

A HOME AWAY FROM HOME: HERITAGE, MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN LATIN AMERICAN
MIGRANT COMMUNITIES OF SANTIAGO DE CHILE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation constitutes a qualitative study that delves into the identities of migrants from a micro perspective, specifically focusing on working-class Latin Americans (originating from Venezuela, Haiti, Peru, Colombia, and Argentina) who have migrated to Chile over the last two decades. Through in-depth ethnographic interviews at home, participant observation, and unstructured interviews in the neighbourhoods of Santiago Centro and Estación Central, this research captures the intimate experience of identity, memory, and heritage construction among migrants. The findings of this project highlight the advantage of entering migrant homes and, simultaneously, connecting them with surrounding public spaces in order to understand how heritage, identity and memory are intertwined with their material culture. The study involves a comprehensive examination of migrant material culture as an expression of the constant ongoing process of creating and recreating individual and collective identity in the context of migration, revealing how memory and intangible heritage related to home and neighbourhood both differ and overlap, reflecting the identity of these groups. The results indicate that the ways in which migrants perceive themselves and their community are closely connected to movement, a phenomenon that transforms their identity before and during travel, setting it apart from that of their past home-country and of Chileans'. This transformation, influenced by movement, imbues migrant objects with new meanings while coexisting with the sense of permanence suggested by nostalgic memories of their geographical and historical past. Objects and rituals within the migrant home and neighbourhood unveil systems of value and identity amongst the migrants, contributing to the formation of their cultural heritage. This materiality also reveals the gender dimension that particularly affects migrant women, who experience high levels of sexualization in Chile, revealing specific exercises of memory and identity unique to the female migrant experience. Ultimately, the material culture of migrants within the neighbourhood and home—how it is shaped, the role it plays, and how it is mapped in a city like Santiago—provides insight into the negotiation of their identity and memory.

In parallel, this study also sheds light on the negotiation of Chilean identity. Chileans confront migrant materiality with nineteenth century narratives about whiteness, exoticizing and

sexualizing new migrant arrivals in recent decades. Challenging these perspectives and foregrounding the practices and experiences of the migrants themselves, this thesis successfully elucidates specific rituals, objects and settings, such as the *Noche de las velitas* for the Colombian community, the consumption of coffee for Venezuelans, and role of the *Los Paisas* supermarket for migrants in general, as elements that serve as both the result and witness of the negotiation of memory and identity. By emphasising such points of convergence in migrant constructions of identity, the study likewise challenges conventional notions of memory confined to fixed locations and underscoring how memory serves as a consistent thread amid periods of change. The manner in which migrants navigate the intricate and frequently challenging dynamics of movement and border crossing significantly shapes their integration and overall welfare within the host society. The escalation of tensions between migrants and locals, due to a rise in criminality and cultural difference in discourses on the use of public space, gives rise to novel formulations of identity, impacting recollections of national narratives and community histories. Concurrently, this transformative process alters the local landscape, prompting a demand for rethinking social policies. This study emphasises the need for a profound comprehension of these identification processes, heritage construction, and memory in order for Chile to achieve a harmonious intercultural coexistence among its inhabitants.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	9
LIST OF TABLES.....	11
CHAPTER 1	13
INTRODUCTION.....	13
1.1 Motivation of the study	13
1.2 Research objectives and method.....	17
1.3 Significance of the study	19
1.4 Structure of the thesis.....	20
CHAPTER 2	23
LITERATURE REVIEW	23
2.1 Introduction.....	23
2.2 Migration studies: outside the European scope.....	24
2.2.1 Migrants and migration: broadening the scope.....	27
2.3 Identity rooted in processes of movement	28
2.3.3 Identity and migration.....	29
2.3.3.1 Identity: feelings of belonging and attachment	30
2.3.3.2 Nationalism and transnationalism	32
2.3.4 Exile, diaspora, and refugees.....	37
2.4 Heritage and migration	39
2.4.1 Heritage as a process	42
2.4.2 Heritage in the transnational present	43
2.4.3 Shifting perspective: “bottom up” heritage process.....	44
2.4.4 Migration and the construction of heritage.....	48
2.4.4.1 The phenomenon of mobility feeding heritage processes.....	50
2.4.5 Heritage between memory and belonging	52
2.5 Neighbourhood and home as spaces anchoring migrant memory.....	54
2.5.1 The neighbourhood as a canvas for migrant memory	56
2.5.2 The home as a container of memories.....	58
2.6 Material culture as the container for intangible and tangible heritage	61
2.7 Chapter conclusions	66
CHAPTER 3	69
COMPLEXITIES AND PANORAMA OF CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION IN CHILE	69
3.1 Introduction.....	69
3.2 Review of Chile’s migration history	69

3.2.1 Migrant groups in Chile, 1850-1960	72
3.3 Geography of Chile's contemporary migration	78
3.3.1 Radiography of Peruvian migration since the 1990s in Chile	78
3.3.2 Chile in 2016: a migratory leap in numbers	84
3.4 Chilean migration policy.....	85
3.5 The socioeconomic issues of the migrant experience in Chile	88
3.5.1 High density neighbourhoods	90
3.5.2 Migrants in the Chilean workforce	92
3.5.3 Migrant children in Chile.....	94
3.5.4 Multidimensional poverty and discrimination	96
3.6 Migrant heritage and memory in Chile	99
3.7 Chapter conclusions	100
CHAPTER 4.....	102
METHODOLOGY.....	102
4.1 Introduction.....	102
4.2 Research philosophy	103
4.2.1 Qualitative mixed-methods approach.....	104
4.3 Geographic location and timeframe of the fieldwork	105
4.4 Research design	107
4.4.1 Examination of archives and media	108
4.4.2 In-depth interviews	110
4.4.2.1 Material culture.....	118
4.4.3 Participant observation.....	120
4.5 Positionality and ethics	122
4.5.1 Positionality.....	122
4.5.2 Ethics	126
4.6 Chapter conclusions	128
CHAPTER 5.....	129
HOME: A PLACE AND A SENSE	129
5.1 Introduction.....	129
5.2 Materiality as anchor for identity and homemaking	132
5.2.1 Luggage: the bridge between the past and the present	134
5.3 Food and cooking as performance of heritage	139
5.3.1 Coffee—a contentious national signifier for Venezuelans	141
5.3.2 Food and feelings of home: an active negotiation	147
5.3.3 Food in festivities as a marker of identity and active homemaking	150
5.4 Religious artefacts and practices in the home: stability within mobility.....	156
5.4.1 The blurry line between the religious and the secular.....	157
5.5 Family album: nostalgia, heritage, memory and identity	166
5.5.1 Photographs: agency to transform and to remain	167

5.5.2 Photo albums as creators of “places” for migrants.....	171
5.5.3 Albums that become object books.....	173
5.6 Chapter conclusions	178
CHAPTER 6	181
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD: A PLACE TO CONNECT.....	181
6.1 Introduction.....	181
6.2 Materiality as marker of migrant identity within the neighbourhood	184
6.2.1 <i>Los Paisas</i> : a place of food, friendship, and belonging.....	185
6.2.2 Salsa and merengue: belonging or disturbing?	196
6.3 Gender dynamics in public places and sexualisation of the migrant female body	205
6.3.1 The gendered public space.....	206
6.3.2 Clothing as expression for processes of identity and heritage.....	210
6.3.3 Migrant women in charge of their own biographies.....	214
6.3.4 The sexualisation of the migrant female body.....	220
6.4 December: where nostalgia meets identity, journey, and heritage.....	228
6.4.1 "In Chile, September is what December is for us"	230
6.4.2 <i>La Noche de las Velitas</i> : Religious and cultural celebrations recreated in a new locus	236
6.5 Chapter conclusions	240
CHAPTER 7	246
CONCLUSION	246
7.1 Introduction.....	246
7.2 Migrant heritage as an expression of their identity	247
7.3 Memory as a locus of belonging and stability amidst mobility.....	262
7.4 Strengths and limitations of this research	269
7.5 Future directions of research	271
APPENDICES.....	273
APPENDIX A: Table of interviews	273
APPENDIX B: Table of observations.....	275
APPENDIX C: Interview guidelines.....	277
APPENDIX D: Informational Letter for participants.....	280
APPENDIX E: Consent Form.....	282
APPENDIX F: Consent Form for photography.....	283
APPENDIX G: Food Glossary	284
REFERENCES.....	286

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 3.1	Contemporary map of Chile showing the City of Santiago to Araucanía Region and inset of Bio-bio River	69
Fig. 3.2	Cities of Valparaíso and Santiago contextualised in the broader map of Chile and inset of northern region of Chile where nitrate mines were located	72
Fig. 3.3	Map of Santiago: Chile's capital city located within the Metropolitan Region	78
Fig. 3.4	Map of Santiago City 1540-1580	79
Fig. 3.5	Contemporary map of Santiago Centro, Río Mapocho and Recoleta and Independencia (former La Chimba)	87
Fig.3.6	Architecture in neighbourhood Santiago Centro	88
Fig. 4.1	Figurine of Saint Dr. José de Gregorio Hernández and Venezuelan food prepared for the interview	116
Fig. 5.1	Jessica's dragonfly drawing	134
Fig. 5.2	Jessica's photograph with her mother	134
Fig. 5.3	Jessica's photograph with her backpack, which she calls her "adventure companion"	135
Fig. 5.4	Photograph of Café Madrid taken in Reina's kitchen	141
Fig. 5.5	Photograph of <i>Sello Rojo</i> taken in Sofia's kitchen	141
Fig. 5.6	René's coffee brewing artefact (<i>chorrador</i>) with a cup handmade by her	144
Fig. 5.7	René's traditional coffee brewing artefact (<i>chorrador</i>) next to her modern French press	144
Fig. 5.8	Fernanda's clothing hanger used for drying plantain leaves used for wrapping <i>hallacas</i>	151
Fig. 5.9	Fernanda's dinner table with the spread used for preparing <i>hallacas</i>	151

Fig. 5.10	Fernanda's family preparing <i>hallacas</i>	151
Fig. 5.11	Rosario, Fernanda's mom, showing the Venezuelan Christmas meal she prepared for her Chilean friends	151
Fig. 5.12	Daniela's wooden figure of José Gregorio Hernandez hanging in the living room of her apartment	155
Fig. 5.13	Daniela's wooden figure of the Devils of Yare	155
Fig. 5.14	Daniela's collage art representing the Devils of Yare traditional dance	156
Fig. 5.15	Tintin's detectives which were confused with JGH wooden figure	157
Fig. 5.16	La Prima's Santeria altar in her living room	158
Fig. 5.17	La Prima's Saints dressed up for her annual saint celebration	158
Fig. 5.18	La Prima's colourful bedroom with a closeup of the Cuban and Chilean flag at each side of her bed	159
Fig. 5.19	Geysa's nativity scene	160
Fig. 5.20	Cruz's nativity scene which she turned into an altar	160
Fig. 5.21	Fernanda's nativity scene	161
Fig. 5.22	Henso with his mother's rosary	162
Fig. 5.23	Cruz's album with a picture of Dayani and the pair of sneakers sent from Chile to Colombia	165
Fig. 5.24	Silvia's photo album with pictures of her grandparents in their <i>hacienda</i>	167
Fig. 5.25	Kelly and Ana on the wedding day in Chillán	169
Fig. 5.26	Kelly's orange wedding decorations	169
Fig. 5.27	Kelly's <i>santitos</i> collection in her photo album	171
Fig. 5.28	Rosario's object book	172
Fig. 6.1	Screenshot of one of the many Google Reviews of <i>Supermercado Los Paisas</i>	183
Fig. 6.2	<i>Supermercado Los Paisas</i> on San Diego Street, Santiago Centro	184
Fig. 6.3	El Sangucho Peruano, the Peruvian Restaurant recommended by René	184

Fig. 6.4	Ice cream shop where you can find mango and lemon sorbet, a Colombian specialty	185
Fig. 6.5	Map of San Diego Street with the migrant restaurants, supermarkets and variety stores mentioned by participants	185
Fig. 6.6	Map of Santiago and the <i>Los Paisas</i> shops	187
Fig. 6.7	Flyer found in <i>Los Paisas</i> of Santo Domingo Street	188
Fig. 6.8	SOSAFE app Chilean comments about foreigners	195
Fig. 6.9	SOSAFE app Chilean comments about foreigners	195
Fig. 6.10	Traditional Colombian musician figurines	199
Fig. 6.11	Ana's feminist bandanas with her purple lipstick	205
Fig. 6.12	Image of MEMCH first congress flyer	205
Fig. 6.13	Frame with Cruz's daughter's graduation photo	212
Fig. 6.14	Gertrudis crossing the Venezuelan-Colombian border in a bicycle taxi.	214
Fig. 6.15	Sofía stands next to a Chilean flag at the monument <i>Morro de Arica</i> , the site of battle during the War of the Pacific in 1880, where Chilean forces captured the hill from Peru	215
Fig. 6.16	Revista <i>Sucesos</i> N 977 1921	218
Fig. 6.17	<i>El Dínamo</i> , February 9, 2023	219
Fig. 6.18	"La Zamacueca" by Manuel Antonio Caro	226
Fig. 6.19	Image from <i>El Diario de Antofagasta</i> , 2023	227
Fig. 6.20	@avilaexpress Instagram post promoting December packages in the month of August	230
Fig. 6.21	<i>Noche de las Velitas</i> in Santiago Centro	233

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	Average per capita monthly income compared	89
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Table 4.1	Stages of research	104
Table 4.2	Photographic material and videos	116

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation of the study

Within the last decade, migration in Chile has been growing rapidly, primarily driven by the influx of people from Venezuela, currently the largest migrant group (INE, 2021). As of December 2021, Chile was home to an estimated 1,625,074 million foreigners, constituting 8.3% of the total population (INE, 2022). While Chile may not exhibit significant migration flows compared to other nations like the United States or Germany, it boasts the world's fastest-growing immigration rate alongside Angola and Qatar, experiencing an annual growth rate of 10% between 2000 and 2021. Recent data indicates that the majority of migrants residing in Chile as of 2022 arrived in the country in 2018, highlighting the recency of this phenomenon (SERMIG, 2022). However, it is important to note that the exact number of immigrants living in Chile has not been updated by the National Statistics Institute since 2021.

The leap in numbers has dramatically changed how migrants are perceived by Chilean nationals while also transforming the newcomers' experience in Chile. The escalating tensions arising from the rapid growth of migration in Chile have been prominently featured in the media, associating insecurity and the rise of organised crime with migration (De la Fuente, 2020; Basso, 2023; Paillal, 2023; Rojas, 2023). Additionally, various expressions of xenophobia have emerged, with journalists interviewing Chileans who vocally express disdain for issues such as noise, litter, and perceived lack of education, attributing these urban problems to migration (BBC, 2021; García, 2023; Rojas, 2023; *24horas* 2023).

In response to these challenges, scholars have initiated studies exploring possibilities for inclusion and social cohesion, formulating agendas and work commissions (Maldonado et al., 2020). Moreover, there have been academic inquiries into the impact of xenophobia on children and women (Silva et al., 2018; Galaz et al., 2021; Reyes et al., 2021). This body of research represents a concerted effort to understand and address the multifaceted implications of the complex interplay between migration, societal perceptions of and from migrants, and social cohesion in the Chilean context.

Growth in migration has brought forth new and diverse challenges for the state and Chilean society in general. Swiftly, the academic community has engaged in research to decipher statistics and data that can inform necessary public policies that can help the efforts to embrace and foster an inclusive and prosperous society for the new members of the country. Transnationalism has been a subject of study concerning social remittances and the role that family responsibility plays in connecting communities across borders. The primary focus has been on the Peruvian context, particularly examining the female role in the transnational family economy (Nuñez, 2010; Imilán and Jirón, 2018; Lube-Guizardi and Gonzalvez, 2019). This study broadens the scope in the field of Chilean migration research, extending its examination to include Venezuelans, Haitians, and Colombians. Moreover, it expands beyond remittances and finances, delving into heritage and identity, and revealing the connections that certain food preparations, specific rituals, and objects provide to transnationality.

Recent research projects have explored feelings of belonging and homeness within the migrant population in Chile, but from a different lens. One example is Megan Sheehan's fieldwork focused on migration studies in Chile with an emphasis on inclusion and diversity (Sheehan, 2022). Additionally, Carol Chan has researched the politics of belonging within the Chinese community in Santiago, concentrating on second-generation migrants who are already Chilean citizens; however, their migration experiences are not recent nor focused on the largest immigrant groups in Chile (Chan and Pavez, 2017; Chan, 2020). This study advances the analysis of nostalgia, feelings of belonging and homeness, shedding new light on large and growing immigrant groups

in Chile, and offering findings related to heritage processes and their connection to these emotions.

The qualitative aspect of material culture immigrant communities in Chile has not historically been the focus of national research, hence the urgency and relevance of this study and its findings. Objects and their material lives with their associated practices and traditions for individuals—undoubtedly express identity and closely reflect social memories over time. Discoveries regarding the material culture of migrants in Chile, and how this materiality reflects the phenomenon of mobility, processes of identity, and heritage building, can provide crucial insights into understanding the needs and behaviours of these new members of Chilean society.

The new migration scenario has led to growing tension in Chilean society, exacerbated by expressions of racism that have surfaced in various contexts, ranging from the media to everyday interactions (Carrère and Carrère, 2015; Cordova, 2015; Bonhomme, 2021). This is closely linked to changes in national identity, giving rise to heightened nationalism and alterations in perceptions toward migrant communities. These changes, in turn, create an environment that can become more distrustful and insecure for those arriving in Chile in search of opportunities. In this context, migrants face significant challenges in formulating their identity amid discrimination, impacting their social interactions and access to essential services, such as education and healthcare, as well as their feelings of belonging in Chilean society. The way migrants navigate these complex and often hostile dynamics directly influences their integration and well-being in the host society. The intensification of tensions between migrants and locals results in new constructions of identity and influences memories regarding national narratives and community stories. Simultaneously, this process changes the local reality and opens the need for new social policies. Therefore, understanding these processes of identification, heritage building, and memory is fundamental for Chile.

Macarena Bonhomme's 2013 study of how Peruvian migrants in Chile inhabit their private space from a perspective of material culture, through the analysis of home possessions and food, leads

the beginning of this project. Her results reveal that the ways of dwelling and appropriating the home are linked to processes of integration, as everyday negotiations of belonging between two worlds occur through material culture. Peru is reflected in photography and food, allowing reaffirmation of migrants' belonging and original identity. Chile is represented by technological objects, materialising the hard work and courage of the immigrants, enabling them to feel a part of the destination society. In the same line, a paper from Bonhomme and Stefoni (2013) shows that for women the ways of inhabiting the migrant home are related to their processes of integration. Material culture portrays the negotiation of their feelings of belonging between what they consider to be their origin versus their destination, both home occupant and the home itself shaping each other. While the material environment of migrants reflects a dual belonging, embodying memory and integrating new technologies, their daily practices also reaffirm their original ties and reproduce their culture, transforming the home into a transnational space. However valuable, this information dates back to 2013, preceding the significant growth in migration that Chile has experienced in the last decade, hence the importance of this study to update and enhance the subject.

Arjun Appadurai's theory on objects and commodities—"the social life of things"— emphasises that commodities have social lives that extend beyond their economic value (Appadurai, 2014). The argument that objects circulate in social contexts, acquiring cultural meaning and value through their interactions with people, is crucial in framing this particular research which deals with mobility and its impact on migrant material culture. The understanding of material culture and its importance in comprehending social processes such as identity, memory, and heritage comes to life in the following chapters and frames the study objectives of this project. Alongside other theoretical work discussed in Chapter 2, Zygmunt Bauman's theory on identification (2001;2011) gives shape to the fact that most participants in this study do not understand themselves or others from their community as units of identity. In this sense, there is a fluid and contingent nature of identity in contemporary society that suggests that traditional forms of identity, such as those based on social structures, have become more uncertain (Bauman, 2001; 2011; 2016). In this context, individuals navigate a world where identity is no longer fixed but

continually constructed and reconstructed, highlighting the challenges people face in forming stable and enduring identities in a society characterised by constant change and instability.

1.2 Research objectives and method

This dissertation focuses on answering three research questions:

1. *How do migrants perceive themselves and their community through an examination of both material and intangible heritage?*

This will inherently delve into the intricate complexities of identity, belonging, nationhood, and transnationalism in order to provide deeper insights into how these issues intersect within the migrant community.

2. *What are the connections between objects, practices, and memory within migrant groups?*

By focusing on material culture and intangible heritage, this study will unveil the values ingrained in objects found in migrant homes and neighbourhoods, and how this materiality contributes to the formation of migrants' cultural heritage.

3. *What is the role of memory within a group's intangible and tangible heritage, particularly in the context of movement and dislocation?*

Answering this question will provide important findings that can challenge conventional notions of memory confined to fixed locations, revealing how memory serves as a consistent thread amidst periods of change.

The questions above implicitly include other questions: how does material culture within the migrant home and neighbourhood participate in the construction of their identity and reflect feelings of belonging and collective identities? How does memory play a crucial role in the preservation and activation of heritage within the home and neighbourhood? How is material culture related to the migrant groups' intangible heritage? How do migrant families in their

homes preserve and build their material world? How do these practices and materiality differ or connect with the public sphere, i.e. the neighbourhood? These are questions that I aim to answer through a flexible methodological structure that combines in-depth ethnographic interviews, participant observation, and visual research, providing insight into how migrants perceive themselves, the connections between their material culture and identity, and the role of memory within heritage; this structure, outlined below, will be examined in depth in Chapter 4.

Drawing inspiration from Sarah Pink's (2013) visual ethnography approach, my methodology emphasises the exploration of sensory experiences, including vision, sound, and smell, within the home and neighbourhood. This holistic perspective focuses on uncovering the nuanced meanings of objects that go beyond what is immediately visible, providing a profound understanding of the significance material culture holds for its keepers. As a participant observer, I immersed myself in the home and neighbourhood atmosphere, aligning with Stacy Jones's (2005) approach that views research as a politically and socially conscious act, involving sustained discursive reflection. The interviews and analysis are designed to delve into how migrant homes convey more than a mere fusion of two worlds, revealing the influence of memory and complex diasporic experiences in shaping these spaces.

The fieldwork took place between July 2021 and January 2022 in Santiago de Chile, specifically in Santiago Centro and Estación Central. These neighbourhoods collectively host 30.5% of the migrant population in the Metropolitan Region (INE, 2019). Both neighbourhoods have a high proportion of foreign residents, Santiago Centro with 45.4% of its population being migrants and Estación Central with 26.4%. Located adjacent to each other, these closely connected communes facilitate daily commercial and social interactions, with residents moving between them seamlessly, making them a rich and representative scenario for this project.

A total of 27 home interviews were conducted, with three being held online via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time. The conversations surrounding objects and associated memories primarily unfolded in their actual context—the home and neighbourhood settings.

Although the COVID-19 circumstances necessitated some online interviews, this approach allowed access to participants who might not have been available for face-to-face interviews, potentially shedding light on issues that are challenging to address in-person.

1.3 Significance of the study

This study makes a significant contribution to understanding the migrant experience regarding identity, memory, and heritage building. It argues that materiality is not just a neutral repository for migrant experiences, but active ‘actants’ attached to the lives and processes of humans in a dialectic manner, where both humans and objects feed into and reinforce each other, shaping their distinct realities (Law, 2002; Latour, 2005). Within this framework, identity and the things and rituals that migrants consider their heritage acquire meanings that are permeated by the experience of mobility. Simultaneously, this mobile experience touches and transforms their homes and their neighbourhoods’ geography. This dissertation also provides considerable insight into issues that are generating tensions both within migrant communities in Chile and between them and the local population.

This thesis offers an exploration of the processes migrants engage in to renegotiate their identity while establishing heritage for themselves and their community in a new setting. Through meticulous analysis of in-depth interviews and attentive observation, the study unveils detailed insights into the creation and preservation of memory through elements such as foods, rituals, and home décor. The gathered information discerns the principal objects anchoring these cultural processes, such as family albums, recipes, neighbourhood stores, and religious memorabilia. Consequently, it elucidates how this materiality is embedded in migrant homes and neighbourhoods while coexisting with emergent local forms.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews the literature and theories that conceptualise heritage, identity, memory, material culture, and transnationalism, positioning my research within the existing literature that enriches and supports the study. The first section of the literature review focuses on examining the historical, Eurocentric perspective of migration studies, noting a recent shift toward a more inclusive view that informs the Latin American context. The review further explores theoretical approaches to identity connected with movement, highlighting conceptualizations such as Bammer's (1994) consideration of mobility as the principal experience of our century. It delves into the feelings of belonging and attachment within seemingly fast-changing and ever-moving communities. Subsequently, the literature review analyses the contemporary understanding of the 'Nation-State,' nationalism, and transnationalism, revealing a departure from essentialist ideas of culture and history tied to place of birth. The review in particular examines Anderson's (2006) and Calhoun's (1993) work, presenting the challenges arising from the absolute recognition between a population and a specific nation-state. Because this research centres on ideas of nation that are not stable and binary, it explores how these national perceptions are linked to smaller groups and specific constructions of the self. Finally, Chapter 2 analyses how heritage processes intersect with the migrant experience and how they are connected to home-building within intimate as well as public spaces.

Chapter 3 provides context with an overview of Chile's geography and history related to migration. It recounts nineteenth-century migratory flows, addressing expectations regarding present migration in Chile, and touching upon issues of eugenics and Eurocentric nation-building narratives. The chapter then examines contemporary migration, initially focusing on the flow of Peruvians to Chile in the 1990s, and how this particular influx shifted expectations and narratives regarding migrants in Chile. Finally, it looks at the exponential growth in Chile's migration flows

in the last decade, creating new and urgent issues related to migration policy and affective experience in Chile.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the research methods, strategies, and design employed for data collection and analysis. It delves into the geographical location of the study, emphasising the implications of the regional context on the research. Additionally, the chapter addresses the specific time period and the noteworthy implications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which influenced the research methods. The section on in-depth interviews thoroughly details how these interviews were managed and highlights the challenges encountered during their execution. Similarly, the chapter elucidates the structure and implementation of participant observation, shedding light on the intricacies of this method. The final part of the chapter delves into the subject of my positionality and ethics as both an interviewer and participant observer. This includes a discussion on the insider/outsider debate within the field of anthropology, exploring the complexities of my identity and its influence on the research process. By exposing these considerations, the chapter provides a degree of transparency regarding the researcher's role in shaping the study and acknowledges the nuances inherent in conducting qualitative research.

Chapter 5 and 6 constitute the analysis and discussion sections, focusing on the data collected during fieldwork. Chapter 5 centres on intimate space—the home—providing detailed accounts of individual migrant experiences during their journeys. The analysis delves into the objects that inhabit the research subjects' homes, unravelling the significance of material culture in shaping ideas of home and homeness. This chapter explores how these concepts are intricately linked to identity and heritage, drawing from personal and communal memories. Elements such as suitcases, food, religion, and family albums are examined as both creators and repositories of identity.

Chapter 6 broadens the scope to the public space—the neighbourhood—highlighting the vibrant presence of material culture as intimately connected to the migrant experience and daily life. It

scrutinises data collected along streets, markets, and public parks that serve as the backdrop for the lives of the study's participants. The fieldwork reveals how migrants establish a sense of belonging by reshaping their new public landscape to express their distinct cultural backgrounds. A detailed analysis of *Supermercado Los Paisas*, a local migrant shop, unfolds as a crucial socialisation hub, identity nexus, and memorial location for the migrant community. This chapter also explores the tensions arising from conflicting narratives constructed by local Chilean citizens and migrant newcomers. Additionally, it examines gender dynamics, particularly the sexualization of the migrant female population, delving into gender roles and societal expectations that shape the migrant experience within public space.

Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, engages in a comprehensive discussion of the research findings, establishing connections with the research objectives and addressing the questions that emerged during the study. The chapter underscores how these questions were effectively met and answered through the research process. Additionally, I deliberate on the contributions of the research to the field, emphasising its theoretical input, ethnographic approach, and significance as a historical archival exercise. Theoretical implications are explored, shedding light on how the findings contribute to and enhance existing theoretical frameworks. The ethnographic approach is critically evaluated, considering its strengths and limitations in capturing the nuanced experiences of migrants in the study. Furthermore, the chapter serves as a reflective platform to offer recommendations for future research. It identifies potential avenues for extending the study, suggesting areas where further investigation could deepen our understanding of migrant identity, heritage, and the role of material culture in shaping these constructs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Studying migration can be a challenging task due to the multiple variables and themes the topic comprises—even more so when looking into cultural heritage within migrant communities in which different cultural expressions undergo the process of movement. A complete view on heritage and migration is not possible within the scope of this research; hence this study focuses on how material culture and intangible heritage in recent migrant communities in Chile act as repositories of memory and identity. This literature review examines how migration and associated processes of identity formation and feelings of belonging relate to the intricate process of constructing cultural heritage. It defines the key theoretical concepts and frameworks of this study in order to assess the neighbourhood and the home for migrant communities as primal arenas for memory. This discussion draws from cultural anthropology, history, sociology, and memory studies, exposing and synthesising the different disciplinary approaches related to migration and heritage, and defining the theoretical framework for engaging with each of my three research questions.

The first study objective is to explore the migrants' imaginary: how they imagine themselves and their community through material culture and intangible heritage. In order to frame this segment of the research, I discuss the key terms and theoretical approaches to identity, belonging, nation, and transnationalism. Elaborating upon the complexities of identity helps clarify how feelings of belonging are expressed and constructed within community, challenging the fixed ideas of nationhood and conversing with the concept of transnationalism.

For the second objective—understanding how objects contain meaning for migrant groups—I examine theories on the profound relation between objects and memory. This research centres itself around material culture and intangible heritage, constantly seeking to understand its value and meaning, which is directly linked to memory and how it relates to objects and cultural practices. The values embedded in the objects preserved in homes and neighbourhoods sometimes have the capacity to perform as migrants’ cultural heritage. Due to this relationship, how do traditional ideas of heritage function within migrants’ realities? The discussion here will illuminate the discrepancy between memory and heritage as produced by institutional discourses and those produced by intersubjective embodied practice. This study considers migrants’ memory constructed by and related to material culture as part of their cultural heritage, opposing binary definitions regarding authorised heritage discourses that have been constructed seeking to legitimate static ideas of identity and nationhood (Smith, 2006).

The third research objective explores how memories are articulated as an integral part of a group’s intangible heritage. I examine the role of memory as a provider of continuity in the face of dislocation. Here the concept of memory will be explored related to movement in order to defy essentialising notions and connections of memory to stable sites.

2.2 Migration studies: outside the European scope

As a starting point for any discussion concerning migrants’ heritage, this section introduces the study of migration and its advancements this last century by analysing the expansion of the field outside European-focused movements, emphasising the importance of an inclusive scope. The fields of heritage and memory are fairly recent endeavours, put in motion after World War II. Heritage studies in its initial form, related to the preservation of material culture and creation of monuments that would commemorate the past, originated in the western sphere. Memory studies also originated in Europe in a search to deal with the trauma left by the Holocaust.

However, as the fields expanded, the realisation that heritage and memory were conceived and created differently in regions outside Europe led to expand the scope (Ashworth et al., 2007; Bortolotto, 2007; Moghadam and Bagheretari, 2007; Bartolini et al., 2016; Bitsani, 2016; Byrne, 2016; Montoya, 2019; Mariou, 2020).

Migration has been studied through the lens of various disciplines and subjects. Humans are propelled to move seeking opportunities, economic advancement, freedom, and security; some are driven out by deteriorating environments, climate change, and wars. As history advances, humankind has produced new technologies that accelerate and change the way we migrate; we have altered and equipped environments making it possible to live almost everywhere (Fisher, 2014). Movement has been a constant along history, as James Clifford (1997) frames it: movement must be assumed for the development of human life as much as motionlessness.

Although migration has been part of humans' lives around the world, migration studies emerged during the 20th century, approaching migration through a Eurocentric focus. When studying movements that marked and constructed America, European migrants were considered foundational. The European expansion and its subsequent colonisation of America, the East Indies, Asia, and Africa fabricated altered social and economic systems which produced new migration flows. As Europeans moved to the colonies, indigenous populations were forced to migrate due to violence, new labour systems, and slavery, all of which are part of these novel migration flows (Everts, 2009).

Setting the gaze on North America and how migration was included in the national discourse, strong paradigms emerge, impacting migration studies here and elsewhere. The United States considered that European migrants were able to assimilate and participate in the making of Americans, contributing to the shaping of the nation after independence (Handlin, 1951). Similarly, migration studies in South America focused on European migration during the colonial period, obscuring indigenous populations and slaves—movements which have only been recently considered in scholarly work (Márquez, 2010; Valenzuela, 2010).

The idea of the modern nation state elaborated during the Enlightenment period travelled to the Americas and crystallised in the independence of various nation states during the 19th century. The formation of new states promoted the creation of a unique national narrative for the entire geographical area of each country, eliding social and ethnic differences between regions. The nation-building process in South America ignored migration outside the European sphere because these migrants did not fulfil the ideas of “unity” and “modernity.” Studies kept their attention on European migration, shaping the idea of a modern nation linked to Europe (Erausquin, 2002; Estrada, 2002; Cano and Soffia, 2009; Doña and Martínez, 2017). The obliteration of intraregional and diverse ethnic movements has had an impact in today’s migrant groups in Chile because they inhabit a region that has not considered their movements part of history, policy, or heritage. Highlighting the longtime focus of migration studies is essential to understand contemporary migrant communities’ values today, because this feeds into the context in and against which they articulate themselves and their heritage.

During the last decades, the focus in research has changed, shifting to consider other types of migrant communities. With this aim, Sanchez (1999) redirects the gaze and prompts us to deconstruct the notion of European migration as the norm within the United States. Latin America, Asia, and Africa have been regions connected by migration to North America since the colonial period. In the same line, authors concerned with South American migration have also shifted their analyses to neighbouring countries, focusing on intraregional logics of movement (Martínez, 2003; 2005; Asdrúbal, 2005). Migration between neighbouring countries in Latin America has been as relevant in numbers and time as European migration into the region, which prompts us to ask: how does the literature and research deal with new and complex migration flows? Latin America is a region that has faced drug-related violence, political and economic crisis, in addition to the consequences of climate change during the last few decades. This particular context has intensified mobility within the region, prompting each migrant community to build different memories and heritage processes according to their nuanced experience.

2.2.1 Migrants and migration: broadening the scope

Accounting for migration outside the European frame is not the only shift that becomes relevant in order to understand how multiple migrant communities formulate their identity and memories. The ideas of borders and nations are directly linked to the concept of immigrants. Gabaccia (1999, pp. 1117-1118) refers to the common expression “the United States is a nation of immigrants” as the “immigrant paradigm,” where immigrants are upheld as transformative and constitutive of national accomplishments. However, when the immigrant paradigm is invoked in political or colloquial conversations it rarely considers all types of movements as immigration, only those recognized by the nation-building narratives. Typically when addressing or talking about immigration as transformative and positive, discourses relate this word to European or white mobility.

This idea has been debated and transformed, with the label *migrant* instead of *immigrant* emerging as an idea that leads away from an “us vs. them” mentality, emphasising wider scopes of movement (Goodman, 2015). Immigrants have been considered by historians and sociologists until a few decades ago as individuals who voluntarily cross borders and assimilate into the new nation. However, recent debates have brought forward the “migrant” as an term that can encompass various types of movements, such as like forced labour, slavery and diasporas, while also avoiding moral connotations about the legitimacy of their movement in “us vs. them” logics (Bender, 2001; Schroeder et al., 2009; Pargas, 2014; David et al., 2019). The division between European migration and the “others” thus breaks down and recent scholarship proposes to include diverse ethnic and racial narratives into migration studies (Goodman, 2015). This project centres itself within this broadened understanding, focusing on communities of migrants who have been forced to leave their countries of origin, revealing memory as a fundamental tool for managing dislocation and identity.

To broaden the scope for this research I combined theoretical frameworks from heritage studies, cultural anthropology, history, sociology, and memory studies to create a more comprehensive

understanding of migration and heritage. By integrating these diverse perspectives, I was able to examine migration not just as a movement of people, but also as a process deeply connected to the construction of identity, memory, and cultural heritage. This interdisciplinary approach allowed for a richer exploration of the ways in which material culture and intangible heritage serve as repositories of memory and identity within migrant communities. It also provided a means to critically engage with the discrepancies between institutional and lived experiences of heritage, thereby enriching the analysis of how heritage is constructed and preserved in both personal and communal contexts.

2.3 Identity rooted in processes of movement

For the purpose of this study it is crucial to understand movement and how it determines identity and heritage in migrant communities. For the last decades, before COVID-19 spread throughout the world causing cross-border and intra-national movement to pause, the world seemed to always be on the move. Internationally in 2018 there were over 1.4 billion legal passenger arrivals, and in 2022 at least 108.4 million people around the world had been forced to flee their homes (The World Bank, 2018; UNHCR, 2023). This number is particularly relevant for the present work because Chile's biggest migrant communities, Venezuelan and Haitian, are being forcefully displaced from their homes. The UNHCR (2023) estimated that there are 7.7 million displaced Venezuelans across the world. This scale of movement is tremendous and it carries multiple consequences.

Sheller and Urry (2006) build on the studies surrounding mobility and emphasise how movement has become pervasive in worldwide systems, opposing the idea of sedentarism present in many geographical, anthropological, and sociological studies. Visualising sedentarism as the starting point for analysis presumes that “stability, meaning, and place” are normal, whereas “distance, change and placelessness” are abnormal (Sheller et al., 2006, p. 208). This framework proposed

by Sheller and Urry (2006; 2016) called the ‘mobility paradigm’ includes a very broad range of concepts that go beyond human movement. It includes movements of images, media, and immobile infrastructure that permit human flow and information. Further, they challenge the distinction between places and those individuals moving towards those places, introducing the meaning of places as mobile entities depending on what is being performed within them. This idea is useful to explain how migrants place certain marks of identity into spaces, like their neighbourhood, that go beyond the notion of exact geography. Here, movement is considered constitutive for all social practices and institutions (Sheller et al., 2016). Following this framework, migrants’ material culture, the memories attached to it, and their identities are all mobile entities. This line of thought considers movement essential to all social practices, revealing heritage as part of that reality, not only as a passive artefact but as actively created through movement.

Randell (2018) questions Sheller and Urry’s framework by asserting that the term “paradigm” can be unhelpful for the understanding of mobility. He proposes that there is no single paradigm for mobility, but that various approaches and fields address it. He prefers to use the term “mobility studies” or “mobility turn” which both reflect the notion that movement has become an important topic for research amongst scholars (Randell, 2018). As contentious as the term “paradigm” can be when addressing the subject of mobility, the idea that both theoretical considerations underline movement as pervasive to everyday life is key to the development of this project.

2.3.3 Identity and migration

Discussions relating to identity and its formation are central for the development of the field of migration studies, especially when looking to understand how heritage is formed and preserved through movement in migrant communities. Bammer situates these considerations as a central concern when referring to mobility as “one of the most formative experiences of our century”

(1994, p. XI). In this section, I want to discuss the concept of identity in order to set the basis for how the findings in this study participate in the process of migrants' identity formation.

Identity has been connected to the idea of nation as a binary concept. According to this logic, individuals adhere to a group and collective which is linked to the nation's history, culture, and language as a stable entity opposed to the otherness of different national identities (Braudel, 1991; Poole, 1999). Identity as a modern concept was considered an essential part of the human being, not only as a stable idea of the self, but as comprehensible to each individual by self-recognition (Locke, 1767; Leibniz, 1973; Hall, 1989). Globalisation referring to the increased interconnection of the world regarding human movement, trading, finance and information across borders and regions has uprooted the conversation about identity and placed it as a construction outside the realms of stable identification, fixed geographical places, and essential self-recognition (Hall, 1989; Held et al., 1999; Scholte, 2005; Baylis et al., 2017).

2.3.3.1 Identity: feelings of belonging and attachment

Within the contemporary context, identity has been framed as a “fluid process discursively constructed” where the attachments and belongings to places, land, and heritage are constantly changing and reinterpreted by individuals in relation to others (Jones, 2008, p. 43). In this scenario, identity is as mobile as migrants, being constructed along the lines of experience and individual memory contrasted and transformed by the mainstream discourses it encounters. Hence, studies have moved towards an approach that sheds light onto the reasons these constructions and self-determinations are made. Even though identity has been shown to be negotiable, individuals still exhibit feelings of attachment, belonging, and community related to certain images of the land, food, and rituals—a nostalgia for a past home. Basu discusses the importance of both the mobile and the static in migrants' identity narratives and recognises that, in some cases, “social rootedness continues to give people ontological security” in a world of constant mobility (2001, p. 336). Understanding identity as a malleable notion that complements

ideas of roots, places, and belonging is important for the analysis of heritage within migrant communities.

As migration propels encounters of people, differences emerge and often clash in negotiation, which creates new boundaries within groups (Brettel, 2003). Movement heightens the concept of the “other,” making evident those things that are and are not shared. These boundaries between people or groups reflect differences of ethnicity, race, class, national narratives, and individual experiences, formulating groups that convey certain ideas of roots or origins. Identity is indeed a very contested concept, posing many complexities because it stands as neither a stable nor unstable notion. Here the idea of “elsewhereness” becomes useful, defying uniformity in identification while underscoring the reality of attachment at some level, noting that “elsewhere” is not “nowhere” (Gooze, 1999). Thinking about identity in terms of spatial language helps clarify the complexities the term contains—elsewhere is not a permanently fixed position, but is indeed somewhere. This idea also points to the political space in the margins inhabited by displaced individuals (migrants) in contrast to other mainstream spaces inhabited by non-migrants.

In order to understand identity within migration beyond a disorganised collection of discourses, examining the ideas of attachment and belonging is helpful. These feelings can be signs that the ideas of identity and ethnicity are not completely abstract and uprooted in migrant communities. Groups that preserve practices, food, or imaginaries concerning land or nostalgia for a past home can find localization in many things, not only specific geographical places (Lavie, 1996; Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996). Feelings of belonging are not always embedded in the country of origin or the fixed idea of a particular culture. Mobility can re-contextualize culture, religious practices, or food, challenging the links between identity and fixed places or practices (Canepa-Koch, 2003). Feelings of belonging and attachment are present in migrants’ identities, though they are not always anchored to specific places or ideas of “authenticity.”

As identity is negotiated and boundaries are formulated, migrant communities build definitions related to their individual selves and the collective. Characteristics that tend to be defining for the self or the community are not fixed entities but malleable to the context. Ethnic and racial conceptions to migration flows are “inconsistent between societies and even within societies” (Benmayor, 1994, p. 7). Benmayor (1994) traces the classification of an individual as coloured in South Africa, who became Black in the United States, and was later considered white in Brazil. Racial identities do not depend solely on the self but are constructed by those around us. Identity is not assembled in isolation, but is negotiated through interactions with others (Taylor, 1994; Huebener, 2007).

The interactions and negotiations individuals undergo when addressing their own identity is highly complex and the outcomes are ever changing. Bauman (2001) brings forward the concept of “identification” in order to express the constant process personal and communal identity undergo in a world where power networks have surpassed national borders and the local is no longer the obvious defining domain. He proposes that identities are neither “inherited [nor] acquired,” because identity is an “open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or by choice, are engaged” (Bauman, 2001, p. 129). Rigid classifications related to class or gender have evolved into a multiplicity of layers that intersect and overlap differently for each subject (Bhabha, 2004). Identity, memory, and heritage are three intertwined processes that communicate and provide tensions. Examining processes of heritage and memory making within migrant communities needs to take into account that its results will not be final (Bauman, 2011). Meaning and identity will continue renegotiating and transforming beyond the scope and timeframe of this project.

2.3.3.2 Nationalism and transnationalism

The modernist structure of the nation state proposed binary logics to understand migrants, their identities, and feelings of belonging. The nation-state was formulated around the essential ideas of culture and history, according to which people were linked to those concepts by birth (Kohn,

1961; Ashcroft et al., 2013; Greenfeld, 2019). However, racialized post-colonial migration into Europe and to North America made it even more blatant that fitting into fixed ideas of belonging was problematic (Lavie and Swendenburg, 1996). These migrants did not fully belong to their original national identities. Colonialism, poverty, and marginality did not align themselves with the expected modern nation-state definitions. As discussed above, postmodern readings of nationality are seen as discursive struggles between the migrants' own national discourse and that of the host country (Hanauer, 2011). This postmodern idea of a fragmented sense of nationhood for some migrants deconstructs the absoluteness of the modern nation paradigm. However, authors have noted that at times this approach obscures power relations by positing a context in which everyone is positioned equally in their constructed differences. However, racialized and gendered subjects can have fragmented and flexible identities but the dominant or official narratives can still set binary oppositions within them (Lavie and Swendenburg, 1996; Hanauer, 2006).

The idea of the modern nation-state has been contested during the last decades, proving the concept to be problematic particularly when considering the integration of world markets and the question of ethnicity. Anderson's (2006) contribution to the understanding of nations is to explain how media, archives, and institutions create imagined communities that identify with a specific nation. Individuals imagine a community that shares similarities and are bonded by certain elements that unite them. Calhoun (1993) closely examines the problem of essentializing the concept of the nation, which implies absolute and stable recognition between those who participate. However, he shows how the idea of nation is still prominent in political rhetoric which attempts to differentiate political communities, in claims of self-determination and legitimate rule over territory.

Logics of identification have proven to be complex, where the idea of identifying solely with one stable national construct has dissolved into nostalgia or mythical narratives within groups. Bammer connects the feelings of belonging that migrant communities hold towards heritage and ritualistic practices to the literal notion of "family or community/clan sense" (1994, p. 120). In

other words, many of the practices traditionally referred to as “national” are actually constructed *within* and *for* particular migrant communities, as opposed to being grounded in a specific essential nation-state. (Calhoun, 2007). Nevertheless, discussions on how feelings of belonging evolve are placed in smaller nucleuses, like family or community instead of nation. When migrant communities value, preserve, and nurture certain practices and objects, ideas of nationhood can be conjured. Therefore, centering the discussion in how ideas of nation are not essential and can be linked to both smaller groups/scales and more particular notions of the self is important when addressing heritage related to mobility. Ideas relating nationhood and self-identification with particular national origins within migrant communities are constantly contested by mobility.

While the nation has been reformulated by moving towards less essentializing ideas, logics of exclusion and inclusion related to national discourses persist. Racism around the world is on the increase and one of its expressions is hostility towards migrants. The migrant has been placed as the “other” throughout contemporary political discourses (Delanty et al., 2008). Donald Trump criminalising Mexicans, UK’s Brexit, and Marine Le Pen linking terrorism with Arab migration emblematised a new racism not exclusively defined by traditional “biological” terms, but by ethnic/cultural differences claimed to be incompatible (Fekete, 2001). The term “syncretic racism” is introduced by Delanty et al. to encompass new subtleties and forms of racism like “otherism,” “perpetual foreigner status,” and “racialisation” (2008).

Institutions still engrained in national constructs perform structural racism through granting or not granting legal access to relevant spaces of society. Legal processes migrants undergo to obtain citizenship are circumscribed by the logics discussed above. Feelings of belonging and fluid identities clash with fixed legal ideas of national belonging and identity. Denial of membership to a particular country, for example through citizenship and passports, can have significant effects on how a community understands themselves and how others understand that community (Hanauer, 2008). Legal status and the processes migrants undergo to obtain it can be exhausting and have deep repercussions in the community’s self-esteem and identity. These experiences

inhabit the home and the neighbourhood, marking every practice, object, and idea the community holds.

The new prominence of the interconnected world and economy has led to the creation of interconnected spaces. Auge (1995) labels as “non-places” those spaces unconnected from history and identity narratives like: airports, railway stations, and fast food chains. In these “non-places,” the idea of identity connected to a stable national definition is nonexistent. National legal processes, places of birth, mythical conceptions of the land are not necessarily used by migrants as markers of their identity; many inhabit the non-places (Hanauer, 2008). Parallel to these notions many minorities and political movements are still fighting for basic privileges that accompany membership in a community, group, or nation. When groups are threatened with assimilation or being erased from history, essentialization emerges as a necessity, making locality surpass in relevance these new non-places; Palestinians and Native Americans are some examples (Lavie and Swendenburg, 1996).

The tension generated by non-places and the opposing fixed landmarks could be part of what Homi Bhabha defined as “interstitial spaces” (2004). Bhabha outlines the in-between space that exists between colliding cultures, an area where identities are in constant evolution and in the process of becoming. Migrants often inhabit interstitial spaces. However, do they pass through the in-between once, or are their identities in constant negotiation of meaning and representation? Here, the concept of hybridity elaborated within Bhabha’s work can be helpful because it stresses the impossibility of essential cultures. Identity is constructed by the mutual dependence of different cultural spaces, and seemingly opposing structures feed on each other, creating the “hybrid.” This hybridity is created within Bhabha’s interstitial spaces.

Latin America is a setting that can be recognized as a product of colonisation, intensified by the contemporary global economic interconnection and technology. Nestor Clancini (1995) characterises hybridity as a more accurate term than the commonly used “syncretism” or *mestizaje* because it highlights the multiple factors that go in the construction of identity. His

work is relevant because it stresses that it is not a simple process of two cultures mixing equally and unproblematically; the in-between is not a space without logics of power and hierarchy. Here negotiation implies resistance while also integrating dominant discourses (Young, 1995). This study deals with many hybrid spaces where opposing and problematic processes of identity are part of migrant communities. Not only are migrant communities in Chile facing the results of their contemporary mobility, but because many of them come from Latin America, they also face being born in a region afflicted by colonialism.

The constant dialogue between identities, nation, national discourses, and feelings of belonging crystallise in discussions pertaining to transnationalism. The notion of transnationalism has changed the understanding of how migrants insert themselves into new spaces. Migrants have expanded logics of borders, nations, or fixed geographical connections because they are not completely uprooted from their homelands when they leave (Basch and Glick Schiller et al., 1995). Migrants inhabit their new host society while interacting with their origin country, e.g. by paying for weddings or acting as decision-making figures for families left behind (Margolis, 1994; Brettel, 2003). Individuals are mobile not just physically but emotionally, interacting in different arenas around the world. This idea becomes especially relevant when thinking about objects that hold family memory that can quickly transport them to their homeland, while keeping their meaning and value in the new host country.

Waldinger (2015) uses terms such as “intersocietal” and “interpolicy convergences and divergences” to explain how migrants have expanded conceptions of community by merging actions between different regions. One individual can have several connections: legal, social, and emotional within and across borders converging the ‘here’ and ‘there’ into one space. However, he posits that this convergence can be defied by nationalistic binarism, where migrants are pushed to identify unequivocally from both sides of the interaction. Glick Schiller (2015) defies this idea pointing out that Waldinger’s view is set by fixed notions of nation-state. She highlights the reality of global capitalism beyond the idea of nation-state, where migrants articulate cross-border ties and identities which are linked to the changing conditions of production, goods, and

services beyond national binarism. Her work recognizes that nation-states continue to enforce national discourses, though political borders do not limit intersecting social relations across the globe.

Migrant communities are permeated by the negotiation of their identity and the history of the modern nation-state. Studies of national identity show that definitions of nationhood are not uncontested landscapes. Migrant communities are constantly struggling with the issues discussed in this section. Nationality is often evoked inside and outside communities, but these claims are not necessarily understood and articulated as clear definitions of the self. Keeping these struggles in mind is crucial when addressing issues regarding migration and processes of heritage. The conflict between the journey, inhabiting 'non-places', threats of assimilation, and marginalisation that are woven into some migrant experiences can be very influential in heritage-making processes.

2.3.4 Exile, diaspora, and refugees

As I discussed in section 2.3.1 the terms *migrant* and *migration* have slowly become holistic frames for the field, though there are a variety of nuances within studies of mobility. Do exiled communities convey and articulate memory differently than those who think of themselves as part of a diaspora or as refugees? Given the differences involved in experiences of movement, the body of work addressing these distinctions can help add complexity to a generalised understanding of migration. McClennen (2004) makes a distinction within the terms exile, diaspora, and refugee. She defines migrants as individuals who move voluntarily and are not linked to notions of a quintessential homeland and the impossibility of return, whereas communities related to exile or diaspora are directly linked with the idea of homeland. However, she recognizes that the notion of choice when moving for a big majority of migrants is not accurate. Migrants' conditions overlap with those groups related to exile conditions or to

diaspora discourses. These concepts are related to the communities' imagery, how they think and understand themselves and their identity.

The terms exile, diaspora, and refugee exist in the realm of movement and migration when thinking in broader considerations of the concept. The terms "exile" and "refugee" are similar as they relate to forced political displacement from one's land. However, the refugee has a legal support frame from host countries and international law while exile does not (Gorman, 2017). Considering the distinction points to the different consequences for the lives of people involved in armed conflict, political crisis, or persecution (UN General Assembly, 2016).

Both exile and refugee are related to the notion of diaspora, a concept certain groups use to describe the experience of being forcefully removed from their land. The concept was initially associated with the Jewish diaspora dating back to the forced dislocation from Israel in the sixth century B.C (Baron, 1978; Rawidowicz, 1998). During the last decades the notion of diaspora has been adapted into various experiences of dislocation representing larger events including migrant, refugee, labour, and exile communities (Clifford, 1997). Language codifies movement, either forced or voluntary, depending on the definition and characteristics of a group's experience.

However, there are conceptualizations that respond to postmodern theorists' reinserting historical consideration into discussions of displacement, such as exile, diaspora, or forced migration (Bammer, 1994). These studies suggest that identity cannot be considered a fixed entity, yet there are certain feelings of attachment and ideas of belonging that oppose abstract notions of identity, where there is no connection to land whatsoever. In this frame, the term "exile" becomes useful, referring to those who have been forced to leave their land, because it is tightly linked to identity formation associated with political context and the feelings of loss and belonging (Bammer, 1994; McClennen, 2004). Exile, an experience attached to land and political historical context, theoretically opposes more abstract notions of movement, the self, and identity formation. Particular displacement experiences should be considered when thinking

about the heritage, cultural value, and identity of migrants. The particular understanding of their experience, either as migrant, diaspora, refugee, or exile, scripts the ideas and imagery surrounding material culture within the community.

2.4 Heritage and migration

As migration has been embedded in historical processes, it is tightly linked to social systems. Humans move around the globe, creating and recreating multiple realities while constructing memories, as well as tangible and intangible heritage. This study centres recent migration in Chile, and how this phenomenon values, reflects, and produces heritage. In this section, I seek to examine the debate surrounding heritage and its links to migration. To provide a starting point, I begin by exploring UNESCO's approach to heritage with its elucidations and limitations, and subsequently review how the field has expanded beyond institutional conceptions. This conversation, I hope, will show the void in adequately addressing the subject of heritage and position this research as a contribution to the field.

The nuances involved in definitions of heritage can be very messy and at times deeply problematic. Cultural heritage and its multiple conceptualizations are all concerned with the past, but they materialise in the present. Carman and Sørensen note a change in the way the West conceives the past; in the 18th and 19th centuries, they argue, "heritage becomes a public concern and its care an expression of the interests and responsibilities of civic societies" (2009, p. 13). There has certainly been an interest in the past before this period, as cultures have valued different elements of history or mythical creation, but after the 18th century these elements are sought to be preserved and held by public institutions.

After World War II, concerns about material destruction crystallised in a discussion regarding cultural heritage, which was addressed by international law in order to be protected. Since then,

a body of treaties was developed by UNESCO and other organisations dedicated to safeguarding places and objects considered culturally important. In 1972, UNESCO adopted the “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” dedicated to establishing and preserving physical landscapes and monuments that would represent outstanding universal heritage value (UNESCO, 1972). UNESCO defined it as their responsibility to delineate what was considered part of the realm of cultural heritage, and materiality and monumentality, often heralding social elites, became key features in this conceptualisation, the definition of heritage being both expert-led and state-sanctioned (Smith, 2006).

This logic has been, in some measure, defied by social practices outside institutions. Institutions like UNESCO did not necessarily consider systems of value outside western conceptions. As the practice of preservation and understanding of cultural heritage expanded, it became clear that institutional definitions were limited (Blake, 2000; Smith, 2006). In 2003, the “UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” included for the first time non-physical aspects of heritage as rituals, oral traditions, practices, and skills (UNESCO, 2003). This addition was made in response to the issue that value and materiality were understood differently outside western culture, an idea put in motion by Japan in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). During this process, several aspects of heritage were brought forward: one being how heritage is a form of preserving what communities want to hand down to their own future generations, and another the continued importance of the symbolism materiality holds (Blake, 2000). UNESCO’s 2003 convention took into account that inheritance and the ideas attached to objects, as well as the role of communities, were very much part of cultural heritage.

The ideas described above do present several issues when thinking about identity and memory. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, identity is constantly transforming and being re-negotiated. Hence, adding mobility—one of the main subjects of this research—to the scheme problematizes conceptual divisions between tangible and intangible heritage as well as embedded notions of stable practices of inheritance. Migrants have no stable locality from which to inherit material culture, produce binary identification with monuments, or replicate ritualistic

practices in the context of a fixed local structure. The concept of intangible culture certainly helps to expand the field, but it does not imagine the reality of mobile communities and their processes of value creation.

Studies have shown that cultural value can be found in everyday objects; when communities mobilise, they often transform their attachments and identities, frequently attributing significance to ordinary items (Betts, 2007; Meyer, 2012). Outside the realm of World Heritage proposed by UNESCO, communities construct systems of inheritance and preservation of elements that are valued locally, at a smaller scale. Although significant research focuses on “the big identity politics of heritage control at an official (and often national) level,” it is important to consider personal and local heritage (Harvey, 2008, p. 20). Some examples include photo albums and rituals, which sometimes are conceptualised as heritage by certain communities, even when formal institutions like UNESCO or national states do not recognise those elements as official cultural heritage (Hirsch, 1997; Clifford, 1997; Lomnitz, 2005; Calanca, 2011; Cuevas-Wolf, 2014). Therefore, is heritage what individuals or communities value and decide to preserve, or what institutions mark as worthy of preservation?

Exploring how tangible and intangible heritage are related can move us into a better suited theoretical space for studying migrant groups. Objects, landscapes, and materiality in general are not isolated from social context. In the last decades, scholarship has shifted away from binary understandings of non-physical and physical heritage towards a logic that considers the interconnection of these elements (Smith, 2015). Blake (2000) understands materiality as a vehicle which mediates intangible senses of heritage. Bouchenaki goes beyond mediations and proposes that intangible heritage is actually a “framework within which tangible heritage takes on shape and significance” (2003, p. 5). In both perspectives, intangible and tangible heritage are interconnected and interdependent. In some contexts, materiality is as powerful as immateriality in the creation and construction of meaning and value. More than functioning as a frame or vehicle, both the intangible and tangible heritage provide continuous feedback loops between the physical and non-physical spheres.

2.4.1 Heritage as a process

Beyond the institutional aspects of heritage and society's increasing attention toward the preservation debate, discussions in the field of critical heritage studies have taken an interest in the logics inscribed on this process. The heritage field has developed studying a fast-moving and transforming phenomenon: heritage is in constant action. The World Heritage List, museums, and community heritagising movements are in continuous expansion, creating a contested arena for the field. Heritage is not only produced by governments or international law, it is also produced organically by individual and communal actions of remembering, performing, and creating (Silverman et al., 2017). Lowenthal (1998), one of the pioneer scholars in the field, distinguishes heritage from history, where the first performs as a form of transmission or representation of the past in the present. However, this transmission, when examined outside the static notion provided by the UNESCO model, has been considered part of ongoing process (Ashworth et al., 2007; Bortolotto, 2007; Naguib, 2013; Biehl et al., 2014). Consequently, when considering heritage as part of historical understanding, the notion that what is valued and deliberately preserved in the present is chosen by a select group for everyone else becomes fraught. Depending on our perspective—specifically, the present we inhabit—our understanding of the past varies. Therefore, heritage is intricately linked to the ever-changing alterations ingrained in time, place, context, and the positionality of those evaluating. For migrants, mobility significantly influences the way they engage in the heritage-making process.

Studies that argue against institutionalised notions of heritage, constructed through essentialist top-down logics, lean into perspectives that incorporate what communities value and decide as their own heritage. However, even “community” can become essentialized in the heritage sector because professionals and governmental programs that seek social inclusion get involved in heritage valorization processes. Because “few heritage professionals ask what people's views of heritage are beyond the white-middle class cultural symbols,” usually the focus is on assimilating excluded groups rather than “broadening definitions of heritage that serve multiple experiences” (Smith and Waterton, 2010, p. 19). Biehl highlights how multiple factors are involved in the

process of heritage like “knowledge, information, expert regimes, emotions and institutions” (2014, p. 30). Following Biehl, heritage is constructed through a social process which requires people to be invested in preservation. Demarcation of value within a group, locality, or nation is based on interactive subjective networks that work to construct heritage. Since the 1970s, scholarship has evolved into considering heritage a “social, political and economic phenomenon within a particular historical context,” suggesting that the process of heritage is not a fixed institutional procedure but a field of constant dialogue between different elements of society (Harrison, 2012, p. 4).

2.4.2 Heritage in the transnational present

Heritage is not a passive reflection of the past into the present. Preserving and valuing feelings of belonging and identity may be social actions linked to practices, objects, and landscapes from the past, but are actively constructed and consonant with the present (Carman et al., 2009; Harrison, 2012; Biehl et al., 2014; Ashworth, 2016). Hence, it is essential for this study to consider migration as a particular context from which heritage is created.

After the industrial revolution, migration has been rapidly growing around the world. Patterns of industries and their subsequent links to colonisation pushed and pulled individuals to move around the globe. From a processual consideration of heritage, which I am applying in this study, individuals who migrate permeate their heritage processes with their mobile experience. Their present is very much part of what they consider and how they create heritage within their communities. Within this context, thinking about transnationalism and a globalised understanding of world markets and information adds various distinctive characteristics to the analysis. Effects developed and constructed by experiences of migration, from diasporic experiences to exile memories, transform individuals’ and groups’ present lives, accordingly adjusting their perspective on how and what they recognize as their heritage (Harrison, 2012).

Heritage processes are affected by contemporary trends of global interconnection, where local and national institutions are sometimes eclipsed by international treaties. In the last decades, the development of global politics and rapidly growing interconnections have transplanted national dialogues of preservation and valorisation to the international sphere (Biehl et al., 2014). Due to the relational character involved in heritage, where individuals, communities, and institutions are in negotiation, the ever-changing reality of migration makes it difficult for one national discourse to construct unchallenged top-down heritage policies.

Both Biehl et al. (2014) and Harrison (2012) have extensively discussed the impact of an interconnected world in heritage processes, and suggested that there is a need for high levels of education and political power in order to influence the institutional process. But when looking into migrant communities, neighbourhoods, and families, there is not a clear institutional path to follow for the establishment of what they preserve and value. Studies show that migrants are usually on the margins of institutional culture, making it difficult for them to engage in the processes described above (Calavita, 2005; Bloch and McKay, 2017). How can migrants produce heritage on the margins of institutional systems? Does mobility imply the unfeasibility of heritage, or at least, of its wider recognition? And if so, what are the implications for migrant communities? I intend to investigate these questions along the course of this research.

2.4.3 Shifting perspective: “bottom up” heritage process

Ashworth (2013) argues that the existence of heritage is dependent on those who are interested in it. He uses the concept “consumer” to portray who defines the value and meaning of heritage and its authenticity. If an individual is willing to imbue an element with value, considers it heritage, and believes it to be representative of their identity, then that becomes meaningful and tangible. I find that the term “consumer” can be a bit narrow to address how subjects engage with heritage because it relegates the issue to market dynamics. Though I would consider more variables between the roles that individuals and communities have in the creation of heritage, Ashworth’s approach is attuned with the problems that arise throughout this work. Accordingly,

this framework can help navigate the questions concerning the creation of heritage outside institutionalised systems that arose in the previous section, since it shifts our gaze to an arena where individuals outside power or formal institutions also engage in heritage processes.

When we deem individuals as possible propellers in the process of heritage, we must take into account the power structures that ultimately influence those people. Shifting perspectives when analysing heritage-making—that is, thinking beyond institutions—is not to say that heritage creation is exempt from power and institutional influences. Power is involved either in enhancing value or in trying to erase it. People “identify an inheritance” and appropriate elements based on multiple variables such “as cultural affinity, political affiliation or social class, all variables influenced by power structures to some degree (Tunbridge, 2013, p. 123).

Undoubtedly, the reasoning posed above presents complicated questions. If individuals can create heritage, does it need to be recognized by UNESCO? Is it relevant for heritage construction to reach bigger scales of recognition outside the local scale? When mobility is in the picture, and the heritage being considered is not recognized globally or even at a national scale, how does it endure over time and space? Thinking about heritage originating from local communities while also intertwined with power, instead of contemplating a more essentialist interpretation, implies a range of overlapping layers that extend from the national and transnational to the collective and individual (Ashworth et al., 2007). Tensions, contradictions, disintegration, and cohesion are constantly being reconciled with each other in order to create new scales of value, inheritance, rituals, material culture, and feelings of belonging. Heritage has multiple types of ‘consumers’ and producers, making it imperative to rigorously examine the producers and consumers in order to understand heritage-making processes (Ashworth and Graham, 2005).

Considering that heritage processes are tightly linked to and even originated by human experience can give specificity to this research; migration as human experience marks the heritage that is bound to it, shifting notions of the unchangeable and permanent. The idea that heritage is bound to specific places is prevalent in the same way ideas of identity can sometimes

be limited to fixed entities, as discussed in section 2.3.3.1. Nora (1989) coined the term *lieux de mémoire*, or “sites of memory”: locations, objects or symbols that have memories ascribed to them. Indeed, many natural and urban landscapes can generate imagery or meaning for particular groups. However, the site of memory can be essentialist when taking into account that memories, even when attached to objects, are constantly transforming and can be different depending on the context (Karp, 2012). Migrants are constantly negotiating their identity, transforming their memories and attachments while incorporating new experiences into their personal histories. This reveals that heritage processes within migrant communities might not focus on bounded sites, and that symbols and even rituals can evoke different things across time and space. Furthermore, some heritage practices might not need a stable site to surface, as elements like language or religion are still spontaneous heritage expressions of a community.

Some theoretical frames point out that considering heritage to be limited to stable sites, or inscribed only within national systems, can obscure “the wider production of social memory throughout society”; arguing that “dynamic, shifting memory is continuously productive rather than merely confined within demarcated sites” (Ashworth et al., 2007, p. 56). Mobility does not deprive communities or individuals of their memories, identity, or heritage, it only particularises their practices. Within this line of thought, research has focused on expanding heritage discourses in order to include populations on the move. Some work has focused on the creation of communal spaces, like museums and exhibitions, that include histories of migration and diasporas as part of a larger national heritage (Naguib, 2013; Eckersley, 2016). Nevertheless, this scholarship does not delve into the idea that migrants have heritage and understandings of material and non-physical culture that are sometimes unrecognised and excluded from national accounts. Hence, those elements are still outside the realm of what a museum or official institution chooses to exhibit about migrants or the way in which these organisations actually understand their heritage.

Heritage, as an overarching concept, encompasses a wide range of processes, materiality, and cultural expressions that are valued, preserved, and passed down by different communities.

Within this broad theme, migrant heritage emerges as a more specific and nuanced category. While much research has focused on what different migrant communities identify as their heritage (Albaladejo, 2017; Byrne, 2016; Dellios and Heinrich, 2021), this study takes a step further by defining migrant heritage not just as the final objects migrants themselves determine to be valuable, but also as the process of creation itself. Unlike other types of heritage processes produced within different contexts, migrant heritage is fundamentally shaped by mobility and is marked by specific ways of creating and recreating cultural expressions. Biehl (2014) touches upon the 'bottom-up' logics, where communities actively engage in defining their heritage in a globalized world, which my study delves even further by defining the migrant heritage process as something unique that is produced when incorporating movement. Not all material culture surrounding migrants constitutes heritage; rather, migrant heritage is delineated by intentional processes of preservation and the special significance attributed to it by migrants themselves.

The work reviewed throughout this section sheds light onto the possibilities of heritage outside stable institutional notions. It expands heritage studies into a field in which individuals and communities are the main characters in heritage processes, noting, however, that migration is still neglected as an aspect that can reconfigure the study of heritage. Migration may be considered part of the heritage narrative of a certain nation or place, a phenomenon that happened in a particular site, but we have yet to incorporate notions that can help us consider heritage within migrant communities: what has happened and what holds meaning to them. The perspectives examined thus far are mainly based in stillness, items or practices that are constructed in certain geographical places, with set and determined identities. The ever-changing identity of the migrant, the mobility of the objects they preserve and carry along is still not quite considered heritage.

2.4.4 Migration and the construction of heritage

Migrants generate feelings of belonging, identity and memory related to notions of heritage as much as non-mobile communities do. The process in which migrants engage in order to create, recognize, inherit, and preserve heritage does not follow the patterns of nations or fixed localities. Accordingly, heritage itself should be considered differently when factoring in mobility.

Ashworth (2013) makes a substantial link between heritage and politics, identifying that politics do not live only at the level of institutional negotiations, but that objects and practices themselves are involved in broader socio-political experiences. This points out how migrants and the infinite nuances of their experiences are actively involved in heritage processes. For diasporas, rooted in ideas of a lost home, mobility will strongly determine those communities' heritage. Here the political sphere usually demarcates the group's strong ties to a long-lost past, asserting their right over particular national discourses which reflect upon their treasured heritage. Movements propelled by economic factors will sometimes pose special importance in material advancement within the family or community, enhancing heritage that represents that position.

However, Ashworth's (2013) work mainly navigates the connection between consolidated material culture and heritage. By 'consolidated' I mean firmly situated spaces, landmarks, and objects that have been conventionally established as heritage and often represented in museums, recognized by the state, or linked to tourism routes. This means that acknowledged migrant heritage usually comprises forms of institutionalised heritage like monuments or art. This perspective binds together forms of intangible and tangible heritage that have traditionally been considered by institutions. What happens when migrant communities reproduce stories, religion, or language practices within their community and actively choose to preserve them, even when not recognized by outsiders? Are transportable material belongings, like photo albums or heirlooms, not part of migrant heritage?

Mcguire (2020) suggests an interesting interpretation regarding migrants and objects that can help shed light to the questions posed above. He examines the importance of the “affective and generative capacities” objects have for migrants (Mcguire, 2020, p. 179). Exploring the relationship migrants have with their material world can reveal how they construct a new sense of place, belonging, and identity. During journeys, migrants go through “non-places” and politically loaded places, ending in new localities that need defining and meaning for them. The creation of “placelessness,” transforming spaces which have meaning and identify them, entails heritage processes specific to each migrant group (Augé, 1995; Mcguire, 2020). Everyday articles or food can create strong identity and feelings of belonging and serve as memory holders in refugee camps or communities that experience displacement (Dudley, 2011; Jayne, 2018).

Considering the idea that heritage can go beyond institutional or national establishment is crucial for the understanding of migrant heritage. Although scholars have examined processes of heritage produced by and from the community, they continue to argue that the heritage created, even when it comes from the communities themselves, is similar to or converses with what conventionally has been understood as heritage. The idea that a particular minority decided to preserve and value their local church as their heritage, for example, still points to the idea of a church or traditional sacred space. However, practises like actively archiving photographs of the family, decorations within the home, songs, or food may also be considered heritage. Bortolotto argues for a new perspective on the concept ‘intangible heritage’ proposed by UNESCO in 2003 which “does not rest on the intangibility of cultural expressions, but rather on its support of the idea that they are to be understood in terms of time (as an evolving process) and usage (not just for aesthetic contemplation)” (2007, p. 21).

Mcguire’s idea of affective objects converses with Bortolotto’s view on intangible heritage, giving useful structure for the present research. Migrants’ material culture and practices are constantly being transformed by space and time while functioning as meaningful identity containers. They can hold value and be willingly preserved by migrant communities no matter the limitations their past, present, or future locality has concerning heritage. However, Bortolotto indicates that this

malleable characteristic of heritage implies that tradition is a performance, hence neither spontaneous nor an integral part of the contemporary world. This perspective follows Nora's conception of *lieux de memoire* "originating with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory" in the present, so communities create archives, museums, and anniversaries because these memories no longer occur naturally (Nora, 1989, p. 12).

Modern memory for Nora is no longer an abstract notion of the mind, but needs materiality and records in order to exist. In this sense, I tend to locate this study in less essentializing notions of heritage and memory. I would not suggest that spontaneity or tradition has disappeared, but that it is very much alive. In the same way heritage can go beyond institutional meanings, tradition can change its production patterns and aesthetic appearance. Some examples of spontaneous contemporary practices in Latin America would be a renewed Catholicism, salsa, cumbia, and merengue. The first dance in Dominican weddings is still merengue, Colombians dance to salsa at every party, and in Chile people are still dancing to cumbia every September when celebrating Chile's independence.

2.4.4.1 The phenomenon of mobility feeding heritage processes

As we have been examining new notions of identity and the role heritage plays, it becomes clearer that movement is increasingly affecting the puzzle of individual and group senses of belonging. Scholarly work on heritage has questioned dominant notions in the field, hence creating new spaces from where to understand identities in movement. In her discussions of "third culture kids," Colomer stresses how high patterns of global mobility during childhood due to an interconnected job market for the parents rely on "common forms of heritage as a cultural capital, to crisscross cultures, and designate places of mobility, like airports, to recall collective memories as people on the move" (2017, p. 913).

Mobility is a defining experience for individuals and groups: it marks and transforms identity, highlighting movement as an inherent part of migrants' heritage processes. Migrants can give new meaning to existing heritage in the host locality, create brand new heritage for themselves, or readapt/recreate heritage from the territory of origin (Colomer, 2017). Moreover, heritage construction imbued by migration flows is also relevant for non-migrant communities left behind in the country of origin. The phenomenon of migration articulates the cultural capital, place-making, and memories of both the mobile communities and those who remain behind. This idea is fundamental when addressing migrants' heritage because there is a tendency to examine heritage that has been built by migrants in the host country, leaving changes in the country of origin outside the analysis. Transnationalism implies that migrants do not leave the country of origin, cut ties and settle forever in a final destination. Migrants can have more than one origin region and move to more than one host country, while also maintaining affective and economic ties with multiple places. As migrant communities settle and build new neighbourhoods in their new home, they often continue contributing funds for home renovations and facilities in their countries of origin (Byrne, 2016). The simultaneity and flexibility of heritage building is important to consider for this particular study because the meaning and identity of objects and traditions explored throughout these pages are rooted beyond Chilean national borders.

There are crucial marks in migrant neighbourhoods that reflect the interconnections between places of origin and destination in migrant heritage practice, such as phone/internet booths, international calling cards, and Western Union offices, all of which are mobility totems. Communities need to send money and communicate with the lives they left behind. Scholars have explored the impact migration has on the community of origin and the host community, revealing the transformation gender roles and children undergo due to the shift in structures of permanence (Marroni, 2009; Alvites, 2011). Alvites' (2011) study on Peruvian women who migrate to Chile, leaving their children behind, discloses the renegotiation of relations and family behaviours through the telephone. This research enhances the role of transnational connection in heritage production. The connection between migrants and their loved ones across borders has to be taken into account in order to envision the effect movement has on creating valuable

sites, objects, and practices for the transnational community. Phone booths or cellphone shops can be as relevant and characteristic of a neighbourhood as statues of national heroes—“their relevance as heritage places does not derive from the space itself, but the emotions that people are able to attach to them, the meanings and interpretations that people invest in them” (Colomer, 2017, p. 922).

2.4.5 Heritage between memory and belonging

Until this section I have addressed theoretical matters concerning migration and heritage, mentioning at times their relation to memory, belonging, and identity. This short section is intended to piece together how heritage and memory work jointly while creating feelings of belonging.

Heritage, in whatever forms it presents itself, is connected to the past (Lowenthal, 1998; Carman and Sørensen, 2009). Souvenirs, memorabilia, inheritances, monuments, language, or rituals are connected to the past but materialise in the present. This particular idea is what inevitably interconnects memory to heritage. No matter the scale— either communal or personal—or the type—official or unofficial—memory is inherently part of the heritage process and vice versa (Mcdowell, 2008; Lähdesmäki, 2017). On one side, memory as the act of remembering will actively pick and choose what to bring from the past into the present. On the other hand, heritage in itself activates memory. Hence, the Haitian community in Chile, by preserving the Creole language through second generation Chilean-Haitian children, can be mentally transported to Haitian landscapes, sounds, and identity. Also, choosing Creole as an essential part of communal heritage over other forms and practices is indeed an active process of selecting and preserving valued elements from the past.

The idea that, for example, language can transport us to familiar nostalgic sites by acting as substantial identity placeholders for particular groups can also be used by outsiders to exclude

the same community (Seremetakis, 1994). Cultural heritage is not treasured equally everywhere by everyone, and this diversity in its creation process and value can be a double-edged sword. Migrants' heritage, in this case language, "can be presented to the 'native' population's sense of belonging within the nation," producing feelings of otherism (Eckersley, 2017, p. 9). Heritage can be positive nourishment for the community, while at the same time being the main reason for its marginalisation from the host society (Lähdesmäki et al., 2019). Feelings of belonging from the host community can be intensified in a fight to preserve their own language and not be overwhelmed by foreign words. At the same time, minorities' preserving their language of origin can strengthen their communal bonds and sense of worth. Heritage and memory between minority and dominant cultures are in a constant struggle (Lähdesmäki, 2019).

Heritage can certainly recreate dominant discourses and help undermine subaltern minority communities. Diaspora, exile, refugees, and migrant communities have frequently suffered marginalisation in their countries of origin, and often undergo a similar experience in their new host countries. Hence, identity and feelings of belonging within migrants' families and communities can be an essential apparatus in order to thrive in a new environment. Heritage processes that originate from migrant communities can serve as an interesting tool for building a more inclusive and diverse status quo (Bartolini et al., 2016; Eckersley, 2017). However, migrant heritage has not been considered as such until recently, and scholars, including myself, are still researching what migrant heritage might include. Understanding migrant heritage helps us broaden and complicate dominant, incomplete, heritage discourses.

This work addresses the gap regarding heritage and migration, where there is still more progress to be made. Mobility does not cancel the possibility of engaging in processes of preservation or building value in the migrant home or neighbourhood. As Mariou (2020) accurately highlighted in her study of Pontian language in Greece, heritage acts as a resource to construct diasporic identities. Heritage goes beyond traditional considerations; flexible perspectives of heritage deem migrants as individuals with agency. Their agency mirrored in the preservation of language, creation, and renegotiation of cultural heritage is fundamental to this study.

2.5 Neighbourhood and home as spaces anchoring migrant memory

This work explores two sites, the home and the neighbourhood, where much discussion between minority and dominant culture occurs. These spaces will be examined with the purpose of understanding how memories anchor themselves, creating and re-creating heritage. These domestic spaces are many times the landscape where migrant memory, identity, and heritage encounter the equivalent local constructions, functioning as the site in which many cultural negotiations occur. Materiality and intangibility perform in neighbourhoods and homes, many times unnoticed, acting as mediators between individuals and the collective, or the public and private spheres of life, representing social memories (Buff, 2001; Hecht, 2001).

In Chile, Peru's religious festival *Señor de los Milagros* (Lord of Miracles) is held every October in Santiago Centro, the city's first and oldest neighbourhood, an area which has been home for the Peruvian migrant community since the 1990s. The festival re-signifies the site, being performed in the same cathedral where the *Virgen del Carmen's* procession, Chile's most renowned religious festivity, takes place. The Peruvian migrant community gathers around a century-old celebration, attaching new meanings to the streets and landmarks of the neighbourhood. On that day, both Peruvian and Chilean worshippers decorate the space with purple motifs and fill the streets with traditional Peruvian music and prayer. The archbishop of Peru travels to Chile in order to officiate the ceremony next to the Chilean archbishop as they walk the streets in procession of the city centre together. Shops around the main plaza, which usually sell Chilean *empanadas*, will offer beef heart *anticuchos* and *chicha morada*, both traditional Peruvian street foods. Throughout Santiago Centro and other surrounding neighbourhoods people will register to be visited by the Brotherhood of *Señor de los Milagros* in order to continue praying and sharing food for the rest

of the month. The Peruvian community becomes visibly relevant for the rest of the city while reuniting their community through religion, art, craftsmanship, and food.

Movement, as I have discussed, does not mean complete detachment from the country of origin, or, inversely, fervent attachment. Migrants' identities and feelings of belonging are fluid, in constant transformation; 'placelessness' can then be constructed through elements that turn the unfamiliar into their new familiar (Dawson and Rapport, 1998; Flynn, 2007). Specific decorations, foods, configurations of space, and even everyday practices like shopping can represent particular group identities (Daniels, 2010). Migrant heritage is produced either at a personal scale in the home or at a collective scale in the neighbourhood, making them the focus of this analysis. Migrant material culture and intangible practices are not necessarily an exact recreation of their prior life, nor a perfect mixture of the past and present home, but present evidence of the complex processes of memory and identity construction that movement entails (Savas, 2014; Pechurina, 2015).

Neighbourhoods and homes are places where heritage is expressed, and these sites serve as anchors for the display of memory which links itself with construction, preservation, and transformation of heritage. Even though neighbourhoods do not necessarily signify a close-knit and coherent community, typically migrants have settled in urban areas within patterns where leadership and neighbourliness are needed in order to create new subsistence networks (Keller, 1968; Ahlbrandt, 1984; Von Brömssen and Risenfors, 2014). Dynamics put in place in urban neighbourhoods vary according to gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, making mobility one of the distinctive factors that shapes the locality's social dynamics (Campbell and Lee, 1990; Barret et al., 1992). The multidimensional quality of spaces contains memories attached to them by individuals or the community; these memories sometimes represent what communities or individuals value, therefore providing a starting point for particular migrant heritage making processes.

2.5.1 The neighbourhood as a canvas for migrant memory

Neighbourhoods are living organisms that transform themselves according to the ecosystem that surrounds them. Historical processes, public policy, and the inhabitants themselves are the pulse for neighbourhood identity construction and transformation (Bond and Coulson, 1989; Peace, 2005; Freelance, 2006; Pugh, 2014). Exploring the landscape individuals live in exposes infinite clues about their desires, struggles, and cohesion as a group. The study of these scenarios will not necessarily provide straightforward answers, but raises complex questions: is the neighbourhood group an actual community or are they residing in the same location with no other bond? Has the class or racial composition of the neighbourhood changed, and, if so, is this a reflection of wider social phenomena like migration or gentrification?

The posed questions open a complex debate about cultural production within neighbourhoods and how migrants fit into that process. In a transnational world, where fluidity and movement have taken unprecedented dimensions, the idea of locality needs particular consideration. Appadurai's (1995) work is illuminating in this sense because it positions social action as a pillar for the production of locality. Rituals and materiality used to produce locations are the main characters of the process beyond the concrete spatiality where they are being performed. Locality is a phenomenological property of social life, a "structure of feeling which is produced by particular forms of intentional activity and which yields particular sorts of material effects" (Appadurai, 1995, p. 212). The neighbourhood acts as context for the production of locality. Therefore, while neighbours, influenced by the environment and history, continue reproducing locality, they simultaneously transform the site creating new contextual frameworks. Likewise, the changes in the neighbourhood will affect the production of locality, pointing to a dialectical relationship between the production of locality and neighbourhood (Appadurai, 1995). People use multiple methods in order to make sites their own— food, festivities, and monuments. Neighbourhoods thus serve as canvases for the creation of heritage and memories, and inversely influence both.

Government policies like culture-led transformations are one example of how the configuration of the locality has direct repercussions for the residents. Studies that focus on economic advancement catalogue cultural investment in neighbourhoods, such as parks, museums, and art spaces as key policies to attract investment in order to revitalise rundown buildings, spurring education and community-building processes (Florida, 2004; Hutton, 2009; Stern and Seifert, 2010). However, other scholars suggest gentrification in poorer neighbourhoods is the main consequence of this type of investment. Zukin (1989) stresses that this type of intervention does not achieve inclusion or encourage local economic development; on the contrary, it promotes outside economic forces which end up crushing local systems. The local arts spaces, restaurants, and boutiques are replaced by upscale shops that can raise rents and change lifestyles (Ley, 2003; Zukin et al., 2009; Braslow and Zukin, 2011).

Traditionally migrant neighbourhoods have been challenged by revitalization or gentrification processes. Migration flows usually follow patterns of arriving to neighbourhoods where other migrants with whom they identify, such as family or friends, have established home before them (Daniels, 1999). This pattern implies a constant conversation, where migrants can integrate into older migrant cultural patterns, challenge established practices, or negotiate with dominant national discourses, hence constantly shaping locations. Gainza (2017) avoids dualistic discussions of 'gentrification' versus 'revitalization', illuminating several nuances that occur when transformations affect a neighbourhood. Looking at changes over the last several decades in San Francisco, a neighbourhood in Bilbao, Spain, he encounters a diverse population "where traditional residents, ethnic minorities, migrants, students, social activists and cultural producers live side by side" (Gainza, 2017, p. 963). San Francisco used to be a working-class neighbourhood that was impoverished by the 1980's economic crisis and has more recently been receiving migrants, which has again transformed the site. This new relationship entails disputes over the use of space and representation of the neighbourhood. I prefer to lean on this perspective rather than more dualistic observations because demographic and economic change is not homogenous. Migrant vicinities do not necessarily undergo complete renovations of the space or absolute displacement of lower classes when transformation arrives; one could name this

process “multicoloured gentrification” (Janoschka, 2016; Gainza, 2017). Migration can bring symbolic transformation of space, opening up a discussion of the “right to the neighbourhood,” which goes beyond straightforward issues of social displacement or economic transformations.

Aptekar (2017) contributes to this idea with a study that compares two parks in New York, revealing how they generate different meanings for the community, even though they share many similarities, exposing the tensions of their own history and identity. The neighbours of each park have constructed different collective memories shaped by the contested political logics of each community and local historical experiences. Migrants can be a force that contradicts dominant discourses shaping the neighbourhood’s traditional accounts; they challenge mainstream identity constructions and construct their own responses to the sites they inhabit (Rua, 2012). Their own scale of value will bring out new considerations of what and how the neighbourhood is understood. The study of migrants’ neighbourhoods and homes illuminates the collective memories that are anchored in these particular places, memories expressed through objects, urban landscapes, and human interactions (Halbwachs, 1992; Krase, 2009; Aptekar, 2017).

2.5.2 The home as a container of memories

The home serves as a meaningful space for the placement of memories which intertwine processes of heritage. Memories transport people to the past, produce feelings of belonging, or shape identities, and these memories are many times triggered or represented in heritage. Memory has multiple meanings depending on the context: it can refer to the ability to memorise things, travel to past events, or attach imagery to certain ideas of self and community. Memory is enacted in the present but refers to the past, becoming pervasive in everyday life, and filling up intimate spaces like our homes (Nora, 1989). People and communities reproduce memory attached to sites, objects, landscapes, music, and even smells as an essential part of social life

(Clifford, 1997). The home precedes public spaces as a site for complex familiar systems that will later incorporate themselves into the neighbourhood (Douglas, 1991).

The home is filled with objects and intangible practices that activate memory, construct identity, and are cherished as heritage. The concept of home is not a straightforward definition because for many migrants, home means what was left behind, while also naming the present new home built in a new landscape. Ahmel et al. (2003) bring forward the notions of “uprootings/regroundings” which are helpful to understand the versatility of the idea of home, providing a framework to rethink home as a multiplicity of experiences. On the one hand, there is the image of the home left behind, where sometimes feelings of displacement are connected to feelings of rootedness in one’s homeland. At the same time, migrants are regrounded in new landscapes where they construct new roots and feelings of belonging.

Exemplary is Moreton-Robison’s (2003) study on how feelings of belonging profoundly differ between indigenous populations and settler/migrant communities in Australia, including what they call home. The coloniser/migrant bases their sense of belonging on the dispossession of land from the original owners following the logic of capital, while the indigenous population’s sense of home and place is rooted in their land and the fight against illegal dispossession. These two groups are both contemporary inhabitants of the same land, but their memories and identities vary in meaning and historical logic. This multiplicity is important to keep in mind when addressing intangible and tangible heritage that resides in the migrant home: these elements do not have fixed meanings, and vary in each domestic space. For instance, the preparation of food or the display of heirlooms can have different meanings and logics depending on the space and its residents. Heritage and related memories approached in the present research have a place within the migrant’s contemporary home, and also have attachments to other homes in the past, while varying in meaning from community to community.

In this line of thought, home can be associated with the neighbourhood itself, a house, or even particular objects or languages (Gunew, 2003). However, for the purpose of this study, the idea

that the home can be everywhere does not mean it can be everything. Rapoport (1995) examines the notion of home in colloquial usage and calls attention to the different meanings it has across cultural groups, calling for an end to concept in scholarship altogether. Agreeing that the concept can be ambiguous, I turn to Brah, who posits that the home can be on the one hand a “mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination” while also “the lived experience of a locality” (1996, pp. 188-189). Home can be an idea that considers space, scale, identity, and power, hence an arena filled with complex socio-spatial relations (Dresprés, 1991; Benjamin and Stea, 1995; Moore, 2000; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Referring to the home can certainly be vague if it is not contextualised or framed with specificity (Coolen and Meesters, 2012; Mallett, 2017). Migrants’ heritage can be linked to memories that construct from past and present scenarios, memories which exist in both the imagined and the physical locality. Hence the data collected throughout this research arises both from the imagined sites called home and from the physicality of the migrant houses, streets, and parks.

How and what migrants consider their heritage to be reveals how they systematise information, giving value to certain things according to a hierarchical organisation of data which is culturally specific (Steward, 1992). Understanding these classifications throughout a community can reveal values beyond the objects or practices themselves. This particular study, in focusing on heritage and the memories attached to it, reveals the way migrants in Chile have organised their world. This organisational system includes how people understand space, economic values, social power, individuality, and the social integration and symbolism provided by objects (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981). Through elements ranging from home decoration to food, furniture, music, dance, and celebration, people express themselves, and in doing so represent things about their lives. Miller’s (2001; 2008) work shows the profound meanings that are enclosed in the intimate home, ranging from empty spaces which are not meaningless but determined to be vacant because of particular experiences, to houses filled with objects that come to life through human relationships.

The home and neighbourhood are both anchors for memory, where individuals and communities express their identity, operating as archives for migrants' accounts (Burton, 2003). Heritage construction happens within these sites, thereby making them crucial focal points when studying migrants' journeys. The intimate spaces of individuals are constructed around systems of value making, and the heritage and memories attached to these spaces are the repositories of migrant reality. Migrants' homes and neighbourhoods are filled with constant negotiation between dominant local discourses and their own stories; this clash causes the community to undergo fluid processes of hierarchization and transformation of identity, memory, and heritage.

2.6 Material culture as the container for intangible and tangible heritage

So far I have reviewed the complexity of identity formation in the context of mobility, and how this process can be reflected in the construction of heritage. Intimate spaces, like the home and neighbourhood, are sites where migrants' heritage and memories are anchored, expressed, and constructed. Material culture is a significant element when addressing processes of heritage construction and memory; objects hold value and are part of migrant biographies, and are therefore main subjects for this research. As discussed in section 2.4, materiality is linked to the intangible dimension of heritage through symbolic meaning: objects are as much part of heritage as the meanings that surround them. In this section, I will expand on theory regarding objects in order to illuminate their relationship with heritage.

The word "object" seems restricted in comparison to the infinite world of materiality that encompasses the life of a community (Ingold, 2000). Here, I explore the multiplicity of terms and concepts used to describe this facet of life: objects, material culture, things, artefacts, goods, commodities, and "actants" (Law, 2002; Latour, 2005). Scholars have reviewed the nuances each term entails and in what contexts they are used, sometimes interchangeably or in distinct

manners (Stocking 1985; Appadurai, 2013 [1986]; Hoskins, 1998; Law 2002; Woodward 2002). The term “thing” is used colloquially and also by scholars to reference everything that is inert. The term “objects: narrows down this idea, pointing to things that can be touched, smelled, and seen—captured by our senses. We human actors bring objects to life by making them move either physically or with our imagination. The word “artefact,” from the latin *arte factum* (‘to make with skill’), is usually linked to the objects that were created or used for human activity, such as cooking or working tools (Woodward, 2007). The term “goods” typically links objects to market systems, where exchange parameters and value are assigned. The closely associated “commodities” closely are objects that can enter and exit the realm of economic exchange (Kopytoff, 1986; Appadurai, 2013). Lastly, the term “actant” is utilised in anthropology, as well as in science and technology, to describe a concept where the boundary between people and objects becomes blurred (Law, 2002; Latour 2005).

When thinking about actants, Latour (2005) and Law (2002) deconstruct the binary theoretical conceptions of objects between either having a static essence or completely fragmented meanings, instead proposing the concept of the “fractionally coherent” when thinking about materiality. This idea stretches certain limits between the material and the lively, or that which is considered to be outside the realm of objects: humans. Law (2002) defies the usual binarism found in the delimitations of objects and humans and emphasises the link between the two. This approach diffuses the line between material culture and individuals, marking little or no difference between the two, which for the purpose of this study can be a leap. However, it is useful to consider the basic theoretical logic proposed by these authors when thinking that material culture is attached to the lives, history, and processes of humankind, often making it impossible to consider an object without human interaction. This reasoning has been used before in order to track the stories of objects that have transited from being human to becoming objects and vice versa, showing that the biographies of objects can be flexible and complex when contemplating uses, stories, and the cultures that relate to them (Hoskins, 1998).

The existing terms within the frame of material culture are useful in order to think about the different variables involved in the study of materiality, the home, and the neighbourhood. Each term is either conceptually linked to others or is systematically bound to the other in social and symbolic meaning and use. For this study it is fundamental to consider material culture within systems of value related to sociability and symbolic meaning. Appadurai (2013) and Kopytoff (1986) seek to unravel the various meanings in objects throughout their lives, examining commodities in order to understand the economic value that is given to most objects at some point in their story. The argument revolves around the idea that commodities, like humans, have social lives. Appadurai builds upon Marx's conception of commodities as linked to systems of production and industrialisation, centering value in the process of exchange (2013). He transposes the idea of commodities to the societal realm by analysing commodity exchanges, including barter and some types of gift exchanges (2013).

Politics, cultural value and social norms determine the life story of objects. How things are exchanged or if they can be exchanged is a "social affair" (Appadurai, 2013). The line between exchangeable goods and gifts is a fine one, and even those objects that do not seem to have the properties of commodities can also, over a period of their lives, transform into exchangeable things. Moreover, gifts exchanged in social relations can be commodified, and these exchanges are part of social hierarchies and practices that entail symbolic violence, a dynamic that has been a sociological concern for some time (Bourdieu, 1977). Materiality in general is constantly linked to exchange, hence commodification, though commodification is not a constant in every object's life. The changes and transformation materiality undergoes is intrinsically bound to the people that interact with them. In this sense, mobility is a defining component of an object's life.

Individuals and communities give significance to objects, appointing them with different attributions and uses throughout their life span. Biographical objects are containers of human narrative. As Hoskins argues, one can hardly collect a person's life story and the stories of objects separately, as people and their material world are "complexly intertwined" (1998, p. 2). Analysing material culture can be a medium to understand a community's history, as well as their systems

of exchange and value. An object's history and biographical account can give form to a person's biography. For example, when a person chooses to travel with certain belongings, these things and their diaspora—the object's and the human's—will be inextricably linked. Beyond movement, migrant communities who replicate material culture from other regions in their new homes renegotiate meanings for their community, which can be studied through these recontextualised objects.

The meaning of objects is not static and is not always linked to individual biographies. Other studies contemplate objects in different dimensions and dynamics: how they relate to power, institutions, and communities. Material things are multi-dimensional. Besides the tri-dimensional physicality, Stocking (1985) proposes a fourth dimension which he suggests is related to time and history; every object has a problematic position and an otherness that comes from a large-scale historical process. He also explores a fifth dimension concerning power, pointing to the fact that every object has travelled and has been signified within relations of power. A sixth dimension deals with the issue of ownership, and how objects can convey ideas of wealth, considering tensions around who objects belong to culturally, or Individually. This sixth dimension closely touches the idea of commodities and the commodification of objects, how the biographical lives of things can surface problems regarding exchange, economic systems, and dimensions of property. Finally, a seventh dimension touches the subject of aesthetics related particularly with museum institutions, and how these types of spaces and their own power and political systems determine what is and isn't aesthetically valued (Stocking, 1985, p. 238). Taking into account Stocking's different dimensions helps structure the analysis of an object's multiple meanings.

How people and communities collect and surround themselves by material culture is not random, ordinary, or innocent. Collecting, owning, and cherishing particular objects can be an exercise in appropriating the world in which we live, reflecting "wider cultural rules, of rational taxonomy, of gender and of aesthetics" (Stocking, 1985, p. 238). Steward's (1992) analysis reveals, among other things, how the bourgeois experience is reflected in their objects, illuminating not only the material world exposed and selected within their group but also that

which is left out, silenced from their universe. The material world of a particular group is symbolic; it encompasses a system of signs that signify class, ethnicity, history, politics, and biographies (Douglas, 1991; Bourdieu, 2013).

When thinking about the home or the neighbourhood linked to migrant communities, I turn to the symbolism of the souvenir. The souvenir “speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing” because it is not an object that relates to need or use value but to a demand for nostalgia (Steward, 1992, p. 135). Souvenirs are usually framed within studies of tourism—objects that represent access to distinct cultures or experiences and are bought, kept, and displayed as mementos of a trip. Sometimes, objects that start their biographical life as souvenirs may become part of museum collections. Things that were bought as souvenirs were later on acquired by museums and are now displayed as iconic pieces considered representative of particular regions of the world (Hitchcock, 2000). Nonetheless, souvenirs are not exclusively part of tourist circuits, as many souvenirs are kept in the migrant home where the residents display and treasure them as expressions of their own origins or journeys (Pechurina, 2015). This practice is particularly associated with nostalgia ('longing for home'), souvenirs encapsulating migrants' yearning for home (Boym, 2001). Expressions of nostalgia vary among communities; how they portray or practise these feelings of longing may depend on their cultural, class, or racial backgrounds. However, delving into the specifics of how nostalgia is displayed and expressed in different scenarios provides information regarding identity formation, which is crucial for this particular study (Boym, 2001; Angé and Berliner, 2015).

Material culture as an expression of heritage, both tangible and intangible, is a rich arena to explore in order to reach into migrants' memories and identity constructions. As actants, objects are transformed by movement when their biographies intertwine with the migrant experience. Objects, whatever their use, are inextricably part of the migrants' homes and neighbourhood, making them the door to understanding how, what, and why memories and heritage are formed.

2.7 Chapter conclusions

This chapter has laid out the theoretical framework I use to approach processes of identity formation and feelings of belonging among migrant groups in Chile through the study of heritage and the memories attached to it. The key element that distinguishes this study is that mobility is inherent to migrant heritage and memory, serving as a central part of their identity and heritage construction processes as related to material culture . Institutional approaches to heritage outlined by international bodies like UNESCO (1972; 1994; 2003) follow a structure where heritage is mainly evaluated as a stable entity; material culture and even intangible heritage are linked to particular stable groups which align with dominant local discourses. This view leaves out migrant realities, where movement and constant transformation are incompatible with this notion of stable entities. Scholarly work in heritage studies has progressed toward the idea that heritage is an ongoing process, continually under construction, wherein both tangible and intangible aspects are intertwined (Lowenthal, 1998; Blake, 2000; Ashworth et al., 2007; Biehl et al., 2014; Smith, 2015). This concept is pivotal in this research because movement imprints on migrant heritage , altering and transforming it, thereby generating new manifestations of heritage that will also be anchored to past cultural legacies. The findings elucidated in this work will bring visibility to these processes and reveal how these developments unfold for the participants.

This research also helps expand the ideas of memory and heritage beyond notions of stable nationalities and identities in South America while addressing the topic from the intimate space of the migrant home and neighbourhood (Martínez, 1997; 2000; 2003; Norambuena, 2004; 2005; Soldivina and Tokman, 2006). Transnationalism has shifted the ways in which migrants construct their heritage and create collective memory, and it is from this perspective that I shed light onto how cross-border memories are being created and recreated in Chile. Authors like Stefoni et al. (2004), Skornia (2008), Pereyra (2000), and Luque (2007) have approached the subject of transnationalism in Chile from political and sociological perspectives, but scholarly attempts to

explore migrant memory and heritage in the transnational context have been scarce. In this sense, the work of Caba (2014) sheds light on how the Peruvian community has mobilised and used their rich heritage as a bridge to facilitate their social inclusion in Chile. This thesis fills in some of the remaining gaps regarding how migrant heritage is constructed, preserved, and, most importantly, understood within the intimate spaces of migrants' lives.

There is ample literature regarding heritage and memory in Chile, focused on national history, like the dictatorship, or local processes of value-making and historical importance (Milos, 2000; Lira, 2001; Lechner, 2002; Castro, 2003; Marshall, 2012; Sanfuentes, 2012). There is still work to do concerning the making of migrants' heritage in Chile, a process developed within Chilean territory but produced by a community that is not geographically fixed. Migration studies are inextricably linked to mobility, journey, ideas of diaspora, and identity formation. Some authors that have explored migrant heritage in Chile in recent decades have tended to focus on the economic or social value their material culture or practices bring to the country (Huatay, 2003; Zerán, 2005). Stefoni (2001; 2005) paved the road to a broader consideration of what food preparation and consumption means to the migrant community itself, outside of the perception and reception from Chilean locals. Contrasting and complementing these views, this project comes from the perspectives of migrant communities themselves and delves into their own unique understanding of their memories, identities, and heritage. Hence, the importance of this study lies in illuminating a discussion that examines memory, anchored in objects and practices, as a provider for continuity and sense of belonging within the migrant community.

The idea of movement as an essential part of migrants' experience but also pervasive to all aspects of social life is crucial for this work (Sheller et al., 2016). Materiality and practices that fill the homes and neighbourhoods investigated are not passive elements serving as identifiers for particular individuals, but are actively produced through movement. This work is an effort to pursue the meanings and memories held in food, rituals, artefacts, decorations, and everyday objects that fill the intimate landscape of migrant communities. The home and the

neighbourhood will both be studied as sites where memories, value, and heritage are negotiated and constructed.

CHAPTER 3

COMPLEXITIES AND PANORAMA OF CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION IN CHILE

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 contextualises this research by exploring Chilean migration, particularly in the last 30 years, which has seen a substantial jump in migratory growth. The chapter starts with a historical review of migration in Chile and lays the groundwork for understanding the changes and transformation contemporary migration has undergone. Next, it provides geographical depictions of the sites this research will explore, zeroing in on particular migrant neighbourhoods in Santiago de Chile. Following this, I will present a discussion on migrants' issues and realities in order to frame my examinations of the migrant home and neighbourhood. Finally, the chapter closes with an assessment of ongoing migrant heritage studies in Chile to set the stage for this study.

3.2 Review of Chile's migration history

Latin America's 19th century was plagued by the impacts of modernising efforts, where the ruling paradigm was "European versus indigenous," and the idea of Europe related directly to civilisation, while everything that originated from Latin America was considered backward, lazy, undisciplined, violent, and oppressive. Europe, particularly France as a cultural model, was admired and efforts from the elites to replicate its standards were relentless (Lempérière, 2005). Porfirio Diaz held the Mexican presidency for thirty years between 1877-1911, establishing a

civilising model based on social Darwinism, where modern urban canons outlawed everything that belonged to the rural, indigenous, or mestizo world (O’Gorman, 1999). In 1845, Argentinian ex-president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento wrote his book *Civilización y Barbarie* (‘Civilisation and Barbarism’), which profoundly impacted Latin American intellectual circles of the time. Here, he placed the region’s progress in the modern Europeanised metropolises, blaming the region’s problems on elements bound to indigenous Latin America and rural areas of Argentina. Following the title of the work, he presented a dichotomy where the modern European ideal was meant to solve every problem caused by Latin America’s essential barbaric nature.

In Chile, the elites would follow similar ideas of modernism, defining the non-European as barbaric and negative. In 1873, Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna, mayor of Santiago, inaugurated the *Exposición del Coloniaje* (Exhibition of the Colony), the first historical exhibition in Chile, which displayed donations from prominent families, including carriages, domestic artefacts and jewellery, intended to demonstrate Hispanic heritage (Schell, 2001; Crow, 2009). Vicuña Mackenna unequivocally highlighted Chile’s European colonial past as the pillar of republican progress, while indigenous artefacts were contrasted and presented as retrograde elements from the past. This exhibition also had a human zoo that displayed natives abducted from Tierra del Fuego, a fact that reverberated through the media of the period with articles portraying them as cannibals, enhancing the ‘civilisation’ versus ‘barbarism’ dichotomy (*El Mercurio*, 1973; Blanchard et al., 2011).

It was within this logic that Chile’s colonisation of its southern territory took place. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Mapuche, an indigenous group living in a region today called Araucanía, were not citizens of the Chilean state. By 1861, the state had taken an interest in expanding beyond Río Bio-bio, militarising and occupying Araucanía (fig. 3.1). During this period Vicente Perez Rosales, a statesman in charge of the colonisation of the south of Chile, organised and implemented European (particularly German) migration to the Araucanía. In 1845, the Selective Migration Law was issued in order to promote the migration of artisans and professionals from Europe to “civilise” the south of Chile. Land which was stolen by the state

from the Mapuche population was given to Europeans in exchange for them settling this region in order to implement Chilean sovereignty. This public policy was not only intended as a geopolitical strategy, but the state also believed Germans would civilise and modernise the indigenous population and eugenically improve racial traits in Chile (Norambuena, 2002; Rosales, 2010; Mascareño, 2019).

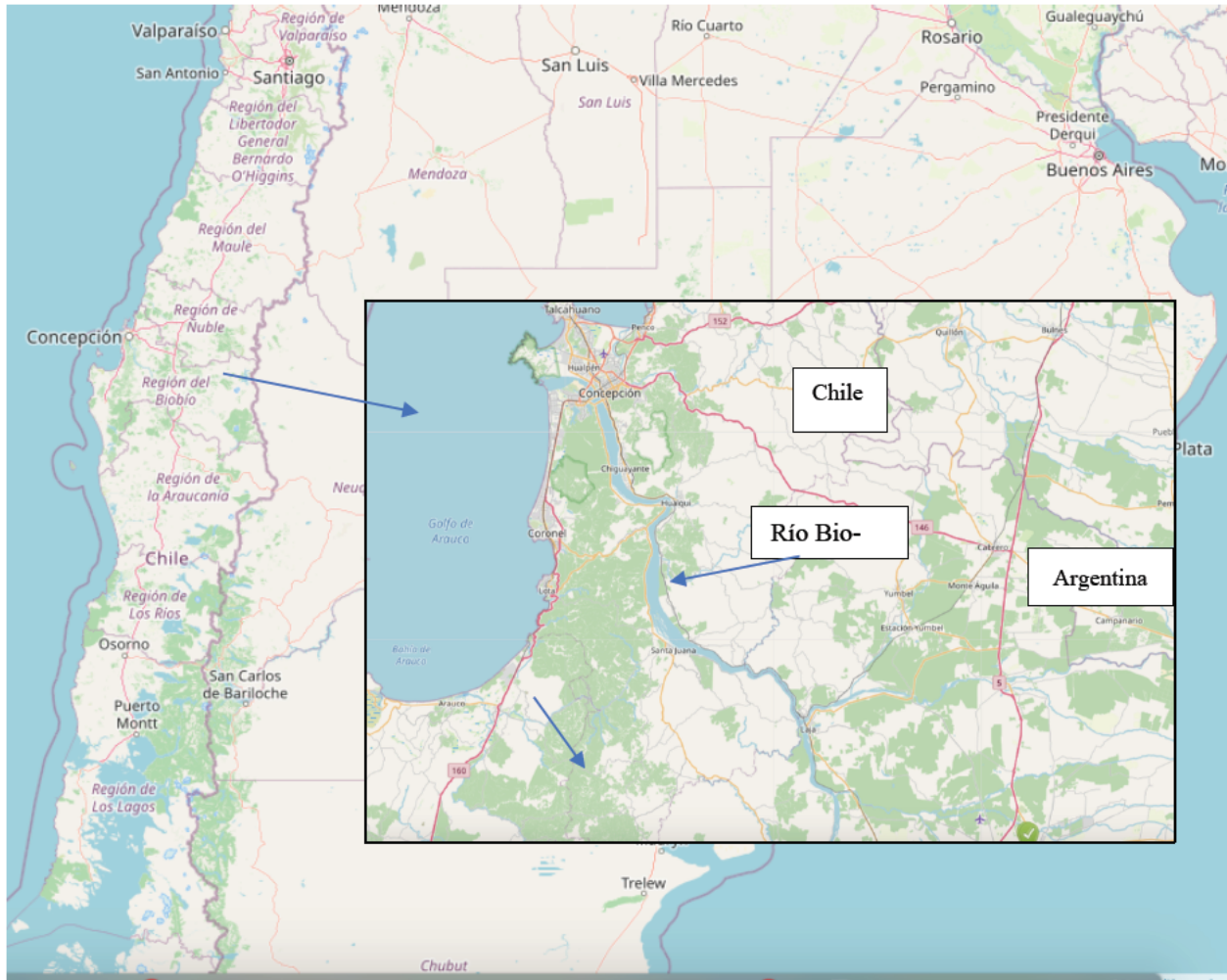


Fig. 3.1 Contemporary map of Chile showing the City of Santiago to Araucanía Region and inset of Bio-bio River (© Colaboradores de OpenStreetMap Open Database Licence ODbL and CC BY-SA)

The civilisation versus barbarism dichotomy follows patterns similar to those examined by Edward Said (2014 [1978]) in his analysis of orientalism, where the West conceives of everything outside itself as its polar opposite: static and irrational. In a similar way, generalisations regarding migration were constructed when republican Chile experienced a variety of non-European

migrant flows during the 19th century. Europeans were understood as contributors to the economy and culture, in contrast to migrants that came from Asia and the Middle East who were considered a “plague” and racially inferior (I will review these groups in section 3.2.1). The essentialisation of migrant groups created racialised hierarchisation, relating specific jobs, abilities, and behaviours with the migrants’ geographic origins and ethnicities (Mascareño, 2019). This logic was prominent until the mid-20th century, at which point individualization slowly began to influence migration policy (Aninat and Sierra, 2019). Though today’s discourses on migration have advanced to more inclusive standards, there are still traces of Eurocentric ideals, embodied in contemporary social issues that will be addressed in section 3.4.

3.2.1 Migrant groups in Chile, 1850-1960

Latin America was a major destination for international migration during the 19th century, but compared to neighbouring countries like Argentina or Brazil, Chile did not receive massive migration during this period. Between the 1850’s and 1950’s, immigration mainly came from Europe (France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and England), the Middle East and Asia, with smaller flows from within South America. In 1854, the number of foreigners amounted to 19,659 out of a total population of 1,439,120; by 1895 there were 76,056 foreigners out of a total population of 1,263,700, growing up to 103,878 foreigners out of a total population of 5,932,995 in 1952 (Diaz et al., 2016). As mentioned above, a state project of modernisation based on encouraging migration was backed by several statesmen of the period, but Chile did not become a main attraction for migrants within the region. Chile, unlike Peru, was not an important location within the Spanish empire, and after its independence in 1818, it developed a small economy in comparison to neighbouring countries like Argentina and Brazil, both building their industrial power during the 19th century.

Valparaíso, Chile’s main port city, was the entrance door for most migrants and many stayed there, while others settled in the capital, Santiago, and in the north where the mining industry

was rapidly growing (fig. 3.2). Italians came to Chile following the wave of rural Italian migration to the Americas, reaching over 10,000 people between 1890 and 1930. They settled in cities, mainly Valparaíso and Santiago, where they established commercial networks, owning up to a thousand commercial shops in Valparaíso by 1900 (Estrada, 1993; Carrera, 2015). The English community was the biggest migrant group until 1885; they settled in Valparaíso and in the northern regions of Chile, where they controlled the nitrate mining industry (Estrada, 2006). The English were actively involved in the development of the first industries in the country, as well as the opening of Chile's economy to international commerce during the 19th century (Mayo, 2018). Germans made up another prominent group of European migrants to Chile, highlighted in traditional historiography due to their contribution to the construction of industries in the south. The main waves of German migration were motivated by the Selective Migration Law between 1850-1910, during which they created craftsman's trades and industrial initiatives like steam sawmills and breweries (Brahm, 2014). The difference between German migrants and other European groups that arrived in this period was that Germans settled in territory that was newly colonised by Chile, which linked their experience to the violence and marginalisation that the indigenous population suffered in the region.



Fig. 3.2 Cities of Valparaíso and Santiago shown within the broader map of Chile, with an inset of the northern region of Chile where nitrate mines were located

(© [Colaboradores de OpenStreetMap](#) Open Database Licence ODbL and CC BY-SA)

State policies that encouraged and provided land guarantees for migrants were replaced in 1880 by the creation of migration agencies that managed and encouraged migration inside and outside of the Chilean territory. However, these agencies were arranged to focus only on European migration. Nevertheless, migration from the Middle East increased during these years without help from the state, and these migrants dedicated themselves to trade, forming strong commercial networks throughout Chile. The destabilisation of the Ottoman Empire pushed

thousands of Christian Arabs to Latin America, Chile being one of the main destinations for Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese migrants (Olguín y Peña, 1990). Palestinian migration was propelled further after World War I and the partition of their land following the creation of Israel in 1948. The subsequent colonisation and economic crisis in Palestinian territory made Chile a common destination for them up until the 1950s, and currently Chile is the country with the largest Palestinian community in the world outside Palestine (Agar and Saffie, 2005; Molina, 2014).

Initially, due to racial hierarchical constructions, Arab migration was not received as positively as European migration. As the government did not provide the land for agriculture or economic help that Europeans received, they settled across Chile, trading and delivering products where commerce was still scarce (Agar, 1983). The media and institutions reflect an environment of discrimination towards the group, blaming them for getting rich at the expense of Chileans, being unclean and of questionable morality (Rebolledo, 1994). The following extract is an example of the tone regarding Arab migration in Chile 1911:

Whether they are Mohammedans or Buddhists, what you see or smell from afar is that everyone is dirtier than the dogs of Constantinople and they enter and leave the country with the freedom that those same dogs enjoy in theirs, because nobody asks them who they are, where they come from, or where they are going (*El Mercurio*, April 13, 1911 in Reyes, 1997).

After 1960, migration waves in Chile diminished, and without the eminent image of European migrants crossing national borders, the Arab community slowly integrated into the dominant culture, participating in the government and succeeding economically (Agar, 1983). In 2001, Agar and Saffie (2005) carried out a study within the Arab community in Chile and 65% of those surveyed said they identified as Chilean-Arabs; by contrast, the German community was slower to generate attachments to the idea of Chilean nationhood, particularly in the southern territories. During the last few decades, descendants of first- and second-generation German migrants who arrived to the southern territories have moved to metropolitan areas, and begun to identify as Chileans (Gloël, 2015).

Jewish migration in Chile can be traced back to the colonial period (1598-1810), when many Jewish migrants came from Spain escaping the inquisition. However, a significant flow took place within 1880-1930 due to the fall of the Turkish empire and general anti-Semitism around Europe, which intensified with the rise of fascism after World War I. The community's reception in Chile followed similar patterns to that of the Arab community, with suspicion due to religious and racial discrimination particularly directed toward the Sephardis (Agar, 2006). Immigration laws at the beginning of the 20th century reflected the wariness around this Jewish migration: the Chilean government issued specific regulations to restrict the entrance of Jewish families to a maximum of 50 per year (Brahm and Montes, 2012). This regulation changed in 1938 with the election of Pedro Aguirre Cerda, the first president from a left-wing coalition who had progressive views, opposing Nazi Germany's discourse and policies. He eliminated restrictive regulations and opened the country in order to receive Jewish refugees, following which over 15,000 entered the country, actively speaking against racial discrimination and political persecution in fascist Europe at the time (Congreso Judío Latinoamericano, 2008; Goldschmidt, 2013; 2016; Schonhaut, 2015).

Asians in Chile, too, have had a major impact on migration discourse. Japanese migrants were not big in numbers, but, at the beginning of the 20th century, they formed a small thriving community in Valparaíso linked to agricultural and botanical commerce. Due to a workforce scarcity in the mining industry in the north of Chile, Japanese immigrants started moving to the north, promoted by an agreement between the Chilean and Japanese governments regarding migrant workers (Estrada, 1997). Over a thousand Chinese migrants from Peru were incorporated into the Chilean state after the Pacific War in 1879. Chile had nitrate investments in northern land that belonged to Peru and Bolivia, resulting in a territorial dispute that Chile won, annexing the territories of Arica y Parinacota, Tarapaca and Antofagasta (fig.3.2). Following this initial push during the first decades of the 20th century, over 2,600 Cantonese arrived in Chile, opening small grocery businesses that supplied food to the nitrate workers in the north (Godoy, 1991; Flores, 1994; Chou, 2004). Since the 1930s, a constant flow of Chinese migrants have arrived in Chile and expanded beyond the northern regions, building a commercial quarter in Santiago called

Patronato. This neighbourhood was first built as a commercial textile hub by the Arab community, but integration into international markets and the consequent closing of local textile industries has diminished these businesses, which have been replaced in recent decades by Chinese and Korean export businesses (Vial and Maxwell, 1995). Today Patronato is one of Santiago's most cosmopolitan neighbourhoods where Chinese, Korean, Palestinian, Lebanese, and Syrian first- to fourth-generation businesses coexist (Soto, 2006).

Over the course of a century, European modernity was emulated throughout Latin America: it represented the ultimate aspiration for the region's nations, and Chile was no exception, structuring its migration, social structure, and policy within this pattern. This section has provided a general review of the chief migrant communities that settled in Chile during this period, partially assessing each group's history and experience, which shows the importance of modernisation and how this idea was reproduced in the understanding of migrant groups depending on their origin. These migrants have constructed robust identities that connect them to their communities through social and football clubs, professional networks, and educational centres, whilst attaching certain feelings of belonging to local national constructions of 'Chileanness' (Agar and Saffie, 2005; Pinto and Valdivia, 2009). While performing ideas linked to their places of origin, they have also constructed strong communities that participate in Chile's public, political, and social life. Some groups, like the Jewish community, have maintained very defined traits regarding traditions like religion, language, and material culture, which provide strong memorial links to their diaspora and self-identification. Meanwhile other groups, like the English, have merged their community's narrative into the mainstream national understanding, incorporating the Spanish language and Catholicism. Despite the fact that discrimination towards Arab, Jewish, and Asian migration in the media has diminished during the last decades, the 19th century structures regarding ideas of modernisation are still present.

3.3 Geography of Chile's contemporary migration

In this section I will attempt to paint a picture of contemporary migration in Chile in terms of its geographic and social characteristics. Since the 1990s, migration started picking up again in Chile, this time from Latin American countries. The changes in world economies, digitalisation, and international job markets that were born with the turn of the century influenced migration patterns within the region, which changed and diversified the migrant experience.

3.3.1 Radiography of Peruvian migration since the 1990s in Chile

In the 1990s, according to the UN and the Chilean Census of 1992, Chile's migrant population was predominantly male (50.74%) and amounted to 1% of the total population. During that decade, the biggest migrant group in Chile was the Argentinian community, followed by Spaniards, Bolivians, and lastly Peruvians (ONU DAES, 1990; INE, 1992). By the turn of the century, the panorama had changed: total migration numbers had not grown that much (1.2% of total population), but the composition had changed, with the Peruvian community leading in numbers (INE, 2002). Peruvians had gone from a population of 7,649 in 1992 to 37,860 in 2002, and the gender majority had reversed, with women comprising 52% of the migrant population (ONU DAES, 2000; INE, 2002; Martínez, 2003). In 2010, the migrant population had increased to 2.2%, and the Peruvian population was by far the biggest in the country with over 120,000 individuals, followed by a population of 50,000 Argentinians (ONU DAES, 2010).

In terms of geographical location, 77.9% of the Peruvian population settled in the Metropolitan Region, the country's capital district, concentrating in neighbourhoods such as Santiago Centro and Independencia (fig. 3.3) (Martínez, 2003; Con et al., 2009; Cano y Soffia, 2009). When evaluating this information it becomes clear that most Peruvian migrants are located in urban settings, particularly in Santiago City, where business and services are the primary economic

sectors. Garcés (2012) explores the modes of occupation Peruvians migrants have in the territory and how this constructs specific commercial and social networks which are an important part of their identity in Chile. In this sense, Santiago Centro and Independencia have transformed themselves into hubs dedicated to provide food, services, and social settings by and for the Peruvian community.

Chile is a country based on a centralist and presidential political structure, where economic and political power emanates from the country's capital. The Metropolitan Region is home to 38% of the country's population and economic and political power is concentrated there. Santiago Centro is the geographical origin of the city, where the Spanish coloniser Pedro de Valdivia built the main Plaza de Armas and the Cathedral, locations around which influential Spaniards erected their houses. Río Mapocho intersects Santiago City and is one of Santiago Centro's boundaries; on the other side of the river is an area called La Chimba, where indigenous, slave, and *mestizo* populations settled. The indigenous and slave population living across the river came during the 16th century along with the Spanish colonisers that arrived from Peru. La Chimba's development was a result of Spanish colonisation. This area is known today as the neighbourhoods of Independencia and Recoleta, both migrant areas to this day (figs. 3.3 and 3.4; Valenzuela, 2010). During the 1990s, Peruvian migrants located themselves in these areas which have rich histories of migration. Spanish colonisers and foreign indigenous groups were not the only communities that preceded Peruvians in this zone; Independencia and Recoleta were also home to Arab and Asian migrants in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as in the Patronato commercial quarter mentioned in section 3.2.1. These adjacent neighbourhoods hold many layers of migrant memory, structuring themselves as rich spaces where migrant heritage resides and is constructed by negotiations between past and present, local and external forces (Taylor, 1994; Huebener, 2007; Savas, 2014; Pechurina, 2015; Sheller et al., 2016).

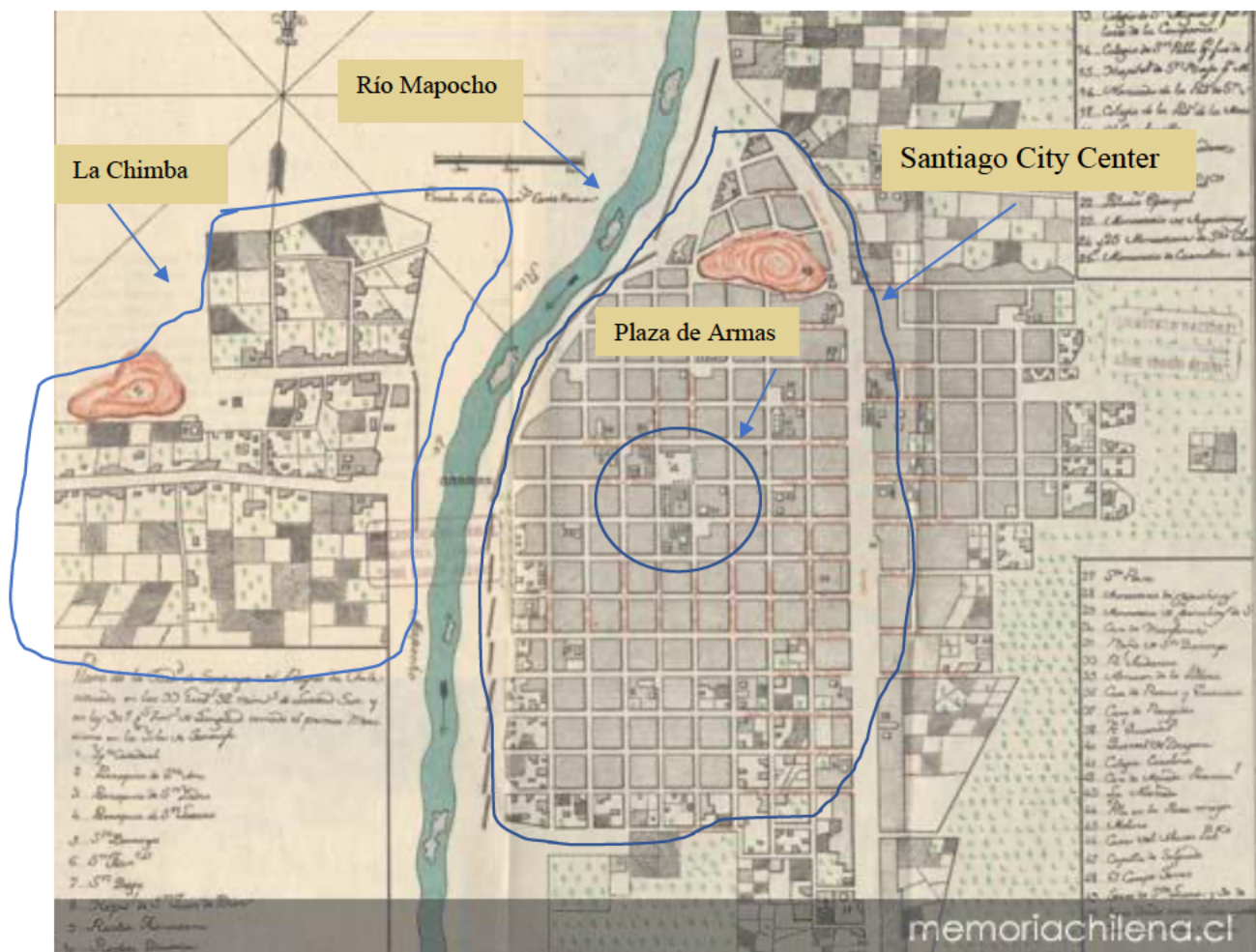


Fig. 3.3 Map of Santiago City 1540-1580
(Memoria Chilena, Biblioteca Nacional de Chile <http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-121352.html>)

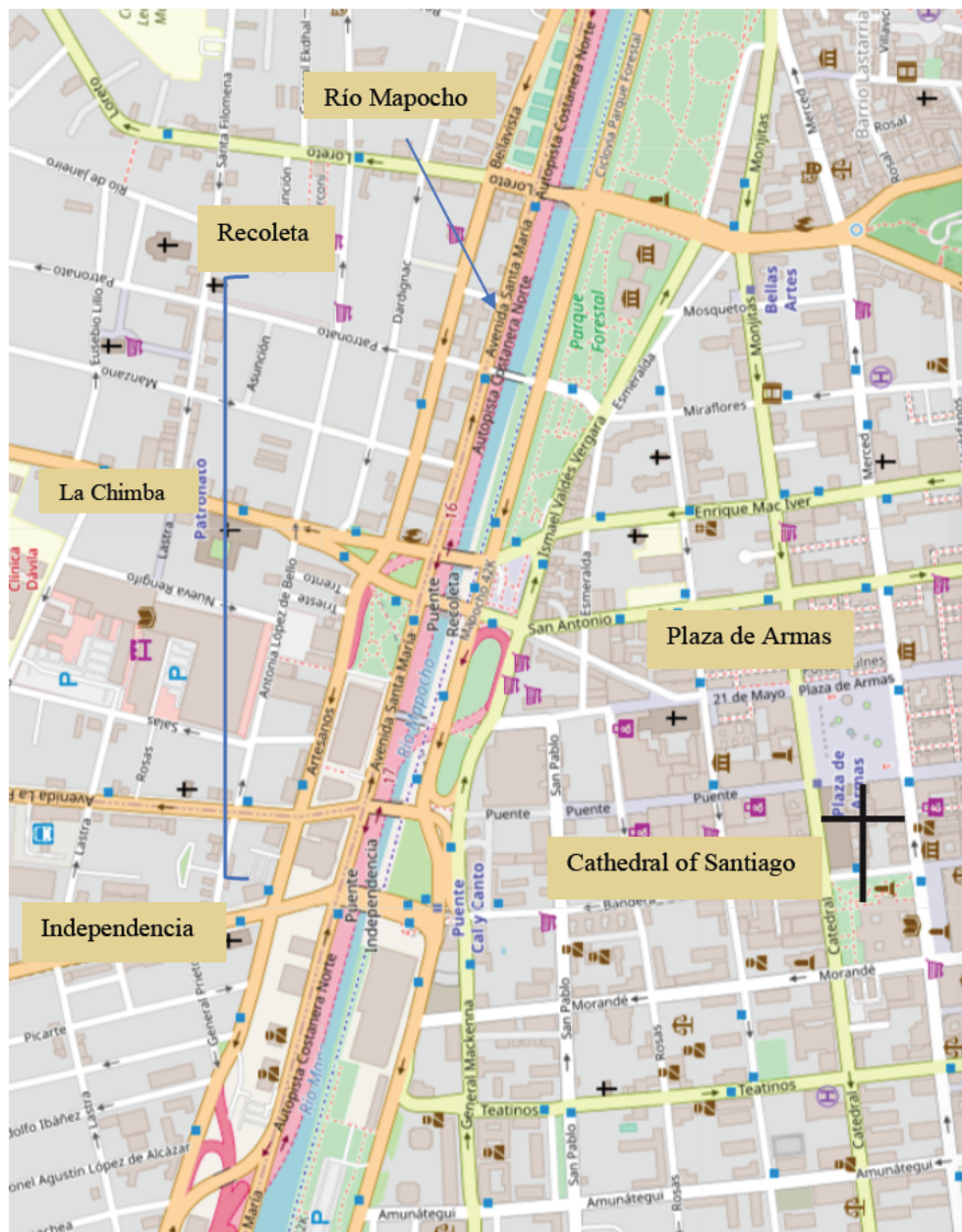


Fig. 3.4 Contemporary map of Santiago Centro, Río Mapocho, and Recoleta and Independencia (formerly La Chimba) ([© Colaboradores de OpenStreetMap](#) Open Database Licence ODbL and CC BY-SA)

Even though these spaces have been historically related to migration, they are not stable sites with fixed meanings for the populations that inhabit them (Appadurai, 1995). This research explores the nuances and multidimensional meanings these places provide while also being transformed and constructed by the migrants that inhabit them. In the case of Peruvians,

Santiago Centro has both been transformed by the community and affected the way the community has developed. This geography is not a mere spectator of migrant experience but an active participant in the social production and construction of their lives (Low, 1996; 2017). One reality that exemplifies the relation between space and the community is how their commercial endeavours in Plaza de Armas and the surrounding streets are very much part of the neighbourhood's traditional economic activities. However, since not all the commerce in which the migrants partake is formalised, commercial laws have persecuted their activities, against which the community has found common ground by countering politicians who criminalise street trade (Garcés, 2015). In this sense, the neighbourhood's historical character has influenced migrant job systems, and dialectically these activities have created new relational spaces, like settings for political organising.

The spike in Peruvian migration during the 1990s boosted the construction of a distinct migrant community in the City of Santiago. Migrants have created an ecosystem of trade along a few streets near Plaza de Armas which are surrounded by music, food carts, spontaneous social gatherings, remittance businesses, and phone booths for international calls. This geographical focus serves as a congregation point for the community, attracting Peruvian domestic workers from other parts of the city on their days off as well as neighbourhood residents (Garcés, 2015). The growth of this particular migrant group, after several decades of slower migration flows in Chile, produced a noticeable new interest in migration from the media and society, ideas that are connected with the construction of the group's own identity as well as the perceptions of locals.

Chavez et al. (2018) illuminate the tone Arica of reporting about Peruvian migration during the years 2000-2010. They compile several press and news clips covering Peruvians that focus mainly on crime, particularly on drug trafficking and attacks against 'Chilean morals,' prompting stereotyping and symbolic racism. Some headline and news examples are: "Peruvian Narcos Detained: The work of the anti-narcotics police continues" (*La Estrella*, April 16, 2001); "The Drug Operation Isla El Alacrán was Successful: Peruvians hid drugs in avocados" (*La Estrella*, May 19, 2001); "We want to end with the filth: the neighbourhood has to put up with several of them

[Peruvians] using the area as a public bathroom and even the most daring occupy it as a nest for furtive love [sex]" (*La Estrella*, October 15, 2004).

Póo (2009) reviews the press related to Peruvian migration during the century's first decade at a national level, examining newspapers that reach the entire country like *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, *Las últimas noticias*, and *La Nación*. Like Chavez et al., she assesses several headlines that link Peruvian migration to crime and document irregularities. However, this study also grasps an effort from the media to address the social issues migrants encounter in Chile while suggesting the importance of integration as the solution for these problems. Some revealing headline examples are: "You will not give birth in Chile: The misery of Peruvian women who give birth in the country" (*La Nación*, April 13, 2008); "Overcrowded migrant buildings in Santiago Centro face high risk of fires" (*La Tercera*, June 1, 2008). Numerous headlines highlight integration as an advancement towards a better situation for migrants in Chile: "Children star in cultural integration fair" (*La Nación*, May 5, 2008); "The growing enrolment of immigrants poses challenges of integration in the classroom: Foreigners in the school system" (*El Mercurio*, January 28, 2008). These articles refer to 'integration' as a notion closer to assimilation than to multicultural dialogue, as the context and wording used regard migrants as individuals that should blend into the mainstream Chilean culture in order to succeed economically and socially. The piece in *El Mercurio*, a conservative media outlet and the biggest newspaper in Chile, covers the subject of school integration, complementing the information with textual quotes from Peruvian parents saying: "Now my children are better because they have learned to speak [Spanish] like a Chilean" (*El Mercurio*, January 28, 2008a). This quote refers to the difference in accent and slang between Chilean and Peruvian Spanish; Peruvian pronunciation, which is mocked by Chilean children in school environments, many times forces Peruvian children to choose Chilean 'cultural mannerisms' over their own (Pavez, 2012).

The multiple approaches seen in the media in the first decade of the 2000s shows the impact Peruvian migrants had in Chile and displays the social and economic tensions caused by their arrival. Several positive articles address food, connecting improvements within the Chilean

culinary scene to the influence Peruvian cuisine has brought to the country. Nevertheless, some stories tend to be quite patronising, pointing out things like: “It is the Peruvian maid who has introduced the culinary art into the Chilean family” (*El Mercurio*, March 23, 2008b). This narrative restores the hierarchy of those who are originally from Chile versus the outsiders, who, despite their contributions, are placed in the margins serving those in power, highlighting continuing tensions between Chileans and migrant communities.

3.3.2 Chile in 2016: a migratory leap in numbers

Among the countries that host the largest numbers of international migrants in the world, the United States is first with 51 million immigrants, representing 15.5 % of the population, followed by Saudi Arabia and Germany, both with 13 million immigrants, in Germany representing 15.7% of the population and in Saudi Arabia amounting to 39% of the population (UN, 2019). Chile was estimated to have 1,625,074 million foreigners living in the country by December 2022, representing 8.3% of the population (INE, 2022). Chile, in comparison to other countries, does not appear to be experiencing massive migration flows, but it has the fastest growing immigration rate in the world next to Angola and Qatar, experiencing an annual growth rate of 6% between the years 2000-2017. Migration in Chile has intensified during the past decades particularly from Venezuela and Haiti, (INE, 2021). In the 2000s, the biggest migrant group in Chile were Peruvians, followed by Argentinians and Bolivians, all from neighbouring countries. Today, Chile’s biggest migrant community are Venezuelans, comprising 30% of the total migrant population, followed by Peruvians (16.6%) and Haitians, who make up 12.2% of the total foreign-born population (INE, 2021).

Multiple factors have changed the migrant composition in Chile. For some communities, the push factor is the main trigger for movement: facing violence and political instability back in their regions, Colombians from Valle del Cauca as well as migrants from Dominican Republic and Haiti come to Chile looking for political and economic stability (Betts, 2019). Under the same logic,

Venezuelan mobility is related more to the political crisis they are experiencing at home than their particular attraction to Chile.

The migrant gender composition in Chile amounts to a ratio of 100.8 men for every one hundred women, that is, each sex represents close to 50% of the population (INE, 2021). This number has only shifted towards a male population in the last few years, changing the scenario from the 2000s, when Chile was one of the countries with the highest proportion of female migrants in Latin America. Peruvian migration, which was predominant at the time, was led by women who largely joined the workforce as domestic workers. Hence, the present growth in male migration rates goes hand in hand with the incoming flow of Venezuelans and Haitians which have levelled the balance, and which in terms of age make the migrant community particularly young, as 47.6% are between 25 to 39 years old. All of these changes, the increase in migration flow, and the variations in its composition have set in motion a new social and political conversation about migration at a national level (INE, 2021).

3.4 Chilean migration policy

The examination of Chile's recent influx of migration in section 3.3 frames, on the one hand, current public policy, and on the other, the particular socio-economic issues it has produced. In this section I will address the transformation migration policy has undergone during the last several decades in Chile, and how these changes affect the migrant population. Understanding the legal structures surrounding the migrant experience will be useful to later, in the subsequent section, assess social issues like gender, poverty, work, education, and racism.

Chile's migration legislation, until December 2020, dated back from 1975, a system of outdated digitisation processes and bigger contemporary migration flows. This law was passed as a decree under dictator Augusto Pinochet following national state security doctrines that would regulate

the entry and exit of foreigners, but did not consider migrant rights, protection, or inclusion (Stang, 2016). This 1970s border control logic became, according to Chile's Department of Migration, a big issue due to the long waits that migrants endure while processing their work permits and visas (Automatización de Servicios, 2020). Chile had the oldest migration legislation in the region, drawing attention from the UN and human rights organisations which insisted Chilean migration laws were outdated and needed to be reformed (Migración y Trabajo, 2020).

President Sebastian Piñera's first government (2010-2014) sent a bill to congress in 2013 in order to pass a new migration law for the country. This bill was discussed and reviewed for seven years until it was approved in 2020. In 2018, President Piñera issued a migration decree anticipating the creation of the new law in Congress, arguing that it would help the migratory system while Congress debated and voted on the new legislation. This decree changed three fundamental pillars within migrant legislation in Chile. The first change was related to the processing of work permits and visas, which in the past were processed once the individual had entered the country. Migrants would come in with tourist visas and once inside the country their work and residential permits would be processed. The new decree mandated that migrants would have to process their papers before arriving; changing status is no longer allowed once migrants have passed into Chile. The second pillar was targeted toward Venezuelan migrants, for whom the President created a special humanitarian visa with no quota limit. This particular visa responds to political issues, and Piñera has been particularly vocal in his right wing policies and advocacy against the Venezuelan government. The third change is targeted toward the Haitian community, creating a special paid tourist visa for them with a 30 day limit. Most Latin American countries do not need a specific tourist visa and have up to 90 days, conditions that were revoked for Haitians in the decree. Adding to these measures, Piñera created a humanitarian visa for Haiti, too, but with a quota limit suitable only for family reunification. The contrast between the beneficial measures taken for Venezuelans versus the more restrictive measures announced for Haitians produced scepticism in the Haitian community, human rights organisations, and part of the national media, indicating these restrictions suggested racial discrimination (Alarcón, 2018; Molina, 2018).

Finally in 2020, the government's migration bill was approved by Congress, changing the migration policy framework for the first time since 1975. The new migration law followed the same logic as the temporary presidential decree of 2018 and established that migrants could not regularise their papers within Chile, and must enter the country with approved work permits issued in their countries of origin. It restricted the right to vote to only those foreigners who have been permanent residents for over five years, leaving out the great majority who migrate with temporary work permits for several years before getting their permanent papers. Article 132 of the new law added that unaccompanied minors who do not have the authorisation required to enter the country may be forced to return to their country of origin, ignoring the Human Rights Court's statement that family reunion and the child's superior interest should be prioritised when assessing border crossing (Yañez, 2020). Article 135 established the possibility that state authorities can detain (in jail or house arrest) undocumented migrants who have been sanctioned with expulsion for up to 72 hours. This is particularly serious since it contradicts the Chilean constitution¹ and goes against international human rights standards that point out that arrest for migration irregularities must only be used in exceptional circumstances and last the shortest time possible (UN Human Rights, n.d.).

The new law reflects some advancements regarding efficiency in issuing permits to work and reside in Chile. However, following the patterns of the 1975 law, it continues to restrict entries, turning a blind eye to migrant rights and international human rights standards. The bill was promoted and approved within a political climate that strategically communicated a need to 'tidy up the house,' constantly suggesting that migrants came to produce disarray and confusion in the country (Cooperativa, 2018; Navarrete and Vedoya, 2019; CNN, 2020). Several migrant organisations and Amnesty International responded, arguing that migrations laws should

¹ Chilean Constitution Article 19, number 7, letter C: No one can be arrested or detained except by order of a public official expressly empowered by law and after said order is legal. However, anyone caught in flagrant crime may be arrested, with the only object of being made available to the competent judge within the following twenty-four hours. If the authority does arrest or detain any person, it must, within the following forty-eight hours, give notice to the competent judge, and contact him or her with the affected person. The judge may, by reasoned resolution, extend this period from five days up to ten days, in the event that qualified facts are investigated by law as terrorist conduct.

expressly establish rights, strengthen immigration institutions, ensure norms for healthy coexistence, and define mechanisms for social and civic participation for the community. Despite the previous political discussion the law was officially passed on February 12, 2022. These events contributed to a climate of confusion and uncertainty for the migrant community in Chile.

3.5 The socioeconomic issues of the migrant experience in Chile

This section will examine some of the main social issues that are associated with migrant communities in Chile. This research project is geographically located in Chile's capital, Santiago, mainly focused on neighbourhoods that have been densely populated by recent migrants. The Metropolitan Region concentrates 61.3% of the total migrant population in Chile, and six of the ten neighbourhoods with the largest migrant populations in the country are located in the City of Santiago (fig. 3.5; INE, 2021). Given the rapid growth in the migrant population reviewed in section 3.3.2, Chile has had to adjust its policy, educational system, housing, and socio-cultural dynamics, particularly in migrant neighbourhoods. The latter has brought to light new political and systemic issues while also deepening existing national difficulties, setting the stage for the construction of migrant memories and heritage within the home and neighbourhood.

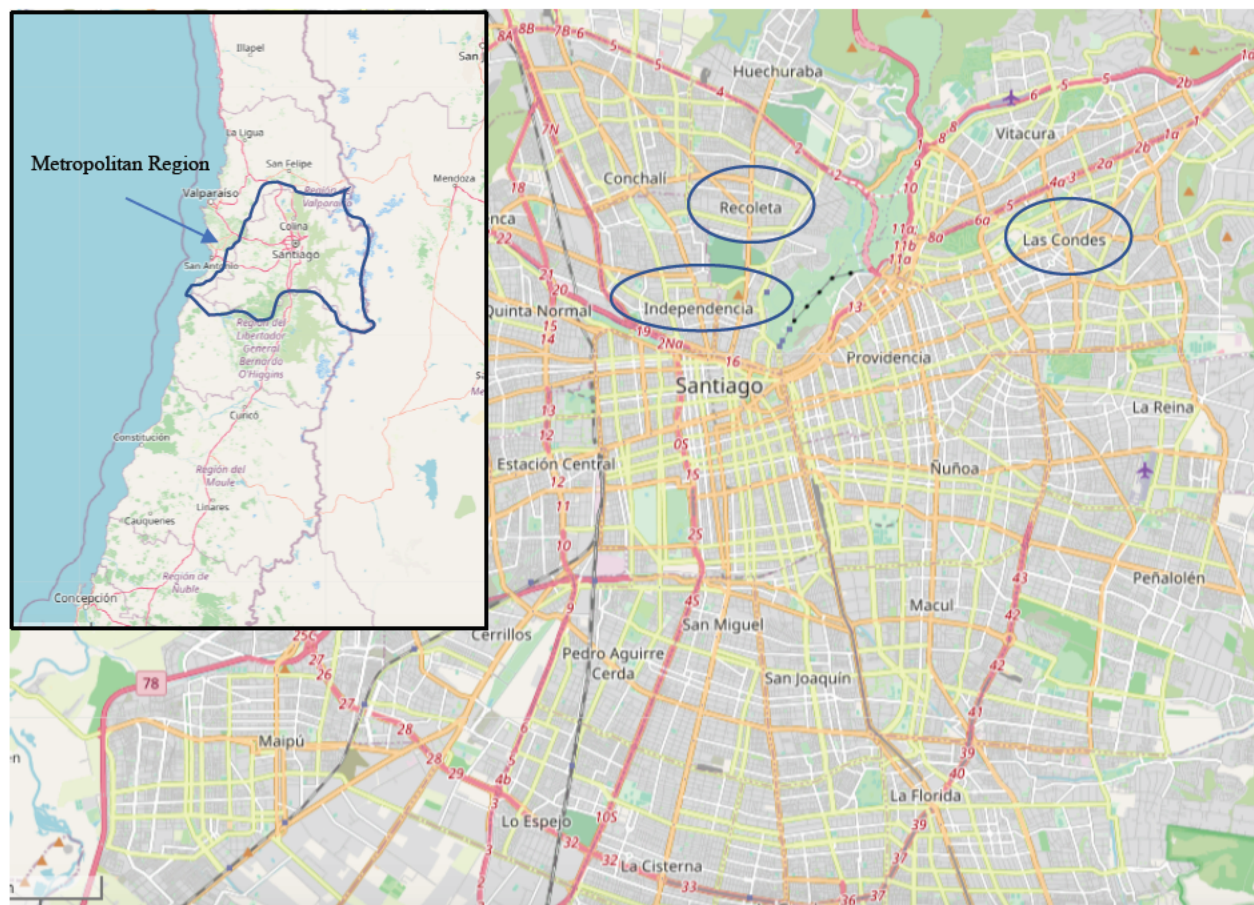


Fig. 3.5 Map of Santiago: Chile's capital city located within the Metropolitan Region. The circled neighbourhoods are Santiago Centro, Independencia, Estación Central, Las Condes, Recoleta, and Ñuñoa. The inset is a zoomed out view of Santiago City, seen within the Metropolitan Region, one of Chile's 15 regional geo-political divisions.

(© [Colaboradores de OpenStreetMap](#) Open Database Licence ODbL and CC BY-SA)

Within the Metropolitan region, 15.3% of the migrant population lives in Santiago Centro, which is also the neighbourhood with the biggest number of migrants in Chile. Following in numbers are the neighbourhoods of Independencia with 3.9%, Estación Central with 3.6%, Las Condes with 2.7%, and Recoleta with 2.6% of the migrant population in the Metropolitan region (INE, 2021). This study examines material culture of homes in the mentioned areas and explores the area surrounding this private world, the neighbourhood, focusing particularly in Santiago Center and Estación Central, two poles of migrant commercial and social activity.

3.5.1 High density neighbourhoods

Santiago Centro has a combination of different types of architecture that houses its population. There are traditional houses built in the 19th century, followed by tenements built for industrial workers, according to Chile's first social laws in 1906, alongside working-class apartments built in the 1970s, and high- and middle-class condominiums clashing with mega tower units built in the past decade (fig. 3.6). These mega towers, which hold up to 3,000 households, are home to families that range from two to four people living in 300 sq. ft apartments producing highly dense spaces (Asenjo and Vergara, 2019).

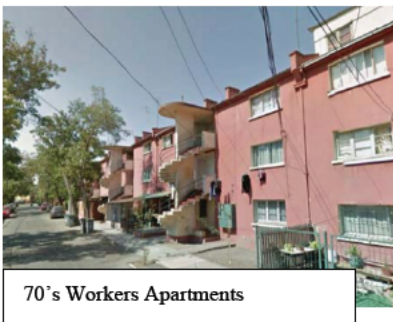


Fig. 3.6 Architecture in neighbourhood Santiago Centro

The housing situation caught the attention of the media and politicians in 2019, starting a heated debate around the subject and referring to the mega towers that were populating the city as “vertical ghettos” (Emol, 2017). Articles in the media referred to issues such as high crime rates, trash, hygiene, and lack of green areas, painting quite a grim picture for the inhabitants of the so-called “vertical ghettos.” In 2020, headlines like: “Agglomerations: The latent danger experienced by vertical ghettos in the midst of the epidemic,” became a common topic for the media due to the high rates of COVID-19 cases in Santiago Centro (*La Tercera*, 2020). High density buildings are also common in Estación Central and Independencia, both migrant hubs.

The following table shows the average household monthly income in Chile compared to that of migrant families for five relevant neighbourhoods in this study. This was calculated based on CASEN 2017 data with a purchasing power parities (PPP) conversion rate from the same year:

Neighbourhood	Average per capita household monthly income	Migrant average per capita household monthly income
Santiago Centro	1,390 USD (PPP)	936 USD (PPP)
Independencia	813 USD (PPP)	719 USD (PPP)
Estación Central	876 USD (PPP)	457 USD (PPP)
Las Condes	3,111 USD (PPP)	3,744 USD (PPP)
Recoleta	823 USD (PPP)	520 USD (PPP)

Table 3.1 Average per capita monthly income compared

These neighbourhoods are categorised by the Ministry of Housing as lower-middle class and low class income areas with the exception of Las Condes which is, in stark contrast, one of the wealthiest parts of the Metropolitan Region. A high percentage of migrants live in these middle-to low-class neighbourhoods and receive lower wages than native born citizens. The national origin of migrants that live in Las Condes, where their average income is substantially higher than the total, is distributed along people that come from Spain (11%), Argentina (13%), Uruguay (6%), and the United States (3%) versus Santiago Centro where the majority come from

Venezuela (40%) and Peru (30%), Independencia with a majority of Peruvians (37%) and Venezuelans (30%), or Estación Central with high populations from Haiti (43%) and Peru (42%) (CASEN, 2017). The nationalities prevalent in Las Condes have been better accepted and less discriminated against in Chile, and are considered to be 'whiter', easier to work with, and less prone to crime (Avaria et al., 2016). Expanding on these observations, migrants overall tend to have higher levels of education in Las Condes resulting in a population with better jobs and consequently higher economic status. The other neighbourhoods listed in table 3.1 reflect lower average salaries which correlates with lower educational levels (Fuentes and Vergara, 2019; Servicio Jesuita, 2020).

3.5.2 Migrants in the Chilean workforce

The multiple social complexities that afflict society in terms of health, housing, education, and gender take on a different hue when expressed in the migrant communities. It is impossible to review every one of the issues in Chile, but I will try to expose some important matters in order to help visualise the social context for this study, starting with labour and the insertion of migrants into the workforce.

Stefoni et al. (2017) address job segmentation between nationals and migrants in Chile, focusing mainly on construction workers and their conditions. They detail how recent migrants are involved in labour segmentation, where Chilean nationals are placed in jobs that are more stable, better paid, and have more benefits, while migrants often hold jobs that are unstable and with lower wages. One instructive example is the construction sector, which in Chile functions on the basis of subcontracting. Intersections of gender, race, immigration status, nationalities, and age may deepen the stratification of labour, making it even more difficult for migrants to find better jobs (Madero and Mora, 2011; Stefoni et al., 2017). In this particular sector, many male migrants are left with no choice but to adapt to precarious job conditions offered by construction companies who profit from the cost reduction implied by subcontracting and informality.

Even within precarious job sectors like construction, women encounter difficulty in finding jobs due to the physical demands they entail, leaving them at a disadvantage compared to male workers. Bustamante's (2017) case study of Haitian women in Chile documents their difficulties in finding legal jobs. These migrant women are employed mostly in cleaning services and house work, although even in these categories of work (which have low benefits and are often offered without legal work contracts) it usually takes them up to six months to be employed. The fact that many do not speak Spanish, which is often required for house work is preventing them from easy hires. Due to difficulties entering the formal workforce, migrant women are overrepresented in the sex trade sector, which they turn to in order to support families in their countries of origin (Carrere and Carrere, 2015). Afro-descendant women in particular, coming from countries like Haiti, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, have been specifically sexualized in Chile (Echeverría 2018). Tijoux's (2014; 2016) work about race and sexualizing practices delves into whiteness as key part of the Chilean identitarian imagery in contraposition to 'foreign' Black bodies are identified with "affection/lust/passion" (Tijoux, 2014, pp. 5-6). It is critical to consider the intersectionality of racial constructions, gender, and educational access to understand the impact these have on migrant women, and their incorporation into the Chilean workforce and social life in general (Guizardi and González, 2019). Migrant women can face gender violence, like domestic abuse and sexual harassment, with an intensity that depends on the multiple layers of subalternity that afflict them (Parson, 2010).

Despite the difficulties encountered by many migrant women, there are ethnographic reports and sociological studies that account for female migration in Latin America as an effective option for betterment in many social arenas. Several studies shed light onto how the migrant experience can be an emancipation tool for women who are subject to strict gender roles in their countries of origin, as the journey delivers financial independence but also diffuses dominant patriarchal ties prominent in the region (Alvites, 2011; Correa Pereira, 2014).

3.5.3 Migrant children in Chile

Gradually, scholarly work regarding migrants in Chile has begun focusing on migrant children, but this field is recent and the work on identifying the extent of the problems concerning children and youth is still in its early stages. Pavez (2012) presents relevant information about Peruvian children and school discrimination, some of which is mentioned in section 3.3.1, while other recent studies point toward how the educational space intensifies the difficulties children face related to racist practices and discourses in Chile (Córdova and Tijoux, 2015; Riedeman and Stefoni, 2015; Galaz and Poblete, 2017).

In Chile, children's rights have been under public scrutiny since 2019 when the systematic abuse from children's social services and foster care came to light with data that indicated that "in 2017, 100% of public foster care centers in Chile have reported abuse and in 50% of those reports sexual abuse has been verified" (Sepulveda and Guzman, 2019, np). Children around the world constitute a vulnerable population due to cultural hierarchies and unregulated violence in nations that are not compliant with the Convention on Children's Rights, especially migrant children who, on top of generalised violence, endure significant additional vulnerability due to displacement. However, migrant children have also configured themselves as subjects with agency, organising and relying on formulas that have allowed them to navigate the school space. Alvarez et al. (2019) compile several interviews which reveal these attitudes, particularly when children are exposed to bullying or harassment:

A boy told me he was going to rape me... one day all of the girls from the class told the teacher and he was expelled from school. (Valentina, 10 years, Perú, San Joaquín, August 2017)

My mom said that if someone called me '*negro*' she was going to the police, that is why I never tell her when they do, because I don't want children to go to prison. (Diego, 10 years, Colombia, San Joaquín, May 2017)

Some girl friends have defended me when the boys harass me in the playground, they even told them that if they touched me again they were going to punch them. (Carolina, 8 years, Dominican republic, Independencia, August 2017)

Nevertheless, there are limits to the resources migrant children can access and many times they are left helpless; Diego recounts, “some children shout ‘negro’ at me in the halls, they even spit at me, and I can’t really defend myself” (Alvarez et al., 2019, pp. 18-19).

Aguirre et al. (2019) review educational data from the last decade which shows a promising incorporation of migrant children into the national school system. Their study examines the concentration of foreign students in few schools located in relevant migrant neighbourhoods—Santiago Centro, Estación Central, Independencia—which indicate that, without policy interventions, segregation could occur, leaving migrant children isolated from Chilean nationals. They also explore evidence that shows that migrant children outperform Chilean students in terms of grades, but their scores are lower in national standardised testing. Amongst the migrant groups in Chile, Haitian children score the lowest due to language barriers, an issue that is still not addressed by the educational ministry in Chile.

The Chilean state has promoted the inclusion of migrant students throughout the school curriculum, aiming to solve the discrimination issues noted above (González et al., 2017). Nonetheless, reviewing the curriculum it becomes apparent that these efforts are mainly centred in promoting cultural valorisation by emphasising folklore and crafts, sometimes exoticising migrant children rather than tending to their educational needs (Ortiz et al., 2020). This is particularly noteworthy for this research: material culture cherished and preserved by migrants displayed in schools is not unproblematic; there can be a partition between what migrants think is worthy to show to the local public and what the locals accept as craft and folklore, or between what migrants display and keep in private spaces but do not share in public space. These questions certainly present muddled conceptions of the value given to material culture and identity, and how that is communicated within and outside the community in question.

3.5.4 Multidimensional poverty and discrimination

Studies show unmistakable differences between migrants' housing and that of locals, particularly in the first decades of living in the host country. Razmilic's (2019) study on migrant housing displays important differences in how migrants live, with higher degrees of residential segregation, overcrowding, and precariousness in property. Segregation rates vary when measured by specific nationality. For example, Colombians, Venezuelans, and Peruvians are highly concentrated in the Metropolitan Region in particular neighbourhoods like Santiago Centro, Independencia, Estación Central, and Recoleta, while other communities, usually non-recent migrants from Argentina or North America, are better distributed across the territory.

Due to the recent migration influx in Chile, Santiago City has experienced a housing shortage. Facing this reality, migrants' living situations have become intensely overcrowded, as families receive newly arrived relatives and friends in their living spaces. This situation led to the unregulated subdivision of urban housing and land invasion, with the settling of camps at the outskirts of the city, where 28% of the migrant population in Chile lives today (Lopez Morales et al., 2018).

It is important to note that unlawful occupation of the land in Chile, sites historically called "camps" do not have access to basic services like running water, trash removal, or sewerage, and are usually isolated from public transportation, schools, and hospitals. Most migrants rent unregulated subdivided houses in central urban areas when they first arrive. If they are not able to get a job and cannot afford rent, they tend to move out to poor quality housing in these self-constructed encampments. The process of obtaining a place to live is not without challenges due to the presence of discriminatory landlords who rent based on national origin, colour, and sex (Conteras et al., 2015). Living in overcrowded spaces or precarious housing due to unregulated rentals and constructions brings along several social issues related to health and segregation, further intensified when the migrant communities in question can end up in complete social

exclusion while living in camps at the outskirts of the city (Maturana, 2017; Alvarez Rojas et al., 2020).

As with problems surrounding housing segregation, poverty among migrants is concentrated in communities coming from Latin America, while migrants from Europe and North America tend to have a better average income than locals. Hernando (2019) points out that the most relevant deficiencies that afflict the migrant community, and where multidimensional poverty is reflected, are associated with lack of access to healthcare, social security, housing, education, and social networks. During their first year of arrival, 25% of the migrant population in Chile is not covered by any healthcare plan; as time goes by they tend to access better healthcare, but they are still below the national average level (Benítez and Velasco, 2019).

The neighbourhoods that host the majority of migrants in the Metropolitan Region—Santiago Centro, Independencia, Estación Central, and Recoleta—have had to deal with the multiple issues mentioned above. Most of the data related to housing, health, and education is more complex and deficient in neighbourhoods where migrants have settled, particularly when considering recent migration from Latin America. There is a stark exception when it comes to migrants from North America or Europe, who typically settle in wealthier neighbourhoods and are not affected by the examined social issues. Gonzalez et al. (2019) present interesting sociological data regarding nationalist feelings in the Chilean population most exposed to migration, that is the Chilean citizen inhabitants of neighbourhoods receiving recent migrant flows. Their analysis shows that these nationalistic feelings are more subdued in comparison to those presented in research from developed countries, though they still exist and intensify when the economy is perceived to be struggling. In this sense, migrant host neighbourhoods deal with a variety of social issues that are not merely an intrinsic part of urban or institutional development but have to do with perceptions and strained social interactions.

Alongside standard lawmaking and public policy discussions examined in section 3.4, the “Humanitarian Return Plan” was put in place in 2018, which impacted social perceptions of the

Haitian community in Chile. This plan aimed to offer a 'safe' return to their countries of origin to those migrants who: "...are in a situation of vulnerability, due to not having achieved an effective integration, sustainability or regularity in the country, for labour, language, sociocultural reasons or because they cannot comply with the requirements established to access the different means of ordinary or extraordinary regularisation (Resolución Núm. 5744 exenta 2018, p. 1).

As of today, the Return Plan has only been directed towards the return of Haitian migrants, elucidating institutional discrimination against this group. Latin American migrants may experience more social precariousness than other migrants, but this particular plan was basically aimed at an even narrower national group. The argument of the resolution places responsibility on the migrants for their social vulnerability, completely disregarding government responsibility in social issues (Stang 2020). The demographic effects of the Plan were perhaps less potent than shifts in discourse: in 2019, 1,262 Haitians returned and 179,333 remained in Chile, but the negative perceptions and social exclusion of the Haitian community has been profound (Stang, 2000, p. 197).

Due to social issues experienced during the last decades in Chile, intensified by the social outburst in 2019 and the economic crisis produced by COVID-19, the migrant population has been left in a very vulnerable state. The media has taken these issues and government policies like the Return Plan and adopted rhetoric based on 'otherism' and 'danger' related to migrants (Dammert, 2020). Blanco et al.'s (2019) study clearly shows that general crime rates among migrants are substantially lower than for local individuals; however, the press has insisted on stereotyping the Latin American migrant population as criminals. In this sense, both negative perceptions and social problems have concentrated on recent migrant populations coming from Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Haiti. In turn, the same matters have intensified in the neighbourhoods and spaces that these communities have occupied.

3.6 Migrant heritage and memory in Chile

This last section examines the available literature regarding migrant material culture in Chile during the last decades in order to assess what is yet to be investigated. Bonhomme (2013) delves into the ways in which Peruvian migrants in Chile inhabit their private space through the analysis of household possessions and food. Her study shows the multiple negotiations, reflected in the home, that belonging to two worlds entails. Peru is portrayed and cherished through photography and food, while Chile is represented in consumer goods like technology. The fundamental issue in Bonhomme's research is how the home becomes a space for Peruvians to reconstruct their identity, selecting those elements that distinguish their new selves, food being what they have left behind versus the new 'modern' elements Chile has brought to their lives. Looking into materiality in the public space, Imilan (2014) reviews how Peruvian restaurants have proliferated throughout the city of Santiago, settling a multicultural economic landscape both driven by migration and promoted and accepted by locals due to the international recognition of Peruvian food. More research on migrant practices, imagery, and belonging through material culture is being conducted through a national grant awarded to Bonhomme et al. from 2020 to 2024.

Music and religious practices have also been examined in order to account for the importance of memory and affect within migration and transnationalism. Sentiments embodied in Peruvian music during recent decades in Chile show the journeys these migrants have endured, first within the border of Peru, moving from rural to urban areas, and later coming to Chile. The songs, instruments, and saloons where this music is played all function as containers that hold multiple aspects of mobility among the Peruvian community, following many years of internal national displacement before crossing Chile's borders (Facuse and Torres, 2017). The study on religious *Santería* practice and material culture shows how this practice is representative of a double-entry migration, one where Chileans went to Cuba as exiles after the coup in 1973, and later as Cubans began arriving in Chile. The crossed journeys brought *Santería* to Chile, either by Cuban migrants

or returned Chileans from Cuba, and is today embedded in salsa clubs, restaurants, and stores in the City of Santiago (Saldívar, 2015).

3.7 Chapter conclusions

The context presented throughout this chapter gives a general overview of the situation recent migrants to Chile have encountered. Migrant characteristics have changed throughout Chilean history, and so have the issues affecting them. However, the underlying perception that white migration or persons coming from western countries is somehow positive for the course of the nation has persisted since the creation of the republic in the 19th century. The creation of the republic relied on modernising efforts that equated the European with civilization, while anything that emanated from Latin America was deemed backward and problematic (Lempérière, 2005). A dichotomy similar to Said's (2014) representational division of the west versus the orient was ingrained in the Chilean narrative of nationhood, and has permeated the country's views on "good" versus "bad" types of migrants.

The aforementioned views on modernity were deployed in the attitudes and policy regarding migrants throughout the 19th century, positively receiving Europeans like Italians, Germans, and English, while making things harder for Middle Eastern, Jewish, and Chinese migrants. Some of these attitudes persisted in the 20th century, while others were diffused with the passing of time. At the end of the 20th century, the migration framework took a substantial turn, as Peruvian migration set a new pace for incoming migration to Chile, changing the landscape of the city with their food, commercial networks, and religious festivals. Neighbourhoods like Santiago Centro and Independencia became new bubbling centres for migrant communities, gaining media attention and opening up new discussions about migration policy making in Chile.

In 2016, Chile underwent a considerable leap in migration flows from Latin America. The migrant landscape transformed itself and new demographics changed many patterns and perceptions Chileans had towards what mobility meant to the country. Today, Chile's biggest migrant communities share neighbourhoods (Santiago Centro, Independencia, Recoleta and Estación Central) that have now become host to these flourishing communities. These changes ended up propelling a new immigration law that was passed in 2020, though it is still being reviewed by the Constitutional Court due to claims of lack of protection for minorities. In this sense, the bill proposed follows old migration policy patterns imbued in Chile during the Cold War era, where focus was placed on regulating borders in order to protect state security, thereby forsaking individual rights. Indeed there are improvements in the protection of women and digitisation of visa processes, but there is a lack of consideration for migrants' rights and wellbeing once they arrive in Chile.

Policymaking and socio-economic issues like housing overcrowding, female sexualisation, and school integration intertwine with migrants' daily lives. Material culture, practices, and festivities develop in the context of each and every one of the issues examined in this chapter, and keeping them in mind throughout this research is crucial. While a few studies delve into Peruvian food and material culture, there are considerable gaps regarding heritage within new communities like Venezuelans, Haitians, and Colombians. How have migrants coming to Chile since 2016 accommodated and built their communities? Have they followed similar memory and heritage-making patterns as Peruvians had before them?

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The three main questions of this study are: How do migrants perceive themselves and their community through an examination of both material and intangible heritage? What are the connections between objects, practices, and memory within migrant groups? What is the integral role of memories within a group's intangible and tangible heritage, particularly in the context of movement and dislocation? Answering these questions requires the inclusion of contrasting experiences and perspectives on what heritage, identity, movement, and memory mean for different individuals and communities. As such, I needed a methodological framework that would allow me to study and analyse competing narratives that are surfaced across different media, such as visual, auditory, tactile, and narrative forms. It was important to use a flexible methodological structure that would allow me to engage with a variety of sources, like in-depth interviews and participant observation, complementing and cross-examining both with contextual information found by analysing coverage in national media and other written sources referring to contemporary migration in Chile.

This chapter explains the methodological framework that mediated my approach in conducting this research. In the first section, I explore the research philosophy that shaped my data collection and the methodological design I applied to answer my research questions; I also identify the key challenges these methods present and my attempts to minimise and overcome them. This is followed by an account of the methods used to carry out the fieldwork and its analysis. The final section of the chapter addresses the limitations and ethical considerations of this project.

4.2 Research philosophy

The approach taken for this project is centred in a qualitative methodology which uses interpretative frameworks to articulate and inform research questions that involve participants and groups related to migrant communities (cf. Creswell and Poth, 2018). As discussed in Chapter 2, migrant groups articulate and negotiate their identity as both communal and individual processes, anchoring their memories and identification in different sites, either material or immaterial. Heritage is embedded, while also being created and recreated within the lives of migrants, and enquiring about it requires a flexible methodology that can help reveal how the home and the neighbourhood house objects and practices that are intrinsically part of migrants' identities. A qualitative methodology allows me to analyse how the above is developed in Santiago.

The strategy adopted for inquiry in this qualitative research is an ethnographic study, an approach which has a longstanding presence in the academic tradition of the social sciences and humanities. As anthropology and sociology became professionalised disciplines, ethnography spread to additional fields that have nurtured the methodology, complemented by visual and sensory studies which are crucial for the understanding of migrants' individual experiences, as well as broader imagery concerning identity and heritage (Pink, 2001; 2009). This has motivated my chosen qualitative approach, following an ethnographic strategy that combines visual and sensory methodological analyses.

The overarching question of the project is to understand how and where migrants place their memories within the home and the neighbourhood while creating communal heritage. This is not a simple task because it involves delving into how something intangible, namely value or memory, is crystalized in material form. There is no unifying migrant experience, thus methods

are required to be flexible enough to capture the nuances of the multiple individual narratives, while also allowing an analysis that incorporates how these individual experiences intersect with national discourses, government institutions, and community narratives. The analytical procedure involved combining multiple sources of data, categorized into different types: media, historical accounts, photographs, and in-depth interviews. I began by identifying recurring themes within the in-depth interviews, which were then cross-referenced with the other data types. This approach enabled the identification of consistent themes that emerged across multiple forms of data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the connections between them. A mixed-methods qualitative framework with an ethnographic strategy of inquiry allowed for the combination of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and multi-sensory analysis that was best suited to handle the complexities the research questions posed.

4.2.1 Qualitative mixed-methods approach

In order to tackle the research questions for this project I used home interviews, public short informal conversational interviews, and visual research so as to engage the senses during fieldwork. I took a mixed-methods qualitative approach which, as Mason proposes, has tremendous value when trying to answer “questions about social experience and lived realities,” which target the nature of this investigation (2006, p. 10). Qualitative thinking is a starting point from which the data collected during fieldwork, plus other types of sources like newspaper articles, migration law, public policy papers, and media depictions of migrants, exceed traditional boundaries of methodological work and can be managed in “terms of multi-dimensional research strategies that transcend or even subvert the so-called qualitative [vs quantitative] divide” (Mason, 2006, p. 10).

4.3 Geographic location and timeframe of the fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted between July 2021 and January 2022 in the city of Santiago de Chile, particularly within the neighbourhoods Santiago Centro and Estación Central, which combined are home to 30.5% of the migrant population in the Metropolitan Region (INE, 2019; see also fig. 3.3). Santiago Centro and Estación Central harbour 25% and 5.5% of the migrant population in the capital's region respectively. These are the zones with the highest number of migrants in the capital, and the proportion of migrants within each neighbourhood is high —migrants make up 45.4% of the population in Santiago Centro and 26.4% in Estación Central—. This, added to the fact that they are the two main poles for migrant commercial and social activity, were the main reasons I selected these two areas to conduct fieldwork (see sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.3 for more on Santiago Centro and Estación Central).

During my fieldwork I combined individual home interviews with neighbourhood observations, setting up meetings for the home interviews when the participants were available, and leaving the rest of the day for neighbourhood observation. This strategy gave me the opportunity to familiarise myself with the participants' environment, spending time within the shops, streets, and parks that surrounded their homes. On the days when I had no scheduled interviews I conducted observations and informal conversations with passers-by throughout the neighbourhood, including in two of the main commercial epicentres of the city—La Vega and Estación Central Market. These two markets are where most migrant commercial activity is carried out in Santiago. Here they sell their particular produce and home brands like Venezuelan flour, Colombian spices, or Peruvian corn. I also mapped the different businesses—food stores, international phone-call centres, and restaurants—in both neighbourhoods that were owned by or catered particularly to the migrant community and visited them several times, talking to workers and customers.

This project also included archival research on contextual information such as relevant news coverage, policies, and information from organisations working with migrant communities in the study area (table 4.1). Fieldwork and analysis stages which roughly followed one another while overlapping in some of the phases are likewise detailed in table 4.1. The table is colour-coded to reflect the different stages of work: green for archival research (section 4.5), blue for research on migrant homes (section 4.6), purple for research on migrant neighbourhoods (section 4.7), and orange for analysis (section 4.8). Details of dates, interview participants and observations can be found in Appendix A and B.

ACTIVITY	July- 2021	Aug- 2021	Sept- 2021	Oct- 2021	Nov- 2021	Dec- 2021	Jan- 2022
Newspaper and media contents relating to public debate on migrants in Chile, 2000–2021							
National Chilean Archive – Documents and photographs related to migration							
Municipalidad de Santiago documents, website, and community centre							
Municipalidad de Estación Central documents, website, and community centre							
Servicio Migrante Jesuita documents, website, and community centre							
Individual home interviews and observation							
Collection of images from homes							
Informal interviews with passers-by in Santiago Centro							
Informal interviews with passers-by in Estación Central							

Observation of Santiago Centro and Estación Central							
Observation of local stores and markets in Santiago Centro and Estación Central							
Observation of community events							
Analysis							

Table 4.1: Stages of the research

4.4 Research design

The research design for this project was based on qualitative methods with a mixed-method approach. Even though quantitative and qualitative approaches are not incompatible paradigms, qualitative research starts from the position that the researcher is embedded in the construction of knowledge, but also that this enables the exploration of cultural processes and dynamics, which is the main objective for this project and hence the starting point for my research design (cf. Bryman, 2008). In this section I will explain and describe the three main pillars for my fieldwork: 1. In-depth interviews, 2. Studying the home and the neighbourhood visually, and 3. Studying the home and the neighbourhood from a sensory perspective. My fieldwork was divided in three different stages:

1. July and August 2021: Examination of printed and online written records on the history and imaginaries of migration in Chile, such as news media coverage and archives of public authorities and NGOs. These sources provided important contextual information in the form of a general impression of how migrants were depicted in a national context as well as in the city of Santiago de Chile.
2. July, August, and November 2021: Research within the homes of migrants where in-depth interviews were conducted in combination with participant observation. The months of

September and October I turned to research in the neighbourhood due to major national festivities.

3. September, October, November, and December 2021: Observation of the neighbourhoods of Santiago Centro and Estación Central and festivities like Independence Day and Christmas celebrated in public spaces, for which I used participant observation and a multi-sensory approach.

The three stages of the research are discussed in further detail in the following sections.

4.4.1 Examination of archives and media

Before the fieldwork stage began, I conducted an examination of archives, media, and literature in order to understand the historical context, imagery, and publicly available documentation of migration in Chile. As discussed in chapter 3, Chilean territory has been experiencing migration since before the colonial period, with several indigenous populations moving in and out of its borders, migration linked to the ‘discovery of America’, the forced migration of enslaved people under colonisation, and different migrant waves after independence. Even though the main focus of this study is not the history of migration, understanding its development in Chile provides a framework that is essential for the analysis and interpretation of the present situation and how contemporary migrants build and negotiate their identity and heritage within the home and neighbourhood.

The archival research was mainly carried out in the National Chilean Archive, located in Santiago Centro, between July 2021 and August 2021, focusing on their collections regarding migration. The National Archive holds an extensive collection of Chilean historical documents where I was able to track information about the different communities that settled in Chile during the last two centuries. In their audiovisual collection, the Women and Gender Audiovisual Fund, I found oral testimonies of women who had migrated from rural to urban areas and domestic workers that came from migrant families. Of particular interest for this research were the documents related to German migration in the 19th century, literature from a seminar held in January 2017

called “The past and the present: afro-descendants in Chile,” created and archived by the humanities faculty of Universidad de Chile, and the Human Rights Archive, where I studied the latest tensions in Chile between the rights of migrants and national laws.

The archival research stage started with the systematic reading of documents related to the historical context of migration in Chile, after which I broadened my scope to documents related to public policies and laws regarding migration. I did the latter in the physical and digital archives of the National Archive, Chile’s biggest migrant NGO *Servicio Migrante Jesuita* (Jesuit Migrant Service), and the local authorities in Santiago Centro and Estación Central. This gave me access to population surveys in each neighbourhood, and allowed me to cross-check information regarding work and housing against national demographic statistics. I also reviewed published books, reports, national surveys, and documents that helped me construct a critical historical account of migration in Chile and examine the current situation, from which I developed context-sensitive interview questions. This archival research offered me a lens to understand how migrants constructed their identities, heritage, and memory in their homes and neighbourhoods in response to these wider discourses.

Finally, I analysed the media perception of migration in newspaper and television news from 2000–2021, which has shaped many of the wider social perceptions about migrants in Chile (Stefoni and Brito, 2019; Dammert and Erlandsen, 2020; Bracho, 2022; Figueiredo et al., 2023). To access these secondary sources, I reviewed newspapers kept in the National Archive starting with the of city Santiago’s traditional media (El Mercurio and La Tercera) and then expanded to smaller local newspapers and adjusted my focus geographically to include media from northern cities like Arica and Iquique, reflecting the routes most of my participants used to enter Chile by foot through the northern border. This helped me prepare the interviews and observations with a sense of possible tensions that could be generated between new migrants and the local communities. This review of media coverage complemented the analysis of formal documents and literature found in government archives. As the analysis chapters will show, the migrants

themselves are very aware of the ways in which they are portrayed in the national news and by government agencies, and this has shaped their practices and reflections in important ways.

4.4.2 In-depth interviews

The ethnographic interviews implemented in this study took place in the months of July, August, and November 2021, and went beyond talk and text—they included sensory methods grounded in the observation of aesthetics, materials, and performative analysis. Pechurina explores the importance of reaching the “participant’s perspectives and knowledge articulated in their ‘own’ language,” which is more than how words are used or what they mean for the speaker but includes physical cues, tones, and expressions (2015, p. 64). Accordingly, I not only had to be attentive to what the interviewee was saying, but also had to ask them to explain the meaning of their words, gestures, and silences. I complemented the audio recordings of the interview with notes that would later remind me of cues that the audio could not catch.

The accounts of research participants come from a personal and intimate understanding of the significance that objects and practices have for them outside institutionalised definitions of heritage, identity, and memory. Importantly, there are generational, gender, ethnic, and social differences within the contemporary migrant communities in Chile. For instance, Venezuelans, Colombians, and Haitians share certain colonial regional similarities, but they also have radical differences between and within them which are difficult to investigate when relying only on ‘official’ accounts like those that may be sourced from the Chilean national media and government museums, archives, and statistics (Torres, 1942; Lucena, 2007; Melo, 2017; Scott, 2021; Ecarri, 2023). Hence the personal home interview serves as a better tool to delve into those differences and see from the migrants’ own perspectives.

The interviews were arranged through three conduits: I looked for participants by posting notifications about my study and soliciting participation in social media groups of migrant

communities in Santiago de Chile, through online postings in organisations specialising in migrant support such as the Jesuit Migrant Service and the National Institute of Human Rights, and by making contacts myself during fieldwork in neighbourhoods where I asked at community centres and local migrant stores if anyone was interested in participating. I first conducted observations in Santiago Centro and Estación Central, walking around commercial and residential areas at different times and days of the week in order to experience the variations in the landscape of daily life and understand what seemed to be a priority for neighbourhood pedestrians when looking for interview participants. Avoiding assumptions by experiencing and understanding the field before setting up interviews can facilitate better interview questions and the forging of trust with the participants (Spradley, 1980; O'Reilly, 2012; Harrison, 2014,). It is important to point out that the ethnographic interview as a method differs from an interview intended to extract statistical data or mere text since it encompasses "more than just a transcript of questions and answers" (Harrison, 2014, p. 26). Environmental elements like place and time, and social cues and dynamics such as body language, dialogue, relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and silence have a direct bearing on the information collected (O'Reilly, 2012; Harrison, 2014). These qualitative observations impact the results of this research, and will therefore be discussed in section 4.5 on positioning and ethics.

As home interviews took place within the home of each participant, they were immersed in their own space which opened the doors to a comfortable, spontaneous style of conversation, different from interviews in more formal and institutional spaces. This undoubtedly collides with the fact that I, as interviewer, was stepping into intimate spaces as an outsider, generating a series of conditions that influenced what was said and what was kept quiet. My positionality in relation to the research participants in terms of my nationality, gender, age, social privilege, and ethnicity will be discussed in section 4.5. However, the topics of conversation and questions were directed in order to emphasise the interviewees' own perspectives and knowledge about the artefacts within their homes, as well as their stories, feelings, and experiences around them, answered in their own language and social codes. This approach fits with the objective of understanding migrants' imagery, identity, memory, and heritage represented through their own

voices and individual nuanced experiences. In this sense, it was important to explain the terms and objectives of the project before the interview so the participants could prepare, considering their stories, meaningful objects, and spaces as a starting place for conversation.

Including home-based interviews in this research involved acknowledging potential risks for both the interviewee and the interviewer, given the intimate nature of sharing a private space with an unfamiliar person. To ensure a safe environment, I offered participants the option to have someone accompany them during the interview. Additionally, the interview process was thoroughly explained beforehand to prevent any surprises, and participants often knew of me through references from friends or the institution that facilitated our connection, which helped build trust. On my side, I took precautions by sharing my live location with a trusted person during interviews. When interviewing men, considering the high statistics of domestic violence in Latin America, I ensured that others were present to avoid being alone. In cases where I had to conduct interviews with men alone, I arranged for a trusted person to wait outside the house. These safety measures, which account for issues like gender-based violence, are a valuable procedure for any research involving in-depth interviewing in private spaces worldwide.

Before the interviews, I emailed an informational brochure to the participants. The brochure explained the purpose and methodology of the study, and included a consent form for recording the interview and using both the interview content and the participant's image in photo documentation. Delivering these documents in advance allowed the participants time to read them independently, ask questions, and make informed decisions regarding anonymity (see the informational letter in Appendix D, the consent form in Appendix E, and the photography consent form in Appendix F). With this information in mind, the interviewees answered my questions and in some instances even directed the interview themselves, using the previously delivered information as memory triggers which led them to remember, look, and ask their families about elements of their biographies and identities that might otherwise be obscured. Here I have taken inspiration from the approach that “interviewing people in their own territory, and allowing them

to [organise] the context the way they wish, is the best strategy. It allows them to relax much more than they would in less familiar surroundings” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019, p. 121).

I conducted 24 home interviews which lasted on average two to three hours. Twenty-one of those interviews were with individual participants, two interviews were conducted for mother and daughter participants who were together at home, and one interview was conducted with a couple who shared a home. Out of the 21 individual interviews, three were conducted online via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions set at the time (see Appendix A for specific details on each interviewee). Given this scenario, the conversation surrounding objects and the associated memories of the migrants’ experiences mainly unfolded in their actual context—the settings of the home and the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, given COVID-19 protocols in Chile when the fieldwork was conducted, three interviews took place online, preventing me from actually experiencing the objects and atmosphere in person. However, this approach gave me access to participants I could not otherwise interview, and it might have shed light on issues that are harder to approach face to face, like matters concerning racism which were explored more in depth through Zoom, where the participants may have felt less intimidated by my presence. In this context, I believe it is essential to consider digital interviews for future research, particularly for follow-up purposes. This approach allows for the initial benefits of face-to-face interaction and can subsequently facilitate the exploration of more challenging topics through the unique advantages offered by a digital format.

The physical separation during Zoom interviews fostered comfort and safety for participants, providing a level of anonymity. This allowed them to express thoughts and experiences, especially on sensitive topics like racism, without immediate fear of judgement. The virtual format created psychological distance, facilitating open and detailed descriptions of racist experiences. The virtual space may have appeared less threatening than face-to-face encounters, making discussions about personal and potentially uncomfortable experiences more accessible. However, in “online environments, the construction of identity is a process that must be initiated more deliberately.... Offline, the body can simply walk around and be responded to by others,

providing the looking glass with which one comes to know the self” (Markham, 2005, p. 249). The interviews that were organised through an online platform were built mostly on the participants’ production of discourse, either by the formation of dialogue or through the objects they showed on screen during the conversation. This required a deliberate effort on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee to exchange information because some non-verbal cues and spatial environmental information that would be present in shared physical space is missing. Digital communication technologies highlight certain structures of interaction while obscuring others, hence opening the door for information that could not be extracted through face-to-face interactions and closing it for other important cues that are only available when meeting in person (Mann and Stewart, 2000; Markham, 2005).

An essential topic when addressing interview methods is sampling: how did I find my participants? First, I approached the community as an outsider, a Chilean national without any formal ties to immigrant groups, such as being a government worker or an NGO representative. This enabled me to establish individual trusted relationships with my participants when approaching them in the streets, by email, or via social media—I was an impartial party without conflict or hidden interest. However, being an outsider meant that when I contacted participants I received a few rejections or no response, whereas when I was introduced by a trusted mediator like a church member, NGO, or friend, people were more open to accept the invitation and less suspicious about my research. The process of finding informants demonstrated the variable and negotiated nature of power relations (Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach, 2009). As a researcher, I generally set the topic and frame for the interviews, while my participants set the conditions on which they would participate. Qualitative research methodology places focus on specific people or situations because they offer an information rich perspective which undoubtedly helps answer sociocultural questions like the ones posed for this project. Hence, non-random sampling better fits this purpose than random sampling, which would be more appropriate in a quantitative context (Williams, 2000; Rapley, 2017; Gill, 2020). I aimed to create a diverse sample of migrants, encompassing various ages, genders, ethnicities, and social positions. However, achieving diversity in age proved challenging, given that the migrant population in Chile is predominantly

young, concentrating between 15 to 44 years old. Consequently, my sample reflects this demographic, with almost all participants ranging from 19 to 48 years old—underage subjects were left out for ethical reasons—with only one participant being 60 years old (Stefoni, 2020). I deliberately focused on including migrants from the LGBTQ+ community, recognizing that their experiences tend to be more marginalised than heteronormative experiences. This effort resulted in the inclusion of four participants from the LGBTQ+ community. Moreover, my sample encompasses individuals from various genders and ethnic backgrounds, reflecting racial differences and diverse social positions.

Disclosing aspects of my own biography, like the fact that I too had been a migrant while growing up (which will be further discussed in section 4.5), helped me connect and establish rapport with participants that persuaded them to participate and disclose personal perspectives that would otherwise stay hidden; yet simultaneously this made me vulnerable, too (Birch and Miller, 2002). Feminist perspectives in research have identified notions of friendship, connection, interpretation and power in the researcher-interviewee relationship, illuminating that a certain “moral high ground” is needed to maintain good relationships with the participants in order to establish an honest and cooperative context to gather information (Oakley, 1981; Reissman, 1987; Birch and Miller, 2002, p. 92). This sometimes placed me in awkward situations that made me revisit “old ghosts” from my past, like the feelings of nostalgia and frustration from my own migration experience (cf. Rogers and Ludhra, 2011, p. 45). This constant adaptation and adjustment to fieldwork produced rich and trustful relationships, and helped me map out a group of recent migrants who shared commonalities of neighbourhood and nationality (mostly Venezuelans, Colombians, and Haitians). The interviewees referred me to their friends or neighbours, or were willing to vouch for me to participants I found through different channels by telling them that I could be trusted in their homes. This social cycle of trust, referrals, and networking produced a process of snowball sampling focused on people who had migrated to Chile in the last decade, who belonged to middle- or lower-class income groups due to the political and economic crisis in their home countries, and who lived in, or were once residents of, Santiago Centro and Estación Central.

The described strategy for choosing participants and producing the sample follows the logic of qualitative research where interpretation of the data collected is one of the main goals. The method used was a mix of purposive sampling strategy and referral processes, or snowball sampling. The purposive sampling strategy requires a previous understanding of the topic and looks for “certain categories of individuals [that] may have a unique, different or important perspective on the phenomenon in question and their presence in the sample should be ensured” (Mason, 1996; Robinson, 2013, p. 32). Additionally, chain referrals—asking participants for the recommendation of acquaintances—was very useful for reaching participants that would trust me enough to let me into their homes (cf. Robinson, 2013). Hence, random samples intended for sociological surveys that represent the general population being researched are not necessary because interpretation for this study is based in human experience, which is not homogenous (Williams, 2000). The aim of ethnographic interviews in a qualitative research project like this one is to develop “an idiographic body of knowledge” which describe individual cases which can provide information for wider social processes (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p. 238). In this sense, my participant sample reflects a specific community that lives in a particular part of the city with a wide range of similarities but also distinctions that make their identities and heritage such a rich but elusive subject for study.

The interview questions (Appendix C) for this project aimed to direct the conversation toward the proposed research questions, but were broad enough to allow for answers reflecting personal understanding and language, and, following the format of a semi-structured interview, were intended as guidelines only, with full flexibility to discuss issues in the order that appeared most natural in the course of the conversations, and to pursue unexpected experiences and points brought up by the interviewees (Pink, 2001; Pink, 2009; cf. Blackstone, 2012; Griffiths et al, 2015; Pechurina, 2015). I based the interviews on the questions in Appendix C, while engaging in open conversation following what the interviewees were signaling, delving into the themes that they proposed, and pursuing what they said with follow-up questions like “why do you say that?” or “what do you mean when you say that a certain object is not important?” to probe for

meaning. In the field, interviews stimulated references to the physical setting in a more dynamic and spontaneous form. However, through online media I kept in mind the situations and environments that had presented themselves in previous face-to-face home interviews and asked questions that could bridge the digital gap as far as possible. Taking into consideration the above, the face-to-face nature of this project was essential, and 90% of the information was extracted from in-person fieldwork.

The ethnographic interview within the home offered me a multisensory perspective, enlightening how materiality held or anchored meaning for the participants. In interview subjects' homes, I had the opportunity to observe and learn how participants accommodated themselves within their space, as well as to taste food and drinks while interacting with them and asking them to elaborate further on the preparation of certain foods, the use of specific tools, or the meaning of certain objects—meanings which often seemed unimportant, until further consideration was elicited through observation and questions. Asking the participants to share photo albums or examining personal diaries alone without the home interviewer, as other studies have done, would not give optimal access to information that is better gathered when listening to the informants' own personal perspectives about the meanings and nuances of their practices and possessions (Pink, 2001; Pechurina, 2015, p. 66).

Unlike the intimate and in-depth conversations I conducted during home interviews, the neighbourhood fieldwork in Santiago Centro and Estación Central involved shorter, more casual interviews that grew out of my interactions with workers in local shops or street markets, and spontaneous conversations with neighbourhood passers-by or residents. As mentioned above and specified in table. 4.1, I conducted weekly outings to both neighbourhoods for the duration of six months of fieldwork, focusing on participant observation triangulated with short interviews and informal conversations. These interactions helped delve into the meaning of neighbourhood social life and the expressions of community aesthetics— decorations, sounds, and smells—in businesses and markets, as well as how memories were anchored in specific locations like food stores, phonebooths, markets, churches, and residential areas.

4.4.2.1 Material culture

During the interview process, both at home and in informal neighbourhood exchanges, I took and collected photographs of a wide range of material culture that anchors the memories and identities of the participants. I sought permission from participants when taking photographs, and, generally, they were very eager and excited to showcase their objects for photography. Only one participant requested that I refrain from portraying her family albums, where images of her family were displayed. Religious artefacts, cooking tools, particular foods, photo albums, national flags, decorations, and books make up just a small part of the things that migrants carry with them along their travels. This materiality holds not only meaning in their material form but is also an intrinsic part of non-material heritage. During fieldwork, I photographed or collected important materials for analysis and produced fieldnotes associated with the objects in question. In table 4.2, I show the objects analysed, how they were collected, and the quantity. Fig. 4.1 shows an example of the collection of objects—a figurine of Saint José de Gregorio and the food served for the interview.

Object	Method of collection	Quantity
Food	Videos and Photographs	2 videos/ 41 images
Buildings	Photographs	18
Cooking Artefacts	Photographs	16
Decorations	Photographs	68
Documents	Photographs	4
National memorabilia	Photographs	7
Travel items	Photographs	11
Personal and family photos	Photographs	43
Sentimental/Personal objects	Photographs	111
Neighbourhood (streets, markets, phonebooths/restaurants/parks)	Photographs	120

Table 4.2 Photographic material and videos



Fig. 4.1 Figurine of Saint Dr. José de Gregorio Hernández and Venezuelan food prepared for the interview 7/18/2021

4.4.3 Participant observation

Participant observation was a central part of the methodology I employed to investigate the neighbourhood as a space where migrants not only live but go about their daily business and build their new homes; it also was central to understanding different dimensions of the meaning of home for the migrant community. Adopting an ethnographic approach to observation involved immersing myself in various aspects of daily life throughout my fieldwork period. This included attending community events, socialising in participant environments like lunches and birthday parties, and taking part in community celebrations and festivals. As Hammersley and Atkinson describe, observation in ethnography involves actively participating in the communities' daily life, listening to what is said, and gathering those small pieces of data that if not observed carefully can go unnoticed (2019, p. 3). Participant observation provides the opportunity to learn “the explicit and tacit aspects of [people’s] life routines and their culture,” explicit culture being what people can communicate about themselves versus tacit aspects of life that remain hidden from our awareness, like the level of discomfort we have when neighbours listen to their music too loud or greet you in an unfamiliar way—kissing, shaking hands, hugging (De Walt and De Walt, 2011, p. 12).

This project is centred in qualitative research, the goal of which is to define and understand the nature of a phenomenon rather than assess the scale and distribution of this phenomenon, like in quantitative methods (Mason, 2006; De Walt and De Walt, 2011). Participant observation is one of the strategies used to collect data that is specific to certain moments, like festivals, street socialisation, and market life. Some examples of the situations observed were the *Día de las Velitas*, celebrated in Colombia every December 7th in commemoration of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, which is now celebrated in Santiago Centro by the Colombian community; daily life at *La Vega Central*, Chile’s biggest fresh produce, food, and household items market located in Santiago Centro, and one of migrants’ central meeting, working, and shopping points; and religious services in the churches located in Estación Central which present a focal meeting point for some migrant groups (for a complete list of the activities observed, refer to

Appendix B). I attended various activities, where I typically recorded, photographed, and actively took notes onsite; if it was not possible to do so in the moment due to religious or social propriety, I created notes later. These notes encompassed various interactions, including brief conversations with passersby, as well as specific sounds, smells, and colours relevant to each situation. For pre-organised events, I contacted the organisation in charge and identified myself in advance to ensure that they had no issues with my attendance; for daily, non-planned activities, I walked around, participated in street life, shopped, and talked to business tenants.

When visiting homes, the observation was just as important as interviewing; participant observation was in fact an essential element of the interviews themselves. Entering the participants' homes meant sharing the intimate spaces where they displayed their inner lives and where they sometimes also discovered, together with me as the researcher, things they had not been conscious of beforehand. As each interview developed, I asked participants about their surroundings, pointing at things that caught my attention; sometimes material objects around the house would pop up in the conversation. When this happened, I asked them to show me the objects and explain their meaning, and I would take a photograph with their consent and assistance. Not all photographs taken in home interviews could be published, even if participants gave consent, because of ethical reasons (see section 4.5). Thus, the photographs of objects and private spaces were taken with the purpose of building documentary evidence which, combined with notes and recorded interviews, formed a coherent body of information that illustrated and enriched the data collected from this study and helped answer the research questions (Hurdley, 2006; Money, 2007; Pink, 2009; Pink, 2011). Many of the photographs taken are not published in this dissertation, nor will I make them available in other publications. However, as Money states, "capturing the visual representations of the context in which the interviews took place [helps] overcome some of the problems related to ensuring accuracy and validity of interview data" (2007, p. 374).

4.5 Positionality and ethics

Qualitative research involving participants and delving into their personal lives always encounters ethical considerations about protecting the data after the interview and dealing with the positionality of both researcher and interview subject. In this section, I reflect on how different aspects of identity affected the research in its design, outcomes, data collection, and analysis. I will also consider the other ethical issues that were important when conducting this study.

4.5.1 Positionality

Conducting fieldwork in my home country involved critically rethinking the history of the nation, the impact of colonialism, urban planning, and the multiple national imaginaries that make up what Chile or Chileans are supposed to signify. However, I also had to take into account that while this research is focused on and carried out in Chile, it is centred on migrant communities, groups from which I am an outsider. There are both challenges and advantages when thinking about the insider/outsider dilemma. An insider is one who belongs to the group being studied— in this case a researcher who is a migrant in Chile—while the outsider is the investigator who does not belong to the group in question—in this case a Chilean national (Brewer, 1986; Denzin, 1992; Williams and Heikes, 1993; Gair, 2012). However, there is a small grey area to consider in my case, which is that I was not raised in Chile; I lived abroad for seven years, between the ages of nine and 16, spending three years in El Salvador and four years in Ecuador. This experience of migration enabled me to connect with certain feelings of nostalgia, foreignness, and mobility in a way that allowed me to create ties and gain the trust of my participants in a quicker and more stable manner than a complete outsider might have been able to achieve. In this sense, the idea that the researcher is either an insider or outsider seldom holds true in practice, rather the data collected and the analysis is constructed in relation to many “others.” Qualitative research that involves participants brings up constant negotiations between personal experiences, class,

ethnicity, gender, and age that shape the researcher-participant relationship in complex ways that are not steadily categorised as those who belong to the group versus those who do not (Griffith, 1998).

The insider/outsider debate has different angles, but one that is pertinent to discuss for this study is how knowledge can better be accessed. Do insiders have epistemological privilege because they belong to the group and can better feel or understand the participants (Zinn, 1979)? Or is this irrelevant when following a structured research process where the outsider can sidestep and interrogate the power influences or group loyalties because they do not play a part in them (Merton, 1972)? The detachment of the outsider can make them notice what insiders might overlook, whereas the tacit knowledge the insider brings to the table produces different understandings of the information gathered (Griffith, 1998). It is important to highlight that there is no possible way to transcend the difficulties that being either an insider or an outsider bring to the study. In the case of this study, my gender (female) helped me gain the trust of female participants and touch upon sensitive subjects like sexual abuse and sexualization, which would not have been possible if I were a male researcher. However, when the subject of race arose, some participants were reluctant to delve into experiences of racism, probably because of my being white. In this sense, I held both insider/outsider status because there were certain boundaries that were easier to surpass, like when interviewing women my age, whereas there were other boundaries that required more negotiation to surpass, like race, being foreign in Chile, and relationships with elder participants (cf. D'Cruz and Jones, 2004). Moreover, even when being an insider you can encounter sub-groups to which you have no access or no previous knowledge about which also brings nuances to the debate (Styles, 1979).

Some aspects of my identity that were at play were my relationship to Chile, my facility with language, and my experiences with migration. I am Chilean born, but at nine years old I moved to El Salvador; at 11 years old I moved to Ecuador, and at 16 years old I returned to Chile. My mother tongue is Spanish and I can speak English, which I learned while growing up and perfected in New York while studying there between 2014–2017. Living in different countries, including a

city like New York where the Latinx community is large, gave me the insight to the various kinds of slang that are used through Latin America. I thus had the advantage of understanding the primary language (Spanish) spoken, but also the cultural slang and dialects used by the Latin American migrants I interviewed. This allowed me to ask more insightful questions, understanding the context of certain words that are not otherwise used in Chile, and making my participants feel better acquainted with me from the beginning. The Creole/French-speaking Haitian participants I interviewed spoke Spanish, and when stuck on certain concepts like *nostalji* (nostalgia) or *memwa* (memory) in Creole, we used a digital translator to help us understand each other. For the most part, however, my participants' first language was Spanish.

Considering that the majority of Chileans are Catholics, most participants assumed I was Catholic and felt comfortable discussing religion with me. However, I am not a Catholic, though I grew up in the Catholic church, which afforded me the ability to comprehend Christian rituals, images, and festivities. Politics was another relevant topic addressed in most interviews, as many recent migrants, particularly Venezuelans, arrive seeking opportunities and escaping political and economic crises in their home countries. Additionally, the political context is heightened by Chile's tense situation, which included a social upheaval in 2019 where protesters filled the streets for months asking for improvements to social conditions, congressional and presidential elections in 2021, and the unsuccessful attempt to establish a new constitution in 2021 and 2023 (see Chapter 3). Participants often brought up political views in interviews, and even though I listened and engaged politely in order to understand their position, at times I felt uncomfortable as they mentioned historical issues like the Chilean dictatorship (Augusto Pinochet 1973–1989) and certain feminist positions that touched my personal biography. In these situations, I practised the concept of empathy as described by Gair (2011)—having the same lived experience is not essential, but active and deep listening is.

My gender is female and this provided benefits when contacting women, while sometimes raising challenges when contacting men. From my standpoint, interviewing women was easier and I felt more confident, and for them it was easier to let me into their homes, many of them saying they

would not have allowed a male researcher in for safety reasons. Interviewing men was more difficult, either because I was a woman or possibly because their bias around traditional gender roles associated the topics of memory, nostalgia, and heritage with femininity. I navigated these boundaries by trying to get male participants to introduce me to other male participants who could be interested, which did work but took time and more effort than contacting females. I am heterosexual which I did not mention straightforwardly in interviews, but some participants did ask about my personal life, trying to decipher my age and if I was married or not. This information might have given away my sexual orientation and probably impacted some of the things participants chose to share with me. As the fieldwork advanced, I noticed that gender and sexuality were a fundamental part of the migrant experience. Taking this into account, I contacted LGBTQ+ community workers and they helped me get in touch with LGBTQ+ migrants who were willing to participate to help broaden the data collection.

Another positionality issue was that age, ethnicity, and class combined created visible and invisible boundaries between the participants and myself. Santiago is a very segregated city, particularly by race and class, making it very evident that I, the researcher, did not belong to some of the locations I visited, marking me as an immediate outsider and causing particular judgements and social hierarchies to manifest. I am a 33 year-old, white, upper-middle class citizen of Santiago de Chile, an educated woman that is visibly categorised into a position of privilege as compared to the situation of most women in the country. This gave me access to a certain trust when people invited me in their homes, however it limited my access to parts of participants' lives or experiences related to poverty and racism. These issues were addressed with participants with whom I created very close ties and talked to on several different occasions. I had to work very hard to show myself to be open and understanding of my own privilege in relation to the research participants. Age played a role in this equation, too—people my own age or younger felt at ease talking with me about things related to sexuality and social relationships, whereas older participants sometimes expressed they felt I was “too young to understand” certain feelings or experiences. When these gaps occurred, I intently proposed that I listen and learn so they could try to explain, but there were inevitably silences and codes that I may be at

risk of misinterpreting or failing to fully understand. As fieldwork progressed, I discovered that my social and professional status unpredictably affected the ways participants interacted with me. However, my familiarity with multicultural backgrounds and understanding of the migrant context helped me in the examination and interpretation of some stereotypes mentioned or coded silences.

4.5.2 Ethics

Ethical considerations for this study were of the utmost importance because it dealt with human research subjects. It is relevant to consider how access to people's homes was gained, how I ensured informed consent and dealt with participants' feedback, participant withdrawal, and confidentiality. It was essential to consider in advance the formal ethics forms (Appendix D, E, and F) that set the base for ethical behaviour and treatment of the information beforehand, just as the methodology was subjected to formal ethical review by the University of Birmingham prior to the fieldwork.

For studying the home, I contacted the participant and verbally explained what the project was about, then proceeded to email them the informational letter where the study was explained (Appendix D). Once they had read the informational letter and agreed to participate I would send them the consent form and ask them to read it over and write back any questions (Appendix E and F). The day we conducted the interview, I brought the consent form and the informational letter in print; this way I could answer questions and explain any doubts before they signed the consent form in person. For Zoom interviews, the research participants signed the forms on the day of the interview and emailed me the signed copy. All forms were translated into Spanish and participants were advised that they could withdraw from the study within a month after the interview, though none of the participants for this study did so.

All data collected in this study was treated as private and confidential, even though most participants signed in the consent form that they did not wish to remain anonymous. Only the participants' first names are used as identifiers, and for those who wish to remain anonymous an alias was given to them. Personal information like address, identifiable features, and personal evidence has been kept private. Dealing with a close-knit community like the recent migrant group in Santiago Centro and Estación Central and using the snow-ball method of recruitment meant I could understand how my participants exchanged information and socialised between themselves, which was important in order to understand identity. However, this could also potentially put both me and the participants in uncomfortable situations, hence the importance of anonymisation. Taking into account that I took photos of the participants in their homes, the objects within their homes, and sometimes home sceneries, I had to be certain that those images were taken with informed consent, which is not the same as signed consent (Mason, 1996). Accordingly, every time I took an image or the participant asked me to take a certain photograph, I asked if it was okay to publish it, or if they wanted me to keep it for research but with no publication. With this strategy, I avoided the ambiguity between agreeing for the image to be taken and actually consenting for it to be published. In addition to the above, I asked them to describe and reflect upon the object photographed; that way, during the analysis stage I could compare my own ideas of the image with the participants' comments. I took into account the perspectives of both the participants and myself when deciding how to conceal identity and which images should remain unseen or unpublished in order to avoid unforeseen problematic situations regarding identity, while also respecting the participants' will and personal voices (Birch and Miller, 2002).

For this study, I gravitated toward the feminist perspective of reflexivity, where empathy, emotions, and ties will occur in the interview process (Dolotto and Tillerey, 2015; Alvesson, and Sköldberg, 2018; Thwaites, 2017). This does not invalidate the data collection process, and instead enriches the data collection. Nevertheless, analytical distance and sensitivity must be a priority in order to protect the anonymity of those involved. The research design was created with cultural sensitivity in mind, for example taking into account that trust and respect toward

practices and cultural differences made a considerable impact on what participants were willing to share, and how.

4.6 Chapter conclusions

This chapter outlined the research philosophy supporting the chosen methodology, research design, and steps taken during the fieldwork. I have elucidated why a qualitative method, coupled with an ethnographic strategy for enquiry, was the most effective approach to understanding how recent migrants in Chile negotiate their identity and reconstruct their heritage through materiality within their neighbourhoods and homes. Ethnographic interviews with migrants provided the opportunity to capture their authentic voices and gather materials beyond traditional sources such as museums, national archives, and mainstream media. Simultaneously, observations facilitated an in-depth analysis of the significance these materials held concerning migrant memory and identity.

This process was not without its ethical and relational challenges. However, despite the method's inherent difficulties, its structure allowed access to intimate spaces such as the home and its connection with the neighbourhood. This insight is challenging to obtain through large-scale quantitative methods like surveys; it requires lengthy and semi-structured interviews to capture the nuances and subtle details that make the migrant experience significant in Chile's current social history.

CHAPTER 5

HOME: A PLACE AND A SENSE

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain findings extracted from interviews, observation, and archival work related to the home, which serves as a repository for heritage within migrant communities in Chile. Participants throughout the 24 interviews mentioned home as a clear marker of their national identity and as a space that framed their cultural practices, bringing them feelings of safety, belonging, and nostalgia. The chapter provides a comprehensive discussion on the findings pertaining to the home as a material setting and an intimate space where migrants anchor and express identity and memory, while also providing a mental sense of place conveyed through rituals, objects, décor, photographs, and food.

First, I will delve into materiality as an anchor for identity and belonging. The concept of elsewhere, as proposed by Gooze (1999), sheds light on how the migratory experiences of my informants shape the distinctiveness of their homes as anchors of memory and identity. Understanding identity, which is contested and dynamic, presents challenges due to its inherent instability (Basch et al., 1995; Bauman, 2001; 2011; Ahmed, 2003; Ashworth 2007; Spellman, 2008; Biehl et al., 2014). However, the idea of elsewhere does not imply a lack of location. Although many migrants do not express identities rooted in permanently fixed geographies, they do establish anchors in specific spaces, such as the home. Certain practices, food, artefacts, and rituals performed within the home serve as containers of localization that extend beyond the geographical realm (Lavie, 1996; Radcliff and Westwood, 1996). The histories of movement among my informants contribute to a unique perspective on the meaning and significance of

home, distinct from what one might find among local Chileans or individuals who have not migrated from their countries of origin. The experience of mobility transforms cultural practices, challenging the traditional associations between identity, heritage, and fixed places (Canepa-Koch, 2003).

By exploring the interplay between materiality, migratory experiences, and the construction of home, we gain a deeper understanding of how these individuals navigate their identities and negotiate a sense of rootedness within the context of displacement. The concept of elsewhere provides a theoretical framework to comprehend the distinctiveness of their homes and the added emotional weight surrounding them, setting them apart from the experiences of both local Chileans and individuals in their countries of origin who have not undergone migration. In essence, this research illuminates the intricate relationship between migration, memory, heritage, and home. Through an examination of how migrants engage with material objects, practices, and rituals within their homes, we gain insights into their processes of identity formation, the reconfiguration of cultural practices, and the significance of the home as a site of memory and belonging. The participants' accounts allow us to comprehend the complex dynamics at play and highlight the resilience and agency of migrants in creating and maintaining a sense of home. It challenges conventional notions of fixed identities and places, emphasising the fluid and multifaceted nature of cultural heritage in the context of migration.

Within this context, the materiality of their homes becomes particularly significant, serving as the container for the reproduction of memory. Migrants recount experiences of uprooting as they remember the homes they left behind, while simultaneously establishing a sense of regrounding in new landscapes, accompanied by new feelings of homeness and belonging (Ahmel et al., 2003). Interviewees in this study often attached deep feelings of belonging to specific objects and places within their homes. These objects and places serve as tangible reminders of their cultural heritage and provide a sense of continuity in their otherwise fragmented lives (Burton, 2003). Through an examination of materiality, we can gain insights into how these

individuals construct and negotiate their identities within the context of migration and displacement.

Three prominent themes emerge as markers of heritage among participants: food, artefacts/decor, and photographs. Food holds a special place in their hearts as it not only nourishes their bodies but also serves as a link to their cultural roots. Artefacts and decor, carefully chosen and displayed within their homes, represent cultural symbols and act as touchstones for their sense of belonging. Photographs capture cherished memories and loved ones, serving as powerful conduits for preserving and transmitting their heritage across generations.

The findings illuminate the intricate relationship between migration, memory, heritage, and home. By examining the multifaceted aspects of their homes and the various ways in which subjects construct and negotiate their sense of belonging, we gain a deeper understanding on how heritage and memory are placed and negotiated constantly within domestic space, specifically through the meaning and scripting of intimate objects. The following sections will engage with the question of how materiality serves as a repository of identity and participates in the processes of creating a home after migration. Section 5.2 will frame the conversation about materiality as an anchor for identity and homemaking, focusing on luggage as a primary example. Section 5.3 will examine the importance of culinary culture in the home and its constant negotiation with different notions of nationhood. Section 5.4 will explore how objects and religious practices function as a centre of stability within the mobile experience of migration. Finally, section 5.5 will delve into how family albums are repositories of intimate heritage practices specific to the community.

5.2 Materiality as anchor for identity and homemaking

For many decades, the study of social interactions was almost exclusively focused on exchanges between humans. However, at the turn of the century, several theorists such as Callon (1986; 2012), Latour (2005), and Law (2002) proposed a novel model for understanding social interactions. According to them, heterogeneous materials, referred to as actants, can form associations that result in what they call an actor-network. This actor-network represents the chain of action-reaction involved in many human-object relations. Therefore, an actant is something that contributes to the form and function of the network—for example, the smell of food and the sight of an heirloom are actants that activate emotions in humans (Cerulo, 2009). Although this study still maintains a clear distinction between emotionless objects and humans who experience emotions, it acknowledges the crucial connection between the two for human understanding, somewhat different to Law's proposition of a completely blurred line between them (further discussed in section 2.6).

With the idea of actants in mind, it is striking how often luggage was brought up by the participants in this study: talking about their journeys immediately conjured the physical container in which they carried the few items they brought with them. Suitcases and backpacks manifest as symbolic objects ingrained with family, community, or personal history and heritage. Despite being iconic symbols of mobility, they are frequently disregarded as objects with their own heritage or cultural significance since they are designed to contain something else rather than being regarded as significant in their own right. Luggage emerges as an object that is profoundly transformed by its connection to human mobility. As Law (2002) and Hoskins (1998) suggest, material culture is closely tied to the lives and narratives of people. Thus, luggage, as an 'actant,' even when not visible within the home, helps create a sense of place and carries significance for identity and the process of homemaking in a new location. The tendency to tuck away suitcases when not in use parallels the relative invisibility of migrant heritage and experience in broader society. Much like migrants, suitcases exist in a state of in-between,

simultaneously present and absent. This section will demonstrate how participants view their luggage as valuable keepsakes of their travels, representing more than just a container for their belongings, instead becoming a companion, symbolising the hardships and experiences they encountered during their journeys. Numerous studies (Fortier, 2000; Dudley, 2011a; Milic, 2012; Naum, 2012; Abell, 2014; Faust, 2015; Trabert, 2020) have established the crucial role of objects in shaping the identity of migrants in contexts such as refugee camps or resettlement homes. However, it is important to expand the existing literature to focus on how objects also influence the in-transit experience. Martin (2023) conducted research in Athens, examining the significance of materiality during migration journeys and illustrating how identity undergoes restructuring throughout the course of travel. This transformation is a result of the agency and resilience demonstrated by migrants. Athens, much like Chile for the Haitian community, has become a space that migrants view as a transitional location before reaching a final destination. Participants who viewed their current geographical setups as temporary layovers regarded their luggage as a fundamental element in their concept of home. According to Martin, this perspective emerged from the participants' conscious decision not to accumulate new possessions, as they perceived their current location as non-permanent. The fundamental difference between my findings and Martin's is that suitcases and bags for my participants were valued and meaningful possessions, whereas Martin demonstrates that her respondents considered these things as only necessities and not really significant.

A recurring theme in Martin's and my studies is what is absent, what is missing, and what the participants repeatedly express longing for. This can include possessions such as books, furniture, or the very house they used to have in their home country. The absence of materiality is undoubtedly substantial, and this lack was expressed throughout my interviews, illuminating the ways in which objects shape migrant experiences. Holmes and Ehgartner's study (2021) on lost property and material absence illustrates the enduring relationships people have with objects that are no longer in their possession, emphasising that materiality continues to affect people's lives even when physically absent. This absence of things directly invoked luggage, because every time a participant would remember or long for something they could not bring with them in their

journey, their suitcases emerged. They consistently showed me their bags, looked for them in their cellars and closets, or showed me photos of them to confirm that it was impossible for the absent objects to fit inside.

The direct link between the suitcase and the remembrance of those missing objects places the suitcases as an actant since they generate recurring emotions for the migrants interviewed. Luggage immediately activates memories of the objects they had to leave behind, while also pointing at the things that accompanied them on the journey and helped them build their present life. This study shows suitcases as tremendously binding and meaningful objects for migrant communities, a theoretical and practical link that Martin overlooks in her work. In the following section I will examine how luggage is a bridge between migrants' former conceptions of home and the present process of home-building in their new location.

5.2.1 Luggage: the bridge between the past and the present

Suitcases and bags become the containers of all material things that encompass a migrant's life in transit, the journey being crucial to the negotiation of their identity and a marker for what is to come in their future home. For migrants who travel under challenging economic and social circumstances, their suitcases contain most, if not all, of their material possessions. Besides the value that the things inside the luggage have, the bag itself represents a great deal of value in the context of mobility and delivers a sense of stability, continuity, and identity to the migrants involved in this research.

Reina, a 38-year old from Venezuela, talked about how she was terrified of losing her bags during the multiple bus transfers she made from Venezuela to Chile. This fear was shared by several other Venezuelan women she did not know but who were also making the same journey. This prompted them to come together and help each other transport and keep an eye on their bags every time they had to get off at a station, buy tickets for the next leg, and move their luggage to

another bus. They would watch over their suitcases while someone went to the bathroom or stack them together and tie them up when they slept at a dangerous stop. The organisation and care of the bags fostered a friendship and sense of community through the shared experience, which has endured to this day. Reina maintains friendships and correspondence with these women who arrived in Chile with her and began their new lives in this country alongside her. The community that formed around the care of the suitcases during Reina's journey evolved into a true support network. She recounted that the bonds grew so strong that the entire group of Venezuelans would gather whenever they reached a new border to ensure that everyone crossed safely. It started with the Venezuela-Colombia border, then Colombia-Ecuador, followed by Ecuador-Peru, and, finally, Peru-Chile. Within the group, they exchanged information that their contacts and relatives who had already navigated this route had shared, which was particularly helpful for Reina since she did not have as much information. The suitcase group informed her that scams were prevalent at the Ecuador-Peru border, cautioning against giving money for made up border procedures. At the same time, Reina contributed by keeping track of the total number of people in the group who were taking care of the bags. At each crossing, she would count: "Ten passed, fifteen passed, twenty more to go, alright, we all made it through."

Sopova (2023) presents a photo-essay documenting the Ukraine war and resulting displacement. Her focus lies on the contents of people's suitcases and the significant items they chose to include or exclude. These objects serve as powerful symbols, representing crucial elements of their owners' lives during critical moments of the crisis. Her work shows how suitcases are not only significant objects for migrants but also how they could be related to ideas of home and homeness. One of her subjects explains that she has everything important, like documents, photographs, cash, and most importantly family memorabilia that she can easily grab if one day she must flee in a haste (Sopova, 2023, p. 54). Her ethnography mentions several items that were not considered living essentials but which nevertheless often ended up packed in suitcases, like slippers and robes which in most post-Soviet countries are used when changing out of 'outside' clothes after work. This type of clothing is thought to create "feelings of home even on someone's

couch... [Or that even when] not having a home [they have] home-slippers" (Sopova, 2023, p. 59).

Following this line of reference in my study, many participants mentioned that the packing process was emotional because they were trying to "fit their home into two suitcases" (Cruz, 49 years old). The majority of my participants expressed a sense of leaving a home behind while simultaneously acknowledging the need to pack items that held significance or reminded them of home, in order to establish a new home in the future. The suitcase and the items packed within it seem to encompass all three timeframes—past, present, and future—when it comes to feelings and ideas of home. Luggage are containers of potential homeness and of the objects that make a specific place a home. Jessica, 29-year old from Venezuela, laughed sheepishly as she recounted the items she packed in her suitcase: "I put in this drawing of a dragonfly that I made (fig. 5.1), an architecture book as if I wouldn't find anything related to my profession in Chile, a bullet casing I found on the street in Caracas, clothes, and a photo where I am a new-born with my mom" (fig. 5.2). Jessica emphasised that she felt as if the things that did not fit in the suitcase would disappear since she was certain that returning to Venezuela was not going to be possible. However, at the same time, while packing, she could not envision a new life in Chile. It was a non-existent place for the moment. So, from the minute she finished packing in Venezuela until she opened the suitcase in Chile and organised her things, her home was stored inside a bag.

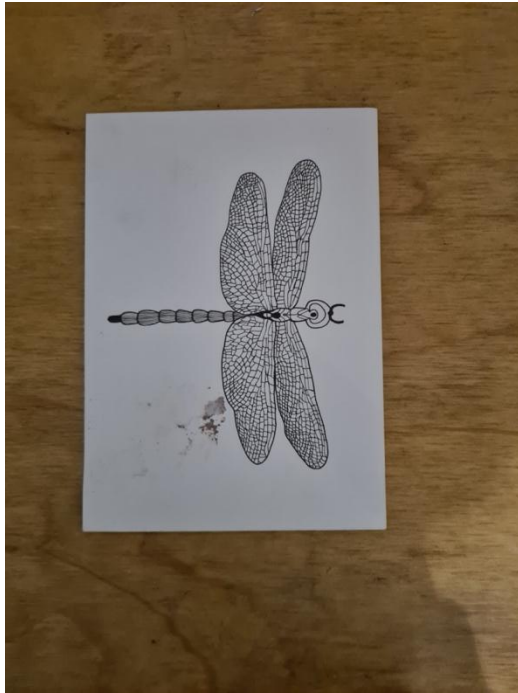


Fig. 5.1 Jessica's dragonfly drawing



Fig. 5.2 Jessica's photograph with her mother

As explored in greater depth in section 2.5, movement does not imply complete detachment from the country of origin, nor does it imply a fervent attachment. Migrants' identities and feelings of belonging are fluid, constantly transforming. Placelessness can be constructed through elements that make the unfamiliar become their new familiar (Dawson and Rapport, 1998; Flynn, 2007). Therefore, for many, suitcases and bags encompass a fundamental symbolic aspect of their life journey, wherein their present identity would not be understood without them. Migrant material culture and intangible practices are not necessarily an exact recreation of a previous life, nor a perfect blend of past and present home. Instead, they can be evidence of the complex processes of memory and identity construction that movement entails, and suitcases appear to be one of the protagonists in these processes (Savas, 2014; Pechurina, 2015). In fig. 5.3, Daniela from Venezuela proudly displays what she calls her "adventure companion."



Fig. 5.3 Daniela's photograph with her backpack which she calls her "adventure companion"

The fieldwork conducted for this study offers valuable insights into the significance of luggage. While existing literature acknowledges the role of objects in recalling past experiences, serving as nostalgic souvenirs, testimonials, or representations of a mobile past, it has primarily focused on objects with more obvious symbolic value, often overlooking utilitarian items such as suitcases (Hirsch 1997; Calanca, 2011; Cuevas-Wolf, 2014; Marschall, 2019). In this section I looked at the intertwined relationship between mobility, belongings, and migrant individuals, specifically focusing on luggage as performer or actant due to the emotional qualities it embodies. Laia (2020) proposes that this performance of the object becomes a source of affective materiality, identity construction, and place-making for those moving alongside the objects. Therefore, bags hold more than just the capacity to contain items that evoke feelings of home and eventually establish a new one; they also symbolise the journey itself and what it signifies for the owner of the luggage. Section 5.3 will examine another kind of materiality related to migrants, focusing on food and how the performances and feelings associated with food create concrete feelings of home, homebuilding, and new processes of heritagisation.

5.3 Food and cooking as performance of heritage

The practice of cooking and eating certain foods in migrant communities is intrinsically linked with their process of heritagisation, which rests on the cultural construction of food linked with an identity paradigm and sense of belonging (Di Fiori, 2019). For migrants, food and the practices around it contain certain expressions of who they think themselves to be, of remembrance, and of how they enact the idea of 'origin' in the present, giving them a sense of stability and belonging. Beyond an essentialist interpretation of heritage, food can serve as a powerful subject of study. As discussed in Chapter 2, heritage encompasses various layers that extend from the national and transnational realms to the individual and collective levels, often making food the embodiment of such diversity (Ashworth et al., 2007). Due to mobility, migrants are continually engaged in negotiating their identity, incorporating new memories, and transforming existing ones. This ongoing process of heritage formation proceeds independent of specific locations. As a result, food and the associated rituals undergo changes and acquire new meanings as migrants move and gain diverse experiences. Some scholars, such as Naguib (2013) and Eckersley (2016), have explored the incorporation of migrant heritage processes into institutions like museums. However, this study specifically focuses on how migrant participants comprehend their own tangible and intangible heritage surrounding their home and neighbourhood. Many of these ideas remain largely outside the scope of what official institutions choose to exhibit regarding migrant heritage.

Food holds significant importance as an identity marker and is often seen as an indication of belonging. Participants in the study frequently associate food with specific nations or regions. However, the explicit link between food and a particular nation or geographic location is not inherently established; it must be acknowledged and claimed by both insiders and outsiders (Di Fiori, 2019; Anupama, 2022; Demirkol, 2022). When interviewees referred to food as part of their identity linked to a particular nation, they also tended to corroborate that link by mentioning that Chileans considered this to be true. For example, Sofia, age 22, from Venezuela explained the

role of food with comments like: “I wanted to show my Chilean friends a piece of myself, of my culture, so I prepared Venezuelan *arepas*. They loved them and said that they were better than Colombian *arepas*.” Food and the practices related to it are important signifiers for transnational communities; recipes and eating extend beyond nutrition to hold and evoke feelings of nostalgia, belonging, and identity (Anupama, 2022). In this sense, McGuire (2010) proposes an interesting interpretation of the relationship between migration and objects, examining how affect plays a crucial role in the significance of objects for migrants, and how their material world contributes to the construction of their sense of place and identity. This idea, combined with Bortolotto's (2007) perspective on intangible heritage, which understands it as an evolving process of repeating old practices while incorporating and negotiating new ones, provides an insightful framework for this research. The participants consistently demonstrated flexible views regarding their practices related to food and heritage in general; these were transformed by movement but still retained their significance as meaningful vessels for their memory and identity.

Participants perceive food and the practices surrounding it as a performance deeply intertwined with emotions and heritage. Culinary traditions serve as a means for them to showcase and transmit the multifaceted aspects of their own identity. In this context, performance refers to the enactment or presentation of food-related rituals, ceremonies, or practices. It incorporates various expressive elements, such as storytelling through recipes, music and dance associated with specific foods, gestures related to the way food is meant to be eaten and prepared, and visual aesthetics concerning plates and cutlery. Through these performative acts, individuals and communities breathe life into their culinary heritage, engaging all the senses and creating an immersive experience that encompasses a wide range of emotions related to their migratory experiences. Migrants reinterpret and adapt traditional practices, incorporating new elements and ideas, as well as new affective imagery (Waterton, 2014). This adaptive nature of performance allows for the continuous evolution and relevance of food as heritage, ensuring its sustained vitality and resonance within contemporary contexts. During fieldwork, some practical examples of the above were revealed, which will be discussed on the following sections: how coffee embodies a difficult political history and, in many cases, the cause of migration for the

Venezuelan community in Chile; how the understanding of home goes beyond the house itself and embodies a feeling described in complex manners by multiple participants; and how the performance involved in cooking of food for festivities is a crucial part of sustaining the memory, history, and identity of migrants.

5.3.1 Coffee—a contentious national signifier for Venezuelans

My first visit to a participant's home was in 2021, to interview Daniela, 35, from Venezuela, who had been living in Chile since 2012, and I still remember how she welcomed me in her apartment. It was a warm winter morning on a sixth floor apartment in a 25 story building in Santiago Centro where she had set the table with *arepas*, *queso fresco*, *nata venezolana*, and *pan de jamón*, all Venezuelan breads and cheese (Appendix F). I felt ashamed and told her she should not have gone through all that hassle for the interview, to which she replied, "but you said this was a study about the home, and how can you get to know my home without trying my food?" For all following interviews, I was received with coffee or some sample of food that the participants identified as from their country. However, although they all greeted me with food—which is a very common practice when receiving guests throughout Latin America—when I asked them more about the meaning of the food served and how it related to them the answers varied. For example, Daniela, when asked about the food and its link to her home or community, stated bluntly that she did not feel connected to the Venezuelan community, that food and the objects in her home that were Venezuelan gave her an individual a sense of homeness but not a communal sense. She then described offering Venezuelan food to Chileans as a way of sharing a piece of who she is as a person, and a way to break down barriers and find topics of conversation with locals, not as providing a sense of community.

Other participants, like 22-year old Sofía from Venezuela who has been living in Chile since 2018, claimed that food revealed an instant link to her community. When she saw someone buying *yuca* or *papelón*—types of potato and sugar from Venezuela (see Appendix G)—from street

markets, she immediately knew they were Venezuelans, and that gave her a sense of “trust” or “familiarity” with that person, even if she did not know them or “exchange words with them.” Claudia, 24, from Colombia, who had been living in Chile since 2008, said food was one of the items she missed most about her country of origin: she missed “the real Colombian food, not the one they sometimes sell in Chile that pretends to be Colombian,” and that thankfully her father who also lived in Chile could still replicate certain recipes to make them taste “as if it had just been bought from a street cart of *Galería Alameda* in Calí,” a traditional food market in a southwestern Colombian city.

While food certainly elicited feelings of belonging or connection/disconnection to the participants’ country of origin, it also brought up political issues. For Venezuelans, coffee entailed a direct connection to specific political and historical events in Venezuela which at the same time had direct connection to the reasons they decided to migrate. Out of the 24 participants of this study, 12 are Venezuelans, of which 11 mentioned coffee as the most important item in their pantry. “Chilean coffee is the worst,” said Sofía; “you cannot call that coffee,” expressed Fernanda; “Nescafé in Chile is like drinking rotten water,” murmured Jessica, excusing herself if that implication about coffee in Chile offended me in any way. Most of the younger participants bought *Sello Rojo*, a Colombian brand, in Santiago’s biggest produce market, *La Vega*, located in Independencia, a neighbourhood adjacent to Santiago Centro and Estación Central, or in a Colombian store in Santiago Centro called *Supermercado Los Paisas*. *Los Paisas* is named after the people from the region of Antioquia in Colombia—the term ‘*Paisa*’ is used to describe the people, culture, and dialect associated with this region. *Sello Rojo* (fig.5.5) is a Colombian brand that became popular in Venezuela when food shortages started in 2007. This coffee was smuggled from Cucuta in Colombia because the sale of foreign coffee was prohibited. In this context, 38-year old Reina and 41-year old Mervin, both from Venezuela, said they were amazed to find *Café Madrid* (fig. 5.4) in Chile, a Venezuelan local coffee that in their last years in the country was very difficult to find.

Geysa, 30, from Venezuela, living in Chile since 2019, recounted that she grew up in Tachira, a coffee-growing region where many people drank coffee produced in the patio of the house, or in their own gardens. Of course, this was not common throughout Venezuela, but almost the entire country consumed Venezuelan coffee like *Café Madrid*. Geysa and her mother explained that when President Chávez began to expropriate the fields, he also expropriated the coffee brands and changed their names to promote brands that spoke to ‘the people’, while also expropriating factories of organic fertilisers and vitamins related to the coffee industry. Hugo Chávez (1954-2013) was Venezuela’s president from 1999 until he passed away from cancer in 2013. Following his election in 1999, Venezuela adopted a new constitution that enabled his reelection and focused on social reforms as part of what Chávez called the “Bolivarian Revolution.” High oil profits during his rule helped nationalise key industries, implement social programs, and expand access to food, housing, healthcare, and education. However, structural changes in inequality were not successfully enacted, and by the end of the decade Venezuela’s economy was faltering. Under Chávez, Venezuela experienced democratic backsliding as he suppressed the press, manipulated elections, and arrested government critics. His government saw increases in the country’s murder rate and corruption. After his death, his successor Nicolás Maduro was elected—many claim through rigged elections—and he has since ruled the country by decree. Described as an autocrat and dictator, Maduro has repressed dissent and Venezuela’s economy has continued to decline, producing more than 6.1 million refugees and migrants fleeing political crisis, economic instability, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis (Buxton, 2016; Stavrakakis, 2016; Ecarri, 2023). This process is considered by several interviewees as the culprit for the crisis of the coffee industry in Venezuela, hence the difficulty in finding Venezuelan coffee like *Café Madrid* over the last decade. Venezuela began to drink *Sello Rojo* coffee brought from Colombia, which is the closest in flavour to the old Venezuelan coffee (fig. 5.5). Today, Venezuelan migrants in Santiago continue drinking *Sello Rojo*, which is what they had gotten used to in Venezuela, but some of them, like Reina and Mervin, have been able to recover a tradition that had been lost for economic and political reasons.



Fig. 5.4
Photograph of
Café Madrid
taken in Reina's
kitchen



Fig. 5.5
Photograph of
Sello Rojo taken
in Sofia's
kitchen.

Jolliffe (2010) discusses how coffee is a major facet of culture around the world, where different coffee traditions entail unique forms of production and consumption of heritage. Coffee is connected to hospitality, both in the home and in public settings like the neighbourhood, hence the preparation and drinking of the beverage is both a familiar and a distinctive experience. For members of the migrant community interviewed in this study, coffee consumption represented clear identity status, where the type of coffee entailed a discernment that differentiated them from Chileans—most of them stating that Chileans drank bad quality coffee and did not know how to correctly prepare it—while reaffirming their national identity, asserting explicitly how the quality was better in their country of origin. Nevertheless, nation and identity can be an intricate subject that is constantly negotiated and transformed, in this case expressed clearly in the contradiction of how the brand Venezuelans participants consume, *Sello Rojo*, is not actually from Venezuela, but is understood as something evidently national, whereas their own original coffee brands were lost decades ago. In this sense, participants regard the practice of drinking coffee, its flavour, and imagery as an anchor of identity without necessarily being an essential marker of origin or nation.

Coffee has long been a part of Venezuelan cultural heritage—it was grown in the region since the colonial era, playing a vital role in the economy and influencing the agricultural industry, political discourses, and culinary practices throughout time. However, political turmoil changed local

production schemes and even when coffee stopped being manufactured in Venezuela, brewing and drinking coffee has remained an important part of culture. Even when the coffee consumed by Venezuelans today comes from a neighbouring country, it still represents nationhood for them, as they are claiming coffee as an intrinsic part of their 'Venezuelanness' and evocative of home. Also, Colombia was used by Venezuelan participants as a comparative geography to describe themselves, either by differentiation or by pointing out similarities. Mervin used Colombia as a differentiation tool when describing his favourite Venezuelan food, *arepas*, by comparing them to Colombian *arepas*, both being corn bread with fillings, but with different ingredients and bread shapes, explaining that: "Venezuelan *arepas* are eaten like a sandwich, not like Colombian *arepas*, where the toppings are placed on top of the bread rather than inside." Meanwhile, Sofía said Colombian accents and humour were much more relatable to her than those in Chile because of the cultural closeness she found to Colombia. Notions of nation and national origins were persistently expressed by interviewees, but ideas of fixed nationhood were openly challenged by them, placing identity as a construction outside the realms of fixity, geographical regions, and essentialism (see 2.3.3.2). In other words, however present the idea of nation is within the migrant community, it is revealed as anything but static.

Coffee as a marker of identity is not limited solely to Venezuelans, as Latin America has an extensive coffee growing region. Colombians and people from Central America also see this beverage as a fundamental part of their sense of home and personal heritage. Renee, 40, from Nicaragua, married a Chilean and has been living in Chile for many years. She felt that many things traditionally associated with being Nicaraguan no longer define her. However, the ritual of preparing and enjoying coffee remains a distinct and cherished part of her daily life.

René explained that the feeling of home, for her, is more connected to the people she is with than to a specific place. While she used to associate home with Nicaragua in the past, her husband and dog have made Chile her new home. Nostalgia was a constant presence in René's life, a feeling she thinks is shared by most of her foreign friends, even though they have built a home in their new country. According to René, nostalgia is a sentiment that will never truly leave

her. She stated that she often longs to go back to her home country, and thinks that maybe if she does, she may instead feel nostalgic for Chile and want to return. *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, presents several case studies that reflect on how political, economic, and social factors influence nostalgia, and how nostalgia can be used as a cultural and political tool to evoke political imagery or construct national identities (Angé and Berliner, 2015). These feelings undoubtedly shape migrant identity, making nostalgia a key element in the construction of cultural narratives for migrants. Nostalgia played a role in shaping Rene's individual identity, and it was also a common thread among her migrant friends, either by shaping their individual understanding of self or connecting them to a collective shared idea. Hence, nostalgia constitutes more than just a longing for a romanticised past, but rather a tool for reflection of individual and collective histories, realities, and futures (Boym, 2001).

Coffee holds a special place in triggering René's nostalgia. She sweetened it with *panela*, a type of brown sugar not commonly found in Chile that she purchases at *Supermercado Los Paisas*—the store sells it because it is the same product Colombians use to sweeten their coffee. She brewed her coffee using a unique wooden artefact with a silk filter called a *chorrador*, which is commonly used for brewing coffee in Costa Rica (figs. 5.6 and 5.7). René, who was born in Nicaragua, spent several years growing up in Costa Rica, and has been living in Santiago since 2011. She brewed coffee sourced from Nicaragua prepared in a Costa Rican artefact, which she purchased from a Colombian store in one of the most densely populated migrant neighbourhoods in Chile. She and her intricately mobile life story are anchored in pieces of heritage she has collected from different locations and life experiences. All of these elements evoke a sense of nostalgia, an abstract feeling that is not tied to a fixed or singular place but nonetheless forms a crucial part of her identity. These abstract feelings crystallize in the process of heritage-making, specifically what I identify in this study as 'migrant heritage', giving her chorrador a special significance. It is no longer just a household appliance but a piece of heritage. Renne expresses that her chorrador not only marks her home but also the homes of her Central American friends here in Chile. She explicitly states that "no other chorrador will do"; she intends

to pass hers down to her children because the coffee made in that particular one has the “flavor of my travels”.



Fig. 5.6 René's coffee brewing artefact (*chorrador*) with a cup handmade by her



Fig. 5.7 René's traditional coffee brewing artefact (*chorrador*) next to her modern French press

5.3.2 Food and feelings of home: an active negotiation

Most interviewees considered food part of what they understood as home, linked not to their countries of origin but rather to a loved one. Steevens, 25, from Haiti migrated to Chile in 2012 and explained, “I have only had one home, that of my grandmother who for a long time I believed was my mother. She died when I was nine years old and with her I lost my home. From then on, I have had only houses, not homes.” The only thing that evoked home for Steevens was food: the preparation, taste, and smells brought memories of his grandmother, whose face he cannot

remember but can certainly feel her presence when eating Haitian food. He remembered vividly the day he found plantains in Chile: it was 2014, he was shopping in a '*Lider*' Walmart in Chile when he found them stocked in a fridge. He bought all the plantains he found that day and fried them just as his grandmother did when he was young. The smell of the burning oil, the softening of the plantain in the skillet, and the feeling of tasting it was an immediate marker that "perhaps home could be in Chile". In Steevens' case, losing his grandmother seems to have caused him to lose his sense of 'placeness.' However, as explored in section 2.3.3.1, 'elsewhere' is not 'nowhere' (Gooze, 1999) and through the sensory experiences of food and smell, he has undergone a process of re-location, finding a sense of home and belonging in the materiality of plantains, which evoke memories of his grandmother and establish a new sense of home 'elsewhere'. Plantains represent a form of materiality that gains new and profound meaning through Steevens, who redefines this particular food from a mere grocery commodity to a symbol of migrant heritage. The materiality of plantains can be understood within the concept of 'actants'—objects that are deeply intertwined with human life and, in this sense, possess a life of their own.

Steevens' father, also from Haiti, who migrated to Chile in 2010, owns a small supermarket in Estación Central where the majority of the Haitian community lives in Santiago. In his store he sells all of the ingredients and special spices that Haitians need to cook their dishes. This space works as a meeting point for many in the community. Steevens explained that because he moved houses so many times in his life, his dad's store and his Haitian clients sometimes gave him the feeling of homeness, especially when he was walking around Estación Central and smelled Haitian spices a mile away and could immediately tell what was being cooked. Morley (2000) reflects upon how different groups that have undergone exile, diaspora, or displacement understand home both as a physical place like a house and also a space that reveals itself as a feeling of belonging and identity. He proposes that there is a very "porous and less rigidly policed boundary around whatever is defined as the home community," proposing that identity and cultures are, if not completely, then very much hybrid for most migrants (Morely, 2000, p. 6). In my study, the participants and observations do show a very flexible understanding of home.

However, there is still a widespread belief that certain aspects can be clearly identified and defined as one's home, including tangible objects that contribute to its definition, opposing the idea of complete hybridity. Many of the interviewees talked about home when describing experiences, smells, or actions that make them feel homeness, beyond the physical space they are inhabiting. These sentiments and affects are clear markers of the home, whether tangible or intangible. Homemaking, the action of creating feelings of home and the process in which people engage affectively with the things that make them feel homeness, is more than a physical process and includes “processes of identity agency through negotiated practices of placeness and belonging, positioning the self and the things accompanying it, as well as the emotions tuning these performances” (Colomer, 2020, p. 85; see also Ahmed, 2003). Hence, Steevens had distinct experiences from his childhood that made up what he defined as home or feelings of homeness, which are related to his deceased grandmother's cooking. His father's store, the clients who buy ingredients in the store, the taste and smells of Haitian cooking in Chile incited unique feelings in him that encompassed what he understood as his home.

Jessica, 29, from Venezuela, enjoys eating primarily Venezuelan food and was very enthusiastic about recommending the best takeout places for me to order from during our interview. However, she explained feeling more at ease in Chile due to certain cultural elements. She described being deeply connected to the changes that feminist perspectives had brought to women's freedom and body image in Chile, noting that traditional ideals of appearance and behaviour for women still held significant influence in everyday life in Venezuela. As a result, Venezuelan food evoked a sense of home for her, not necessarily because she fully identified with her country of origin, but because its preparation, smell, and taste evoke cherished memories that have shaped her life's story. She reminisced with nostalgia, recognizing that food did not serve as an all-encompassing national identifier for her. Nevertheless, it still worked as a homemaking signifier.

When reflecting about their homes, all participants mentioned food as an important part of homemaking and specific markers of their ‘home away from home,’ food working as a tool to

make their new house more like the one they had in their country of origin which they considered to be a home. Food emerged as a form of materiality that provides continuity even when the geographical and cultural context changes due to migration. Specific preparations, often preserved within family traditions and prepared at particular times of the year, serve as stabilizers. In several interviews, participants mentioned Venezuelan or Colombian dishes they did not know how to make before but learned after migrating because they wanted to replicate a flavor or smell they considered part of their identity. Special national dishes prepared by migrants abroad are not exact replicas; they embody movement and transformation, becoming 'migrant heritage'—an element recognized as special and important to preserve through time. There is a need for constant flexibility within migrant communities because change is an inevitable part of who they are. The new environment they confront positions them as 'outsiders,' which pushes them to look for identifiable traits that can build their identities (Duru, 2017, p. 166). Our sense of home is closely tied to the material aspects of our surroundings, hence participants constantly enunciating phrases like "a house that smells like home" or "food that evokes a sense of home," emphasising the connection between the senses and our sense of place (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Anderson, 2014).

5.3.3 Food in festivities as a marker of identity and active homemaking

Food holds significant cultural and symbolic value, particularly in the context of festivities, as it acts as a marker of identity and homemaking. Festive foods are deeply rooted in traditions and rituals, carrying historical, social, and emotional significance (Douglas, 2003). Through the preparation and consumption of specific dishes during festivities, individuals and communities express their cultural identity and create a sense of belonging. Food and the performances associated with it take on a special dimension when examining migrant communities. On one hand, food serves as a tangible representation of cultural heritage, as recipes and cooking techniques are often passed down through generations; on the other hand, migrant foods manifest the experience of movement and the malleability of identity in materiality. The act of preparing traditional festive foods becomes a means of preserving cultural practices and

transmitting cultural knowledge from one generation to the next (Brulotte and Di Giovine, 2014). By following traditional recipes and techniques, individuals engage in a process of homemaking, recreating the tastes and aromas that are associated with their cultural identity (Alatorre, 2015). These actions proved to be particularly important for participants, all of whom mentioned preserving some recipe that reminded them of their past home and that made their new living space homey.

Festive foods also act as powerful markers of social identity, bringing people together and fostering a sense of community. Sharing meals during festivities strengthens social bonds, promotes solidarity, and reinforces a collective sense of belonging. Hence, particular foods related to festivities served as markers for individual as well as collective identity for migrants in this study. The act of partaking in the same dishes during celebrations establishes a shared experience and reinforces the unique identity of the community or group involved. Most participants mentioned December as a key month for celebrations, specific foods, and drinks, in comparison to what they characterised as the lack of rituals and celebratory practices observed by Chileans during this time of the year. These practices reproduce feelings of home and familiarity that bring stability to their very mobile lives. Moreover, festive foods often carry symbolic meanings that go beyond their culinary attributes—they can represent historical events, religious beliefs, or cultural values that participants regarded as relevant for them to remember and preserve. Ingredients, cooking methods, and the overall presentation of these foods may be carefully chosen to reflect specific cultural or religious symbolism. Through the consumption of these symbolic dishes, individuals connect with their cultural roots, reaffirm their identity, and participate in the collective memory of their community no matter the geographical placement of the people celebrating.

For most of the migrants I interviewed, December held immense significance for their sense of identity. It is the month in which they deeply missed their home countries, experienced a heightened sense of being outsiders, and engaged in cultural practices that provided them with a sense of roots and belonging. In Chile, Christmas is not celebrated as a month-long festivity as

it is in countries located north of the equator in Latin America, which happens to be the geographic origin of the majority of contemporary migrants in Chile. Participants made comparisons and some even equated the intense celebration of *18 de Septiembre* (Independence Day) in Chile to the Christmas celebrations in their respective countries.

In Chile, there are three official holidays surrounding Independence Day, during which most locals participate in preparing specific foods such as *empanadas*, *asados*, *mote con huesillos*, and *sopaipillas* (beef filled pastries, barbeque, and cereal with dehydrated peaches; see Appendix G) while listening and dancing to folk music. The central aspect of celebrating Independence in Chile is socialisation, which takes place through workplace activities before the holidays begin, with families, and within the neighbourhood. There is a lot of drinking and partying involved, creating a carnival-like atmosphere where behaviours that may be deemed inappropriate during the rest of the year are socially accepted during this time. Since Christmas is not celebrated in the same manner in Chile, many migrants thoroughly enjoy the *18 de Septiembre* celebrations but miss that same energy in December. Therefore, they try to replicate that festive feeling throughout the month by engaging in activities such as drinking, exchanging gifts, and sharing meals with friends in social gatherings (more on which in section 6.4.1).

In Chile, secularism has increased, with the percentage of people identifying themselves as Catholics decreasing from 73% in 2006 to 42% 2018 (CEP, 2018). In contrast, Venezuela maintains a higher level of adherence to Catholicism, with 88% of the population identifying as Catholic, and Colombia has a 76% Catholic population (Latinobarómetro, 2021). In addition to religiosity, there is a cultural aspect to consider: in some Latin American countries (Venezuela, Colombia, and Haiti in particular), December represents a month of gathering with family and friends to celebrate the end of the year. Beyond religious significance, it is a time for festivities, rum-drinking, and gift exchanges. In Chile, however, Christmas celebrations are culturally reduced to the 24th and 25th, focused on a family meal. September, on the other hand, is when social celebrations are expressed with greater intensity, perhaps due to nationalist expressions promoted during the dictatorship (1973-1989), given that Dictator Augusto Pinochet placed

special emphasis on these celebrations, creating huge military parades and making the hanging of the flag in every house mandatory during the month of September, a practice that is enforced until today.

Geysa, Fernanda, Reina, Mervin, Verónica, Ernesto, Silvia, and Sofía (Appendix A #1), all born in Venezuela and migrated to Chile within the last six years, shared their experiences of preparing *hallacas*—a traditional kind of *tamale* (see Appendix G)—as a crucial part of their Christmas celebrations (Fig. 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11). *Hallacas* are prepared using intricate family recipes, and most of them mentioned that their grandmothers' or mothers' *hallacas* tasted notably different and better compared to those made in other households. Due to the elaborate preparation process, multiple helping hands are required, prompting the preparation to take place in advance with the participation of numerous family members.

Geysa recalls the heartwarming experience of connecting with her mother via Zoom a week before Christmas Eve in 2021 to prepare *hallacas* together. This shared ritual brought them closer despite the physical distance between them, and instilled hope that they might be reunited for the following Christmas.

My mom is elderly and a widow, so having her so far away is incredibly challenging for me. We stay in touch through Zoom and WhatsApp, but at times it's difficult due to internet outages and power failures in Venezuela. Fortunately, during our Zoom call for making *hallacas*, the internet connection was smooth, and we laughed and talked as she provided me with all the instructions. We even shared a little bit of rum. I hope her visa documents get approved, and next Christmas, we can recreate the same experience here in Chile but in person.

The importance of food and drink to people's identity and cultural heritage is quite clear throughout literature in the humanities and social sciences, being a relevant aid to social cohesion as well as differentiation (Hall, 1999; Wilson, 2006, p. 5; Geysen, 2011; Brulotte, 2014; Hryciuk and Brulotte, 2019). Through the observation and interviews conducted in this study, I discovered an additional dimension to the topic by considering the experiences of migrants.

Food, in these cases, does not necessarily act as a marker that distinguishes them from the locals with completely different food practices. Instead, it serves as a tool for socialisation and integration in certain cases. I did not find food to be a binary element that solely either integrates or differentiates communities. For Christmas 2021, Rosario Fernanda's Venezuelan elderly mother extended an invitation to her classmates from the neighbourhood's community centre to her home. She prepared a variety of traditional Venezuelan dishes that are typically enjoyed during the holiday season, allowing her friends to learn about and savour a small part of her cultural identity through food (fig. 5.11). Thus food plays a fundamental role in marking and making the home, and participants used food they considered to be 'their own' to socialise and share with locals who had different foods they identified as 'their own'. Inviting Chileans over to their homes and offering food appeared as a common practice between migrants in order to help break barriers, and while sharing something that differentiated them from local customs it also integrated them through socialisation. Latin American contemporary migrants in Chile perceive food and festivities as a means of support in building a new life. They perceive these elements as markers of their cultural heritage, moving with them during their travels. This process translates into a new context, allowing for reproduction in different geographic locations and ultimately contributing to the creation of a sense of home in their new environment.



Fig. 5.8 Fernanda's clothing hanger used for drying plantain leaves used for wrapping *hallacas*



Fig. 5.9 Fernanda's dinner table with the spread used for preparing *hallacas*



Fig. 5.10 Fernanda's family preparing *hallacas*



Fig. 5.11 Rosario, Fernanda's mom, showing the Venezuelan Christmas meal she prepared for her Chilean friends

Throughout these sections, I have presented the complex and fluid nature of the concept of home for migrants and its relationship to food. I discussed how this relationship unfolds as a constant negotiation between feelings of nostalgia, belonging, and national identity, which depend on the life story of each participant. For example, Daniela viewed food as a personal expression of homeness rather than a communal connection with other Venezuelans. On the other hand, Sofia and Claudia (24, from Colombia) felt a strong bond with their community, which they expressed through specific foods or food rituals. However, in the interviews and throughout my observations, it became evident that food holds significant meaning for all participants and plays a vital role in shaping their identity and understanding of their migrant experience. In particular, coffee has a contentious significance for Venezuelans, with many expressing dissatisfaction with the low quality of the coffee consumed in Chile. They maintain a strong connection to specific brands, either those originating from their home country or those connected to it historically, such as Colombian brands. The analysed data also sheds light on the role of nostalgia and belonging in the process of creating a sense of home for many participants. For instance,

Steevens associated home directly with the food his grandmother used to cook, and the aromas of Haitian stores and neighbourhoods evoked a deep connection to the idea of home for him.

5.4 Religious artefacts and practices in the home: stability within mobility

The intersection of migration and religiosity has received significant scholarly attention. This is because religion plays a crucial role in shaping the beliefs, practices, and sense of belonging for migrants (Sarat, 2013; Gallo, 2014; Foroutan, 2015; Saldivar, 2015; Frederiks, 2016; Saunders, 2016; Bieler, 2019; Zanfrini, 2020). Many studies highlight religion as a source of solace and community for migrants, while recent studies indicate that it can also be a divisive and problematic aspect of their lives. In this section, I will analyse the importance of religious objects and practices within contemporary migrant communities in Chile. These elements play a significant role in the processes of heritage creation and preservation. Similar to food, religion serves as a memory placeholder for communities that have experienced displacement, even if formal institutions do not necessarily recognise these practices and objects as part of migrant heritage (Blake, 2000; Silverman et al., 2017).

In section 2.4.3, I discuss how heritage processes in migrant communities have a "bottom-up" logic. This means that the existence of heritage depends on the interests of those involved, and is not relegated to the recognition of institutions like UNESCO, national ministries of culture, museums, or the mainstream media. Migrants themselves assign value and determine what they consider to be their heritage and part of their identity (Ashworth, 2013). Religion emerges as a recurring theme in most interviews and neighbourhood observations (discussed in section 6.6). However, it is important to note that religion is not uniformly understood or considered by everyone, indicating that it is a contested subject with multiple interpretations, but is a potent heritage signifier nonetheless.

5.4.1 The blurry line between the religious and the secular

At the national level, three out of five Chileans declare themselves as Christians, making it the Latin American country with the lowest number of adherents to this belief system. Peru leads this regional list (76%), followed by Colombia (73%), Mexico (71%), Brazil (70%), Argentina (67%), and, finally, Chile (59%). In contrast, Chile is the Latin American country with the highest percentage of people who declare not to adhere to any belief, with 29% of people identifying as agnostic (IPSO, 2023). For Venezuela the number of Christians ascends to 88% but the figure has not been officially updated in recent years, so, following the regional trend, it has likely decreased a few points since 2012 (Aguirre, 2012). The disparity of religious beliefs between the countries where recent migrants are coming from and Chile is visible, though the religiousness practised by migrant communities is not necessarily dogmatic or traditional. On the contrary, as is common in Latin America, spiritual practices are filled with a mixture of influences, whether from pre-Hispanic heritage, colonial traditions, or the modern world (Morandé, 1980). If we add the migratory experience to the previous combination, religious objects and practices take on a new dimension that surpasses the binary opposition between spiritual and secular.

The level of religious adherence travels in surprising ways with migrants who have arrived in Chile. One of the most recurrent figures in Venezuelan households is that of Saint José Gregorio Hernández (popularly known as JGH); born in Inostú, Venezuela in 1864 and died in Caracas, Venezuela in 1919, José Gregorio Hernández was a Venezuelan doctor and scientist who had a strong inclination towards monastic life. He made significant contributions to scientific advancements in his country and led a religious life even though he was not a priest. In 2021, a study revealed that 70% of Venezuelans believe in José Gregorio Hernández, with 89% of believers being Christians and the remaining 11% being non-religious individuals who still believe in the power of this saint (Briceño and Carmadiel, 2021). Today, people venerate him for his ability to intervene for the sick before God and grant special favours. Beatified by the Catholic

church and on his way to become an official Saint, he appears in the form of crafts, decorations, and stamps in Venezuelan households, where I often found representations of him hanging on walls, as a refrigerator magnet, or placed on a household altar. Daniela, 35, said her JGH figurine was the first thing she packed when she decided she was going to migrate, and she reiterated that she was not religious:

I do not believe in God, but Jose Gregorio Hernandez is a doctor who made significant advancements in my country. I feel a beautiful fascination when I think about how many people in Venezuela put their faith in that image that is both scientific and ethereal. It is interesting and good for me; it is like a lucky charm, apart from being beautiful. (fig. 5.12)

On the same wall where Daniela hung JGH she also displayed two crafts and a painting of the *Diablos Danzantes de Yare* (Dancing Devils of Yare) (Fig. 5.13, 5.14), a tradition included in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2012). This tradition is unique to the central coast of Venezuela, where they celebrate *Corpus Christi*, a special festivity of the Roman Catholic Church that commemorates the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Groups of people dressed as masked devils dance before officials from the Catholic Church, usually a priest who advances towards them carrying the Holy Sacrament. During the procession, string and percussion instruments accompany the event, and the faithful use rattles to ward off evil spirits. In the climax of the celebration, the devils symbolically submit themselves to the Holy Sacrament, signifying the triumph of good over evil. Daniela's crafts and art, in general, refer to very important religious themes at a national level in Venezuela, both institutional and popular. However, she did not claim to be religious herself and did not enjoy participating in these communal rituals with other Venezuelans in Chile. She had these objects because they made her apartment feel like home. She described how the devils and the figure of JGH had shapes, colours, and sensations that, for her, translated into feelings of home.



Fig. 5.12 Daniela's wooden figure of José Gregorio Hernandez (left) hanging in the living room of her apartment



Fig. 5.13 Daniela's wooden figure of the Devils of Yare



Fig. 5.14 Daniela's collage art representing the Devils of Yare traditional dance

Jessica, 29, also Venezuelan, mentioned that she was not religious, but observed that people in Venezuela have a strong fascination with JGH. She said, "I know when I am walking into a Venezuelan home when there's some representation of JGH somewhere." She recounted how

her cousin, who lived with her in Chile, had an altar where she kept a Virgin Mary, family photos from their hometown, and a little figure that she initially thought was JGH. Jessica had recently noticed that it was actually a figurine of one of the two detectives from the Belgian artist Hergé's cartoon *Tintin* (fig. 5.15). She giggled as she remembered telling her cousin, but her cousin insisted that it was definitely JGH, with such a serious expression that Jessica did not dare contradict her. Martinelli describes this scenario where religiousness is inexplicably intertwined with the secular in Europe as "a composite, plural one, which cannot be explained simply by choosing between two options: 'secularisation' versus 'non-secularisation'" (2020, p. 74). This study focuses on South America, so the context and types of migration vary greatly from Europe. However, throughout fieldwork, the coexistence between the religious and the secular was quite evident and permeated all aspects of domestic life, such as decoration, humour, and spirituality, revealing it as highly formative for both individual and communal identity.



Fig. 5.15 The detectives from Tintin (depicted below) which share many visual characteristics with JGH (left) were confused with a JGH wooden figure

5.4.2 Religion and identity

When assessing identity linked to religion, La Prima, a Cuban woman of 48 years, described her religion, Afro-Cuban Santeria, as a crucial part of celebrating herself every year:

Just as you hear it, I celebrate myself because in Santeria, one celebrates their saint instead of birthday every year. Mine was on August 15th, where I prepare delicious food and dress up all my saints to welcome my friends to dance. All my Cuban friends who are here in Chile come, and in recent years, I mix them with my Chilean friends, but only the daring ones because there are some Chileans who are very reserved and don't want to dance or mix, and they also don't respect my saints. (figs. 5.16 and 5.17)

La Prima described respect for the saints as something more than just respecting her religion—it was an attitude toward her culture and way of living. She recounted how some Cuban friends had purchased furniture and painted their homes in the Chilean style, exclaiming, “all black and beige! What a horror!” By contrast she chose to maintain the vibrant and joyful colours of her homeland. When Chileans visited her home and criticised the colours or expressed distaste for her Cuban food, she interpreted it as a lack of respect for her saints and Santeria as a whole. There was a constant connection between religious articles and home decoration throughout interviews, as if religion came naturally paired with house aesthetics. La Prima understood the colourful expression of Santeria as an extension of her identity, which she explained has to do with her country of origin, Cuba, but existed in the place she called her “true home, Chile, the country that allowed me to thrive economically.” This coexistence of the two nationalities I found literally translated into materiality through the display of both the Chilean and Cuban national flags, each placed on each side of her bed in the midst of her brightly painted red bedroom (fig. 5.18).



Fig. 5.16 La Prima's Santeria altar in her living room



Fig. 5.17 La Prima's Saints dressed up for her annual saint celebration



Fig. 5.18 La Prima's colourful bedroom with a closeup of the Cuban and Chilean flag at each side of her bed

Similar to section 5.3.2, where food was strongly linked to celebrations, particularly during the month of December and Christmas, religious objects and festive practices also contribute to feelings of home and identity. Several participants—Geysa (30, Venezuelan), Fernanda (43, Venezuelan), Cruz (49, Colombian), and Kelly (40, Colombian)—expressed a strong longing for the tradition of making nativity scenes in December. They explained that in their hometowns, each family constructs beautiful and detailed nativity scenes, and everyone in the neighbourhood takes pleasure in strolling around to admire their neighbour's displays (further examined in section 6.9). They all mentioned that communities organised nativity scene competitions, with Kelly and Geysa recalling winning several years in a row. Each participant showed me how they recreated this tradition, albeit on a smaller scale, during the month of December. They used items they brought with them or purchased at *La Vega* Santiago's largest street market—in order to, according to Kelly, “recreate the feeling of joy and homeliness that nativity scenes bring during that time, which does not exist here in Chile” (figs. 5.19, 5.20, and 5.21). The tradition of nativity scenes is popular in the northern regions of Latin America, but it is not widely practised in Chile, where it is usually done privately and lacks communal or personal identity significance. However, for the respondents, putting together nativity scenes is a practice that made them feel “themselves” and they often described it as being “true to their identity.” This is a communal practice that is shared throughout migrant communities that have recently arrived in Chile and continues to be prevalent in most migrant homes in Chile.



Fig. 5.19 Geysa's nativity scene



Fig. 5.20 Cruz's nativity scene which she turned into an altar



Fig. 5.21 Fernanda's nativity scene

Much the same as luggage, yet with a more overt symbolic meaning, religious objects travelled with participants and for many represented the way movement transformed their identities. Henso, 33, explained that his journey from Colombia to Chile did not arise out of necessity nor from being forced by the context; rather, it was born out of a job opportunity that he decided to pursue. When he told his family about his decision to move, his mother gifted him a rosary that had belonged to his grandmother. This rosary had accompanied his mother when she was young,

during their migration from the interior of Colombia to Santa Marta on the coast, where there was less violence and more opportunities. Henso wore this rosary because it reminded him of his family's origins, their history, and the history of violence in Colombia. However, he also said that it reminded him of that exciting moment before coming to Chile, the thrill of the unknown and the new opportunities. He hoped to pass it on to a future child when they embark on a journey of their own someday (fig. 5.22).



Fig. 5.22 Henso with his mother's rosary



In section 5.3, I delved into the intersection between my participants and the topic of religion, revealing its significant role in shaping their practices and fostering a sense of home and identity. Arguing for a “bottom-up” logic of heritage-making, religion emerges as a recurring theme throughout interviews and observation. Religion was not understood or preserved by most interviewees in the traditional sense of religiousness but as part of daily secular life. JGH, a Venezuelan doctor and a saint revered by many, actively participates in the life and decoration of the majority of Venezuelan households and has travelled to Chile as a sort of lucky charm for

many migrants, for others as a signifier of identity and home. However, saints are made by the Vatican, a very traditional authority, speaking to the intersection between officially authorised heritage and the appropriation from below that participants make and understand. Religious objects serve as potent heritage signifiers evoking memories, feelings of belonging, and community while reinforcing individual experiences and stories. Religion plays a multifaceted role in the lives of migrants in Chile, where it does not relate directly with the traditional belief or religious practice but finds its place in the in-between of secular and religious.

5.5 Family album: nostalgia, heritage, memory and identity

This section delves into the multifaceted role of the family albums as both containers and triggers of nostalgia, heritage, memory, and identity in the lives of migrants in Chile. Family albums have long served as repositories of personal and collective history, preserving cherished moments and narratives across generations. They take on special significance when they are the chosen objects to bring along in journeys that entail difficult border crossing and very light packing, to then emerge as one of the central objects in the process of home building. Sontag (1979) in her germinal work about photography delves into how photos are inherently selective representations: the photographer actively chooses to focus on a particular moment or event while also choosing to exclude other moments. Photographs are used to document history, providing affective triggers for nostalgia and the ability to travel to the past by just observing them. Finally, following Sontag, photographs are more than just plain images—they are nuanced images that have tremendous power to shape people's understanding of the world. Participants in this study showed overt attachment to photos and albums that had travelled with them from their countries of origin and now hold an important place in their new lives.

When we connect Sontag's argument in the context of migration processes, we encounter different aspects to examine, as images directly impact the representation of the migrant,

whether it is through images displayed in the media about migration or in photographs that they themselves keep in their family albums. It is common to see images scattered throughout the media that depict long lines of migrants crowded at the border, dirty, with lost and desperate children (Sheehan, 2018). In a certain sense, these images portray a rather sordid and dehumanising aspect of migration. The ethnographic work in this study manages to shift the focus to the photographs preserved and valued by the participants—not what the media chooses to show of them, but what they decide to show through their albums and family photographs.

For Hirsch (1997), family photos provide continuity over time and space to lives shaped by movement and displacement. She argues, “rectangular pieces of cardboard transform themselves when placed into narrative, into telling details connecting lives and stories across continents and generations” (Hirsch, 1997, p. 12). Images carefully saved by individuals and families hold value when embedded in the fundamental rituals of family life. However, when these images are taken out of context and sold, for instance, at flea markets, they become aesthetic testimonials of a long-gone past. As discussed in section 2.4.4, migrant objects, in this case family albums, possess powerful affective and generative capacities which contribute to the process of placemaking, wherein migrants transform meaningless spaces into meaningful habitats that many now call their homes (McGuire, 2020). In section 5.3, I presented how religious artefacts and heirlooms travel thousands of kilometres in the luggage of migrants who may not even identify themselves as religious. Nevertheless, these objects serve as powerful signifiers of their journeys and identities, and provide support in the construction of a new life. I will now proceed to examine the role of family albums which are packed with the same frequency and care as the religious objects discussed above.

5.5.1 Photographs: agency to transform and to remain

Cruz, 49, from Colombia greeted me for the interview with a notebook under her arm—it was her photo album, and the first thing she did was open it on the table where we sat to talk. The

notebook had squared sheets, one of those school notebooks where she had pasted various photos of her children, some memories of visits to amusement parks, and heart-shaped stickers and figures that provided context and colour to the album. She hurried to find a photo where Dayani—her now 22 year old daughter who was sitting next to us—was an eight-year-old kid kneeling near the ocean, showing off a pair of glittery new shoes (fig. 5.23). Cruz explained that it was the first gift she sent to Colombia with her first paycheck while working in Chile:

Back in Colombia, in Buenaventura, we were so poor that all we did was *aguantar hambre*.² My daughter didn't even have shoes, so as soon as I had a little money, I sent her a beautiful new pair of shoes that you couldn't even find in Buenaventura. My family sent me this photo so that I could see that she was already wearing them. I immediately pasted it in my album to give me strength to keep working and buy her a ticket to Chile to come join me.



Fig. 5.23 Cruz's album with a picture of Dayani and the pair of sneakers sent from Chile to Colombia

² Colombian expression to describe enduring hunger.

Cruz went back and forth, showing me before and after pictures of how they looked and dressed before she migrated to Chile. She had a clear vision that Chile had given her the means to make the transformation she was so candidly trying to show me in her album.

I cannot say I am Chilean because I am a black Colombian woman. No one would believe me if I said I was Chilean. I love being Colombian, and I will not change my citizenship but above all, I love Chile. I have written my will, and it states that I want to be buried in Chilean soil. Even if I end up dying in Colombia, I need to be buried in the country that gave me the opportunity to send my daughter to university, to have this beautiful apartment, and to welcome you into my home with a glass of juice and cookies. Chile has given me humanity, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

She recited this conviction with tears in her eyes, but mostly she pointed out the photos in her album. In a way, they functioned as powerful reminders of what her life was before and what it was at the time of the interview. Photographs here become significant tools of agency that help piece together the migration puzzle. These photos, in Cruz's imagination, were testimonies of the power she possessed and what she achieved through her migratory journey. Fitzpatrick (2021) analyses the photographs of an Irish family that migrated to Kansas and how the photos sent by mail from the part of the family that migrated to the United States first sparked the idea in a young member of the family who had stayed behind to migrate to Kansas in order to study and become a professional woman. In various studies on migration, photography plays a fundamental role as a means of communication between families; photographs are sent by mail or through cell phones, serving as sources of inspiration and memorial witnesses to family progress. Something that has not been explored in the literature on migration in Chile is how photography fits into the idea of home and placemaking in a very significant way, because these photographs of inspiration and progress are "reminders of the purpose of the journey," as Cruz called them, and they give meaning to the present.

For Cruz, photographs gave her agency for her transformation and inspired homemaking in the present by forgoing the hardships of her past. For others, these photographs held a sense of permanence, an image of something that had been lost in real-time but that they wished to keep in their memories. Family albums maintain the connections to both the past life and a sense of

familiarity in the present. Migration disrupts life continuities, like familiar geographies, objects, and practices that have been present for generations, resulting in a rupture in the history of a person's scenery or expected life trajectory (Fathi, 2022). This disruption is characterised by spatial, material, and relational discontinuity, which Ahmed refers to as "temporal dislocation," highlighting the discontinuity between the former home and the current conditions (1999, p. 343). Silvia, 30, shows me the album she brought with her along her journey from Venezuela:

It is funny because you would expect me to bring photos of my friends or myself when I was little, but the only thing I could think of when packing was bringing images of my grandparents and the *hacienda* they used to own in the countryside. That house has been in my family for generations, is where my father was born and I felt so much anxiety knowing that I would never see it again and probably my kids would never get to know it. (fig. 5.24)



Fig. 5.24 Silvia's photo album with pictures of her grandparents in their *hacienda*

Silvia took those photographs with her because her temporal dislocation would produce durable consequences in her life trajectory—even if she was successful at building a new home and creating new memories, her family's *hacienda* would never return. This familial memory was a fundamental part of her identity even if it no longer physically exists; her family lost the *hacienda*

due to Venezuela's economic and political crisis, so even if she were to go back it is no longer their property. The photographs serve as testimony of that part of her life story.

5.5.2 Photo albums as creators of “places” for migrants

As I extensively discuss in section 2.3, identity is not a binary concept, especially with migrants whose movement defines their identity in a particular way. In a framework where movement is an intrinsic part of human existence, “places” are mobile entities that travel and gain significance with the materiality and meaning attached to them (Sheller and Urry, 2006; 2016). For Silvia, her family's *hacienda* was a place that was still very much real and the images of it in her home in Chile were markers of her identity. The same can be said for Cruz, whose photo album contained the infinite movements she had to overcome, serving as a ‘before and after’ scheme that she used to describe herself and her life journey. These family albums existed in the home of every respondent considered for this study, contained either in albums with fancy leather covers, school notebooks, an assemblage of frames placed on a coffee table, or as loose photographs saved in an old envelope. Their prevalence indicates Bauman's (2001) process of identification, as the albums embody the personal and communal processes identity undergoes when power and meaning have surpassed the local, opening personal definitions to a variety of domains.

Kelly kept a series of stacked albums on the TV stand in the living room. She pulled out one and told me it's "the most beautiful" album she owned, containing all the photos from her wedding. She fell in love with a Chilean and came to Chile for love with her daughter, Ana, who was ten years old at the time of migration. She showed me photos of the two of them, dressed up for the big day

We were so nervous. We arrived in Chile with my future husband and didn't know anyone from his family. Our wedding took place at my husband's family home in Chillán³, and in

³ A city 6 hours south from Santiago.

this photo, it's the two of us before walking down the aisle among a sea of strangers. (fig. 5.25)

She immediately flipped to the next page and showed me a photo of the wedding tables decorated with orange colours

Look at these tables [laughs loudly]. I decorated them with so many bright colours. My mother-in-law wanted neutral Chilean colours, but I said, "No way!" I don't know anyone on my wedding day. I'm thousands of kilometres away from Colombia, so I decided to decorate everything as if we were in my country. (fig. 5.26)

This album contained images of what Kelly herself called "my transition process," which she claimed was difficult because she missed Colombia a lot and did not feel comfortable with the Chilean school and social system to educate her children. However, this photo album reminded her of how much they had grown in Chile and that love was the reason why they made this change. The photo album reminded them, like Cruz, of the purpose of their migration while portraying an important process of transformation between what they left behind and what they found in their new home. The photo albums serve as objects actively participating in the migrants' process of identification.



Fig. 5.25 Kelly and Ana on the wedding day in Chillán



Fig. 5.26 Kelly's orange wedding decorations

5.5.3 Albums that become object books

As reviewed above photo albums play an important role in placemaking and the process of identification, both aspects of home building for migrants. While reviewing the various albums that participants showed me, I noticed that many of them contained more than just photos—many also contained souvenirs or mementos. Section 2.4.5 discusses the connection heritage has with memory and belonging; heritage might present itself as souvenirs, memorabilia, monuments, or rituals, a form connected to the past but materialised in the present (Lowenthal, 1998; Carman and Sørensen, 2009). This connection between past and present is what inevitably unites heritage and memory. Indeed, many of the research participants collected mementos in between photographs to remember certain aspects of their culture that seemed to be fading away or endangered by their present context. The collection of these objects functions as a trigger to the place and practice they are connected to, like an entrance ticket to a special festivity or *santitos de bautizo*—Baptism holy cards with religious motifs that are custom made for a baby's baptism, or for children's first communion.

Several pages of Kelly's photo albums were filled with *santitos*. She recalled:

I loved baptisms and first communions in Colombia, they were these really fancy events with delicious food and music. Here in Chile nobody really celebrates like we do back in Colombia. I love this collection, and I found a Colombian friend here in Chile who custom makes them in the Colombian style. This lady provides *santitos* to the whole Colombian community. (fig. 5.27)



Fig. 5.27 Kelly's *santitos* collection in her photo album

It is interesting because at first glance, I observe the collection of *santitos* and find them quite similar to the ones I have seen in Chilean homes. My grandmother, who is a devout Catholic, has a *santito* saved from each of her 30 grandchildren's baptism and first communion in a similar album. However, the key issue here is not about aesthetics alone, but rather the meaning and practices attached to the objects. For Kelly, baptisms and first communions were celebrated differently in Colombia compared to Chile, so the meanings associated with the *santitos* were also different. The fact that she found a Colombian manufacturer in Chile imbues the *santitos* with a particular significance because the Colombian manufacturer comprehended Kelly's

understanding of those specific rituals. They could recreate the cards in a way that not only captured the aesthetic aspect but also conveyed their deeper meaning.

Objects also conjure psychological effects: many interviewees used the collection of mementos in attempts to capture the experience of the migration journey that they could not easily put into words. Rosario, Fernanda's Colombian elderly mother, experienced a newfound sense of purpose in life after migrating to Chile. Her life in Venezuela had become increasingly difficult, and Fernanda noticed that she had aged rapidly in recent years. Initially, the prospect of moving to Chile was daunting for Rosario, and it took several years of persuasion. However, once she made the journey south and settled in, she realised the importance of establishing new support networks and not relying solely on her daughter and husband. Rosario began attending courses for the elderly offered by the municipality, where she engaged in arts and crafts activities. This experience not only allowed her to develop new artistic sensibilities and express the trauma of uprooting her life at a late stage but also enabled her to make friends within the Chilean community. At the time of the interview, Rosario was working on creating an object book that incorporated ephemera from Venezuela and her late father. She viewed this book as a visual representation of her life story, while participating in classes in a new country with new friends reminded her that there were still memories to be built (fig. 5.28).



Fig. 5.28 Rosario's object book

Rosario's object book appeared as a treasure during my research. When Fernanda first mentioned it, I did not make much of it, but she insisted on showing it to me, and I was amazed. This book, created by Rosario, combined many of the elements I was documenting in all the migrant homes I visited. It had the form of a photo album and included different pictures of her in Venezuela, her journey to Chile, and some with her new friends from the cultural centre. Hanging from the spine of the book were the keys to her house in Venezuela, a powerful and universally significant symbol in the migrant narrative. The book was placed inside a box that contains Rosario's grandmother's rosary and some threads from when she learned to sew as a young girl. It also held a stone that she claimed was her lucky charm, which accompanied her on the journey to Chile and saved her from various dangers. Rosario explained that she needed closure from her life back in Venezuela; she believed that because of her advanced age she would not be able to create a new home in Chile. However, the classes at the cultural centre gave her the opportunity to meet new friends, and the creation of this object book enclosed many of the things she left behind but still carried in "her heart." Her house keys are charged with meaning: she said the function of keys is to open and close doors, which resonates with her motto when

facing life in Chile: “when one door closes, another will open,” simultaneously representing the home she left behind and was slowly re-building in Chile.

Section 5.4 delved into the research participants’ family albums, showing the significant meaning they held for the individual migrants who owned them as well as for their family histories. Photographs and family albums serve as powerful tools for migrants in Chile, encompassing nostalgia, heritage, memory, and identity, acting as repositories of personal and collective history, and preserving cherished moments and narratives across generations. Family albums gain special significance when migrants choose to bring them along on their journey, becoming central objects in the process of building a new home. These albums are not only containers of photographs but also triggers of agency, transformation, and a sense of permanence in a disrupted life. They provide a way for migrants to communicate, inspire, and remember, bridging the gaps between their past and present, their home countries and new homes. In the face of media representations that often dehumanise migrants, a feeling often mentioned by participants, these albums become powerful counter-narratives and tools of seizing agency, allowing individuals to show their own stories and define their identities. By incorporating mementos and souvenirs, family albums also become object books, connecting heritage with memory and belonging. From Law’s and Latour’s perspective on materiality (2002; 2005), albums function as true actants within the migrants’ process of identification, contributing to placemaking by transforming otherwise meaningless spaces into meaningful habitats. While movement often appears to result in dislocation—a loss of home and geographical roots—it also initiates a new process of ‘re-location,’ the creation of an ‘elsewhere’ (Gooze, 1999) (further discussed in section 2.3.3.1 and 2.6). Family albums and photographs serve to anchor what was left behind, bringing it into the present in a way that vividly expresses the lived experience of mobility. Overall, family albums play a crucial role in the lives of migrants, shaping their understanding of themselves and the world around them. Saving and caring for photos serves as an active reminder of migration and how it has shaped their lives.

5.6 Chapter conclusions

Food, religious artefacts, and family albums emerged as the most prominent pieces of material culture during home interviews. Consequently, I selected these elements from a plethora of potentially interesting objects to facilitate a rich and in-depth analysis of three consistent themes that held significant meaning for participants in the study. Chapter 5 focused on analysing the data collected during fieldwork related to the ideas of home and homeness for migrants in Chile. For the participants, homeness was tightly connected to materiality that many considered part of their identity and heritage, linking personal and communal memories to the migratory experience.

Section 5.2 examined the significance of home and materiality within migrant communities, highlighting the role of home as a marker of what the research participants understood as their national identity, as well as a space for cultural practices that provide strong feelings of belonging and nostalgia. Material objects within the home serve as anchors for identity, allowing migrants in Chile to establish a sense of localization and continuity in their otherwise fragmented lives. In this sense, materiality extends beyond finding possibilities for home-making and identity building in the present by bringing items from the past; it also introduces new notions for the future. It includes objects that participants believe should be preserved within their families to remember the experience of mobility and the development of their negotiated identities. In this section I focused on luggage as important symbolic objects that carry memories of a past home and aspirations for present and future home-building. Suitcases became companions and containers of personal and cultural heritage during the migration journey, fostering a sense of stability and identity.

Section 5.3 delved into the subject of food, which plays a significant role in the performance of heritage for migrant communities. Food serves as a powerful subject for this study because it encompasses various layers of heritage. Migrants continuously negotiate their identity,

incorporating new experiences and transforming existing ones. Food and associated rituals undergo changes and acquire new meaning as migrants move and gain diverse experiences. While food can be understood as an indication of belonging to a particular nation or region, this link is not inherently established, but has to be claimed by both insiders and outsiders. In this sense, respondents demonstrated flexible views regarding food and heritage, acknowledging a constant transformation to their practices while retaining their significance as vessels of their identity. Food, as a performative act, is deeply intertwined with emotions and heritage for migrants. It involves storytelling, music, dance, gestures, and visual aesthetics, creating an immersive experience that evokes a wide range of emotions related to migratory experiences. Migrants reinterpret and adapt traditional practices, incorporating new elements and ideas, ensuring the continuous evolution and relevance of food heritage. Coffee, in particular, holds contentious significance for Venezuelans, as it embodies a difficult political history and is connected to the reasons for migration. Coffee serves as a marker of identity, differentiating migrants from locals while reaffirming their national identity. However, the study reveals that notions of nation and national origins are complex, as ideas of fixed nationhood are challenged by migrants, who construct their identity outside the realms of fixed identification, geographical regions, and essentialism.

Section 5.4 revealed how the presence of religious artefacts and practices in the homes of migrants reflects the complex intersection of migration and religiosity. In many ways, religion serves as a source of solace, community and identity for many migrants, while being a contested theme with diverse interpretations and practices. The meaning and value of these religious objects usually goes beyond the formal institutional recognition, as migrants themselves assign value and determine what they consider to be the significance of spiritual objects. In this sense, the coexistence of the religious and the secular is evident in domestic life, permeating aspects such as home decorations and even humour. These religious elements contribute to a sense of home and identity for migrants, bridging the gap between their countries of origin and their new host country.

Finally, section 5.5 reveals how family albums articulate the past and the present for migrants. These albums act as repositories of personal and collective history, preserving cherished moments and narratives throughout many generations. Participants in the study expressed a strong attachment to the photos and albums that travelled with them from their countries of origin, highlighting their importance in processes of homebuilding. The photographs within the albums provide agency for migrants, inspiring transformation and serving as reminders of their journeys and achievements. The albums also play a role in creating a sense of place for migrants, connecting them to their past and helping them navigate their present identity. Additionally, some albums go beyond photographs, incorporating souvenirs and mementos that serve as tangible connections to the past and trigger memories of cultural practices and rituals. Overall, family albums hold immense power in shaping migrants' understandings of themselves and their new homes.

The intimate space of the home elucidated findings indicating that objects related to religion, food, and family photos hold particular significance for identity and memory building during and after migration. Objects such as suitcases or family albums are part of a transformative journey for migrants, becoming embedded in their present homes in Chile. These objects root their past and present experiences while contributing to the ongoing process of heritage building. The next chapter moves from the private space of the home to the public space of the neighbourhood, which serves as a point of convergence for migrants, locals, and material culture, and a site where migrants ground their memories and construct new identities.

CHAPTER 6

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD: A PLACE TO CONNECT

6.1 Introduction

When analysing the interviews, observations, and archival work, two overarching themes- the home and neighbourhood- emerged related to the role of both tangible and intangible heritage in preserving memory and identity within migrant communities in Chile. In this chapter, I will focus on exploring the neighbourhood. Throughout the 24 interviews conducted, the notion of public space was frequently mentioned, and it was associated with identifiable elements of personal and communal identity. As migrants establish their homes, they also form a sense of community in outdoor spaces like stores, street markets, and parks, and these spaces evoke a sense of belonging and nostalgia for their community. This chapter offers a comprehensive discussion of the neighbourhood as a physical and social public space where migrants establish and express their identity. Additionally, it explores the sense of place created through rituals, objects, food, and religious community celebrations.

Chapter 6 will first explore how the physical aspects of public spaces serve as powerful indicators of identity. These material elements not only evoke a sense of belonging but also contribute to the creation of meaning and a sense of place for migrants. It is important to note that neighbourhoods are not always tightly-knit and cohesive communities (Ashworth, 2007). However, migrants have typically established themselves in urban areas, forming leadership structures and neighbourly connections that provide support networks for individuals who might otherwise feel isolated (Keller, 1968; Ahlbrandt, 1984; Von Brömssen and Risenfors, 2014). As discussed in section 2.5, mobility plays a significant role in shaping interactions, gender dynamics,

and economic activities within localities (Campbell and Lee, 1990). Therefore, it is the actions and engagements of individuals that give spaces their true significance; spaces themselves hold little significance until they are imbued with meaning by the people who inhabit them (Friedman, 2010; Stern, 2010).

Appadurai (1995) positions social action as a fundamental pillar in the construction of local identity. In this context, the neighbourhood becomes a witness to various rituals and material practices carried out within its boundaries. Simultaneously, these practices are influenced and shaped by the physical space they inhabit. Within the neighbourhood, performances, monuments, stores, and food all contribute to the creation of heritage and memories, utilising the neighbourhood as a backdrop for their development. The reciprocal relationship between the neighbourhood and the cultural expressions that inhabit it is explored in detail throughout this chapter. The analysis will demonstrate that public space is transformed by migrants, while the neighbourhood simultaneously shapes their identity.

In section 6.3, I consider the influence of gender on public space and its impact on the bodies of female migrants, particularly focusing on issues of sexualization. Following that, in section 6.4, I explore the role of religion, socialising, and street food in public spaces as important identity markers for migrant communities. These locations function as spaces for socialisation, the establishment of support networks, job opportunities, and the cultivation of a sense of identification with their new locality. These findings align with data shown in sections 5.3 and 5.4, which explore food and religion in the intimate sphere of the home, revealing how they serve as signifiers for both individual and collective identity and memory. Finally, in section 6.5, I turn to celebration, exploring the significance of December, the month of Christmas for migrants primarily originating from regions north of the equator. Through observations and ethnographic research, I reveal how these celebrations have permeated the geography of Chile, adding new aesthetic elements to the streets and attracting migrants from other areas to explore these neighbourhoods.

The findings presented in this chapter shed light on the intricate interplay between the impact of the neighbourhood on the migrant community and the reciprocal influence of the migrant community on the neighbourhood. This dynamic relationship, characterised by a mutual exchange between materiality and individuals, is crucial for understanding how migrants establish a strong sense of belonging to new physical spaces that may lack historical significance for them. Despite this initial lack of connection, these spaces become imbued with a feeling of home or familiarity that holds great importance for individual migrants and the community as a whole.

Migration patterns often follow a trend of settling in neighbourhoods where other migrants, such as family or friends, have already established themselves (Daniels, 1999). This process entails an ongoing dialogue, as migrants integrate into existing cultural patterns, challenge established practices, and negotiate new discourses within the dominant local narratives. As a result, the public space is continuously shaped and reshaped, with material expressions gradually transforming into a shared heritage that carries identifying and commemorative value for those who have inhabited these neighbourhoods upon arrival and continue to do so to this day.

Studies have analysed the segregation and exclusion of migrant communities in Santiago, taking into account how issues like racism and housing precarity are intensified (Margarit and Bijit, 2014; Bonhomme, 2021). This study not only continues to reveal some of the realities described in previous research but also distinguishes itself by showing how these same issues manifest in material culture. In terms of identity and sense of belonging, two interesting studies deserve mention: Pavez-Soto's (2017) analysis of the integration process of children in the Recoleta commune of Santiago, and Márquez's (2014) examination of La Chimba, also located in Recoleta, which portrays how the multicultural identity of migrants endures through their support networks and sense of rootedness. This chapter contributes to the field by revealing insights into the material dimension of the neighbourhood, and exploring how culture is expressed in public spaces, shaping the identities of those who traverse them.

6.2 Materiality as marker of migrant identity within the neighbourhood

This section will focus on how the diversity of cultural expressions that unfold in the two neighbourhoods with the highest migrant density in Chile, Santiago Centro and Estación Central, come to embody sites of belonging and socialisation for migrants from different nationalities. Street signs, music, food carts, and overall street material culture transform unknown spaces into intimate and safe places for migrants, even if the materiality they encounter is not specifically from their country of origin. A significant aspect of research regarding migrant placemaking focuses on the particular ethnic groups that predominate and how they create distinct migrant spaces that reflect their original national identities (Logan, 2002; Luk et al., 2005; Aguilar San-Juan, 2005). However, there are processes of migrant placemaking in localities without a predominant ethnic group, but instead characterised by multicultural diversity, or what Vertovec (2007) describes as “super diversity,” a demographic phenomenon in which populations are more diverse than ever before. This concept implies that within a single neighbourhood, migrants arrive from numerous places, not just geographically but also in terms of ethnicity, economics, religion, immigration status, gender, and age. Super diversity goes beyond the idea of a multicultural community where different ethnic groups coexist. Instead, it describes communities that are so diverse that no single ethnic group holds dominance. Such communities encompass layered demographics, with a mixture of “old” and “established” immigrants from various countries of origin, alongside long-standing local populations. Neighbourhoods like Santiago Centro and Estación Central are clear examples of super diverse spaces.

Most studies focus on coherent distinct ethnic groups in neighbourhoods as a necessary context for place-making processes to occur (Robertson et al., 2008; Boschman, 2015). However, place-making has to do with the display of identity, whether individual or collective, in a particular

place, which is expressed in neighbourhoods through monuments, festivals, specialty shops, or businesses that sell products characteristic of a particular national culture (Luk et al., 2005; Friedmann, 2010). Some of these places are proudly showcased by cities as part of their identity, like “our Chinatown” or “our Indian neighbourhood,” while in other cases these spaces are merely tolerated or outright marginalised. As argued by Edensor (2016), most of the literature focused on processes of heritage and place-making is dedicated to spaces constructed by a single ethno-national identity. However, Chile differs from other cases, as place-making has been a diverse and multi-layered process in historically migrant-receiving neighbourhoods. The shops that fill Santiago Centro or Estación Central may be called “Colombian” or “Venezuelan,” but they serve and support communities from various countries. Pemberton and Philimore's (2016) study on the Handsworth neighbourhood of Birmingham, UK, is quite enlightening for this research because it assesses how the long-standing diversity of Handsworth, combined with ongoing immigration from many countries, appears to project a neighbourhood identity of diversity that is sufficiently broad to appeal to individuals with different backgrounds and make their accommodation and feelings of belonging possible.

6.2.1 *Los Paisas*: a place of food, friendship, and belonging

Commercial activity stands out as important in participant interviews and neighbourhood observations because buying certain products at certain stores is part of what makes migrants feel more at home in certain parts of the city. One of the recurring businesses that showed up during field work was *Supermercado Los Paisas*, named after the people from the region of Antioquia in Colombia—a chain located in Santiago Centro with more than 10 stores. *Los Paisas* is not just a store where a variety of migrants can find ingredients for their dishes, it also marks streets as a migrant dense location, and is considered by participants as a sign they are entering a space where they will find like-minded individuals and an aesthetic that recalls home. This section will examine the impact commerce has in the material world of migrants and how businesses function as markers and containers of identity and heritage for migrants.

Santiago Centro and Estación Central have historically been the city's commercial centre. However, in the 1990s, Santiago Centro and its main square, *Plaza de Armas*, along with the surrounding streets, were noticeably desolate and gloomy. The economic advancements in Chile in recent decades led to the establishment of upscale strip malls in other areas of the city, causing the former commercial heart of the city to lose its lustre. At the same time, during the mid-90s, there was a gradual but steady increase in the number of migrants arriving in the country. The economic centralization of the Metropolitan Region in Chile resulted in a significant concentration of migrants in Santiago (further discussed in section 3.3.1). The city centre began to be populated by informal vendors of articles such as food and international phone cards, as well as offering services for remittances and parcel delivery (Ducci & Rojas, 2010). By the mid-90s, the galleries on Cathedral Street were practically deserted, while outside, the streets became a bustling gathering place for migrants (Stefoni, 2013). When the Santiago Centro Municipality intensified its crackdown on street vendors, migrants sought refuge by leasing premises in the same streets to continue their sales. This process facilitated a certain level of formalisation in economic activities, though did not eliminate the informal economy, thereby enabling the coexistence of formal and informal practices that persists to this day (Stefoni et al., 2021). An illustrative example is the significant sale of food along these streets, which continues to be made in the homes of migrants and then transported and sold in premises licensed for other types of products (Stefoni, 2013).

Many informal street commerce and food stalls become formalised once the entrepreneurs gain sufficient networks and save enough capital to be able to rent a space and complete the necessary institutional paperwork. One example of such an institutionalised business is *Los Paisas*, which was formerly a street food stall. Through unstructured interviews with employees of *Los Paisas* and customers who shop there, I was able to gather valuable insights. It was generally understood that *Los Paisas* initially started as a street food stall specialising in Colombian *empanadas*. Over time, it transformed into a Colombian fast food restaurant that also offered Colombian products. As it expanded throughout the neighbourhood, different stores

emerged, each with its own specialty. For example, one store is focused on selling meat, while others concentrate on prepared foods, pantry items, and groceries. Both the Facebook page and extensive reviews on chileopina.cl (a Chilean review site) reflect customers' sentiments about *Los Paisas*. They describe it as a place where you can find "all the ingredients to make you feel at home" or that "bring the Caribbean to your doorstep" (Fig. 6.1). This suggests that the shops not only offer products from Colombia, specifically Antioquía, but also a variety of items from the wider Caribbean and Latin American region—provisions that are not easily found in local Chilean businesses.



Alexander Guavita Silva



203 reviews

★★★★★ 2 years ago

I have lost the number of times I have gone shopping there, you can find everything if you are Colombian you should visit this place, if you are Chilean go because you delight in Colombian products, I recommend the tilapia, the SantaRosanos chorizos, and especially good service people friendly and willing to help you always...

Translated by Google · [See original \(Spanish\)](#)



2

Fig. 6.1 Screenshot of one of the many Google Reviews of *Supermercado Los Paisas*

These stores leave their distinctive marks on Santiago Centro, visually signalling to both migrants and non-migrants that the store and its surroundings are part of a culture different from the local one. Renee, 40, who migrated from Nicaragua, and Henso, 33, who migrated from Colombia, both stated that around the time they moved, in 2011 and 2012 respectively, San Diego Street, one of Santiago Centro's main commercial streets, just sold books and bicycles, and held mostly

local Chilean businesses. However, they agreed that soon after *Los Paisas* opened a big store on San Diego in 2015, many restaurants and stores from Peru and Venezuela opened around it.

The stated dates of store openings may not be exact, but the perception within the community that frequents those streets is that there has been a significant change in the type of commerce and the type of customers that roam those streets. Chile has witnessed a growth in migration flows, with an annual growth rate of 6% between 2000 and 2017, which aligns with the collective memories gathered during my fieldwork. Participants in my study seemed to perceive a shift in the culture, aesthetics, and social network of the neighbourhood (further discussed in section 3.3.2). In this context, *Los Paisas* emerges as not only a centre for the products that migrants desire, but also as the heart of their mental map of the neighbourhood. Many individuals refer to *Los Paisas* when providing directions to other businesses. For example, Renee recommended a Peruvian restaurant located a few blocks away from *Los Paisas*. Likewise, Ana, a 19-year-old Colombian, informed me that there was an ice cream shop just two businesses away from *Los Paisas* where one could find mango and lemon sorbet, a delightful Colombian treat (figs. 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5).



Fig. 6.2 Supermarket *Los Paisas* on San Diego Street, Santiago Centro



Fig. 6.3 El Sangucho Peruano, the Peruvian Restaurant recommended by René



Fig. 6.4 Ice cream shop where you can find mango and lemon sorbet, a Colombian specialty

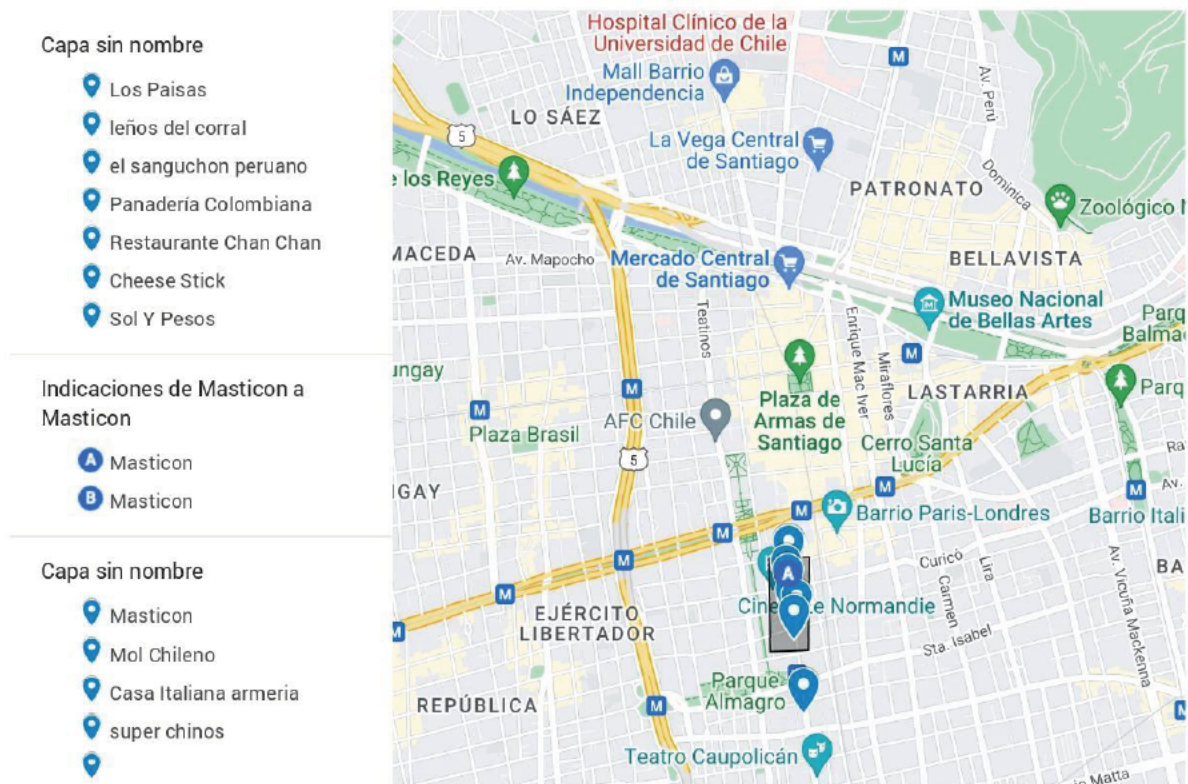


Fig. 6.5 Map of *San Diego* Street with the migrant restaurants, supermarkets and variety stores mentioned by participants. Around the blue commercial pins there are residential buildings where participants in the study live.

Los Paisas is mentioned repeatedly in stories as a crucial geographical and social point upon arrival in Chile. Many migrants described going there to inquire about employment when they were newly arrived because the staff at *Los Paisas* often provided helpful tips on where to find job opportunities, including the construction industry and other local businesses seeking employees. These supermarkets are strategically located throughout Santiago Centro, demarcating streets and spaces where a diverse range of migrant enterprises coexist alongside residential buildings that house many newcomers. These newcomers are welcomed by family and friends who have been living there for a longer period of time (Wise, 2016). This combination of residential and commercial spaces, clearly visible when observed on a map (fig. 6.5), fosters a synergistic environment for the integration of newly arrived individuals, which is quite common in migrant settlement processes around the world (Hanhörster and Wessendorf, 2020). The same places where they shop also serve as hubs for job hunting and acquiring valuable information to navigate their initial months in Chile (fig. 6.6).

Geysa, a 30-year-old Venezuelan, recounted her experience of when she first arrived in Chile. She was initially supposed to meet a love interest with whom she had been flirting long distance and who had migrated from Venezuela before her, but upon her arrival, the girl denied meeting her in person. This decision left her feeling deeply depressed, as her motivation to come to Chile had been fueled by their text conversations. Feeling alone and unwanted, Geysa found solace in the company of two friends who graciously hosted her in their home in Santiago Centro. They encouraged her to quickly find a job to distract herself from the heartache, and following their advice, Geysa distributed her CV to various local businesses in Santiago Centro, including *Los Paisas* on San Diego Street. It was at *Los Paisas* that she received the contact information for a Venezuelan *empanada* business that was seeking a delivery person. Although Geysa was trained as an environmental engineer and had envisioned pursuing that career path in Chile, she recognized the opportunity to stand on her own two feet, secure a place to live, and promptly send money back home, so she took the job. This particular experience illuminates the multiplicity of networks and connections that I observed during fieldwork after many afternoons spent monitoring the same streets and documenting various interactions. Repeatedly, I noted

migrants entering and exiting establishments inquiring about jobs, mentioning that they were recommended by a friend or partner. They were given flyers with job advertisements or provided with contact information through text messages from someone looking to hire. Migration is often motivated by affections, as in the case of Geysa, where love or friendship initially led to a place to arrive, subsequently translating into networks for finding a job in commercial establishments, parks, restaurants, and streets across neighbourhoods that have been receiving migrants for years.

Los Paisas

- Los paisas
- Carnes Los Paisas
- Los Paisas
- LOS PAISAS
- Los Paisas
- Las Paisas
- Supermercado Los Paisas
- Los Paisas
- Los Paisas
- Polígono 12

Los Paisas Supermarkets
throughout Santiago Centro

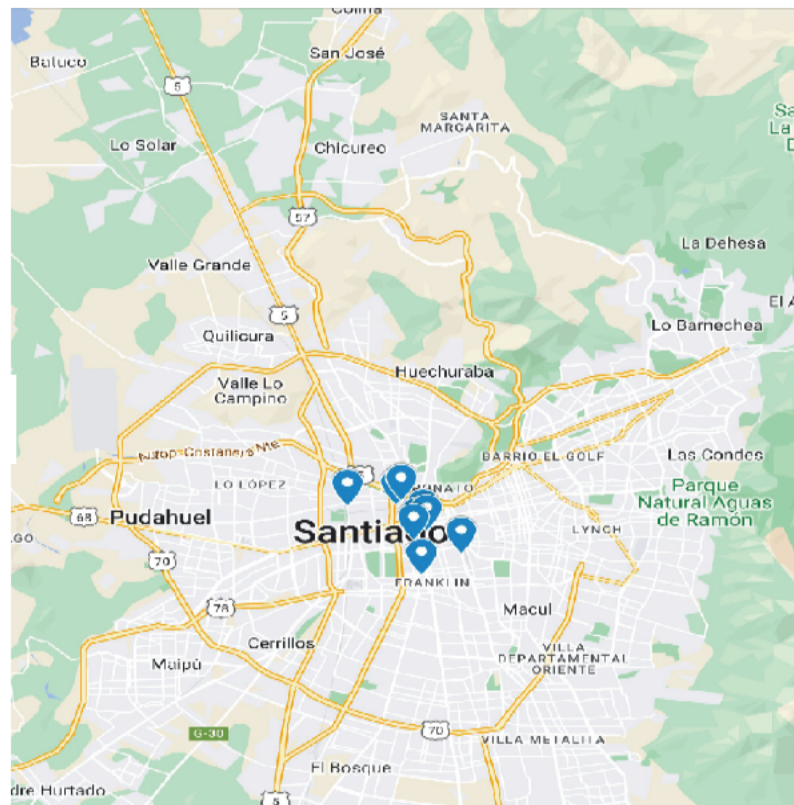


Fig. 6.6 Map of Santiago and the *Los Paisas* shops

What is interesting to examine is how *Los Paisas*, and other migrant businesses that position themselves as social and employment hubs, relate to identity, memory, and heritage. Initially, the connection may not be evident, but many of the items sold inside the stores are used in the processes of creating a home, as described in Chapter 5, such as the preparation of *hallacas* for Christmas (Appendix G). *Los Paisas* also sells religious candles with the typical saints of Colombia and Venezuela like Jose Gregorio Hernández (discussed in 5.3.1), which some research participants bought in Chile to adorn their personal altars. These stores provide the necessary materials for migrants to transform and represent their identity in Chile. Additionally, *Los Paisas* serves as a hub for community formation and announcements of communal celebrations during Christmas and other religious holidays. I found several different flyers promoting activities for a variety of migrant communities at the checkout counters. My attention was caught by one flyer that promoted an activity for the Colombian community to celebrate the Day of the Candles in 2017 (this celebration will be further explored in section 6.4.2). The vendor who showed it to me looked at it nostalgically and explained that, due to the pandemic, many of these activities were cancelled, and in 2021, they were supposed to resume (fig. 6.7).

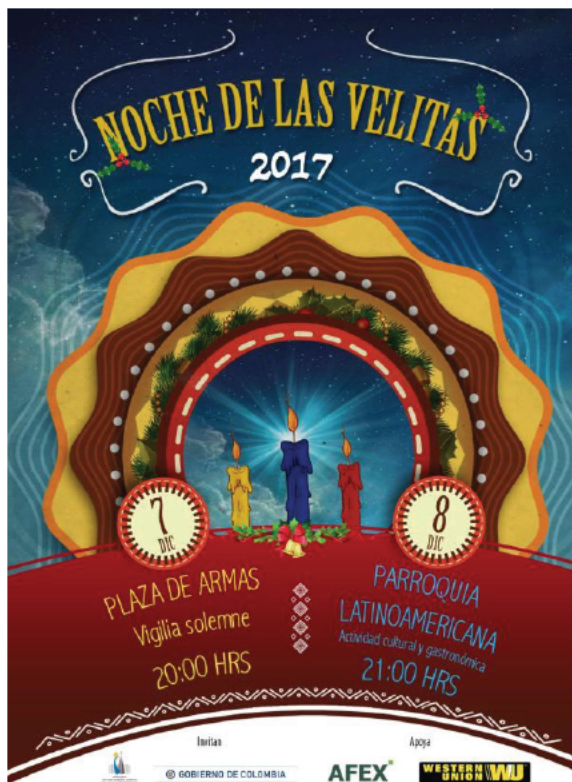


Fig. 6.7 Flyer found in *Los Paisas* of Santo Domingo Street

Politics, cultural values, and social norms play a crucial role in shaping the life trajectory of objects. The way objects are exchanged, or whether they can be exchanged at all, is a collective process influenced by social factors (Kopytoff, 1986; Appadurai, 2013). Generally, materiality is closely tied to exchange and commodification, but not all objects exist solely as commodities throughout their lifespan as they transform in meaning, bound to the people that interact with them (further elaborated in section 2.6). In this sense, *Los Paisas* serves as an iconic representation of commodification, being a store that sells products to the public. However, within this store and among the various objects being sold, this study unveils several meanings associated with this space that extend beyond commodification. Material objects and physical settings interact not only with the store's employees and clients but also the neighbourhood, marking it with different significance for migrants who find a special meaning in these stores and the specific interactions that take place within them. In this sense, the changes and transformations that objects undergo are inherently connected to the people who interact with them. In a migrant neighbourhood, the significance of mobility is emblematised by an object's existence.

It is essential to understand that it is not only the businesses aspect of migrant stores and commerce that define the neighbourhood as a representative territory of the migrant population, but that these businesses also function as vibrant spaces where useful information is shared within the community, people connect with each other, jobs are found, and objects are acquired that contribute to the performative process of identity transformation. Simultaneously, the gaze of the locals intersects with this reality, which leads to questions such as: how does the local population perceive this transformation in the neighbourhood? And how do migrants understand these perceptions from the locals?

Ernesto, a 30-year-old Venezuelan, says that he struggled to understand Chile's social outburst in 2019 where protesters filled the streets for months asking for better social and economic conditions. The trigger was an increase in public transportation fares, which ignited broader

frustrations over inequality, high living costs, and inadequate public services. The protestors demanded systemic changes, including reforms to the pension, healthcare, and education systems, as well as a new constitution to address long-standing grievances. Ernesto had found so much abundance in Chile that did not exist in Venezuela, and felt that asking for more from the government did not seem feasible or reasonable. "I had not seen so much food together in one place for many decades. Being able to walk into Los Paisas and choose from 10 different brands of toilet paper seemed like a crazy, too-good-to-be-true situation," he recounted. The majority of participants in this study expressed confusion regarding the Chileans' perceptions of quality of life in Chile and their reasons for complaining. This confusion arose from the participants' comparisons of their lives in Chile to their lives in their countries of origin, which they found to be significantly better.

After the political turmoil in Chile the term "*Chilezuela*" a combination of Chile and Venezuela—started to appear frequently in social media and the press. The term was coined to draw a comparison between the socio-economic and political situations in Chile and Venezuela. It suggests that Chile, especially after the protests and public disorder in 2019, may be heading towards a similar scenario of economic decline, social unrest, and political instability as experienced in Venezuela. This comparison highlights concerns about rising inequality, a perceived loss of democratic institutions, and potential consequences for the country's future. The term is mostly used in a pejorative manner, to warn people against populism and socialist governments that supposedly will lead Chile along the same road taken by Venezuela. Several respondents point out that many Chileans sometimes used the term to refer to spaces and things being "too Venezuelan," like a neighbourhood or a specific bar or restaurant. Ernesto continued:

I try not to take it personally when my Chilean colleagues at work say that Santiago Centro is "*Chilezuela*" or that they do not go to Bellavista⁴ anymore because it has turned into "*Chilezuela*". I know they don't mean any harm, but I'm not accustomed to that narrative. For me, what has happened in Venezuela is traumatic. I lost my home, and all my family and friends have been displaced worldwide. I don't find it funny or clever that they use a

⁴ A nightlife sector in Providencia, a neighbourhood near Santiago Centro.

term, which I know is used pejoratively by most Chileans, to refer to a part of the city inhabited by Venezuelans.

As discussed in section 2.5.1, the neighbourhood serves as a canvas for migrant memory, while also carrying significance for local residents who have previously inhabited the area or are now sharing it with the growing migrant population. Neighbourhoods are dynamic entities that adapt and evolve in response to their surroundings, resembling living organisms within an ecosystem. The continuous transformation of neighbourhood identities is influenced by historical events, public policies, and the actions of residents, serving as the driving forces behind their construction and evolution (Bond & Coulson, 1989; Peace, 2005; Freelance, 2006; Pugh, 2014). In a recent study by Bonhomme (2021) that focuses on Recoleta—the fourth most populated by migrants in Santiago, situated near Santiago Centro and Estación Central— interviewees expressed the perception that their surroundings deteriorated once migrants started arriving. However, Bonhomme examines how economic and historical processes at the time had already worsened the neighbourhood's conditions, leading migrants to seek housing there due to their limited options for renting or purchasing better homes.

The belief that incoming migration makes spaces unsafe or undesirable has become prevalent in Chile, supported by multiple media articles and participants in this study who acknowledged that Chileans often express such views to them (Carmona Lopez, 2016; Martínez, 2023; Parrini, 2023; Rojas, 2023b). Ernesto's reflections connect with the fact that Chileans have created a negative perception about certain neighbourhoods where migrant communities reside. Migrant-owned businesses, such as *Los Paisas*, are recognisable markers of identity for both migrants and locals. Their location and presence in Santiago Centro create many positive externalities as described earlier, but their material culture expressed throughout the neighbourhood also generates tensions and conflicting narratives between the local and foreign population.

6.2.2 Salsa and merengue: belonging or disturbing?

Margarit and Abde (2014) conducted a study on Santiago Centro in 2014, just before the significant increase in migration in 2015, at a time when the Peruvian community remained the most dominant. The study reveals how migrants establish themselves in specific areas, due to the availability of rental options for individual or shared rooms, urban amenities, and connectivity. It also highlights the presence of solidarity networks and information exchange among migrants. In this timeframe, there is already a concentration of the immigrant population in Santiago Centro and Estación Central, where long-time residents perceive this demographic shift as a threat to the neighbourhood's reputation. According to the perception of the local residents, the arrival of immigrants led to an increase in insecurity within the neighbourhood. Certain cultural practices of the incoming immigrants, such as hosting late-night parties, expanding private space into public areas for family celebrations (such as birthdays and anniversaries), or using public spaces extensively for recreational purposes, are often associated with undesirable behaviour.

Stefoni et al. (2021) propose a valuable point that complements this research regarding the negotiation of tensions between locals and migrants within the neighbourhood in the case of a shopping gallery called *Caracol de Bandera* in Santiago Centro. Here, local shop owners have a complex relationship with foreigners. This is manifested in the fact that local shop owners keep their doors closed, stating that "since the arrival of migrants to the gallery, we no longer feel safe. I prefer to keep the door closed and have to open it for customers rather than being exposed to what happens outside" (Stefoni et al., 2021, p. 152) In contrast, the authors describe migrant-managed stores as constantly open, even those selling higher-value computer products: "Closing the door seems to be a boundary between the internal (my business, my life, my world) and what happens in the rest of the gallery," allowing them to isolate themselves from what is not considered their own and marking a distinction with what is different (Stefoni et al., 2021, p. 152).

This study expands on Stefoni et al.'s research, uncovering a consistent pattern of tensions in the daily coexistence between migrants and the local population. Numerous participants expressed a sense of acceptance and belonging when they disembark from the metro in Santiago Centro or stroll along Meiggs, a commercial street in Estación Central. They appreciated the unique smells and sounds specific to these areas which, according to them, were all very Venezuelan or Colombian, and could not be encountered elsewhere in the city. However, in the press and social media you can read the frustration and irritation of locals concerning what they consider to be disruptive noises generated by foreigners playing loud music (Cerna, 2020; *24horas*, 2022; Rojas, 2023a). In this case, the boundaries at stake are not just the closed doors of businesses but the very confines of the locals' homes. Locals describe feeling overwhelmed because when they shut the doors of their homes, they expect to leave behind the commotion of the neighbourhood but, as some locals express, "immigrants fail to respect the boundaries of coexistence, and their music seeps through the windows and walls at all hours" (SOSAFE, 2023a, np). In a way, migrant traits or pieces of their identity that spread through the neighbourhood infiltrate through the windows, blurring the lines that Chileans strive to establish, distinguishing between the private and public realms.

From the mid-19th century onwards, changes in the consumption patterns of the Chilean elite towards European goods and the growth of an emerging middle class resulted in the withdrawal of these classes from public spaces. They did not want to share with popular practices, disorder, and what they considered "unmodern" elements. During this period, the state in Chile embarked on what they referred to as the modernisation of the country, basing it in European culture while disregarding anything indigenous or non-European. The modernisation of the state and advancements in western science led the wealthier classes to confine their lives to private spaces, creating a world away from the common people who, with their "barbaric" customs, inhabited public spaces. This has, in a way, shaped Chile's cultural history, where even today the use of public space is subject to this Europeanist modernising scrutiny, with behaviour expected to be unobtrusive, quiet, and austere (Guzmán, 2012; De Ramón, 2013; De Simone, 2013). Some migrant communities can understand this differently, as many who have settled in Chile come

from warmer latitudes—like Cartagena de India in Colombia, Maracaibo in Venezuela, or Haiti—where being outside the house is possible year-round. Adding to this fact, some migrants come from poorer Latin American towns with less housing infrastructure, leading to many daily practices taking place on the streets as an extension of their own homes; using the street for celebrations or daily chores is something participants in this study continued to do in Chile. Chile has had government housing programs since the 19th century in order to end squatter settlements, effectively reducing the numbers, with only 24,000 families living in squatter settlements by 2005. However, after the social upheaval in 2019, coupled with the impacts of the pandemic in 2020, squatter settlements have reemerged in Chile, increasing to 81,000 families (TECHO, 2023). The idea of constructing sturdy homes and leading a life confined within the house has been a narrative influenced by modernising trends dating back to the 19th century in Chile. This has not always been the reality, and many Chileans do inhabit public spaces as an extension of their homes, but the official narrative and traditional expectations of what is considered “modern” discourage this practice.

In this sense, migrants in this study seem to be more connected to the neighbourhood than Chileans, who are very explicit in their separation between the private and the public. For migrants, the neighbourhood becomes an extension of their homes, unintentionally disrupting the local residents’ sense of tranquillity. These tensions can be observed daily in SOSAFE, a mobile application that provides users with a platform to report and receive information about safety incidents and emergencies in their area. It allows individuals to report crimes, accidents, and other incidents in real-time, and also provides alerts and notifications from local authorities and community members. The app aims to enhance community safety and facilitate communication between users and relevant authorities. However, when tracking daily posts in Santiago Centro and Estación Central, I found more racial slurs than communication between neighbours. This is probably because this app works as an amplificatory platform for a specific radicalised group, and not necessarily the majority of Chileans. The expressions reviewed in this study convey not just annoyance about the disturbances caused by the noise, but also frame this behaviour, of playing loud music, within a colonial framework. The immigrants are deemed

uncivilised in their customs, being associated with monkeys or apes. They are also ridiculed for their music preferences and looked down upon for the jobs they usually have, such as food delivery (figs. 6.8 and 6.9)

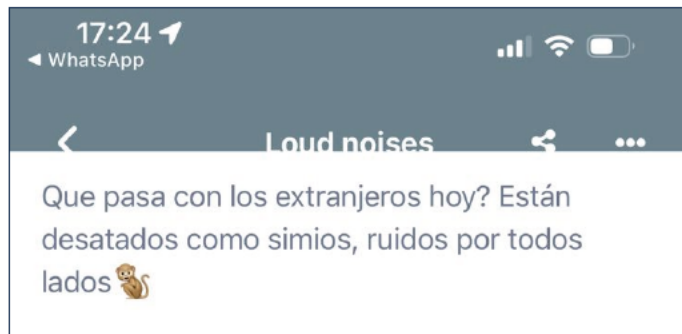


Fig. 6.8 SOSAFE Translation: "What's going on with the foreigners today? They're unleashed like monkeys, making noise everywhere".

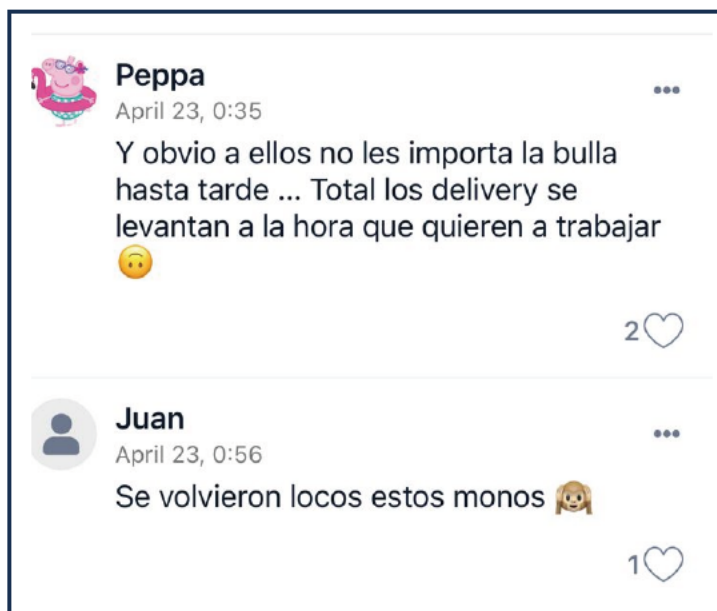


Fig. 6.9 SOSAFE Peppa: "And obviously, they don't care about the noise late at night... after all, the delivery drivers get up to work whenever they want."

Juan: "These monkeys have gone crazy"

The slurs and racial insults represented above fill social media, directed from Chileans toward migrants since 2020. This use of language is not new in Chile and has its origins in the colonial period and first decades of nation building throughout Latin America. "Civilisation and barbarism" is a dichotomy used by Argentine writer and politician Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in his work *Facundo*, published in 1845. This book is a biographical study that explores the life

and character of Juan Facundo Quiroga, a 19th century Argentine military leader. The book delves into the turbulent and violent aspects of Argentine society, analysing Facundo's rise to power and presenting him as a representation of the challenges faced by the country in its quest for modernisation and civilisation against local barbarism. Sarmiento uses these terms—civilisation and barbarism—to contrast two opposing views of society and development in Argentina. Civilization represents progress, education, and modernity, linked to European influence, while barbarism refers to ignorance, violence, and lack of development, linked to traditional indigenous customs in rural Latin American regions (Sarmiento, 2006). Sarmiento argues that Argentina's advancement and prosperity depends on leaving behind barbarism and embracing European civilisation and its values. This concept has influenced social and political thinking in Latin America and has been subject to debate and criticism for its Eurocentric view and disregard for indigenous and local cultures. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento had tremendous influence in Latin American intellectual spheres of the time, which greatly impacted nation building processes after independence. He served as the President of Argentina from 1868 to 1874, focusing on promoting what he called a modernising vision as the cornerstone of social progress for Argentina and Latin America. This vision was centred on Eurocentric paradigms, where "civilised" and "progressive" were linked to European standards. Undoubtedly, the idea of civilisation, progress, and modernity associated with European practices still resonates in conceptions of urban behaviour in Chile. Therefore, the narrative of Chileans regarding the impact that migrants have had on the neighbourhood, associating their practices and the use of public space with words like "apes" and "uncivilised," is related to Sarmiento's intellectual tradition. The Chileans amplified in social media regard the way migrants use public space as not modern nor civilised.

While many Chileans seem upset by the loud noises, disposal of trash and distinctive smells of the neighbourhood, migrants seem to be comforted by them. Henso, who came to Chile for work and ended up marrying a Chilean woman, explained:

I had to teach my wife how to dance proper salsa. Here in Chile, they twist and turn too much, but salsa is about dancing while embracing each other. It's much more romantic and elegant than simply following the steps. When I walk around Santiago Centro, I can

hear salsa music emanating from the buildings, and for a moment, I feel like I'm back home, overcome with a sudden urge to drink, party, dance, and laugh all at once. Here in Chile, I do not get that same excitement for parties because I struggle to connect with the music or dancing style. When I visit Colombia to see my parents, I instantly crave some rum and want to dance to *champeta* or *vallenato*.⁵ It is that same feeling I get for a brief moment when I am walking around Santiago Centro.

Henso also emphasised the intrinsic connection of salsa, *champeta*, and *vallenato*, all of which originate from Colombia's Caribbean coast, to his national identity. He noted:

Here in Chile, the music you hear is mostly imported from other countries. Chileans only truly appreciate music produced in Chile during the national holidays in September. Personally, I take pride in understanding the origins of *champeta* within the Afro-Colombian community, recognizing the distinctions between Colombian and Cuban salsa, and acknowledging the prominent use of accordions in *vallenato*. Having such knowledge and hearing the music that resonates with my own roots evokes deep emotions within me.

Music, although intangible, is represented and created through tangible objects such as instruments, specific attire used for dancing, and instruments or equipment. When migrant communities replicate material culture from their places of origin in their new homes and neighbourhoods, they engage in a process of redefining the meanings associated with these objects. Material things possess multiple dimensions beyond their physical form, following Stocking (1985), who proposes seven dimensions that illustrate the intricate and diverse meanings that objects and materiality can encompass (further discussed in section 2.6). The seventh dimension pertains to how museums and cultural institutions, due to their political and economic power, can influence aesthetic considerations. In this context, Chilean institutions do not acknowledge the heritage value of migrant music, and the local population does not seem to appreciate it as much as the migrants themselves. However, this does not diminish the significant value and meaning that music holds for the migrant community. It carries a deep sense of identity and has travelled with them, transforming itself in the new territory and existing as a cherished heritage for the migrants.

⁵ Forms of traditional Colombian music.

Some scholars perceive materiality as a vehicle for conveying intangible aspects of heritage (Blake, 2000). Bouchenaki takes this further by suggesting that intangible heritage actually provides a framework within which tangible heritage gains form and significance (2003, p. 5). However, as mentioned in section 2.4, I propose that the significance of materiality and immateriality depends on the specific context being examined. In this case, music entails meaning for respondents that relates to how they understand themselves and where they come from, while at the same time acting in the present as a potent marker of their new home. There are instances where immateriality can be just as influential as materiality in constructing meaning and value. Rather than functioning solely as a framework or vehicle, both the material and the immaterial create ongoing feedback loops between the physical and non-physical realms. Henso, who regards music as an integral part of creating a sense of home and influencing his state of mind, prominently displays various Colombian figurines of *vallenato* musicians playing the accordion in his living room (fig. 6.10). Within his private space, he visually represents the importance of music through these figurines while also connecting with music in public spaces when hearing the sounds of *vallenato* music in Santiago Centro; home is evoked, here, in both domestic and neighbourhood space.



Fig. 6.10 Traditional Colombian musician figurines

In section 2.4.4, I pondered about what happens when migrant communities reproduce stories, religion, or language practices within their community and actively choose to preserve them, even when this preservation is not recognised by outsiders. In the case of music, this research exposes that outside recognition from locals does not seem to deter the cultivation and expression of music for migrants. Santiago Centro and Estación Central are filled with sounds that signal a different way of inhabiting the neighbourhood and mark the arrival of migrants. This creates tensions with the local population, though these tensions, for the time being, do not seem to detract from the continued enjoyment of music.

The different value judgments that loud music in the neighbourhood produces between the local population—annoyance—and migrants—nostalgia and emotion—also exists in the countries from which such music comes. For example, UNESCO recognized *vallenato* as intangible heritage in Colombia in 2015 after the government had been working on its inscription for over a decade (UNESCO, 2015). However, the motion to inscribe *champeta* sparked debate because it emerged as a form of resistance against racial and social inequalities faced by Afro-descendant communities in Colombia. *Champeta* music reflects the experiences of Afro-Colombians, their history, struggles, and aspirations, generating a complex relationship between *champeta* artists, their communities, and the wider society as they negotiate issues of authenticity, recognition, and the commercial mainstream. However, this divide was not absolute. Despite initial reluctance, the *champetúos* eventually became involved in an official process of heritage recognition to include *champeta* in local, national, and international heritage lists. Since 2017, they have found themselves formally entangled in the lengthy path of nation-state heritage processes that vaguely promise a heritage declaration by UNESCO (Montoya, 2019). This example shows that heritage is a constant negotiation between institutions and communities, and that discussions pertaining to it happen at different levels all around the globe. Colombians in Chile keep *champeta* as part of their daily lives; it holds racial and social significance for them, even though it is being played thousands of miles away from its origins.

Neighbourhood tensions, the recognition of value and different perceptions surrounding both the material and the immaterial are fundamental aspects of placemaking processes and the construction of migrant identity. In addition to tensions, there are also opposing views within the migrant community regarding behaviour discourses of reconciliation and calls for adaptation between the local and migrant communities. After reviewing press archives and social media, I came across numerous threads and writings from migrants urging their fellow countrymen to make an effort to adapt to Chilean customs and traditions. One notable example is Patricia Villa, a Venezuelan who gained popularity on TikTok, and was then posted in many media outlets, with a video that received over 300,000 views and 200 comments (*24Horas; Mega; Meganoticias*, 2023; *Central Noticia*, 2023). In her video, she encouraged Venezuelans to embrace “the country that had opened its doors to them,” emphasising the importance of “adapting to the local culture, showing respect, and living harmoniously.” On the other hand, Cruz, a 49-year-old Colombian woman, self-identified as Black but expressed her aversion to associating with other Black people in Chile. She did not want her children to do so either, citing their negative reputation, noise, and lack of respect for Chile's culture of tranquillity. Cruz pointed out that “my son’s Black friends come and take beer from my fridge without asking and then leave everything dirty. This does not happen with his white friends. So I like white friends better for my son, even though we are Black.” These tensions not only revolve around the dichotomy of locals versus foreigners, the case of Cruz shows conflicts and complex processes of transformation that deal with both external and internal community issues. The process of transformation is ongoing and manifests in public spaces, such as neighbourhoods, as well as through various media outlets that provide platforms for different communities to express themselves.

6.3 Gender dynamics in public places and sexualisation of the migrant female body

The cultural heritage of migrant communities is closely connected to the process of self-identification. However, determining the identity of individuals or groups is not without its challenges, as classifications based on factors such as social class or traditional gender roles have given way to a complex interplay of factors that vary for each person (Bhabha, 2004). This section will delve into how gender, an important component of personal and collective identity, undergoes transformation with mobility, which changes some gender traits associated with the country of origin, accentuating others, and opening up new possibilities for expression. Identity, memory, and heritage are intricately intertwined, creating tensions which shape migrant heritage and memories, hence the outcomes that I observe about gender in this study are not be definitive or conclusive (cf. Bauman, 2011). The gendered migrant experience—like the ethnic and economic—will continue to be renegotiated and transformed beyond the scope and timeframe of this project.

As mentioned in section 2.4.4.1, traditional gender roles in Latin America have a significant influence on regional idiosyncrasies; migrant women have roles and contexts that are markedly different from those of migrant men (Marroni, 2006). These differences become visibly evident in the material culture of migrants and in how public space is utilised and experienced. Researchers have examined how migration affects both the community of origin and the host community, uncovering the changes in gender roles and children's experiences resulting from the altered structures of permanence (Marroni, 2006; Alvites, 2011). The dynamics established in urban neighbourhoods differ depending on factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, with mobility being one of the key elements that influences interactions within public space (Campbell and Lee, 1990; Barrett et al., 1992). The following section will approach how migrant women experience and are perceived in the streets and parks they inhabit.

6.3.1 The gendered public space

In Latin America, women are often overlooked or confined to stereotypical roles in historical accounts, rendering them largely invisible in terms of heritage. This lack of visibility is palpable when examining tangible heritage, as seen in the scarcity of female figures in public monuments or the absence of streets named after women. Gender inequalities within the traditional cultural spheres—such as museums, monuments, and historical narratives—are connected to women’s limited access and visibility in professions, as well as their differential participation in cultural activities compared to men. This can be attributed to women having fewer financial resources and less leisure time. However, when considering intangible heritage, women, often without recognition, can take on a primary role as they are often the keepers of practices such as cooking, dancing, collecting, and creating photo albums, which they then pass down to their daughters (Moghadam and Bagheritari, 2007). As analysed in Chapter 5, many female research participants take on a prominent role in heritage preservation when discussing topics such as food or the safekeeping of valuable items like family photos. The research methodology employed in this study, which involved home interviews and ethnographic observation, provided access to the intimate space of the home and allowed for insights into aspects of women's experiences that other methods and studies often overlook. Given that the public space has historically been dominated by men and is not always a safe environment for women, women tend to feel more at ease in the private sphere. By delving into the privacy and security that the home offers, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the often complex experiences women have in the public realm.

Values, norms, and rules concerning gender vary among societies, communities, and groups, but gender inequality remains pervasive worldwide. In recent years, Chile has witnessed a significant rise in feminist voices claiming public space, which has influenced the perspectives and experiences of female migrants. The Chilean feminist movement that began in 2018, known as “*El Estallido Feminista*” (Feminist Outburst), was a significant social and political movement that aimed to address gender inequality and advocate for women's rights in Chile. It emerged as a

response to deep-rooted issues such as gender-based violence, wage disparities, reproductive rights, and gender discrimination. The movement gained momentum with massive protests, marches, and demonstrations organised by women and feminist collectives across the country. These actions called for systemic changes in various areas, including education, healthcare, labour rights, and the dismantling of patriarchal structures. One of the key catalysts for the movement was the widespread denunciation of sexual abuse and harassment within educational institutions. These allegations sparked a national conversation about gender-based violence and the need for institutional accountability (Errázuriz, 2021; Palacio-Valladares, 2022; Perry, 2022). The feminist movement in Chile also focused on amplifying the voices of marginalised women, including indigenous women, Afro-descendant women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and migrant women, acknowledging their unique struggles and advocating for their rights and inclusion.

The history of feminism in Chile gained strength during the 20th century and holds particular significance in recent history due to its profound influence on Chile's cultural heritage during the dictatorship. Through art, theatre, and clandestine performances, women organised themselves to resist and confront the human rights violations perpetrated by the Pinochet dictatorship (Pernet, 2000; Donoso, 2022; Gavin, 2022). While the feminist movement has evolved and taken on new forms over time, many practices that emerged during the dictatorship persist today. One example is the emblem on the Chilean pro-choice bandana, which is widely used in feminist paraphernalia in Chile today (fig. 6.11). It was created by the renowned feminist artist Laura Rodig in 1937 for the first congress of the feminist association MEMCH (Movement for the Emancipation of Women in Chile). This emblem has endured through time, symbolising the emancipation of women in various contexts. During the dictatorship, it represented mothers searching for their disappeared children, while today it represents women seeking justice in cases of sexual abuse (figs. 6.11 and 6.12). Laura Rodig is a vital figure in Chile's cultural heritage. She was recently honoured with the first exhibition at Chile's Fine Arts Museum, nearly 50 years after her death. This exhibition showcased her prolific legacy and solidified her status as one of the most captivating Chilean artists of her generation. Rodig was deeply connected to the intellectual and political avant-garde in Latin America, adding to the significance of her contributions to the

art world (Valdebenito, 2018). Today's feminists, particularly young university students who have spoken out against sexual abuse, draw inspiration from the courageous feminist women who fought during the dictatorship (Perry, 2022).

The women interviewed for this study share a common experience: they had no prior exposure or in-depth knowledge of contemporary feminism in their home countries, only hearing about it as something that transpired in the past when women fought for the right to vote. It was in Chile that they discovered feminism as a line of thinking and activism that was alive in present times, and this discovery proved to be a transformative experience for each of them in their own unique way. This becomes especially evident when examining the transformative journey of migrant women, who acquired knowledge about the feminist history of Chile and gradually began participating, albeit hesitantly, in recent feminist marches. Ana, a 19-year-old Colombian, shared her personal experience of learning that it was possible to embrace makeup, fashion, and still identify as a feminist through a friend she met at university. She proudly showed her green pro-choice bandana along with her purple lipstick,⁶ which she wore to all university feminist events (fig. 6.11). Ana reflected on the contrasting attitudes of her mother, who remained unaware and unable to comprehend feminism due to the strong presence of machismo in Colombia, particularly in her hometown of Cartagena. In her mother's eyes, feminists were perceived as crazy women incapable of establishing serious relationships with men. However, for Ana, her experience with feminism in Chile empowered her with the confidence to set boundaries with men and assert her rights. Movement, both migratory and historical, is showcased in its entirety in this particular case, where Ana, a young migrant, wore a bandana with a historical drawing representing feminism in Chile. The use of this scarf intertwines concepts of identity as it signifies a new kind of identification for the interviewee; memory is crystalized in a drawing that serves as a feminist emblem created by a transcendent feminist artist; and heritage, both in its tangible form and in Ana's feminist intangible practice of marching, as millions have before her, and chanting the classic chants of Chilean feminism, advocating for justice.

⁶ In Chile, as in other parts of Latin America, feminists use purple and green to symbolise reproductive rights and gender equality.



Fig. 6.11 Ana's feminist bandanas with her purple lipstick



Fig. 6.12 Image of MEMCH first congress flyer

The Day of Patrimonies in Chile is an annual celebration established in 1999 by the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage to value and preserve the country's cultural heritage. On this day, various heritage activities are organised, and historical sites, museums, and cultural spaces are opened to the public free of charge, allowing the community to access and engage with their cultural heritage nationwide. In recent years, Chilean civil society has highlighted the importance of recognizing diverse forms of heritage that may not be reflected in official institutions like museums, one example being the feminist legacy in Chile. Efforts have been made to amplify narratives surrounding heritage, leading the government to officially announce a special emphasis on gender during the 2022 Day of Patrimonies (Ministerio de las Artes, 2022; 2023). This focus aimed to recognise and celebrate the significant role of women in the country's history and culture, raising awareness about women's contributions, challenging historical inequalities, promoting gender equality, and acknowledging the profound impact women have had in shaping Chile's cultural heritage. At the same time, bottom-up feminist civil organisations have been filling the public space with their narrative. This is why migrant women who come to live in Chile

find themselves confronted with feminist discussions in all public spaces, whether social or institutional in nature.

6.3.2 Clothing as expression for processes of identity and heritage

Nicole, 25, migrated from Venezuela with her mother when she was 16 years old, and reflected on how her understanding of clothing changed after her arrival:

In Venezuela I was raised and socialised to dress for the male gaze. Feeling comfortable? Not a chance. Liking an outfit that does not make me look skinny or sexy? No way. When I arrived in Chile and experienced my first winter I suffered so much. I would wear really tight coats that would not leave any space for layering, just so I would not look fat. I would get so cold that I would end up shivering profusely in school and they would have to send me home.

Nicole recalled how she started realising her classmates wore layers, downy coats, and wool tights that would protect them from cold weather. Also, almost none of them wore make-up to school, and many did not use high heels for going out at night, instead wearing flats and sneakers at parties. As time went by, she started blending in with her Chilean friends and feeling more comfortable wearing appropriate clothing for cold weather, and even started to carry flats in her purse so that when her heels started to ache at night she could change into more comfortable shoes.

It was not until college, around 2017, that I started naming my experience and understanding that my change in dressing had been so liberating in a feminist sense. I had learned to dress for myself and not based on how men wanted me to dress. It is my body, so I have to clothe it for me and no one else. That is something Chile gave me. Whenever I visit Venezuela, I enjoy the food and music so much, but I hate the looks I receive for dressing comfortably. However, I refuse to go back to wearing pants that don't let me breathe.

Clothing was frequently mentioned by the research participants when I inquired about identity, as dressing serves as a means of expression and also holds cultural significance. This can be

attributed to factors such as the climate, with Chile being colder compared to the home countries of the research participants, as well as the customs within different cultural groups. In Nicole's case, she modified her attire because she experienced a sense of freedom in Chile to do so. She credited this to feminist thinking, which contributed to her newfound sense of self. Other research participants observed the contrast in clothing styles between Chilean and foreign women but chose to maintain their own unique styles. For instance, Cruz explained that Chilean women often dress conservatively, favouring dull and muted colours, while being excessively covered up. In contrast, Cruz preferred vibrant colours and daring necklines. With a laugh, she shared, "In the neighbourhood, everyone calls me 'the cheerful Colombian' because I wear bright pinks and yellows even in the middle of winter." For Cruz, the Colombian way of dressing was much more liberating aesthetically than what she observed in Chile, which she found conservative. Nonetheless, Cruz asserted that she felt more liberated to dress provocatively in Chile, because:

Chilean women are strong and know how to set boundaries with men. Here in Chile, there are fewer men who dare to touch you without permission because Chilean women are fierce and demand respect. In Colombia, on the other hand, there is a pervasive machismo, and men can be foolish.

The notion that street harassment is less prevalent in Chile, as stated by Cruz, is not necessarily supported by the experiences of Chilean women. Eight out of ten women in Chile report having experienced harassment in public spaces (ENVIF-VCM, 2020). These differing perspectives on the neighbourhood experience are not absolute and are influenced by varying perceptions of safety and assertiveness between the local and foreign population. The differences between participants' perceptions of public harassment and their reasons for changing the way they dressed are difficult to separate from the complex gender norms that emerged during the interviews and the dynamics between me, the researcher, and the participants (further discussed in section 4.5). Female participants may have changed their clothing style due to excessive sexualization (as further discussed in section 6.3.4), to avoid discrimination, or to gain social inclusion from locals. However, in-depth interviews suggest that the reasons they described -

feminist discourse and climate- were their primary motivations and the arguments they deemed important to mention. While there is no doubt that discrimination and sexualization are linked to clothing and physical appearance—issues mentioned by participants and discussed in section 6.3—other factors, such as the climate and the incorporation of some aspects of feminist public discourse in Chile, also play a role in the contemporary narratives of migrants.

Research on clothing choices and preferences has primarily been conducted within the fields of anthropology, economics, marketing, and consumer studies (Chattaraman & Lennon, 2008; McKinney et al., 2004; Miller, 2021). However, there is limited research specifically examining clothing choices, meaning, and resourcefulness amongst migrants. Inglessis (2008) delves into how Latinx women in the United States communicate their individuality and cultural identity through clothing, where specific values are learned early on from their mothers and maintained through interaction with their community, driving the way Latinx women communicate their gender, age, ethnicity, and social class. Other studies address the topic of clothing among female migrants in Chile, with a primary focus on the criminalisation and racialisation of migrants (Stefoni and Stang, 2016). In these studies, clothing is recognised as a factor that contributes to stigmatisation, though this is not the main subject of study. Valdebenito and Lube (2015) and Guizardi et al. (2017) examine migrant women and their participation in clothing commerce yet do not address how clothing relates to them and expresses their personal identity. Since this research emphasises the personal experiences and perspectives of the migrant community, clothing and its meaning become outlets for expression and identity transformation. Interviews and observations indicate that the neighbourhood and the interactions migrants have with political and cultural trends in this public space has affected the way they perceive themselves, and, in the case of clothing, how they dress and how they feel about their clothing. Feminist street manifestations, institutional public discourses, and socialising have brought different perspectives to the experiences of interviewees.

Interviews and participant observation revealed important issues and narratives regarding clothing among female migrants, which are clearly linked to social norms and cultural

conventions. However, a more nuanced interpretation shows an inherent connection to heritage, given that social norms are closely tied to the production of heritage through daily life. Since clothing is intimately connected to identity expression and formation, it plays a significant role in the process of heritage building. As migration brings about changes in clothing for migrants, these changes become part of what they consider important to preserve and use as identifiers within their community. Even when participants mention changing their way of dressing to adapt to the cold, they often describe how they quickly advise newly arrived migrants from warmer areas on how to dress appropriately. One participant even mentioned several second-hand clothing stores in Santiago Centro where she has directed her migrant friends to buy coats. In cases where participants have maintained bright colors in their clothing, resisting what they perceive as 'Chilean' patterns, they say they can recognize other migrants on the street simply by their outfits and exchange greetings. These dynamics are characteristic of a materiality that has been through the migrant experience and hence forms an intrinsic part of the cultural heritage of their community.

Geysa and Verónica, 23, communicated that their gender expression, in general, has more freedom in Chile than what they experienced in Venezuela. Both identified as sexual dissidents (bisexual and demisexual) and expressed that in Venezuela, they did not feel free to dress as they liked. Upon arriving in Chile, they found a greater sense of sexual freedom, which prompted them to change their way of dressing. Geysa explained,

Here in Chile, the conversation is much more open. In my hometown, Tachira, a bisexual person doesn't exist, but here, there are many LGBTQ+ public figures. They appear on TV, and I even see them at work, something I never imagined in Latin America. This allowed me to stop wearing high heels, straightening my hair, and putting on makeup every day because it's not my style. I feel more comfortable in clothing that society considers masculine, and that was unacceptable in Venezuela.

Verónica reinforced this, saying:

In Chile, I realised that there are various definitions of 'women.' Not everyone has to straighten their hair, wear makeup, high heels, and tight clothes. There is the possibility of having a short haircut and wearing loose-fitting clothes. I love that because I didn't feel comfortable with the traditional gender definition I experienced in Venezuela. In Chile, there is more openness.

Safdar et al. (2020) in their study about clothing and identity in Canada amongst migrants report that migrant groups have a higher tendency to wear ethnic clothing when among individuals of the same background. However, outside of these specific contexts, they were more inclined to wear Canadian clothing, and findings thus indicated that migrants' clothing choices were influenced by their interactions with others. The migrants in this study utilised clothing as a means to express their values and represent their adaptation to the society in which they had settled. The data collected in my fieldwork shows some similarities to the work of Safdar et al. regarding differences in clothing choices based on the people one interacts with. However, a notable difference here is that the participants expressed a greater inclination to dress differently once distanced from their original communities. It remains inconclusive whether Chile is truly more liberal than other countries, but there are progressive public discourses that have an impact on the migrant population. Additionally, being far from the patriarchal structures of their original families provides a sense of personal freedom, as family structures tend to have a stronger influence when in close proximity (Alvites, 2011). On the other hand, Chilean women might not feel as liberated as the migrant women interviewed because they are still in close proximity to the patriarchal structures they were born into.

6.3.3 Migrant women in charge of their own biographies

In general, studies on intangible heritage commonly portray women as the keepers of various practices, including cooking, family photography, clothing, and oral traditions (Billson, 1995; Del Solar, 2019; Suarez-Orozco and Qin, 2006; Nandi and Platt, 2020). However, this study expands this perspective, arguing that when women migrate and create physical distance from their male connections, they experience a newfound independence that they had not previously explored, distancing them from traditional forms of behaviour. This newfound independence enables them

to reevaluate themselves outside the confines of more traditional practices and roles within their immediate families. It also allows them to consider which aspects of their past they wish to preserve. Migrant women encounter new relationships that transform their memories and present opportunities to relinquish certain obligations, changing ways in which they preserve heritage, participate in their community, and build identity and home.

Daniela, 35, Jessica, 29, Verónica, 23, and Geysa, 30, all Venezuelan, were less likely to get together with their own migrant community because they felt that old conservative patterns from Venezuela reappeared in these contexts, and they preferred to stay away from that. Daniela and Jessica explained that Venezuelans tend to be very closed off and do not like to mingle with Chileans, but when they started socialising with locals they found that they could be more themselves than when participating in Venezuelan friend groups that demanded certain behaviours and did not acknowledge change. Daniela shared:

I used to be consumed by Venezuelan politics, so much so that I did not have any other activities outside of hanging out with Venezuelans to talk about Maduro. Once I went out with some Chileans from work and they started questioning some of my political views. It was so refreshing, I felt defied and extremely motivated.

Jessica defined the rethinking of her femininity as “revolutionary”:

In Venezuela, the beauty standards for women are absolutely ridiculous. There's this incredibly macho culture, like the whole Miss Venezuela thing and how we're supposed to behave and look, you know? I've never really bought into that. But yeah, I have felt a lot of pressure because of it, you know? So, of course, coming here and distancing myself from all of those things, and not just distancing myself, but also getting closer to the sisterhood among Chilean women, has taught me a lot.

The integration of women into the labour force is slower and more challenging for migrant women than for men in Chile due to gender discrimination and the sexualisation of women (Carrere and Carrere, 2015; Tjoux, 2016). As a result, migrant women, particularly racialised migrant women, often find themselves working in the sex industry. When Cruz arrived in Chile,

she began working in a “*café con piernas*” (coffee with legs), a kind of coffee shop primarily frequented by men where female servers wear revealing clothing like thongs and bikini tops. These establishments aim to create a sensual atmosphere where patrons may pay for flirty dances or encounters beyond coffee. Typically, a *café con piernas* also serves as a meeting place for sex workers and their clients, who may then move elsewhere. Cruz explained that she was underpaid in other job opportunities she considered upon arrival, suspecting it may be due to her being Black, which according to her made Chileans initially hesitant to trust her. This prompted her to decide to work as a cabaret dancer and server in a *café con piernas*. She remained at the same coffee shop for seven years until she married one of her clients and chose to stop working. “I don’t regret working as a sexy dancer; it allowed me to bring my daughter to Chile and pay for her college education,” she said. She pointed to a frame of her daughter’s high school graduation with pride and exclaimed, “this image is the most valuable thing I have, who cares what I had to do to get my daughter where she is today!” (fig. 6.13). She mentioned that those seven years provided her with the opportunity to understand Chilean culture and build a strong community of women—her coworkers at the café—who continued to support her. “After leaving the café, I formed such valuable relationships with the girls that I started working as a babysitter for their children. Women in Chile are truly great friends, and I am incredibly grateful for that.”



Fig. 6.13 Frame with Cruz’s daughter’s graduation photo

Cruz left her daughter behind in Colombia with the purpose of working and eventually bringing her to Chile. However, her daughter's father, Cruz's then-partner, never fully supported her migration project. Conflict arose when Cruz started sending money back home, causing him to distance himself and end their relationship. Reflecting on her journey, Cruz realized that she used to rely on men to navigate life. However, upon arriving in Chile, she experienced a sense of empowerment. As she earned more money, she discovered that depending on men was not necessary, making life much easier. She no longer needed permission for anything. This newfound independence led her to be clear about her need for economic autonomy when she remarried in Chile.

When Geysa decided to migrate to Chile, Gertrudis, her 73-year old mother, believed that it would be the last time they would see each other since she saw no possibility of migrating herself due to feeling too old and set in her ways. However, as the situation in Venezuela worsened, with difficulties in finding food and frequent electricity cuts, Geysa convinced her mother to make the move. Gertrudis recalled the fear she felt while packing her belongings, selling her grandmother's silverware for very little money, and leaving behind the only home she had known. However, she mustered the courage to go through with it. The moment that remained deeply ingrained in Gertrudis' memory is when she crossed from Venezuela to Colombia alone with her bags and dog, Marti, using a bicycle taxi (fig. 6.14). She considered this moment the "foundation of her independence." Moving to Chile gave her a new sense of purpose in life, and she did not want to be a burden to her daughter. This motivated her to explore the city and pull her own weight in this new chapter of her life.

The newfound independence that migration provides to women becomes essential when considering public spaces, such as the neighbourhood. Migrant women thrive in these public spaces, embracing a renewed sense of identity and enjoying greater independence compared to their pre-migration lives. It is within the neighbourhood and their newfound, often

neighbourhood-based, employment that these women discover economic and social independence. They establish networks of female support, effectively transforming traditional gender roles.



Fig. 6.14 Gertrudis crossing the Venezuelan-Colombian border in a bicycle taxi

Gertrudis explained that she would always understand herself as Venezuelan because that was where she grew up—“in my case the land I was born in defined me in a special way”— but asserted that she had integrated Chile into her understanding of herself, saying, “I could not describe myself today without the Chilean experience.” This explanation does not necessarily adhere to a binary line of identification between nationalities, as discussed in section 2.3.3.2. The essential concept of a nation-state can be problematic because a person does not necessarily conform to a fixed understanding of nation based solely on being born in a specific place. Bammer

(1994) explains that many fixed ideas of national identification, like the one Gertrudis initially described, are more related to nostalgia. Gertrudis reproduced and cherished her identification with Venezuela in her new home in different ways, integrating new “Chilean” forms, ultimately leading to a sense of belonging anchored in a community of migrants, rather than in an essentialised nation-state. Several research participants across age and nationality—Gertrudis, *La Prima* (48, Cuban), Sofía (22, Venezuelan), Cruz (49, Colombian) and Dayani (22, Colombian)—had photos of themselves displayed side by side with Chilean flags, or images of Chilean flags alone flying next to a monument or in the midst of a national park. When I asked them about these images, they described them as evocative of their newfound independence and new home. Sofía, for example, described a photo from a trip she took, marking her migration anniversary, to celebrate her journey (fig. 6.15). Mobility for women goes beyond the crossing of national boundaries; it creates new feelings of belonging that surpass nationalistic symbolism and instead pursue self-meaning. While some studies like Bachan’s (2018) examine how labour contributes to economic independence for migrant women, here I uncover a new layer that goes beyond just economic independence. The described experiences above refer more to the biographical agency of leading and determining one’s own life.



Fig. 6.15 Sofía stands next to a Chilean flag at the monument *Morro de Arica*, the site of battle during the War of the Pacific in 1880, where Chilean forces captured the hill from Peru

6.3.4 The sexualisation of the migrant female body

The neighbourhood serves as a space of identification and material expression for migrants, while also being a place where locals form their own identifications and stereotypes of migrants. My fieldwork uncovers the frequency with which locals sexualise migrant women in public spaces. All participants in this study described feeling objectified by Chileans due to their country of origin, or having heard comments like, "women from tropical countries are sexier or more sexual than Chilean women" (Ana, 19, Colombian). In this sense, materiality like clothing, accessories, or idiosyncratic markers like accents or mannerisms are perceived by locals as signs of migrant women being friendlier, more loving, and more open to sex than local Chilean women. This section will address this particular phenomenon that affects migrant women in public spaces, focusing on how their multiple material expressions are interpreted as sensual signs and are heavily sexualised by Chilean men.

Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), a prominent Brazilian sociologist and anthropologist best known for his influential work *Casa-Grande & Senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves), examined the social and cultural dynamics of Brazil, focusing on the relationships between the country's various racial and ethnic groups. One of the central concepts in Freyre's work is "tropicalisation," which refers to the unique cultural characteristics and social norms that emerged in the tropical regions of Brazil. He argued that the tropical climate and geography of Brazil played a significant role in shaping the culture, behaviour, and customs of its people. According to Freyre, the tropical climate encouraged a more relaxed and laid-back lifestyle, as well as a greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships and social interactions. This resulted in a more affectionate and sensual culture, where physical touch, warmth, and emotional expressions were highly valued (Freyre, 1946). Freyre's work influenced Latin America and aligned with conceptions informing the European-centred modernisation processes that newly independent states were pursuing. Critiques of this theory of tropicalisation point out that it involves cultural determinism, oversimplifying the complex interplay of historical, social, and economic factors that shape culture. It is also a Eurocentric concept because it compares Brazilian culture to European norms and values, overlooking the diversity within the country. Additionally, it tends to downplay individual and collective agency in shaping culture (Pallares-Burke and Burke, 2009; Motta and Fernandes, 2013; Lima, 2013). However strong the critiques, the imaginary of "the tropical" as the opposite of colder and "more civilised" culture has nevertheless had a significant impact on Latin American society. Following this logic, thinkers and mass media entrenched in popular culture the idea that Chile's Mediterranean climate has led Chileans to be metaphorically colder, more rational, and less sensual compared to their Latin American counterparts, bringing them closer to what they believe is a more European demeanour (Dümmer, 2012; Ruz et al., 2018).

In early 20th-century magazines and media, there are several significant images that represent Chile's construction of whiteness. One image in the magazine *Sucesos* stands out, where two photos are contrasted: one shows a robust European white worker operating industrial machinery, and the other depicts an indigenous person wearing only a loincloth, implying a hot

climate. The images are subtitled, "Which of these two citizens do you prefer?" The descriptor below states that the government must strive to produce citizens of quality for work and appearance (*Sucesos*, 1921; fig. 6.16).

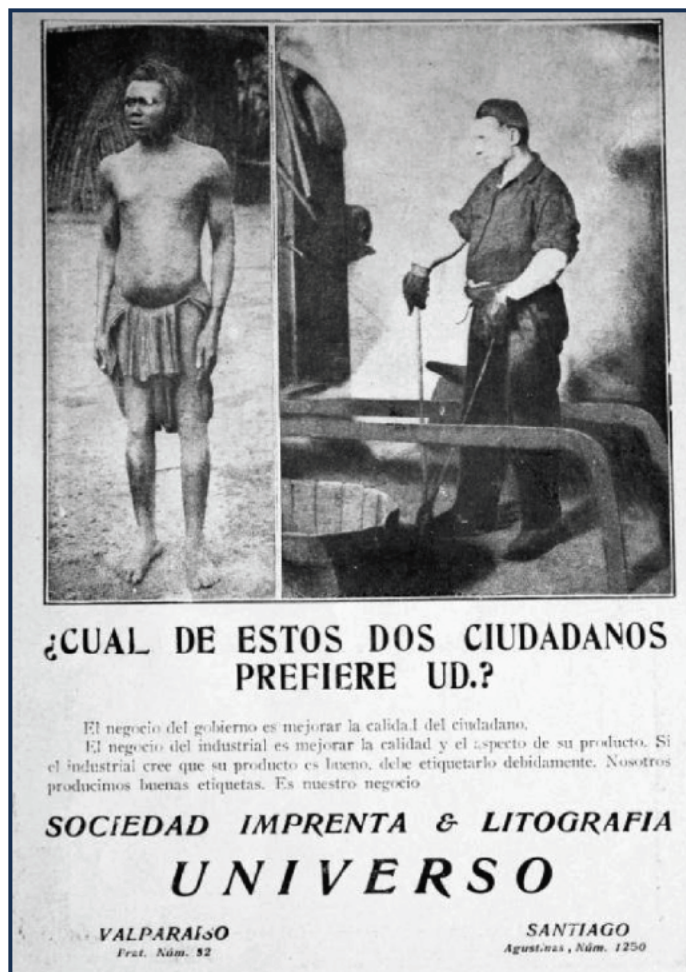


Fig. 6.16 Revista
Sucesos N 977 1921

Messages like this one have solidified the widespread belief that Chile is more European and less tropical and indigenous than other Latin American countries, despite statistics and alternative realities that contradict this notion. Contemporary Chileans likewise perceive migrant women from Latin American countries as more sensual and tropical. Drawing from the works of Freyre and decades of eugenicist thinking, this study documents how social media, press, and daily behaviours indicate that Chileans view migrant women as more sexually inclined due to their supposed tropical origins on the continent. A striking example can be found in *El Dinamo* newspaper, which published an interview titled, "Victor Perl, endocrinologist, nutritionist, and gynaecologist: 'The Chilean woman's body is becoming more tropicalised'" (Torres, February 9, 2023; fig. 6.17). In the interview, Dr. Perl describes how Chilean women feel threatened by migrant women and come to his clinic requesting larger buttocks and smaller waists to compete:

"The Chilean woman's body is becoming more tropicalized. The female aesthetic ideal is changing, and this is also related to the migratory phenomenon," says the specialist. He admits not having objective studies or data but asserts that he observes it in his clinic. "Previously, patients wanted to lose weight, to become thinner. Now they ask to lose weight in specific parts of the body and not in others. Hips and buttocks have become important, an aesthetic attribute that must not be lost. And this is because they see Colombian and Venezuelan women as competitors in terms of seduction. Women from those countries tend to have curvy hips and small waists, which men like."

Dr. Perl avoids using explicit terms but mentions that buttock lifting and augmentation surgeries have become very common. "Not all women experience this tropicalisation, but it is prevalent. That is a noticeable change. And don't even get me started on the drawn-on thick eyebrows, false eyelashes, and fake nails!".

9 de Febrero de 2023

Víctor Perl, endocrinólogo, nutricionista y ginecólogo: “El cuerpo de la chilena se está tropicalizando”

Tiene 30 años observando los vaivenes estéticos nacionales en su consulta y las maneras de lograr esos ideales. Asegura que la migración ha desatado el interés femenino por adelgazar sólo ciertas presas y mantener otras bien robustas. Glúteos firmes, abundantes y levantados; caderas anchas. Ese es el objetivo actual, nos cuenta, entre otras muchas otras novedades alimentarias y quirúrgicas.

Por Ximena Torres Cautivo



Fig. 6.17 *El Dínamo*
February 9, 2023

Dr. Perl's recent interview clearly articulates this sexualisation of the migrant female body in Chile, which is reified in my research. During my observations and unstructured interviews with passers-by, I found that Chilean men's tone and references towards migrant women are consistently sexual, objectifying them and denying them any agency beyond their sexuality. The interviewed women recounted experiencing various types of sexual aggression in public spaces, whether in the neighbourhood, at the market, in their universities, or at work. All the interviewees expressed awareness of the sexual stereotypes that Chilean men associate with migrant women, perceiving them as seductive and tropical. This perception significantly impacts how migrant women navigate public spaces and construct their support networks in their new home. Moreover, this experience shapes the material culture that surrounds these women, becoming an integral part of their identity and personal heritage.

As discussed above, women who distance themselves from their male relationships in their home country when migrating manage to gain a certain independence they did not have in their countries of origin. When addressing their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse, many interviewees described establishing new forms of support that differed from those back home, often involving other women rather than men. Inhabiting the neighbourhood and public spaces has enabled migrant women to weave support networks with other migrant women, as well as with Chilean women. Participants frequently emphasised themes of sisterhood with Chilean women, and contributions from Chilean women toward these support systems.

Sofia is a survivor of sexual abuse. A university professor began harassing her, taking advantage of her status as a newly arrived Venezuelan student with no support network by pressuring her to go out with him and kissing her without her consent. When Sofia confided in her parents, they discouraged her from filing a complaint, fearing it would jeopardise her permanent visa process in Chile. Sofia shared that it was due to the support of her Chilean classmates, who explained the reporting process at the university and offered to act as witnesses despite not being close friends, that she found the courage to take action:

I had not interacted much with my university classmates before; I usually spent time with Venezuelans. However, after a class where this professor behaved particularly inappropriately towards me in front of everyone, a classmate approached me and immediately suggested reporting the harassment to the administration. I couldn't believe it. In Venezuela, it is frowned upon for a professor to make flirtatious comments towards a student, but there is little one can do about it. Initially, I declined her offer. However, as the harassment escalated and turned physical, I made the decision to file a complaint. At that moment, I did not think to ask for her help; I handled it on my own. But when witnesses were needed, I reached out to her. Without hesitation, she organised many others who had witnessed the professor's inappropriate behaviour towards me. The Chilean women taught me an unexpected lesson in sisterhood. They transformed an incredibly difficult situation into something somewhat bearable.

Delfina, a 29-year old Argentinian, migrated to Chile because she fell in love with a Chilean man. She described having no community and feeling very isolated at the beginning, and those feelings

only grew bigger with time. Her fears of socialising and going out in public spaces increased. She arrived in Chile in April 2018, and by June, the violence her partner exerted on her had escalated significantly, both physically and psychologically. These violent patterns caused her to isolate herself even more, and when she finally filed a report with the police after a severe blow, she had no one to call for help from the police station.

In the workplace, we were invited on a trip to the beach where we could bring our partners. When they asked me about mine, I didn't know what to say. It was impossible to bring him along; he would get jealous over everything. Just the thought of my partner being in a social situation with my colleagues made my blood pressure drop. One of the girls noticed and asked me about it. I told her that my boyfriend was complicated and that bringing him along caused me problems. From that moment on, I started building friendships with some of my female colleagues. They asked about my relationship, and little by little, I began to share more with them. It reached a point where they told me I should leave him, but I did not dare to. Where would I go? Everything started getting worse. One day, I arrived at the office, and the girls had a plan for me. They showed me where to file a report, helped me find an apartment to rent, and bought me a new SIM card to change my phone number. They became my guardian angels.

Delfina described how these women helped her navigate the intricate system of reporting gender violence in Chile. In the months following the separation, they would also walk her to and from the office to ensure her safety, providing her with a trusted network. This support gave her strength and, as she explained, a reason to stay in Chile, as returning to Argentina no longer made sense for her. She pointed to this event as decisive in changing her identity and sense of belonging forever. Regaining self-worth and understanding her new boundaries became a necessary journey in this new country. Delfina's interview clearly depicts how the lack of a support network left her vulnerable to the violence she suffered, a common issue among migrant women. However, the construction of a new network, particularly a female one, liberated her from that same violence. Her identity underwent significant shifts due to mobility and gender-related challenges commonly faced by female migrants within traditional gender structures (Menjívar and Drysdale Walsh, 2019). She in turn built new structures that solidified her new personal biography. This process of identity-making and belonging is closely connected to heritage processes, which is made material through Delfina's practice of keeping the paper with her work

colleagues' escape plan in her diary. She said she plans to show it to her future daughter so that she can understand the importance of female friendship first-hand.

This unfortunately common experience among the study's participants is manifested in material objects, allowing them to integrate these events into their personal and communal lives. Romina, 28, from Ecuador, recalled being given the nickname "*calienta sopa*" (soup warmer) by her classmates in school, a derogatory term used in Chile for girls who supposedly seduce men but do not engage in sexual activity. She stated that they interpreted her body, which she described as having wide hips and a small waist, as an invitation to initiate physical contact which she refused, which led to the pejorative nickname. Additionally, they referred to her as "the horny Ecuadorian" because they perceived her as always being in provocative clothes. Another female research participant shared that she was raped at a party in 2019, and when she confided in her friends, they also labeled her a *calienta sopa* due to her perceived flirtatiousness. They found it hard to believe that the sexual event was not consensual.

Romina expressed these and many other aspects of her migratory journey through her project "*Palabra Significativa*" (Significant Word)(Samaniego, 2022). Through art and writing, she aimed to use language and words to process her life experiences. Romina created a book, in which she materialised the migratory experience through carefully chosen images and words, including the hypersexualisation she faced. She sold this book series in her neighbourhood store in Ñuñoa and on the project's website. Authors like Carreré and Carreré (2015) and Tijoux (2016) have explored the sexualisation of migrant women and its connection to racialisation processes in Chile. I, within this research, specifically want to emphasise how the racialisation of migrant women is complemented by tropicalism, where race and gender within migrant females in the Chilean context is linked to the early 20th century tropes of modernism/civilisation vs barbarism/tropicalism. Additionally, this study explicitly visualises, through the women's own voices, how these experiences are processed through material creation. Materiality plays a significant role in the experiences of women in public spaces. As they venture out into the neighbourhood and beyond, they face systematic sexualisation, which is a common occurrence

reflected in various material forms as exemplified above with Romina and Delfina. Furthermore, these material compilations become part of female migratory heritage, which remains unrecorded in official accounts.

6.4 December: where nostalgia meets identity, journey, and heritage

During the interviews, when I asked participants what they missed most about their home country or what made them feel nostalgic due to the distance, all but one (from Argentina) answered "the month of December." There is compelling literature addressing religious and popular festivities in Latin America, featuring seminal analyses such as those by Roberto Da Matta (1991) regarding Brazil's carnival and studies and by Claudio Lomitz (2005) concerning the significance and use of death imagery in popular Mexican festivities. There is also research on Andean celebrations that unveils the fusion of the divine and the pagan, intricately linked to colonial upheaval in the region's history (Rivera Andia, 2003; 2005). Additionally, there are numerous comparative studies that examine Latin American popular festivities in conjunction with other transatlantic cultures (Jiménez et al., 2018). The fieldwork undertaken in this research consistently stresses a pervasive yearning for celebrations associated with the month of December. This sentiment is not exclusively connected to Christmas or any specific festival, rather the month of December evokes a profound feeling of nostalgia in interviewees that come from countries situated north of the equator.

Participants in this study refer to the month of December as the end of year "*Fiestas*," indicating that is not one specific celebration they miss but a collection of ritualistic and social elements. The Spanish word *fiesta* encompasses a broader range of meanings than the English word "party." It includes elements of celebration and festivity, and often incorporates rituals and traditions. *La Fiesta* is a broad concept in Latin America and Spain that can refer to a specific

celebration like Christmas Eve or to broader celebrations like the *fiestas patronales* (patron celebrations), which are traditional religious celebrations that honour the patron saint of a particular community. *Fiestas patronales* are an important part of the cultural and religious calendar in many Spanish-speaking countries, as well as in regions with strong Spanish heritage. During these celebrations, various events and activities take place, often over a period of several days. These can include religious processions, masses, parades, concerts, traditional dances, food fairs, and other festivities. Many of these celebrations are not only religious events but also occasions for people to come together, socialise, and celebrate their cultural heritage. Whether particular festivities or broader celebrations, these *fiestas* hold deep cultural significance and are an opportunity for people to express devotion, celebrate identity, and/or strengthen their sense of community (Jimenez et al, 2018). From a theoretical perspective, the *fiesta* lacks clear definition in sociology, anthropology, and literature due to its diverse and complex nature. Miguel Roiz (1982) proposes that a *fiesta* represents a communicative social phenomenon—a sequence of group actions and meanings conveyed through customs, traditions, rituals, and ceremonies. These elements emerge as non-daily facets of interaction, particularly at the interpersonal level, distinguished by robust participation.

December emerges as a significant month for migrants that originate from the regions north of the equator in Latin America. This period stirs in them a sense of nostalgia and connection to their heritage, offering a platform to recreate and renegotiate past cultural practices and memories alongside newly acquired customs from Chile. A compelling aspect unearthed by this study is the consistent recurrence of these sentiments across many migrant communities arriving from northern Latin America. While there may not be distinct celebrations or rituals, a shared interest in socialisation, festivities, and cuisine emerges—elements that they do not encounter in Chile during the same time period. In the subsequent sections, I will delve into the parallels drawn by respondents with September festivities in Chile, and certain specific practices that vividly illustrate processes of identity and heritage.

6.4.1 "In Chile, September is what December is for us"

One of the most frequently repeated phrases when participants discussed December was, "In Chile, September is what December is for us," in order to convey to me the sense of festivity and celebration that arises during December time in their countries of origin. The *Fiestas Patrias* in Chile is a nationwide celebration that spans throughout the month of September, culminating in two significant public holidays: the 18th and 19th of September. These festivities commemorate Chile's independence and rank among the most significant and joyous celebrations in the country. On the 18th of September, known as the Day of Chilean Independence, the celebration focuses on the anniversary of the First National Government Junta in 1810, a pivotal stride towards Chile's liberation from Spain (Peralta, 2007). This day witnesses a host of activities nationwide, including parades, *fondas* (traditional Chilean fairs), traditional cuisine, games, music, and folk dances. *Fondas*, particularly popular, are set up in various locations, offering food, drinks, live music, and dancing. There are numerous depictions of these festivities, particularly of the *fondas*, throughout local history. Some are included as part of Chile's official heritage in the collection of the National Museum of Fine Arts. When examining these images, it becomes apparent that, with certain modifications, these traditions are still celebrated in similar ways today (figs. 6.19 and 6.20). The 19th of September is recognized as the Day of the Glories of the Army, a tribute to the Chilean Armed Forces. On this day, military parades and ceremonies unfold across the country to honour and acknowledge the army's historical significance. However, the entire month of September is characterised by immense joy. Social gatherings include barbecues where people dance, drink, and banter in a distinct manner that distinguishes this time of the year from everyday life. Attired in traditional costumes, individuals engage in social and cultural activities. Food assumes a pivotal role in the celebrations, highlighting customary dishes such as *empanadas*, barbecues, stews, and pastries. This celebratory occasion intersects with various political and power dynamics in Chile. It has historically served as a potent tool in shaping a strong national image, functioning as a mechanism of state discourse during wartime in the 19th century and during the nation-building process (Albizú, 2001; Cid, 2008). Notably, during the era of the military dictatorship, this celebration was intensified, with nationalist symbols like flags and

spirited chants for the nation being promoted as part of the regime's own version of fascism under Augusto Pinochet's rule (Jara, 2011; Fielbaum, 2018). Nevertheless, these festivities transcend the official aspirations in some ways: the celebration of Chile's independence serves as a platform for fostering social bonds and preserving local and family cultural heritage, allowing individuals a distinctive reprieve by indulging in more food and drinks than usual.



Fig. 6.18 "La Zamacueca" by Manuel Antonio Caro, a painting created in the second half of the 19th century. Caro was recognized by art historians for painting a series of compositions that are true historical documents of that era (Galaz and Evelic, 1981).



Fig. 6.19 Image from *El Diario de Antofagasta*, 2023 news report titled: “The surprises that the big municipal *Fonda* of Antofagasta will bring”

Ernesto, a 30-year old Venezuelan, commented that for him the month of September in Chile had the same atmosphere as December in Venezuela.

Nobody really wants to work. During working hours, the office organises traditional games, enjoys *terremotos* and dances *cueca*. In the evenings, people gather with friends to celebrate; Chileans shout and sing in the streets. Everyone is joyful, and there's a festive atmosphere that's very beautiful. In Venezuela, December is similar—at work, you're celebrating with colleagues, and in the evenings, you attend gatherings where you play secret Santa and gift exchanges, enjoying *hallacas*, and listening to *gaitas*.⁷

⁷ Terremotos are traditional drinks, literally translated as “earthquakes,” composed of liquor with pineapple ice cream. Cueca is a traditional dance in Chile. Gaitas are a type of Venezuelan music specifically played during December for Christmas festivities.

As reviewed in section 5.3.2, *hallacas* Venezuelan tamales prepared and eaten specifically during Christmas time—represent a pivotal element in the celebration of Christmas for Venezuelans in Chile. The act of preparing them, the ingredients, and the activities surrounding the preparation evoke feelings of nostalgia while also making Christmas tangible and comprehensible. A similar phenomenon occurs with the example of music; the *gaitas* mentioned by Ernesto were referenced in some way or another by all the Venezuelan respondents. Fernanda, a 43-year-old Venezuelan, mentioned that she never used to actively search for live *gaitas* while she lived in Venezuela. However, in Santiago she attended an *amanecer gaitero*—an event where *gaitas* are played until dawn in Santiago Centro's *Teatro La Cúpula*—and recalls feeling overwhelmingly emotional. In Venezuela, *gaitas* refer to a traditional style of music that is particularly popular during the Christmas season. *Gaitas* are characterised by their rhythmic patterns, melodies, and lyrics that often tell stories, convey social messages, or simply celebrate the festive spirit of the holiday season.

Material culture plays an unexpected role in migrants' continued and changing social identities. Everyday materiality can hold dual meanings in the lives of migrants. Some items can serve as tools for preserving and communicating their identity, while also becoming bridges for integrating themselves into new social networks (Trabert, 2020). Migrant material culture related to December, along with the memories triggered by the month's particular foods, music, and rituals, assist migrants in relating to specific emotions and traditions within Chilean culture, such as the celebrations in September. They have rapidly grasped that this month in Chile is not solely about historical significance but also about celebration and a distinct festive sentiment. Through this connection, they can empathise with the local population and even partake in the joyfulness that they also experience in December.

Migrants' material culture can also function as artefacts of memory, enabling individuals to adjust to their new circumstances while evoking their connections to important traditions. According to Naum (2015), migration represents a transformative journey that involves a separation that can be interpreted as a form of loss. The flow of everyday life and established routines becomes

disrupted, and as migrants transition to unfamiliar territories, a growing sense of alienation and detachment is experienced. To navigate through these profound changes and feelings of loss, Naum proposes that migrants often recreate fragments of their previous lives and cultural practices using objects from their countries of origin. Even the most ordinary domestic items and customs can gain renewed significance as they serve as reminders of the homes and lives that migrants left behind. In this sense, the atmosphere felt in the month of September in Chile activates similar feelings to those migrants long for during the month of December. Experiences in the neighbourhood during these months act as tangible points of connection with sites and feelings from the past. The neighbourhood is inhabited by Chileans during the month of September in a way that activates deep memories for migrants, who then inhabit the neighbourhood in a similar way in December.

Another significant aspect of both the September celebrations in Chile and the December celebrations for migrants is the concept of *estrenos* (debuting). *Estrenos* refer to the tradition of wearing new clothes and shoes for a specific celebration. In a Chilean tradition which is less prevalent today, families would either purchase or have a complete outfit custom-made specifically for the occasion of September. In cases where there was not enough money to afford this luxury, some recollect their parents resorting to turning clothes inside out to give the illusion of newness (*La Tercera*, 2012; *24Horas*, 2015). The participants in this study emphasised the significance of *estrenos* in shaping their December experiences. Wearing new apparel and shoes symbolises the conclusion of one annual cycle and the commencement of another. Some interviewees mentioned diligently saving money throughout the year to send new items to their families in their home countries in December, thereby enabling them to partake in this tradition. Seven Venezuelan participants mentioned Avilaexpress, a package delivery service established by a Venezuelan in 2021. They elaborated that the entire community employed this service to send packages containing their Chile-acquired *estrenos* to their families back in Venezuela. The company begins advertising December deliveries as early as August, underscoring the significance of this tradition (fig. 6.20).

Henso recounted how he had to persuade his Chilean wife to wear a dress that she would typically reserve for a wedding in Chile during Christmas with his family in Colombia: "My wife couldn't grasp the idea that all my siblings would be wearing new dresses there and that she was expected to dress elegantly." Kelly, a 40-year-old Colombian, expressed both her yearning for December and a sense of relief at not having to spend excessive amounts of money during that period: "The *estrenos* used to drain my finances, along with the decorations we needed to put up at home and the expenses for the festive dinners." She chuckled, adding that what she spent in December in Colombia, her Chilean husband spent in September, "buying meat, banners, costumes for our daughter to perform the *cueca* at school, alcohol, and fairground tickets." This tradition, somewhat faded in Chile, remains vibrantly alive for Christmas in northern Latin America. The many interviewees discussing their expenditures and comparing the two months is indicative of the convergence of these celebrations.



Fig. 6.20 @avilaexpress Instagram post promoting December packages in the month of August

September and December converge as reflections of memory and tradition for the participants in this study. Public celebrations which shape emotions and customs are intertwined with the heritage of communities. In the context of December, migrants have depicted both nostalgia and practices that serve to alleviate this nostalgia, such as preparing specific dishes and attending family gatherings. Concurrently, they appear to fill this void by slowly incorporating Chile's September festivities, which they seem to relish. This interplay between the two months highlights the malleability inherent in identity and stands as a vivid illustration of the negotiation migrants undertake when they move.

6.4.2 *La Noche de las Velitas*: Religious and cultural celebrations recreated in a new locus

The *Noche de las Velitas* (Night of the Candles) is a culturally significant and widely celebrated event in Colombia that marks the beginning of the Christmas season. This tradition takes place on the night of December 7th and holds deep religious and cultural meanings for Colombian migrants in Chile. During the *Noche de las Velitas*, people light candles, lanterns, and other sources of light in and around their homes, creating a mesmerising display that illuminates streets, plazas, and neighbourhoods. The tradition has historical roots in the celebration of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, a feast observed on December 8th in the Catholic Church (Mantilla, 2002). The event also has strong ties to Colombia's colonial history. According to historical records, the tradition started in the city of Popayán in the 18th century, when residents would light candles to celebrate the feast day of the Immaculate Conception. Over time, this practice evolved into the *Noche de las Velitas*, expanding its significance and becoming a hallmark of Colombian cultural identity (Páramo and Ramírez, 2010). This night serves as a communal gathering, fostering a sense of unity and togetherness. Families, friends, and neighbours share in the festive atmosphere, often enjoying traditional Colombian foods, music, and dance along the neighbourhood streets during the celebration (Lambert, 1979; Smith, 2012).

Kelly spoke with great enthusiasm about the *Noche de las Velitas* as one of the events that signalled the start of the most delightful month of the year:

When December 7th arrives here in Chile, an overwhelming yearning to be in Barranquilla comes over me. It is as if I have lost touch with my own identity and need to return to Colombia to rediscover myself. What is truly heart-warming is that in Santiago Centro, where I reside, there's a vibrant Colombian community, and all of us illuminate our candles and position them on our balconies. I gaze out of my window and, even though I am physically distant, I experience a sense of proximity to my home Barranquilla.

Within the month of December, the *Noche de las Velitas* serves as a unique trigger of nostalgia and remembrance for the place considered home. However, when asked about how they reconcile this with the fact that they expressed having somehow succeeded in establishing a home in Chile, a paradox arises. This discrepancy emerged as a shared sentiment among the interviewees, and effectively encapsulates the intricate dynamics that unfold between the home, a private realm, and the neighbourhood, which constitutes a public domain. In both these spheres, material elements play a pivotal role in evoking and embodying feelings of home, while simultaneously acting as reminders of the existence of another home in a distinct location in the past—a home that held deep significance, now fading but still embraced.

Candles for this particular celebration have become a signature aesthetic in Santiago Centro on the 7th of December. The Archdiocese of Santiago, in conjunction with the Latin American parish, recreates the *Noche de las Velitas* by adorning the street with an endless array of lights, gathering numerous migrants to partake in this event (fig. 6.21). This parish stands out as one of the churches in Santiago Centro that draws the largest congregation of Catholic migrants, functioning as both a social meeting point and a spiritual assembly. This celebration distinctly leaves its mark on the Santiago neighbourhood, extending beyond the mere presence of candles; it also incorporates the projection of the Colombian flag. This display of objects and national symbols represents a reimagining of the ritual within a different geographic context, unveiling specific changes that have stemmed from migration. The celebratory rite is not replicated in an identical

fashion, given that in Colombia, the ritual holds religious significance and does not encompass the showcasing of national symbols. In contrast, the re-enactment of this celebration in Chile assumes a different dimension, blending religious and national elements.



Fig. 6.21 *Noche de las Velitas* in Santiago Centro celebrated in Iglesia Latinoamericana



The location of the celebration infuses it with meaning, thus *las velitas* in Colombia does not play out in the same way as when it is performed in Santiago. Yoselin, a 29-year-old from Colombia, explained that in her home country, *las velitas* night holds religious significance. Growing up in a Jehovah's Witness family, she didn't partake in the celebration when she lived in Colombia.

However, she shared that while being in Chile, she did not miss a 7th of December celebration in Santiago Centro. Even though it was not a spiritual tradition for her, she enjoyed being around fellow Colombians, having a good time, and feeling connected to her roots. The *Noche de las velitas* in Chile goes beyond its spiritual nature, having been transplanted to a different physical space and carried out by a community of migrants who share histories of movement, nostalgia, and the creation and recreation of identity. The tangible elements displayed in the neighbourhood of Santiago during the 7th of December—thousands of lit candles—did not evoke the Virgin Mary for Yoselin, but they did connect her to her community.

Migrants must possess flexibility as change consistently accompanies their experiences. Their capacity to confront and acclimate to shifts in their daily routines, while preserving culturally ingrained dishes, celebrations, and materiality, constitutes a puzzling aspect of the intersection between heritage and migration. The unfamiliar setting, the city of Santiago in this study, designates the migrant as an "outsider," compelling them to readjust their position and establish affiliations within communities of migrants and other minorities that share the outsider experience (Maureen, 2017). This process constructs markers of identity that highlight both the commonalities and differences between migrant groups and locals. Food and religion are expressed as preservation forces in the migratory journey, where, despite the passage of time and change in space, migrant individuals uphold certain reinterpretations of their dishes and religious practices in renegotiated or hybrid versions (Counihan and Van Esterik, 2012).

The *Noche de las Velitas* is a deeply rooted Colombian tradition that heralds the Christmas season. Lit candles and lanterns illuminate the streets, fostering unity among communities. Kelly's sentiment highlights the event's power to evoke longing for home and connect migrants in Chile with their Colombian identity. This celebration, transplanted to Santiago Centro, has evolved into a fusion of spiritual and national elements, reflecting migrants' adaptability. As Colombian migrants uphold modified traditions, they bridge the emotional gap between their past and present homes, showcasing resilience in the face of transformation.

6.5 Chapter conclusions

This chapter delves into the multifaceted interrelationship between migrant communities and their host neighbourhoods, focusing on the intricate dynamics shaping their heritage, identity, and memory within the context of Chile. Through an exploration of physical spaces, material culture, and diverse expressions of identity, this chapter uncovers a series of significant conclusions that contribute to our understanding of how migrants establish a sense of belonging and reshape the urban landscape. One central finding is understanding the importance of how public spaces function as markers of migrant identity. These spaces, ranging from festivals to specialty shops and businesses, serve as platforms for migrants to express their distinct cultural backgrounds and establish a sense of belonging. The expression of migrant culture in public spaces reveals the reciprocal influence between the migrants and the neighbourhood environment, in which the identities of both the individual and the collective are mutually shaped through this interplay.

Vertovec's concept of "super diversity" emerges as a vital framework for comprehending the complexities of migrant placemaking within neighbourhoods such as Santiago Centro and Estación Central. In these locales, the conventional paradigm of a single predominant ethnic group forming an enclave is challenged by the coexistence of a multitude of backgrounds, origins, and identities. This intricate demographic tapestry not only defies traditional conceptions of place-making but also establishes a unique neighbourhood identity. Contrary to the prevailing notion that coherent ethnic groups are a prerequisite for successful placemaking, this study illustrates the resilience and adaptability of migrant-receiving neighbourhoods in Chile. Rather than adhering to strict segregation, these neighbourhoods embrace a diverse range of migrants and their expressions, resulting in a collection of businesses and spaces that cater to a broad spectrum of cultural backgrounds. This phenomenon showcases the neighbourhoods' capacity to foster a dynamic identity that goes beyond ethnic boundaries.

The examination of *Supermercado Los Paisas* and its role within the context of migrant neighbourhoods in Santiago Centro reveals a multifaceted interaction between commerce, identity, memory, and community formation. This study elucidates how commercial establishments such as *Los Paisas* transcend their conventional role as suppliers of goods to become versatile hubs that facilitate the integration, socialisation, and identity expression of migrants. The evolution of *Los Paisas* from a street food stall to a network of stores specialising in Colombian and Caribbean products shows the dynamic processes through which informal enterprises can transform into formalised, community-centric spaces. The case of *Los Paisas* highlights the broader dynamics of commercial activity within the urban landscape, illustrating how migration and economic shifts can lead to the revitalisation and transformation of commercial districts. In the face of economic centralisation and the subsequent decline of Santiago Centro's commercial appeal, the emergence of immigrant-driven enterprises like *Los Paisas* breathes new life into these urban spaces. The establishment's prominence in the mental maps of migrants demonstrates its significance as a navigational landmark, a source of essential provisions, and a catalyst for the creation of social networks.

This study unveils the intricate intertwining of materiality, heritage, identity, and memory. The objects sold within *Los Paisas* and similar establishments not only serve as commodities but also as vessels for cultural expression, heritage preservation, and the negotiation of belonging. Religious artefacts, ingredients for traditional dishes, and communal event announcements collectively contribute to the reconfiguration of space and meaning within the neighbourhood. *Los Paisas* emerges as a dynamic site where the materiality of objects interacts with the aspirations and experiences of migrants, encapsulating the fluid and interconnected nature of identity formation in migrant communities. The exploration of *Los Paisas* also prompts critical questions about perception and interaction between migrants and the local population. The transformative nature of commercial establishments challenges the traditional boundaries of neighbourhood identity, raising inquiries into how local residents perceive these shifts and how

migrants interpret and respond to local perceptions. Understanding this mutual gaze provides valuable insights into the complex process of coexistence and adaptation in shared urban spaces.

This chapter has illuminated the conflicting narratives that arise between the local population and migrants in these neighbourhoods. The tensions surrounding the use of public space, music, and cultural practices have brought to the forefront the complexities of place-making, memory, and identity. While some locals express discomfort with the perceived disruptions caused by migrants' behaviours, migrants themselves find comfort and connection through their familiar music and cultural expressions. The experiences, perceptions, and conflicts of migrants and locals offer insight into the ongoing processes of identity negotiation, placemaking, and memory formation within these urban spaces.

Section 6.3 explores gender dynamics in public places and the sexualisation of the migrant female body, revealing intersections between identity, memory, heritage, and the transformative power of mobility. Gender roles, influenced by traditional norms and societal expectations, undergo transformation as migrants navigate new cultural contexts. The gendered experience within public spaces highlights the historical and contemporary challenges faced by women, particularly migrant women, in accessing and shaping cultural heritage. In Latin America, women's visibility has often been marginalised, resulting in their limited representation in tangible heritage. However, women play essential roles in the preservation and transmission of intangible heritage, such as cooking, dancing, and memory-keeping practices. Through the methodology employed in this study, the importance of the private sphere became evident as a space where women's experiences and contributions are more tangible.

Women in Latin America are often seen as the custodians of familial memory, a role that becomes particularly significant in migrant contexts, where preserving cultural heritage is vital. They are expected to maintain and transmit family traditions through creating photo albums, recreating traditional recipes, and decorating homes to reflect their heritage. This responsibility is often socially mandated, reflecting broader societal expectations about gender roles and cultural

transmission. For many migrant women, these practices help maintain a sense of identity and belonging in a new country. For example, compiling family photo albums and preparing traditional dishes with ingredients from migrant stores like "Los Paisas" serve as tangible means of connecting with their past and recreating a sense of home in an unfamiliar environment. However, the role of cultural tradition-bearer can also reinforce traditional gender norms that confine women to domestic spaces, creating a dual experience of both pride and restriction. While these responsibilities provide a sense of continuity and connection, they can limit opportunities for self-expression and personal growth, particularly when they conflict with new freedoms or challenges in the host country. This study reveals that the preservation of culture by women in migrant communities is a complex process that involves both maintaining identity and negotiating societal expectations. Although cultural preservation is often viewed as a positive contribution to community life, it can also perpetuate gendered expectations, highlighting the dual nature of this role as both empowering and, at times, a compromise.

As Chilean society grapples with issues of gender inequality and works toward a more inclusive cultural heritage, migrant women's experiences and contributions add a valuable layer to the discussion. Efforts made by civil society and governmental initiatives to emphasise gender equality within the cultural heritage framework signal a shift towards recognising diverse forms of heritage, contributing toward a more holistic representation of Chile's cultural heritage. The experiences of migrant women navigating new cultural contexts, engaging with feminist narratives, and contributing to the discourse on gender equality provide insight into the complexities of contemporary cultural transformation. As these dynamics continue to evolve, it is imperative to recognise the significance of gender-related heritage and its ongoing impact on societal perceptions, identity formation, and cultural memory.

This study also illuminates how clothing becomes a medium through which migrant women negotiate their identities as sexual dissidents, asserting their authenticity and embracing newfound freedoms in Chile. The act of dressing challenges societal norms and reshapes their

self-perception, fostering a sense of belonging and self-empowerment within their adopted country. Likewise Cruz's experience in the *café con piernas* underscores the intersection of clothing, labour, and empowerment, showcasing how she navigated gender discrimination and financial challenges to create a supportive community and secure her daughter's education. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the limited academic exploration of clothing as a conduit for identity and heritage transformation among migrants.

Section 6.3 examines how the concept of “tropicalisation” has contributed to the sexualisation of migrant women in Chilean society. This phenomenon, as evidenced by media portrayals and anecdotal experiences, highlights how migrant women from tropical climates are often objectified and stereotyped as more sensual and sexually open. Field work revealed how consistently migrant women are sexualised by Chilean society, reproducing an unsettling pattern that reduces migrant women to mere objects of desire, eclipsing their agency beyond their sexuality. Numerous interviewees recounted enduring forms of sexual harassment and assault, highlighting the pervasive nature of the issue across public spaces.

Section 6.4 examines the significance of the month of December for migrants in Santiago and how celebration materialises in the neighbourhood. The fieldwork undertaken in this research displays the profound yearning for December-associated celebrations, which is not limited to any specific festival but encompasses a collection of ritualistic and social elements. Notably, December holds distinct resonance for migrants who originate from regions north of the equator in Latin America. They identify Chilean September festivities, particularly *Fiestas Patrias*, as similar to their own December celebrations. The parallels between the two months are highlighted through activities, traditions, and shared sentiments. The connection between September in Chile and December in migrants' home countries illustrates the malleability of identity and the ways in which migrants negotiate their sense of self within new cultural contexts. The interplay between these two months serves as a poignant example of how rituals, emotions, and customs can traverse geographic boundaries, facilitating the integration of migrants into new societies while preserving cherished elements of their heritage. Overall, the month of December

serves as a conduit through which migrants rekindle their heritage, negotiate their identities, and engage with new cultural practices. The convergence of sentiments between Chile's September celebrations and migrants' December traditions underscores the complex interplay of memory, nostalgia, and cultural adaptation, ultimately shaping the transformative journey of migration.

The interplay between migrants and their host neighbourhoods extends beyond the physical realm. This research accentuates that spaces hold significance not solely due to their physical attributes, but rather through the actions and engagements of the individuals who inhabit them. The reciprocal relationship between migrant communities and their surroundings underscores the intricate process of identity formation, as cultural expressions within the neighbourhood are influenced by, and in turn influence, the spaces they inhabit. By illuminating the transformative power of physical spaces, the concept of super diversity, and the fluid nature of migrant-driven placemaking, this research advances our comprehension of the nuanced interplay between migrants and their host communities. Ultimately, the findings show the importance of recognizing the pivotal role that migrants play in reshaping the urban fabric and imbuing spaces with new layers of meaning and identity.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In this concluding section, I will present my final reflections on the insights developed through this study, reflecting on how I arrived at these conclusions and how they address the existing gaps in scholarship. The research pursued three primary questions:

1. *How do migrants perceive themselves and their community through an examination of both material and intangible heritage?*
2. *What are the connections between objects, practices, and memory within migrant groups?*
3. *What is the role of memory within a group's intangible and tangible heritage, particularly in the context of movement and dislocation?*

To answer these questions, I adopted a methodological framework tailored to capture the diverse range of experiences and perspectives among different individuals and communities. The multi-modal approach utilised visuals, sounds, touch, and the recollection of narratives to dissect similar and contrasting migrant experiences. The methodology included conducting in-depth interviews, engaging in participant observation, and analysing national media and contemporary migration-related literature. After conducting interviews, observing migrant homes and neighbourhoods, and examining media discourses surrounding contemporary migrants in Chile, is it possible to grasp how migrants perceive themselves? How they make connections between

their material world, memories, and cultural heritage? How migrant memory serves as a thread of consistency and belonging through movement? In the following sections I discuss the different findings that the field work provided, answering the questions posed above while also addressing the voids that are still to be illuminated.

7.2 Migrant heritage as an expression of their identity

The first two questions posed in this study are closely interconnected and mutually reinforce each other. The initial question centres on migrants' self-perception and their relationship with their community by scrutinising the material culture within their homes and neighbourhoods. As I delved into their artefacts and heritage manifestations, I navigated a complex labyrinth of emotions related to belonging, notions of nationhood, and transnational connections. The second research question comes into play when aiming to uncover the intricate links between migrants' material environment, their identity, and their memory, which together form what they consider to be their heritage. These dual objectives intersect, as the exploration of migrants' self-perceptions through the prism of their belongings acts as a point of origin for the shaping of what they consider integral components of their cultural heritage.

One of the most relevant findings is how materiality serves as an anchor for identity and home-making processes. As a vast field of research has shown, objects—whether they are decorations, food, souvenirs, or furniture—are not merely items devoid of meaning (Kopytoff, 1986; Stocking, 1988; Hoskins, 1998; Sherry, 2007; Appadurai, 2013); on the contrary, they are imbued with identity-related significance and memories that, in the case of this study, express and encapsulate the experiences of mobility as a defining element in the personal and communal history of the migrant population. This study not only uncovers the specific connection that contemporary migrants in Chile have with their material culture (extensively reviewed in Chapters 5 and 6) but also sheds light on this experience in the context of Latin American

migration, thereby broadening the Eurocentric field of migration studies. Until a few decades ago, scholarly research on migration had primarily focused on European migration (Erausquin, 2002; Estrada, 2002; Cano and Soffia, 2009; Doña and Martínez, 2017). Even narratives of nation-building in Latin America, which incorporated migration as a central aspect of the new nations' identity, were primarily Eurocentric, thus overshadowing the indigenous populations and movements related to slavery (Márquez 2010; Valenzuela 2010). However, in recent decades scholarly attention has shifted to expand the scope and acknowledge other forms of migrant communities that have long existed outside of Eurocentric narratives (Sanchez, 1999; Martínez, 2003; 2005; Asdrúbal, 2005).

This project cannot comprehensively address Latin American migration from every perspective; instead, it focuses on contemporary flows from the past three decades, engaging with migrants that have settled in two specific neighbourhoods in Santiago—Santiago Centro and Estación Central—aiming to examine their processes of identity and heritage construction through material culture. The fieldwork observations and the 27 in-depth interviews conducted in this study significantly enrich the existing literature on material culture within migrant communities. The ethnographic approach and the specificity of the accounts provided by participants contribute significantly to diversify ethnic and racial narratives in Chile. Even though many of the interviewees are Venezuelans—a rapidly growing community in Chile and the region over the past few decades due to the political crisis described in section 5.3.1—or Colombians, there is a considerable diversity within these national communities. The study reveals these differences, showing that the migratory experience varies depending on factors such as gender, class, and race. The various issues discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate that race, gender, and economic status directly impact how migrants preserve objects, express their identity through them, and experience integration within the local population in Chile. In this regard, this study sheds light on how materiality can function as a tool and platform for the expression of these differences within the migrant community, while also providing avenues for making connections and creating a sense of unity. Migrants curate, protect, and care for their material culture,

building their heritage and identity, and rooting their memories throughout the process of movement.

One example of the above is the analysis of female migrants (section 6.3), which explicitly demonstrates how sexualisation unfolds in the lives of migrant women, shaping their experiences in ways that are fundamentally different from those of men. Furthermore, when other layers of identity come into play, such as sexual diversity or race, the female experience is also affected differently. Racialised women, for instance, are subjected to more sexualisation than white women, while the experience of LGBTQ+ individuals is tinted differently compared to the experiences of those who are heteronormative. These differences were observed throughout the interviews, and, consistently, participants used material culture to underscore these differences, as evident in discussions about clothing (section 6.3.2) and economic independence (section 6.3.4). While gender plays a differentiating role in the migratory experience, there are other themes that act as common threads, expressing points of connection among migrant communities. For instance, coffee (section 5.3.1) serves as a unifying element, symbolising historical nuances shared by migrants. Its aroma and flavour evoke feelings of both belonging and differentiation from the local Chilean population regarding customs related to coffee consumption.

Two of the three research questions posed for this study focus on understanding how migrants perceive themselves through material culture and how the connections between the migrants and their objects are enacted. In this context, mobility emerges as a key element in the discussions presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Even though it may seem evident that movement plays a role when examining migration, this research delves into the empirical and practical ways in which movement effectively transforms the lives and material culture of these communities. Movement imparts new meaning to materiality, transforming objects and places that before displacement served different purposes and conveyed different meanings. One significant finding, as examined in section 6.2.1, concerned *Supermercado Los Paisas*, a space that might have functioned for research participants as a typical grocery shopping destination, but after

their experiences of migration, the store evolved into a location for socialisation, integration, and job hunting. It also served as a container for the sensory experiences of smells, language, and food, and symbolised a potent signifier that they could identify with and that set them apart from Chileans. Mobility acts not only as a context for these transformations but as an active shaping agent of 'migrant heritage'. The experience of movement and deterritorialization contributes to creating unique forms of heritage that are constantly being reshaped through the experiences of crossing borders, adapting to new environments, and negotiating new identities. This dynamic process allows for a re-evaluation of traditional heritage constructs, emphasizing the fluidity and continuous evolution of migrant identities.

Materiality occupies space (as discussed in 2.3.1) while also defining the places in which it resides. In the case of locations associated with migration, such as airports, bus stations, borders, or migrant neighbourhoods, the concept of a fixed location becomes unfeasible. This study enhances existing literature on the subject by illustrating specifically how the migrant experience in Chile has transformed certain places into mobile entities, transcending the idea of static locations. Santiago Centro and Estación Central are not fixed locations in the city's historic narrative or geographically definable as static points on a map. The migrant population has infused these areas with feelings and ideas from other geographies, while also using them as a canvas for the dynamics mobility brings regarding ways of socialisation. Festivities, examined in section 6.4, demonstrate how decorations, songs, and food that take up residence in a place can evoke a sense of identity among the people who inhabit it.

I argue that luggage is understood as a symbol of mobility and migrant agency in the process of home-making. Suitcases accompany migrants to a new place, in which they develop a sense of belonging and eventually transform into their new home. Respondents reflected a lot about their suitcases, recognizing that these held fragments of home for them, which ultimately aided them in constructing a home in Chile. The act of packing, selecting the things to pack, and the experience of travelling with their luggage is intrinsically part of the home-making process, bearing witness to the journey and accompanying migrants to a new destination where a

burgeoning sense of belonging will take root. Movement itself signifies a transformative juncture that reshapes the migrant's comprehension and self-perception. The suitcase emerges as an object that numerous participants presented as a catalyst for contemplating the shifts their identity has undergone. In this context, luggage symbolises the intricate processes of memory and identity formation intertwined with the experience of movement. Respondents described the items they travelled with, such as photographs, cooking artefacts, books, and small souvenirs that held memorial significance for them. Many individuals mentioned that these objects were not deemed essential for travel, yet they could not bring themselves to leave them behind, even if it meant forsaking other typically essential items such as clothing. Therefore, as they gazed at their bags, they pondered how these items represented their evolving identities. Their suitcases served as vessels for various essential items that many participants regard as part of their heritage, which in Chile assumed important roles in their home and community building. Objects like luggage contribute to both self-understanding and the fabric of heritage woven into human social life.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2, along with many of the empirical findings in this research, indicate that identity is a negotiable concept. However, this does not imply that migrants, who are constantly influenced by change, fail to develop feelings of attachment, belonging, and a sense of community related to their past home. Basu (2001) discusses that migrants' narratives include both mobile and static elements, suggesting that mobility as a phenomenon does not necessarily conflict with ideas of roots, places, and belonging. This study successfully demonstrates how heritage and a sense of rootedness within the context of constant movement remain significant for contemporary migrants in Santiago Centro and Estación Central. Even if the objects and practices they consider heritage are not recognized in official state accounts or institutions, they hold great importance within their community. One of the examples examined is Saint José Gregorio Hernández (Section 5.3.1), a Venezuelan figure who, despite being a Catholic saint, participants described outside of the religious framework, considering him a marker of their community's identity. JGH emerges as an intrinsic part of Venezuelan heritage

that travelled with migrants from their home country, the journey imbuing this figure with a new layer of identity, making him a symbol of what they perceive as their “Venezuelanness”.

The connection between migration and religiosity has garnered considerable scholarly interest. This is due to the vital role that religion plays in influencing the beliefs, customs, and sense of belonging of migrants (Sarat, 2013; Gallo, 2014; Foroutan, 2015; Saldivar, 2015; Frederiks, 2016; Saunders, 2016; Bieler, 2019; Zanfrini, 2020). Some studies underscore how religion offers comfort and community for migrants, while other research suggests that it can also create divisions and challenges in their lives. This research analysed the significance of religious items and practices among modern migrant communities in Chile, revealing how they play a vital role in the formation and safeguarding of their cultural heritage. I argue that religion and religious objects are not uniformly understood by all interviewees, but present themselves as markers of community-building. Migrants recognize others as part of their community when they see certain religious symbols, celebrate specific festivals, or use religious symbols and aesthetics as differentiators of their identity. Many respondents describe religious objects as items that imbue their homes with a sense of self, setting them apart from Chilean households, and thereby bolstering a sense of identity. For migrants in Chile, religious items occupy a space that bridges the secular and the spiritual realms.

Gooze's (1999) concept of 'elsewhereness' (discussed in section 2.3.3.1) suggests that even when a community identifies with a particular narrative or specific object, this does not imply uniformity within the group but rather reflects attachment and understanding, emphasizing that 'elsewhere' is distinct from 'nowhere.' This study challenges the idea of a fixed location for migrants while affirming that notions of belonging, as Gooze describes, still exist. It reveals how contemporary migration in Chile is a complex process that defies fixed notions of identity and heritage, while also reinforcing a sense of shared ground and understanding within the community, establishing their own 'somewhere'. This dual concept of a mobile identity that still maintains certain common ideas and feelings of belonging within the migrant community is crucial when examining the evidence presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Despite the numerous

nuances in the participants' narratives, these are more than a disorganised and disconnected collection of discourses. Feelings of belonging and attachment, highlighted through observations and interviews, reveal that materiality serves as the repository for these shared sentiments and plays a fundamental role in the process of creating a sense of home for migrants. Further, the concepts of placeness and 'elsewhereness' are crucial in understanding how migrant communities create heritage. Heritage-making in migrant contexts is often rooted in both the places they inhabit and the 'elsewhere' from which they originate. These dualities embody the tension between the need for belonging in a new place and the desire to maintain connections with the past, shaping a unique form of heritage that straddles both the present location and an imagined or remembered 'elsewhere'. The various objects reviewed in the research, within both homes and neighbourhoods, do not conform to traditional ideas of "authenticity" and official "heritage." Migrants attach flexible ideas of belonging that vary depending on the context, aligning with Bauman's (2007) concept of identification, where personal and communal identity processes are continually influenced by global power networks that transcend the local. These encounters lead to changes and negotiations, resulting in new forms of identity that are not necessarily inherited or acquired, underscoring that identity is an open-ended activity in which everyone is engaged.

Food and the customs surrounding it hold significant expressions of migrant identity and memory, fostering feelings of stability and belonging while at the same time encompassing the inherent changes undergone with movement. The continuous mobility experienced by migrants leads to a continuous negotiation of their identity, as they integrate new memories and reshape existing ones. This ongoing process of heritage development becomes detached from the geographic confines of nations or localities. Consequently, food and its associated rituals undergo transformations and acquire fresh meanings as migrants move and accumulate diverse encounters. Analysing data I find that the research participants consistently exhibit adaptable attitudes toward their practices involving food and heritage, demonstrating an ongoing evolution due to movement while retaining their significance as cherished conduits for their memories and identities. The importance of food within cultural heritage has been thoroughly explored in the

fields of the humanities and social sciences (Douglas, 2003; Counihan and Van Esterik, 2012; Geyzen, 2014; Duru, 2017; Di Fiori, 2019; Hryciuk and Brulotte, 2019; Porciani, 2019). This study introduces an additional dimension, as for migrants food presents the chance to function as a tool for socialisation and integration in their new environments. It is not a fixed recipe, with permanent taste and tradition but something that translates to a mobile instance that can be shared with Chileans as a means for explaining the migrants' differences but also commonalities with the local culture.

The processes and material aspects of heritage acquire new meanings through the lens of migration. Everyday objects, food, and rituals gain significance not only for their intrinsic value but also for the narratives of movement and displacement they embody. Through these materials, migrants negotiate their identities, integrate into new contexts, and maintain a sense of continuity with their past. This ongoing material engagement reflects a more nuanced understanding of heritage formation that goes beyond static definitions to include the dynamic and evolving nature of migrant life.

For the research participants, food and its practices were entangled with emotions and heritage. Culinary traditions entail performances that encompass the enactment of rituals, ceremonies, and practices that display a personal story or the community's narrative. Ingredients, restaurants, street carts, grocery shopping, and the craft of cooking include storytelling through recipes, the integration of music and dance associated with specific dishes, gestures connected to the manner of eating and preparing food, and visual aesthetics related to tableware—all are part of food culture. Through these performative acts, individuals and communities breathe vitality into their culinary heritage, engaging all senses and creating immersive encounters that evoke a wide spectrum of emotions intertwined with their migrant experiences. In numerous instances, respondents mentioned that they shared their traditional foods with new Chilean friends, which served as a means to initiate conversations and forge friendships. Additionally, my observations in the neighbourhoods I researched unveiled how migrant food stalls, supermarkets, and restaurants acted as spatial markers, delineating migrant presence and their transitional status

while providing resources for integrating into the local labour force. This dynamic is essential for both migrants and their interactions with others in their new home. Food aids in their self-understanding, reflecting materially the changes they have undergone—substituting ingredients or adjusting cooking techniques. Simultaneously, migrants share food, creating opportunities for socialising with Chileans, explaining how they eat, how they cook, and drawing parallels to elements of Chilean cuisine.

The theme of food for migrants extends beyond the obvious aspects tied to heritage, such as traditional recipes or specific tools utilised in its preparation. Ingredients, the locations where these ingredients are sourced within the city of Santiago, and the specific dates for food preparation—like *hallacas* for Christmas in the Venezuelan community (see section 5.3.2)—all correspond to distinct emotions concerning nostalgia, belonging, and robust identity definitions for migrants. All the participants who were interviewed for this study highlighted how everything related to food served as a fundamental framework for migrants. They utilised it as a means to socialise with Chileans, to express their own identities, and to discover common ground in their new environment. Food triggered scents and images that reminded them of their homeland, simultaneously facilitating the process of establishing a new sense of home in an unfamiliar place. Fieldwork demonstrates that food is more than just a source of nutrients; it represents a profound nourishment for the body, culture, and social connections of migrants.

In recent decades, the concept of the modern nation-state has faced challenges, particularly in the context of global integration and questions of ethnicity. Anderson (2006) explains how media, archives, and institutions create imagined communities that unite individuals who share similarities and are connected by elements associated with a specific nation. The research questions in this study aim to comprehend migrants' self-perception through their material world and how they relate to this materiality, positioning the question of nation and nationhood in the centre of this research. Most participants expressed and explained their self-perceptions by identifying with national names and definitions. Calhoun (1993) examines the issue of essentializing the nation, highlighting that stable definitions are not necessarily prevalent among

the national population. However, he acknowledges that the concept of the nation remains prominent in political rhetoric, often used to differentiate political communities, assert claims of self-determination, and legitimise rule over a territory. Following Calhoun, while the concept of the nation still exists and is frequently evoked in societal discourse, this research shows that many feelings of belonging—expressed through terms like “Colombianness” or “Venezuelanness” are more closely related to smaller groups, such as family or community, rather than the traditional understanding of nationhood. Migrant communities value, preserve, and nurture specific practices and objects which can evoke ideas of nationhood. The dynamics of identification have become intricate, and the idea of identifying solely with a stable national construct is often associated more with nostalgia or mythical narratives within groups than with fixed definitions of national identity. Bammer (1994) connects the sense of belonging in migrant communities to their heritage and ritualistic practices, demonstrating that many practices often labelled as “national” are actually constructed within specific migrant communities rather than being rooted in a particular essential nation-state. Migrant communities within this study constantly grapple with issues related to nationality, often evoking imagery both within and outside their communities. However, these claims are not always understood and articulated as clear definitions of the holistic self. Hence, this study confirms these conflicts and illustrates how objects materialise what communities understand as their nation, sometimes deviating from official institutional efforts.

Findings related to heritage in this research also transcend binarism. Migrants lack a stable locality from which they can inherit material culture, and they do not neatly fit into binary identifications with monuments or the exact replication of ritualistic practices within fixed local structures. The process of value creation for migrants involves not only the complexities of their countries of origin, including histories of colonialism and unique historical movements, but also the phenomenon of mobility. As discussed, migrants transform their attachments and identities, and, as a result, cultural value tends to be found in everyday objects that exist outside the realm of officially recognized heritage such as the Cultural Ministry in Chile or UNESCO. The fieldwork and subsequent analysis revealed how participants construct systems of appreciation,

inheritance, and preservation of objects and practices that hold local value on a smaller scale. As presented in section 2.4, heritage is not solely produced by governments or international law, but is created by groups of people who remember, perform, and develop the cultural elements that they value. The research outcomes contribute to the literature that portrays heritage as an ongoing process and challenges top-down essentialist notions of heritage (Ashworth et al., 2007; Bortolotto, 2007; Naguib, 2013; Biehl et al., 2014;). The individual voices of participants illustrate the networks and nuanced processes involved in constructing heritage within migrant communities in Chile. As Harrison (2012) proposes, heritage is a social and political phenomenon that evolves in a particular historical context. This study serves as a snapshot of a specific community's political and social process in Santiago Centro and Estación Central in 2022, highlighting how migrant heritage diverges significantly from authorized heritage frameworks. Unlike officially recognized forms of heritage, which are often static and defined by governmental or international institutions, migrant heritage is fluid and dynamic, evolving as migrants move, adapt, and renegotiate their cultural identities. This divergence underlines the necessity of understanding heritage as a flexible, living process, especially in migrant contexts where traditional concepts of heritage may not fully capture the nuanced experiences of these communities.

Migrants imbue existing heritage in the host locality with new meaning, create entirely new heritage for themselves, or adapt and recreate heritage from their country of origin (Colomer, 2017). The construction of heritage influenced by migration flows is also significant for non-migrant communities remaining in the country of origin. In this regard, section 5.3, which relates to food as a performance of heritage, and section 6.2.2, which is related to music as a distinct marker for migrants within the neighbourhood, demonstrate that these issues are not only essential for the migrant community but also relevant for both the families left behind in the countries of origin and the local Chilean population. The phenomenon of migration shapes the cultural capital, place-making, and memories of both the mobile communities involved, the local population, and those who remain in their home countries. This idea is crucial when addressing migrant heritage because there is a tendency to focus solely on heritage built by migrants in the

host country, leaving out the analysis of developments in the country of origin. Transnationalism implies that migrants do not completely sever ties with their country of origin and settle permanently in a final destination. Migrants can have more than one origin region and move to more than one host country, all the while maintaining emotional and economic connections with multiple places. This is evident when discussing food, with examples like coffee, special preparations for Christmas, and shared rituals via Zoom that bridge the gap between Chile and the migrants' home countries.

Heritage building does not just affect the transformation of tangible objects; it also influences intangible rituals and daily life throughout the neighbourhood. Studies like Margarit and Abde (2014) and Stefoni et al. (2021) shed light on the tensions and dynamics between locals and migrants when sharing public space. While migrants create support networks and establish connections with Chileans to foster pathways for integration, significant tensions arise as the concentration of immigrant populations in Santiago Centro and Estación Central grows. This growth is perceived as a threat to coexistence and the neighbourhood's reputation (see sections 6.2.2 and 6.3). This research builds upon previous studies, confirming that local residents often associate the arrival of immigrants with increased insecurity and undesirable behaviours in public space (Bauman, 2016). This study demonstrates cultural differences in the use of public space, as migrants and Chileans have distinct ways of using public spaces, such as shared building amenities and public parks. They also have different understandings of the boundaries of privacy. Chileans are very strict about noise not crossing between public and private spaces, while migrant respondents consider that noises originating from within the private space should not be limited by people outside. The findings emphasise that migrants often find comfort and a sense of belonging in the unique smells and sounds of their cultural heritage, with one of the primary elements being the enjoyment of their music. However, local residents perceive some of these cultural practices, such as listening to salsa and merengue, as disruptive.

Section 6.2.2 delves into the origins and dynamics of this tension. It elucidates how European influences in the 19th century shaped what Chile and Latin America considered to be modern,

with Europe as a central reference point. Modernisation processes in Chile revolved around excluding or erasing elements perceived as non-European while promoting and nurturing those closer to European culture. It is within this framework that Sarmiento's work *Facundo* (1845) played a fundamental role in shaping the prevalent distinction in Latin America between "civilisation" and "barbarism." This dichotomy categorised things and attitudes related to Europe as civilised, while those associated with indigenous cultures were seen as barbaric. Regarding the use of public space, more reserved behaviour in public areas is seen as more European, while activities such as dancing and loud music are considered exuberant and typically reserved for private spaces. Some Chileans, particularly those concerned with security matters and right wing political issues (as discussed in section 6.2.2), tend to believe that the behaviour of their migrant neighbours is less civilised than the behaviour they advocate for, arguing the necessity for modesty and silence in the neighbourhood.

Research also highlighted the ongoing negotiation of tensions and identity within the migrant community itself. Some migrants advocate for adaptation to Chilean customs and traditions, while others distance themselves from fellow migrants due to negative stereotypes and a desire to fit into Chilean culture. These complexities illustrate the dynamic and evolving nature of migrant identity and memory in the context of neighbourhood coexistence. It is in these terms that personal migrant identity and the materiality of public space, such as food, music, and commercial activity, take on special significance. Migrant interaction with the local population in the neighbourhood generates both tensions and positive feelings that shape and mould migrant identity.

Throughout this section I have been examining conclusions regarding identification processes pertaining to migrant heritage. I have also shed light on the often-overlooked roles and experiences of migrant women in shaping their cultural heritage in Chile. This study highlights the gender inequalities and disparities that are intensified in the case of migrant women, while emphasising how these inequalities are intertwined with women's limited access to professionalisation, financial resources, and leisure time. The research also underlines the crucial

role of women, particularly migrant women, in preserving intangible heritage through practices such as cooking, dancing, and collecting, which they pass down to future generations.

The feminist movements in Chile, such as *El Estallido Feminista* (discussed in section 6.3.1), have had a profound impact on the perspectives and experiences of female migrants. These movements have actively worked to address gender inequality, advocate for women's rights, and amplify the voices of marginalised women, including migrants. The historical context of feminism in Chile, particularly during the dictatorship, has left a lasting legacy that continues to inspire and empower women today. During my fieldwork, it became evident that migrant women have been influenced by the feminist culture in Chile, and they have incorporated these ideas into their own identities and understanding of their place in society. Many participants mentioned Chilean feminism in their interviews and proudly displayed feminist memorabilia in their homes, which they also wore around the neighbourhood as a symbol of their beliefs.

Clothing emerged as a powerful tool for self-expression and identity transformation among migrant women. Some female participants expressed how their adaptation to Chilean society and newfound sense of personal freedom were reflected in their choice of attire. Migrant women, hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds, have found that Chile provides them with a more liberal environment to express their gender identity through clothing. This transformation is not just personal but is also influenced by progressive public discourses and the physical distance they have from the patriarchal structures of their home countries. I suggest that this sense of liberation is facilitated by their physical movement, as local women may not necessarily feel as liberated in this respect because migrant women have distanced themselves from male power figures who no longer exert practical and economic influence over their lives. This physical and symbolic space enables them to integrate progressive public discourses in ways that were often impossible in their countries of origin.

Overall, this study highlights the intricate interplay between gender, migration, heritage, and identity in the lives of women in Chile. It underscores the need for a more inclusive approach to

cultural heritage that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of women, both local and migrant, in shaping the cultural tapestry of the country. As Chilean society continues to evolve, the experiences and voices of migrant women play a vital role in shaping its cultural heritage and identity.

The neighbourhood serves as a space of identification and material expression for migrants, and becomes a place where Chilean locals form their own stereotypes of migrant women. All female participants in the study (particularly those who come from countries north of the equator) described feeling objectified by Chileans—both male and female—due to their country of origin, with comments such as "women from tropical countries are sexier or more sexual than Chilean women" being distressingly common. This phenomenon is fueled by the perception that clothing, accessories, accents, and mannerisms are indicative of migrant women being more approachable, affectionate, and sexually available than their Chilean counterparts. Male research participants do not refer to this sexualising dynamic, but did assert differences between Chilean women and what they call "their women." Mainly this involved referring to "their women" being better looking and more fun than Chilean women. The study also draws parallels to the concept of "tropicalisation" popularised by Gilberto Freyre in Brazil (1946), which, despite criticism, has had a significant impact on Latin American societies, including Chile, where the Mediterranean climate has led to a perception of Chileans as being more "European" and less "tropical" (Scheel, 2012; 2022). This juxtaposition plays a role in how migrant women are stereotyped. Media, such as newspapers, further perpetuate these stereotypes, enumerated in section 6.3.4. The experiences of migrant women include enduring various forms of sexual harassment and abuse in public spaces, affecting their sense of security and well-being.

However, the study also highlights the resilience of migrant women and the support networks they build. They often establish bonds with both other migrant women and Chilean women, forming a sense of sisterhood and mutual assistance. These networks become crucial in times of crisis, as seen in the stories of Sofía and Delfina (section 6.3.4), who found strength and support from their female peers. Material objects, such as Romina's "Significant Word" project, play a

vital role in documenting and processing these experiences. Through art and writing, migrant women like Romina use language and imagery to express their journeys and the challenges they face, including hypersexualisation. This materiality becomes a part of their migratory heritage, an essential but often overlooked aspect of their identity.

7.3 Memory as a locus of belonging and stability amidst mobility

This section will address the third study objective and present the findings related to the integral role of memory within a migrant group's intangible and tangible heritage. Memory is a consistent thread for those who face migration, assisting in the processes of home and identity building, and thereby challenging conventional notions of memory as being confined to fixed locations. The subject of food, for example, intersects with issues of memory throughout the interviews and ethnographic observations, revealing how tastes, smells, ingredients, and the celebrations associated with food serve as locus and trigger for memories that encompass the experiences and cultural heritage of the migrant community.

Heritage, in its various forms, always has a connection to the past (Lowenthal, 1998; Carman and Sørensen, 2009). Food, souvenirs, memorabilia, heirlooms, monuments, language, and rituals all have links to the past, but they manifest in the present. This essential connection is what naturally ties memory to heritage. Regardless of the scale, be it communal or personal memory, or the type, whether official or unofficial, memory is an integral part of the heritage process, and vice versa (Mcdowell, 2008; Lähdesmäki, 2017). On one hand, memory, as the act of recollection, actively selects what to bring from the past into the present. On the other hand, heritage itself triggers memories for people connected to specific cultural contexts. The findings of this research reveal that for migrants, the act of remembering and the triggers it sets in motion are essential components of the processes of identification and creating a sense of home. Migrant memories

find their anchors, shaping and reshaping heritage in both traditional and innovative ways. Throughout Chapters 5 and 6, home and neighbourhood became the backdrop for the intersections of migrant memory, identity, and heritage with the corresponding local constructs, serving as platforms for many cultural negotiations. As examined in the literature review, materiality and immateriality coexist and impact neighbourhoods and homes, acting as intermediaries between individuals and their community or between the public and private aspects of life, representing social memories (cf. Buff, 2001; Hecht, 2001).

Within this framework, food is a powerful and multifaceted element in the lives of migrants, often serving as a bridge between their past and present. Food functions as a thread that connects the life left behind with the one being built in the present. From a theoretical standpoint, it links the migrant's timeline, and from a practical standpoint, it serves as a tool for connecting translocated experiences. While most participants consider their country of origin as home, they also associate the concept of home with specific culinary preparations, smells, and celebrations that eating with loved ones entail. The connection to family and the memories associated with them are often evoked through the ritual and sensorial experiences of traditional dishes, creating a sense of home even when far away from their place of origin.

Moreover, participants showed remarkable flexibility in their understanding of home, with many saying that it extends beyond the physical space they inhabit. This flexibility is tightly connected to the memorial aspect of human life, where memories carried along the migrant's journey hold the idea of home beyond fixed locations, national specifics, or physical houses. Home is seen as a feeling of belonging and identity, encompassing tangible and intangible aspects, many of which are triggered by memories that are materially embodied in food. This fluidity in the concept of home highlights the complexity of identity formation among migrants, where movement proposes some hybrid traits while simultaneously seeking continuity, even in a new environment. I argue that the acts of preparing and consuming these dishes—acts of memory—become a means of preserving cultural practices and transmitting cultural knowledge across generations no matter the geography. Festive foods also foster a sense of community and homeness as they

bring people together, strengthen social bonds, and create a shared experience of belonging. Memory not only conjures an imaginary place that the migrant community travels to through food, but a tangible feeling and place that is shared among those who have experienced dislocation. The preservation of recipes, migrant restaurants, and special ingredients recreated in Chile create a shared experience of identity.

This thesis not only identifies specific elements and practices that participants consider important, even crucial, to understanding their current identities, but also reveals how movement and the migratory experience intersect with materiality, transforming it into objects and practices unique to the migrant experience. For instance, coffee is no longer the same drink prepared in the country of origin; its preparation and significance evolve after the migratory journey. Migrant heritage, therefore, is characterized by this unique transformation through mobility, incorporating new elements from the journey itself, which differentiates it from other forms of heritage produced within national or indigenous contexts. Defined in this study as 'migrant heritage,' this concept includes both material aspects and the specific process shaped by movement and migration. This notion can be expanded to other contexts because variations in the migratory experience worldwide are infinite, but they all share a common element: movement. Future studies could adopt this concept to remain conscious that heritage production within migrant communities is shaped by mobility, an aspect that should be carefully considered to understand material culture and home-making when conducting interviews, formulating questions, and engaging in participant observation across diverse global settings.

The concept of home encompasses both tangible objects and intangible practices that trigger memories, shape one's identity, and are treasured as heritage. However, defining "home" is not a straightforward task, especially for migrants, as it often means both what was left behind and what has been built in a new setting. Ahmel et al. (2003) introduce the ideas of "uprootings/regroundings," which help us comprehend the flexibility of home. These concepts provide a framework to view home as a multitude of experiences that can be located in a physical house, a neighbourhood, or even a mental space. These include the image of the home left

behind, where the feelings of displacement can be closely tied to those of the homeland, creating a sense of grounding, while, simultaneously, migrants find themselves regrounded in new landscapes, where they establish new roots and a sense of belonging. The research presented in Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrates that, as in the case of cuisine, religion serves as a vessel of memory for communities that have experienced displacement, even if formal institutions do not necessarily recognize these practices and objects as part of migrant heritage (Blake, 2000; Silverman et al., 2017). This study highlights the profound importance of religion in the lives of migrants, not only as a matter of faith but as a dynamic aspect of their cultural identity. It acts as a powerful force that helps migrants cope with displacement, maintain connections with their heritage, and construct a sense of home in an unfamiliar environment.

Religion plays a significant role in shaping both individual and communal identities among migrants, extending beyond religious belief to encompass cultural expressions, aesthetics, and practices that are seen as integral to one's identity. Religious objects, such as rosaries and figurines, hold cultural significance as well as individual and collective memories that transcend their religious meaning (section 5.3). They become symbols of family history, migration experiences, and the interplay between tradition and change that comes with mobility. Transnational connections are evident in religious practices and objects, offering a sense of continuity and familiarity as migrants navigate the changes brought about by migration. The multifaceted role of religion among migrants in Chile transcends traditional religious boundaries, existing in a space that blends the secular and the spiritual. It serves as a unique lens through which migrants negotiate the memories particular to their experiences and their sense of belonging before and after migration.

Conducting interviews and observing how migrants define their heritage reveals their differential valuation of certain cultural aspects over others. This valuation relies on the hierarchical organisation of data (Steward, 1992). These distinctions can vary across different cultures and historical contexts, and understanding these classifications within a community can unveil values that extend beyond the objects or practices themselves. This study sheds light on how migrants

in Chile—specifically in two migrant neighbourhoods—have structured their world. This organisational system speaks to how people perceive their surroundings, assign economic value, symbolise social power, cultivate individuality, and experience social integration through objects (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981). In this sense, participants in this study demonstrated being attached to materiality that anchored family memories like photos, religious practices—that were not necessarily centred in spirituality but contained a familiar identification space—and food, which triggered profound feelings of belonging. Both the home and the neighbourhood serve as repositories for memory, where individuals and communities manifest their identities, operating as archives of migrant narratives (Burton, 2003). This project gathers essential evidence and produces valuable archival work that unveils the intimate spaces where migrant individuals shape their systems of value, resulting in the creation of heritage and memories linked to these spaces, which serve as living documents of migrant reality.

Family albums, explored in section 5.4, serve dual purposes, acting as both containers and triggers for nostalgia, heritage, memory, and identity. They serve as repositories of personal and collective history, safeguarding cherished moments and narratives that span generations. Given the inherent instability associated with migration and the anticipated disruption and distancing of friendships and family bonds, these albums function as stabilisers and preservers of these essential connections. When migrants choose to include albums and photographs as companions on their journeys, even in the face of challenging border crossings and limited packing space, these albums assume a unique and central role in the process of establishing a new home.

Sontag's (1979) insights into photography as inherently selective representations align with the role of photographs in documenting history, acting as effective triggers for nostalgia, and allowing individuals to travel to the past through observation. This research proves that photographs are more than mere images; they possess nuanced materiality that can profoundly shape people's understanding of the world. Participants in this study exhibited strong attachment to photographs and albums that had travelled with them from their countries of origin, emphasising their importance in their new lives. By connecting Sontag's ideas with the migration

context, it becomes evident that images play a significant role in shaping the representation of migrants. While the media often portrays migrants in a dehumanising light, the ethnographic work in this study shifts the focus to the photographs preserved and valued by the participants, allowing them to tell their own stories and define their identities. Hirsch's (1997) understanding of "family frames" provides continuity over time and space, highlighting how these photographs connect lives and stories across continents and generations. These images, carefully saved by individuals and families, hold value as they are embedded in the fundamental rituals of migrant family life, materially connecting what they left behind with their new geography.

Furthermore, family albums serve as agents of transformation and reminders of the purpose of the migration journey. They inspire home-making in the new location by bridging the gap between the past and the present, helping individuals navigate the hardships of migration. These albums are not limited to photographs alone; many participants included souvenirs and mementos alongside images like birthday cards, holy communion cards, and funny stickers. Such objects evoke the culture and traditions left behind. Family albums play a pivotal role in the lives of migrants, influencing their understanding of themselves and the world. These receptacles of memory, identity, and transformation allow individuals to craft their narratives and establish a sense of continuity in disrupted lives. These albums, filled with photographs and meaningful objects, contribute significantly to the process of placemaking, helping migrants turn unfamiliar spaces into meaningful habitats they can call their new homes.

Fieldwork revealed that the transformative power of movement is portrayed in a very organic way within the female experience, as it provides women with the opportunity to take control of their own biographies. Far away from their places of origin and the patriarchal ties they contain, migrant women are able to shape their identities, roles, and sense of belonging in an independent manner. This independence provides new forms of allocating and creating memories, preserving novel aspects of their heritage, and redefining their identities. The narratives of Daniela, Jessica, and others in section 6.3.3 illustrate how migration can in some occasions liberate women from cultural and societal pressures, enabling them to challenge beauty standards and political beliefs

they felt confined by in their home countries. Their encounters with new cultures and communities can trigger new ways of understanding the self and shift traditional Latin American gender roles. I argue that the migrant women interviewed gained economic independence when migrating, which, in turn, has granted them some biographical independence. However, it also incorporates new costs and difficulties into their lives involving discrimination and sexualisation. This insight needs to be placed within the difficulties that traditional gender roles and gender violence—predominant in Latin America as a region—produce in the lives of women, further intensified when class, race, and migratory status are considered. This study shows that there is certain economic independence gained, while also revealing evidence that sexualisation and abuse are heightened for migrant women.

December as a month of nostalgia and celebration among migrants from northern Latin America reveals several compelling findings and conclusions related to memory. In my fieldwork, this month emerged as stirring a deep sense of nostalgia and connection to heritage, serving as a platform for migrants to recreate and renegotiate their cultural practices and memories alongside newly acquired customs in Chile. According to the findings, while the specific rituals and celebrations vary between migrants' nationalities, there are shared sentiments and rituals of socialisation, festivity, and cuisine that they do not encounter in Chile during the same time. This collective nostalgia transcends individual nationalities. In this sense, several examples of foods and objects appear as repositories for these celebrations, functioning as "actants" (see section 2.6) where sometimes the line between people and objects disappears. Surely, the separation of material from human persists, as the line is not completely dissolved, but the biography of the objects becomes essentially intertwined, in this case, with the human migratory experience.

Migrants who participated in this study often drew parallels between the September celebrations in Chile and the December festivities in their home countries. The *Fiestas Patrias* in Chile, spanning the month of September, provide a similar atmosphere of festivity and celebration, allowing migrants to experience a sense of belonging and joy that feels similar to their month of

December. This parallel exists not only in feelings regarding the use and recreation of memory, but also in the comparable material custom of *estrenos*, a tradition of wearing new clothes and shoes during September celebrations in Chile or December in northern Latin American countries.

7.4 Strengths and limitations of this research

This research pursued an in-depth investigation of the migrant experience in Chile, focusing on home and belonging in the neighbourhoods of Santiago Centro and Estación Central. I have contributed a comprehensive exploration of the relationship between migrant heritage, identity, and material surroundings in Chile. The significance of cultural heritage in migrants' lives is portrayed in the study's analysis, shedding light on how objects and practices from their home countries, those collected along the journey and those newly incorporated in Chile, are negotiated, serving as anchors for their identities in a new cultural context. I also delve into various aspects of migrants' lives, like cuisine, religious practices, commercial activities, social interactions, and gendered experiences, all focused in the realms of the home—intimate—and the neighbourhood—public—spaces. As Chile experiences the fastest growing immigration rate in the world, next to Qatar and Angola, with an annual growth rate of 6% between the years 2000-2017, this research adds narrative force and nuance to quantitative data gathered by surveys and government analysis, delivering findings that illustrate the multifaceted realities of the migrant experience (United Nations, 2020; INE, 2021). This in-depth analysis delivers essential detail, expanding understanding of the migration scenario in Chile beyond numbers.

I integrate insights from various academic disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, history, and gender studies to provide a rounded understanding of how heritage, memory, and identity are shaped by migrants' material world. The in-depth interviews conducted with migrants collect a rich qualitative data set that provides insights into their experiences, perceptions, and emotions related to material aspects of their lives. This methodology allows us to access individuals'

intimate spaces, which are often challenging to reach for research purposes. Homes, especially migrant homes, are particularly elusive to the public eye due to migrants trying to escape judgement and unnecessary stigmatisation, and thus not easily accessible to outsiders. Gaining entry required building trust and engaging in participant-led conversations to highlight their voices and intentions without the researcher taking the lead. However, this approach presents its own set of challenges, as there is no way to prevent the researcher's presence from influencing and, at the same time, reshaping the voices and explanations related to material aspects of the migrant home. Nonetheless, successfully documenting the interior of these homes and the narratives and experiences that go alongside them, despite its limitations, is a significant accomplishment of this study and one of its major strengths.

Another significant contribution of this research is how it effectively incorporates historical context to explain the dynamics and tensions observed in the present, offering a deeper understanding of how historical factors influence contemporary migrant experiences. Historical background and the pertinent archival work provides insight into the cultural implications migration has produced in the local dynamics, and how the migrants' historical background also influences their experience in Chile. This becomes especially relevant when talking about Venezuelan or Colombian migrants who have undergone strong political and economic crises during the last decade that mark their life experience.

The research focuses specifically on the experiences of migrants in the city of Santiago in Chile, which may limit the generalizability of its findings to other regions or countries with different migration dynamics and cultural contexts. While in-depth interviews provide rich qualitative data, the sample offers data limited to the time and space indicated in the methodology, so it is important to be mindful of the geographic and temporal scope of the study. Chapter 4, the methodology chapter, discussed some of the limitations that in-depth interviewing encounters and the ways it can be minimised. It was of the utmost importance for me to recognize my own biases and gender/racial/class differences and privileges compared to the participants. Self-awareness was the most important practice while conducting interviews in order to maintain an

ethical approach that implied the adequate sensitivity and diligence to enter the intimate space of the home. I prioritised building trust and rapport with participants, took time to explain the purpose of the study, and ensured that their voices were being registered and respected as the main objective. The interview questions were revised and ensured cultural sensitivity while maintaining an open-ended structure to avoid making assumptions based on race, gender, or class. Participants are the experts in their own experiences, resulting in complicated and nuanced reflections that are not homogenous generalisations of the migrant experience. In this sense, the research has limited capacity to project trends, even as it captures the richness and problematics that arise from migration.

7.5 Future directions of research

Exploring the heritage of migrant communities is deeply intertwined with processes of identity formation. However, defining an individual's or a group's identity is not a straightforward task, as the rigid classifications tied to factors like class or gender have given way to a complex reality of multiple intersecting layers, each unique to the individual (Bhabha, 2004). Identity, memory, and heritage are interlinked processes that interact with and sometimes create tensions among each other. When examining the processes of heritage and memory formation within migrant communities, it is crucial to acknowledge that the results are not set in stone (Bauman, 2011). Self-perception, identity, and memories will continue to evolve and be renegotiated beyond the scope and timeframe of this project, hence the need to delve deeper into qualitative methodologies to further analyse heritage processes associated with movement in this global era.

The research provides valuable insights into migrant experiences related to their intimate home-making and heritage-making processes. This information is vital when considering potential

policy implications or recommendations for addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by migrants in Chile, potentially resulting in significant advances in migrants' quality of life.

Another valuable research avenue that can stem from this study focuses on memory preservation practices among the female migrant population in Chile, with a focus on intergenerational comparisons. There is existing research on this subject (Hirsch, 1997; Alison, 2016), showing how women play a crucial role in preserving family recipes, ingredients, and traditional knowledge. It would be interesting to investigate if and why this process occurs within the female migrant population in Chile and whether it will be perpetuated by their daughters.

Finally, through this study, I have attempted to answer how migrant identity and memory are negotiated and transformed through the materiality that surrounds them in their homes and neighbourhoods. Within this same question lies the opportunity to further investigate the same theme but focused on the intermediate spaces of coexistence, places that serve as gathering spots, such as churches, event halls, or restaurants. These are neither domestic nor public spaces, but intermediate centres of migrant identity. How do migrant identity and memory extend into these intermediate spaces of coexistence? These spaces, which serve as meeting points and hubs of cultural exchange, offer a unique perspective on how migrants negotiate and express their identity. By studying the materiality and practices within these intermediate spaces, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how migration shapes individual and collective identities, both within and beyond the confines of the home and the public sphere.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Table of interviews

#	Name	Modality	Date of Migration	Neighbourhood	Gender/ Identity	Nationality	Date
1	Ana (19 yrs)	Face to face	2013	Santiago Centro	Female	Colombia	7-30-21
2	Claudia (24 yrs)	Zoom	2008	Santiago/Melipilla	Female	Colombia	7-20-21
3	Cruz (49 yrs)	Face to face	2006	Santiago Centro	Female	Colombia	7-19-21
4	Daniela (35 yrs)	Face to face	2013	Santiago Centro	Female	Venezuela	7-18-21
5	Dayan (33 yrs)	Face to face	2002	Santiago Centro	Female	Ecuador	8-10-21
6	Dayani (22 yrs)	Face to face	2008	Santiago Centro	Female	Colombia	7-19-21
7	"Delfina" (29 yrs)	Zoom	2018	Santiago Centro	Female	Argentina	8-11-21
8	Ernesto (30 yrs)	Zoom	2019	Santiago	Male	Venezuela	8-28-21
9	"Fernanda" (43 yrs)	Face to face	2015	Santiago Centro/Ñuñoa	Female	Venezuela	11-17-21
10	Geysa (30 yrs)	Face to face	2019	Santiago Centro	Female/LG TBQ	Venezuela	11-16-21
11	Henso (33 yrs)	Face to face	2012	Santiago Centro/ Providencia	Male	Colombia	8-04-21
12	Jarnac (27 yrs)	Zoom	2017	Estación Central/ Los Angeles	Male	Haiti	8-04-21
13	Jefferson (26 yrs)	Face to face	2016	Estación Central	Male	Haiti	11-9-21

14	Jessica (29 yrs)	Face to face	2017	Santiago centro/Providencia	Female	Venezuela	7-29-21
15	Jose de Jesus (63 yrs)	Face to face	2009	Santiago Centro/ Las Condes	Male	Venezuela	8-03-21
16	Kelly (40 yrs)	Face to face	2013	Santiago Centro	Female	Colombia	7-30-21
17	"La prima" (48 yrs)	Face to face	2016	Estación Central/La Florida	Female	Cuba	11-15- 21
18	Mervin (41 yrs)	Face to face	2018	Independencia	Female	Venezuela	7-31-21
19	Nicole (25 yrs)	Face to face	2012	Santiago Centro	Female/LG TBQ	Venezuela	8-11-21
20	Reina (38 yrs)	Face to face	2018	Independencia	Female	Venezuela	7-31-21
21	Renee (40 yrs)	Face to face	2011	Santiago Centro	Female	Nicaragua	8-02-21
22	Romina (28 yrs)	Face to face	2033	Santiago Centro/ Ñuñoa	Female	Ecuador	8-06-21
23	Silvia A (30 yrs)	Face to face	2017	Santiago Centro/Las Condes	Female	Venezuela	11-10- 21
24	Sofia (22 yrs)	Face to face	2018	Santiago Centro/Ñuñoa	Female	Venezuela	7-21-21
25	Steevens (25 yrs)	Face to face	2012	Estación Central	Male	Haiti	8-5-21
26	Verónica (23 yrs)	Face to face	2019	Santiago Centro/Ñuñoa	Female/LG TBQ	Venezuela	8-11-21
27	Yoselin (29 yrs)	Zoom	2012	Santiago Centro/Huechuraba	Female	Colombia	8-28-21

APPENDIX B: Table of observations

#	Type	Place or Event	Date
1	Non-participant	Santiago Centro and Estación Central (walked through the neighbourhoods covering 4km/2.5m each outing. The neighbourhoods are 23.2 km ² /14.4 km ² respectively)	9-1-21 – 9-3-21 9-6-21 – 9-8-21 9-15-21 – 9-16-21 9-23-21 – 9-25-21 10-4-21 – 10-6-21 10-13-21 – 10-15-21 10-21-21 – 10-22-21 10-26-21 – 10-28-21 11-9-21 – 11-12-21 11-15-21 – 11-17-21 12-1-21 – 12-4-21 12-7-21 / 12-8-21 12-13-21 – 12-15-21 12-23-21
2	Participant	Service for “Migrant Day” Parish of Our Lady of Pompeii (Santiago Centro)	9-5-21
3	Participant	Sunday service Parish of Our Lady of Pompeii (Santiago Centro)	12-12-21
4	Participant	Spanish Classes for Haitians Creole speakers in Church of the Augustines (Santiago Centro)	11-10-21
5	Participant	Street Market Calle Pingüino (Estación Central)	9-26-21
6	Participant	Sunday Service Parroquia de Santa Cruz de Estación Central	9-26-21
7	Participant	Sunday Service	10-17-21

		Église adventiste haitiens estacion centrale Los Tres Angeles (Estación Central)	
8	Participant	Plaza de Armas (Santiago Centro)	7-20-21/7-24-21/ 7-25-21
9	Participant	Servicio Jesuita Migrante Children's End of Year Party (Estación Central)	12-9-21
10	Non-Participant	Candle Day Celebration (Santiago Centro)	12-9-21
11	Participant	La Vega (Santiago Centro)	10-18-21-10-21-21
12	Participant	Commercial quarter of Estación Central	11-10-21 – 11-12-21

APPENDIX C: Interview guidelines

#	General Questions for the researcher that guided the interviews
1	Indicate your name, age, nationality, gender you identify with, race, ethnicity
2	How does material culture within the migrant home and neighbourhood participate in the construction of their identity and reflect feelings of belonging and collective identities?
3	How does memory play a role in the preservation and activation of heritage within the home and neighbourhood?
4	How is individual and collective memory linked and negotiated within the home versus the neighbourhood?
5	What are the links and overlaps between memory and heritage when thinking about movement and displacement?
6	How does material culture related to migrant groups reflect the groups' intangible heritage? Is the preservation of certain material aspects and practices of life related to the construction and preservation of their intangible heritage?
7	Are there any transversal components when thinking about material culture across different migrant groups in Chile? What, if any, are the differences between communities when choosing what items and associated cultural practices to value and preserve?
8	Do families in their homes preserve and build their material world in similar ways in comparison to other migrant families?
9	Do we find similar practices within the private world of these communities?

10	What are the differences when approaching the private world when it comes to material culture? How do these practices and materiality differ or connect with the public sphere: the neighbourhood?
	Specific Guidelines
	Sense of belonging and place
11	Where were you born?
12	Where did you grow up?
13	Where do you consider yourself to be from? Do you identify with any nationality?
14	How long have you been living in Chile?
15	Do you feel you are part of this country or being "Chilean"?
16	Where would you say home is for you?
17	What things around you remind you of or make this particular space your home?
18	Can you tell me what makes you feel part of your community? If not, why do you feel as an outsider?
19	How important is it to feel that you are part of the community?
20	Are there specific objects or activities that remind you of home?
	Sense of home
21	Are there certain objects, celebrations or sites that link you to what you consider to be your home and to your sense of community here in Chile?
22	How long did it take to get settled in Chile? Find a place to live?
23	Does this place you live in feel like home? If yes/no Why?
24	Which objects or activities make this place or any place feel like home to you?
25	Are there any objects you brought from your country of origin? If so, why?
26	What do these things mean to you?
27	Are these things in many of your friend's houses (those who come from your country of origin) too?
28	Are there specific objects, food or rituals that mark your house as home?

29	Are there specific objects, food or rituals that signal you to recognize someone or somewhere as part of your community?
	Sense of neighbourhood
30	Why did you choose to live or work in this neighbourhood?
31	Do other people from your community live/work in this neighbourhood?
32	What does this neighbourhood mean to you?
33	Are there any special buildings or features in the neighbourhood that remind you of your country of origin?
34	Do you participate in any community activities or events? Can you elaborate?
35	What objects or props are necessary or are part of participating in the mentioned events?
36	What do these objects and activities mean to the event and for you? Do you keep/use any at home?
37	How do you describe your connection to the things mentioned?
38	Are there specific objects, food or rituals that mark your neighbourhood?

APPENDIX D: Informational Letter for participants

I am a PhD student based at the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage, University of Birmingham, UK. I am carrying out research on migrant heritage in the home and neighbourhood in two of Santiago's migrant neighbourhoods: Santiago Centro and Estación Central. The information collected and the insights developed through this research will document the importance of the heritage of migrant communities in Chile, while also giving voice to the social issues affecting them as a community.

I would love to get your insights into how you value and understand your heritage in your home and neighbourhood. I am looking for participants willing to give me an interview (between 1 to 2 hours depending on your availability) which will be audio recorded. During the interviews all government safety measures will be followed in order to remain safe during the pandemic. Depending on the necessary measures and what you yourself feel most comfortable with, interviews might be held within your home or garden, in public areas or digitally via ZOOM. If you give your permission for this, some photographs may be taken during the interview. The information collected will be stored safely under password protection in my university database "BEAR data share" for 10 years and it will be used to produce my PhD thesis and other scholarly publications. Any sensitive information that may be given during the interviews or photographs will be protected through anonymity in name, location and recognizable features. It is key to the project to capture your understanding of heritage in your home and neighbourhood in a way that you feel fully comfortable with. The project will involve talking to lots of local migrant businesses and individuals who work and live in Santiago Centro/Estación Central - make sure your voice is heard!

I would be very happy to share the results of the project with you. If you would like to find out more about the project, or register an interest in receiving information about the results, please get in touch using my contact details below. No commercially sensitive information is required -

just your observations and insights into what you consider to be important for feeling at home and what you consider to be part of your identity. Participation is completely voluntary, and should you decide that you no longer wish to take part, for whatever reason, you would be completely free to do so. Information provided can be removed from the project up to a month after the interview. You would not be identified personally in any publication of the research unless you give your specific consent. All data collected will be held in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Contact Details:

Main researcher: Ximena Vial Lecaros / [REDACTED] *New sim card will be bought in order to have a particular phone number associated to the research

Supervisor: Helle Jørgensen / [REDACTED]

APPENDIX E: Consent Form

PhD Research Project: A home away from home: Latin American Migrant Communities in Chile and Identity Building Across Borders

The project involves collection of information about heritage within the migrant community in Santiago Centro/Estación Central, as detailed in the participant information sheet. Information provided by participants will be used in the production of the researcher's PhD thesis and may be included in articles and other publications. The participants may be identified by name unless they wish to be kept anonymous. The information will be stored safely in the researcher's university database "BEAR cloud" with password protection for 10 years.

Should participants wish to withdraw information from the study they must do so within one month of the interview.

I have been informed of, and understand the purposes of the project, and I agree to participate in the study as outlined to me. I agree that the information I provide may be used in the ways described above and that withdrawal can only happen within one month of the interview.

I wish to remain anonymous: _____

I wish to appear by my legal name: _____

Name (print).....

Signature..... Date.....

APPENDIX F: Consent Form for photography

PhD Research Project: A home away from home: Latin American Migrant Communities in Chile and Identity Building Across Borders

The project involves collection of information by photography about heritage within the migrant community in Santiago Centro/Estación Central, as detailed in the participant information sheet. Photography of the participants and their homes will be used in the production of the researcher's PhD thesis and may be included in articles and other publications. Participants may choose to have their recognizable features blurred out in photographs in order to keep anonymity or to appear in full. The participant may be identified in the photograph by name unless they wish to be kept anonymous. The photographs will be stored safely in the researcher's university database "BEAR cloud" with password protection for 10 years. Should participants wish to withdraw permission to use their photographs from the study they must do so within one month of the interview.

I have been informed of, and understand the purposes of the project, and I agree to participate in the study as outlined to me. I agree that the photographs taken may be used in the ways described above and that withdrawal can only happen within one month of the interview.

I wish my name to remain anonymous: _____

I wish to appear by my legal name: _____

I wish that my recognizable features are blurred out: _____

I wish to appear clearly in the photographs taken: _____

Name (print).....

Signature..... Date.....

APPENDIX G: Food Glossary

Arepas: are a traditional staple food in Colombia and Venezuela. They are round, flatbread-like cornmeal patties that can be grilled, baked, or fried. Arepas can be served plain or split open and filled with various ingredients like cheese, meat, beans, or avocado and can be enjoyed as a breakfast, lunch, or dinner option.

Asados: An asado in Chile refers to a traditional barbecue or cookout, typically involving grilled meats and various accompaniments. It is a social gathering centred around the preparation and enjoyment of grilled meats, such as beef, pork, or chicken. The meats are usually seasoned with simple ingredients like salt and pepper, allowing the natural flavours to shine. Asados are often accompanied by bread, veggie sauce, salads, and beverages, creating a festive and communal dining experience.

Empanadas: are a popular food item in various Latin American countries. They consist of a pastry dough filled with a savory mixture, typically including meat, cheese, vegetables, or a combination of ingredients. Empanadas can be baked or fried, resulting in a crispy and delicious outer crust. They are often enjoyed as a snack, appetizer, or main course, and variations of empanadas can be found in different culinary traditions throughout the world. In Chile, the traditional empanada is an oven baked pastry filled with a traditional mixture of meat, onions, hard-boiled egg and raisins.

Hallacas: Venezuelan hallacas are a traditional dish typically enjoyed during the holiday season, especially Christmas. They are similar to tamales, but with a unique Venezuelan twist. Hallacas consist of a corn-based dough filled with a flavourful mixture of meats, such as beef, chicken, and pork, combined with onions, bell peppers, olives, and raisins, all cooked in a rich and spiced broth.

Mote con Huesillo: Mote con huesillo is a traditional Chilean drink. It consists of rehydrated dried peaches (huesillo) cooked in sweet syrup, served with husked wheat kernels (mote) and the syrup. The peaches impart a sweet and fruity flavor, while the mote provides a chewy texture. It is commonly enjoyed as a refreshing summer beverage and is considered a cultural symbol in Chile.

Sopaipillas: are a popular traditional Chilean snack or street food. They are fried dough discs made from a mixture of pumpkin, flour, and spices. Sopaipillas have a crispy exterior and a soft, doughy interior. They are typically served hot and can be enjoyed plain or with pebre (a spicy tomatoes and onions salsa) or other toppings like mustard or ketchup. Sopaipillas are commonly enjoyed during the winter months and are a beloved part of Chilean cuisine.

The filled dough is then wrapped in banana leaves and steamed until cooked. Hallacas are known for their delicious and complex flavours, representing a cherished culinary tradition in Venezuela.

Papelon/panela: also known as rapadura, is a traditional unrefined sugar commonly used north of the Equator in Latin American and Caribbean cuisine. It is made by evaporating sugar cane juice until it solidifies into blocks or cones. Papelon has a rich, caramel-like flavour and is often used as a sweetener in beverages, desserts, and savoury dishes. It retains more of the natural minerals and molasses compared to refined sugar, making it a slightly healthier alternative.

Yuca: is a starchy root vegetable similar to potatoes, rich in carbohydrates with a firm texture and nutty flavour. It is a staple food in tropical regions of Latin America, and due to its versatility it can be cooked in various ways.

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