraguayans) arrived in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Lattes (2007) and Ceva (2006), migration increased following the enactment of Law 10,640, which promoted certain sectors of employment in the region, like assembly factories and the exploitation of natural resources.

In Chile, studies that address the migration of Chilotes refer to different historical moments of displacement, settlement, and population in Fuego-Patagonia (Montiel 2010). During the gold rush initiated by Julio Popper in 1883 until its eventual decline in 1910, the Chilotes participated in extracting gold resources, continuing the work until 1990 as *pirquineros* organized in groups or *comparsas* in Magallanes and Porvenir, as well as in Argentine territory, especially on islands south of Cape Horn (Autor 2020; Martinic 2003). Their itineraries involved seasons on ranches as laborers in the pastoral sphere developing shearing activities combined with work in meat packing and tallow processing plants, and other trades in places such as Punta Arenas, Porvenir, Río Gallegos and Río Grande (Autor 2018). Their displacements are associated with particular events. For instance, the death of 59 Chilotes in 1906 in Bajo Pisagua (Isla de los Muertos) in Caleta Tortel (Aysén Region), who had been hired by the Compañía Explotadora del Baker (Ivanoff Wellmann 2000).

The sources of work that opened up as a result of European investment in the southern Argentinian territories tie in with various tragic events that nonetheless did little to stem southbound migration, most notably the massacre of Chilotes in the Strike of 21 (*Huelga del 21*) at the hands of the Argentinian army in Estancia Anita in the Province of Santa Cruz (Mancilla 2012).

Materials and methods

The methodology followed the parameters established in FONDECYT project no. 3160798, in which fieldwork was conducted in three stages from 2016 to 2018 in various places across Chiloe and Fuego-Patagonia. Multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 2001) was considered an effective strategy to monitor the subjects of our study and, in particular, to examine the life stories of Chilotes who had moved southward, their settlements in different places of residence, and collective action in the formation of communities in Ushuaia. Multi-sited ethnography proposes understanding connections through the circumstantial tracking of people, objects, metaphors, patterns, lives, and conflicts in motion. Transnational migration as an anthropological problem considers the analysis of long-term processes and multi-situational scenarios. This approach shows the importance of the migrants' place of origin, especially considering the bonds generated with places of residence.

The ethnographical study covers ten communes in the Chiloe archipelago and the towns of Punta Arenas and Porvenir (Chile) and Río Grande, Río Gallegos, and Ushuaia (Argentina). We visited various places, particularly on the outskirts of Punta Arenas, where we located the 18 de Septiembre community, a Chilote neighborhood similar to Evita and Belgrano in Río Gallegos. We crossed the Strait of Magellan to the main island of Tierra del Fuego, where we observed small-scale gold mining and sheep-shearing in *estancias* in Porvenir, Río Grande, and Ushuaia. It was in Ushuaia that we focused on different sectors of the population, locating Chilote communities that were not grouped together in villages or neighborhoods but rather were dispersed, unlike in other towns. The characteristics of the Chilote settlements in Ushuaia reflect an itinerant settlement that was established during different generational ages. In order to

understand this process, we visited places where migrants interact, such as clubs, associations, churches, restaurants, and other leisure spaces.

Information was gathered by reviewing historical records (archived in collections in Chiloe, Santiago, Punta Arenas, Buenos Aires, and Ushuaia) and from 10 participatory maps, 112 in-depth interviews, 25 life stories of key informants and various types of audiovisual analysis (photographs from family albums and videos of cultural events). It should be noted that the participatory workshops were powerful allies for understanding the routes and trajectories that the Chilotes drew during their displacements to different places in Fuego-Patagonia. The workshops were held with groups of Chilote migrants, women and men, residents and returnees in different cities, both in Chile (Chiloe, Porvenir, Punta Arenas) and Argentina (Comodoro Rivadavia, Río Turbio, Río Gallegos, Río Grande and Ushuaia). The participatory activity was developed through the inclusion of a map of the territories of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, where the participants pointed out the trajectories they had experienced; their itinerant, stationary and current places of residence.

First migratory age: The prison closure, 1947-1960

The closure of the prison in Ushuaia formed the backdrop to this first migratory age, as a key factor triggering the arrival of Chilote migrants in search of work. During the first four decades of the 20th century, Ushuaia continued to be perceived as offering few employment opportunities for foreigners, at least by those intending to settle to find paid jobs. The migratory explosion of Chilotes occurred after the closure of the penitentiary institution as work opportunities opened up, primarily in the logging industry; laborers would take the *convicts' train* into the woods and return with large loads of timber for construction. In addition to the sawmills, there was a quarry used to crush limestone and its derivatives, also for construction purposes. Other important industries were carpentry and cabinetmaking, where "the Chilotes were well-esteemed for the quality of their work. At the time, they would build most of the huts, houses, buildings, and ranches".[i]

Those who decided to take the chance, "no matter the hostility of the weather and the limitations which made life more difficult for them […] claimed to be informed about the benefits of settling in the area" (Cicarelli 2015, 184). This prosperity, well known by the community, would slowly attract foreigners – for the most part Chileans who arrived in the mid 1940s, as recounted by Juan Sabino Andrade, "my two elder brothers, Eulogio and Luis, settled in Ushuaia as correctional officers […] after serving in the Chilean army, they moved to work in this institution" (1999: 17).

Indeed, as Genaro Cárcamo recalls, "People used to talk about Ushuaia, my father and my brothers who worked in Río Grande were there to work as axmen. They would say the weather was hard but you could make a lot of money. It was difficult to get groceries and there weren't many places to get food".[ii] Susana Cicarelli mentions that "single, illiterate males of working age would arrive in Ushuaia […] women arrived afterwards, after the risks decreased and living conditions improved" (Cicarelli 2015: 189-215). Both comments serve as an illustration of the early migrations of Chilotes towards Ushuaia in the mid 1940s, mostly by men who had finished their shearing seasons in Río Grande.

During the 1950s, the population stood at around "7,000 in Ushuaia and 10,000 in Río Grande. 70% of them were foreigners (basically Chilean)" (D'Ambra 2000: 90). This additional population was made up of different types of migrants, for the most part from Chiloe Island, who had all set out in search of job opportunities. These waves of migration mostly originated from three locations: Chiloe Island, Porvenir, and Punta Arenas. From Chiloe Island, migrants set out in groups of five or six workers or "swallows" (*golondrinas*) with the intention of offering their services as shearers in the *estancias* of Tierra del Fuego. A second group of migrants headed toward Río Grande and Ushuaia from Porvenir once the shearing season was over, or when

they had completed their work in *estancias* or as artisanal gold-miners, and were focused primarily on locating and mining gold. Indeed, gold-mining should be viewed as a key driver of high mobility within Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, especially from Porvenir across the Baquedano mountain range (*Cordón Baquedano*) to places like Río Grande, Ushuaia, Puerto Toro, Punta Guanaco, Navarino Island, and Bahía Sloggett, where budding miners joined gold companies or engaged in small-scale mineral mining in small groups known as *comparsas* in the hope of striking it rich. The third group of arrivals were young men between 18 and 20 years of age who had just completed their military service in Punta Arenas. As a general rule, they had not yet begun their working life, so for them this was an entirely new experience.

The routes followed by Chilotes as they moved toward Ushuaia are one key characteristic of this migratory phenomenon. Generally, there were two routes. The "long route" involved sailing from Chiloe to Punta Arenas, where they crossed the Strait of Magellan to Porvenir, at which point they could follow the road to Río Grande and from there travel to Ushuaia. The "short route" meant a series of journeys by land from Chiloe to places like Aysén and then crossing the border into Argentinian territory, where they reached Río Gallegos and crossed the strait to Río Grande and then moved onwards to Ushuaia. It should be noted that the long route was the most popular among the Chilotes due to the comfort offered by the ships that sailed to Punta Arenas, where passengers used the cargo rooms to spend the night during the trips that lasted between three to five days. The short route, for example, meant a series of journeys by land, on horseback or on foot, then by bus or a vehicle that transported them in stretches to nearby towns or villages until they reached the border. While it is true that most migrants following these routes were traveling from Chiloe, mention must also be made of Chilotes employed in the Aysén and Magallanes regions (in places like Coyhaique, Punta Arenas, Puerto Natales, and Porvenir), who at the end of the season would head toward Ushuaia, where work opportunities were being promoted across different seasonal sectors.
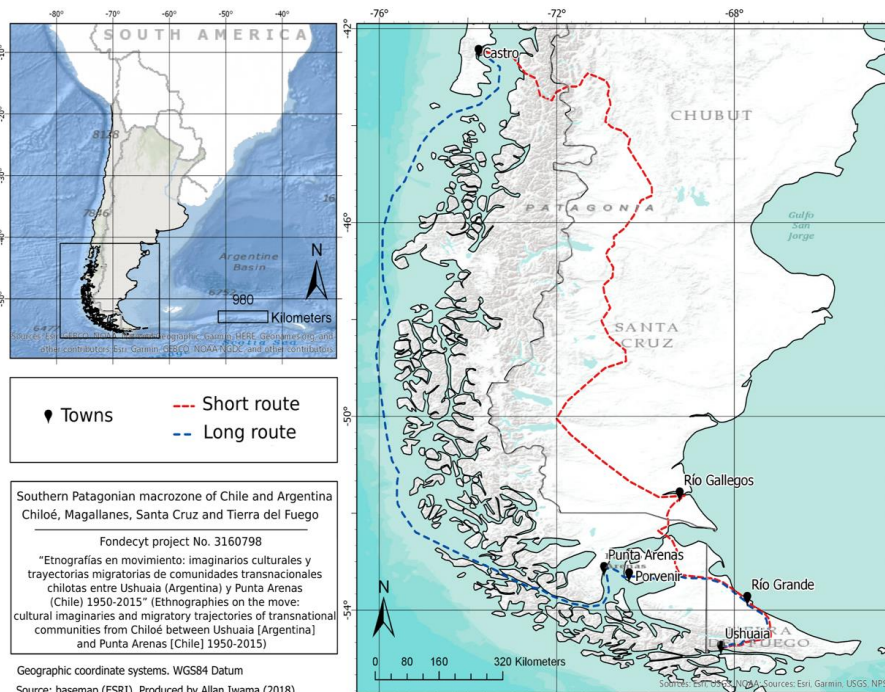

Fig. 1: Mogration routes. **Credits:** Juan. M. Saldívar. Prepared by Allan Iwama, basemap ESRI.

Two factors help to explain these migrations: firstly, the lack of work in Chiloe, and secondly, the hardships incurred as a result of the potato blight in the 1950s, which were further exacerbated in the 1960s by an earthquake that practically flattened the island's inhabited coast. These misfortunes hit the regional economy hard, particularly in the smaller islands in the inner sea of Chiloe, where the economy was heavily dependent on farming and small-scale fishing and shellfish harvesting. In this sense, migration by Chilotes can be described as a sort of rural migration in which migrants found niches in the labor market in Ushuaia that accommodated their skills in different sectors. One such industry was logging, where skilled laborers were needed to craft wood shingles for construction. Migrants' expertise in artisanal fishing was also put to good use in the canals of Tierra del Fuego, and Chilotes proved especially valuable in the *estancias,* where they were well-reputed as shepherds, shearers, wire-fence erectors (they built a large number of fences), and ranch foremen.

Second migratory age: Itinerant settlings, 1960-1990

From 1960, our findings point to a second migratory age characterized by temporary settlements of Chilotes, especially males coming to work in seasonal industries. By 1960, the internal dynamics in the provinces of Chiloe and Magallanes showed a trend toward rural-to-urban migration, especially in Chiloe where the urban population grew by about 10% in 20 years. This, in turn, would also worsen the impact of one of the drivers of migration of this period: the 1960 earthquake in Chiloe. This natural disaster led to mass displacements toward southern Chile and Argentina as the islanders sought work to recover what they had lost in the earthquake (Mancilla and Mardones 2009).

One key feature of migration in the 1960s was the displacement of families, mostly nuclear units (parents and their children). Some local historians assert that the majority of families who left Chiloe Island did not return, and it is they who settled on the outskirts of towns, mainly in places like Río Grande and Ushuaia, where they maintained networks with friends and family members living there (Mancilla 2012). Settlements on the outskirts resulted in the sharp growth of towns in Tierra del Fuego —not just on the Argentinian side, but in Chile too. This was notably the case in Bahía Chilota, a settlement near the town of Porvenir essentially populated by Chilotes who arrived following the earthquake. The integration of the Chilotes in Tierra del Fuego is a defining trait of these communities as transnational, due to their settlement experiences and, above all, the creative strategies they have developed on both sides of the border, such as the circulation of objects and merchandise, cultural traditions, religious calendars, club foundations, associations and mutual aid groups.

Then, in the 1970s, one other factor that led to an increase in the Chilote population in Ushuaia was the discovery of hydrocarbon deposits south of Río Grande, as Ms. Hortencia clearly recalled: "My husband arrived in 1971 to work for an oil company in the area following the arrival of YPF S.A. [an oil and gas company]".[iii] This finding led to the establishment of new companies and an uncontrolled increase in demand for labor in the construction of irrigation ditches and wells, as well as in exploration, exploitation, and distillation. Furthermore, after 1972, with the enactment of the Industrial Promotion Law No. 19,640, which exempted companies from paying taxes, assembly companies were established in Río Grande and Ushuaia, accelerating economic growth and sparking a series of migratory flows from central and northern Argentina, as well as by foreigners, mostly Bolivians and Peruvians. While it is true that at this point the Chilote men were not enthusiastic about taking up work in factories, these events marked a precedent for future mobility among women wishing to join the migrant labor market.

The exponential growth of migrants continued in the region, as word of the benefits offered by the city and surrounding areas spread in the media and by word of mouth (Horlent, 2018). Networks were formed between migrant communities and their places of origin. Elena Martínez

recalled, "Northerners went back on vacation and returned with more people, and these relatives brought others, that was how Argentinians arrived; the same happened with the Bolivians and Chileans, like us. When my husband went to Chiloe, he brought nephews to work here, it was a way of helping them".[iv] Migration networks extended rapidly, displacing families. While men sought construction work, women turned toward domestic work combined with part-time jobs in the city's assembly factories.

The driving forces behind Chilote migration to Ushuaia included fears of the Pinochet regime after the coup d'état in Chile in 1973. José Soto recalled that "the dictatorship was a dangerous period. In the 1970s Fuego-Patagonia (particularly Río Gallegos and Río Turbio) became a refuge away from the Magellan shores. In settlements towards the south of Ushuaia, near the *estancias* Haberton and Remolino, people would work in sawmills as axmen. Gabriel Silva reports that the port of Almanza "began with the arrival of the Cárcamo, a Chilote family of fisherfolk who had been fleeing the dictatorship".[v]

Just as life in the south seemed to be moving forward smoothly, a series of episodes triggered the so-called Operation Sovereignty in 1978, when the Argentinian military attempted to invade Chile as part of a dispute over the sovereignty of islands on the Chilean side of the Beagle Channel. In addition to the Beagle conflict, the Argentinians fought the British in 1982 in an attempt to reclaim sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, a conflict that sent Chilotes fleeing back to Punta Arenas in fear. Although these events were certainly a factor that drew some people back to Chiloe, the rise of artisanal fishing and salmon farming on the island, and hence large-scale trade, also played a key role. Notable in this regard was the surge in trade caused by the Loco Fever or *Fiebre del Loco* (*Concholepas Concholepas*), the Urchin Fever or *Fiebre del Erizo* (*Echinoidea*), and the Hake Fever or *Fiebre de la Merluza* (*Merluccius gayi*). This fishing boom and salmon farming, combined with the decline of the Argentinian ranches, brought migration towards Fuego-Patagonian territories to a halt (Author 2019).

The second half of the 1980s saw marked return migration towards the Argentine Fuegian territories, where foreign labor was scarce. Claudio Segurola reports that, at that time, "people would return and stay because they could earn three times more than in the country's central region and, what's more, the government would distribute land, which was why more Bolivians arrived and Chileans returned to settle, for good".[vi] Assembly plants tapped into an abundant female labor market. In addition to the job opportunities, foreigners were also motivated by the strong chance of obtaining a land allowance from the local government, which sometimes included construction materials and was offered as an incentive in an attempt to populate the outskirts of the town. The communities of national and foreign migrants were placed in different sectors depending on their order of arrival. As a general rule, the earlier settlers were to be found in the town center and "they were given more land, which was granted according to their status; they had to naturalize or at least one member had to be Argentinian".[vii]

These territorial characteristics are also reflected in the Argentinians' social classification of foreign inhabitants, who were designated as former settlers (FS), born and raised (B&R) or come and stayed (C&S) —cultural markers that distinguish the ages of migration in Ushuaia. A note in *El Diario del Fin del Mundo*, Ushuaia's newspaper, dated November 13, 2011, referred to the following headline "Los NyC, los VyQ y los TaF", and explained the following:

> "Our population was divided between the NyC (*nacidos y criados* [born and raised]), the
>
> VyQ (*venidos y quedados* [came and stayed]), the TaF (*traídos a la fuerza* [brought by
>
> force]) […] The NyC and the VyQ are legitimate Fuegians. The question lies in those
>
> who were brought here by force. They are the managers of the private firms, the

authorities of the public companies, the factory workers who, here, escape the meager salaries of the north, and the sailors of the base. The TaF make up the majority. They work and save for a future that they will develop in the continent [...] Those of us who remember this history know that most of those who were forcibly brought here ended up becoming the VyQ, although with a great uprooting, a very scarce identification with the place where we live, which has left a deep mark on our society".

Third migratory age: The formation of transnational communities, 1990-2018

By the second half of the 1990s, Chilote migration was typified as "non-permanent migration", especially towards places such as Ushuaia, where settlements were established later in comparison to other southern towns. Those who elected to stay on the other side of the border engaged in collective activities to preserve native cultural traditions, "and so, September 18th, the Chilean Independence Day, was also a holiday in Tierra del Fuego" (D´Ambra 2000: 90). In this sense, Lucas Sanhueza agrees with Claudio: "Those from Chiloe who stayed to live in Ushuaia soon organized themselves so they could celebrate their Chilean national holidays. They would race in rowing boats and cook *curantos*, *empanadas de locos*, *cholgas*, *milcaos*, *sopaipillas*, and stuffed potatoes".[viii]

These events became more popular with the founding of associations such as the Solidarity Group, the Gabriela Mistral Chilean Residents' Center, and early settlers' clubs. In addition, Elena Martínez recalls that these associations "were responsible for connecting Chilean culture by holding events and parties and [these activities] also found expression in the local football team, Arturo Prat, in the local league".[ix] The migrants' notion of community resembles a representation of their homeland, especially when the actions bring symbolic connections that allow them to reconnect with their place of origin despite the distance.

One of the most important spaces today is the Chilean Residents' Center, founded on September 5, 2000, where Felix Vallejo has been president for four years. Felix himself states that "the objectives of the center are to celebrate national holidays and offer workshops and other activities for the community's sake".[x] Hence, these cultural references show "the ways in which mobile people unify symbols, and reconstruct and represent their cultures, identities and new social realities in the transnational context" (Hirai 2012:33). The national holiday is coordinated well in advance and planned from the beginning of the year through a work agenda, and responsibilities are divided hierarchically. Some active members, Felix acknowledged, are responsible for scheduling activities by seeking sponsorship from the mayor's office and applying for the relevant permits.

The celebration generally takes place in the event room of the Chilean Residents' Center. According to Jaime Cárdenas, "Chilotes abroad feel closer to their homeland when we hold our traditional celebrations and sing our national anthem. Many people are moved to tears when we project photos of Chiloe on the screen".[xi] The celebration continues with folk music groups hired by the community to liven up the event, which alternate with local groups such as *Archipiélago del Sur*, which is made up of people from Chiloe who live in Ushuaia. Festivities are also held in Chilean neighborhoods like Vicente de Paul and La Cantera, where the participants show their zest mostly through cultural items such as kites, flags, and local cuisine.

Apart from national holidays, other elements also characterize the connection between migrants from Chiloe and their homeland, such as the small shops where goods from Punta Arenas and

Chiloe are traded. These shops offer traditional fare from Chiloe, such as toasted flour, garlic, potatoes, dried fish, *cochayuyo*, *luche*, smoked pork, empanadas, *curanto*, and *milcao*. These products follow different geographical routes. Some are traded in nearby cities by frequent travelers; others are requested from relatives who live abroad. The presence of Chilote cuisine is evidence of an absence of the homeland – an absence that Chilotes attempt to fill by consuming certain goods that allow connections between people and the motherland. This is an example of what Shinji Hiraí (2012) termed a *nostalgia market*: a market that enables affective links between the motherland and place of residence, allowing people to "find products [and] remember their homelands [...] and feel that they are at home" (Hiraí 2012: 280).

Leisure spaces such as clubs, centers, and restaurants enable the circulation of meanings that allow migrants to feel closer to their homeland, especially when members of these communities no longer visit their place of origin. Jaime Cárdenas explains that a traditional Chilote restaurant in Ushuaia was intended as a space for people from Chiloe, where they could satisfy their nostalgia through traditional food. For just a moment, they would feel in Chiloe. Jaime is the owner of *Chiko Restaurant* in the town center. Migrants gather there as a community, especially when "La Roja [the Chilean soccer team] plays in the World Cup or the Copa América. They turn up wearing their national football soccer jerseys. It feels just like home".[xii] Meeting spaces enable Chilotes to display their identity landscapes and bonds and express the emotions stirred up by this distance from their homeland. In this sense, nostalgia is a stimulating element "to understand the ways in which itinerant people unify symbols, reconstruct and represent their cultures, identities and new social realities in the transnational context" (Hirai 2012: 33). These emergency mechanisms in the reconstruction of home become evident through the recreation of imaginary spaces and the following of cultural codes that strengthen the affective bonds of collective memory. Cultural practices by communities legitimize identities through consumption and continuity.

Conclusion

The migration of Chilotes to Ushuaia, Argentina, is fairly recent compared to other destinations in Fuego-Patagonia. These migrations took place in three stages of population rearrangement, from the mid 1940s (1947) right through to the present day (albeit to a lesser extent). The first age acknowledges physical displacements as a series of circumstantial trajectories that began from the island of Chiloe towards different environments in the south. One key characteristic of this stage is that travelers tried their luck in increasingly distant places as they sought work in alternative sectors following the collapse of ranches and meat-packing plants.

The second age begins in the 1960s, when a large earthquake destroys Chiloe, driving islanders out towards various areas across Chile and Argentina. The chaos caused by the quake was exacerbated by political developments in Chile in the mid 1970s, including a coup d'état that drove people to new latitudes in search of refuge. Ushuaia was one such place and became a permanent residence for those escaping repression. One of the main characteristics of this stage was the increase in Chiloe natives in Ushuaia as a result of itinerant settlements: groups who traveled around on a seasonal basis or so-called "swallow travelers" (*viajeros golondrina*).

Argentinian accusations leveled at Chileans, who were perceived as "Chileanizing" Argentinian territory, led to cross-border tensions. More peaceful relations were restored when communities from Bolivia, Paraguay, and northern and central Argentina began to settle in the region, redefining the local population. Lastly, we identify a third stage beginning in 1990. This was a period of cultural and identity reaffirmation for second-generation Chilotes, born and raised in Ushuaia. It is they who, together with their parents and grandparents, recreated spaces of residence as they formed a community based on collective action and ever stronger emotional ties with their places of origin in Chiloe. All of these aspects suggest certain emergency mechanisms that migrants use to culturally legitimize their new places of residence.

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[i] Emiliano Gonzalez, 48 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 14, 2018.

[ii] Genaro Cárcamo, 55 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 16, 2018.

[iii] Hortencia Cárcamo, 52 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 12, 2018.

[iv] Marcia Saldívia, 49 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 13, 2018.

[v] Gabriel Silva, 59 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 12, 2018.

[vi] Claudio Segurola, 45 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 14, 2018.

[vii] Felix Vallejo, 58 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 18, 2018.

[viii] Lucas Sanhueza, 46 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 7, 2018.

[ix] Elena Martinez, 47 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 14, 2018.

[x] Félix Vallejo, 58 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 18, 2018.

[xi] Jaime Cárdenas, 55 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 10, 2018.

[xii] Jaime Cárdenas, 55 years old. Extensive interview conducted in Ushuaia, Argentina, on September 10, 2018.

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