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# Lifestyle Migration and the Nascent Agroecological Movement in the Andean Araucanía, Chile: Is It Promoting Sustainable Local Development?

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Amenity and lifestyle migration is a global phenomenon that may be considered an agent of transformation of the local dynamics of rural areas. This new migratory trend has been observed in the last few years in the

Andean Araucanía in southern Chile, an area rich in natural and cultural attractions. Migrants to the region who are proponents of agroecology—considered in the broad sense of the term as

practice, theory, and social movement—have sought to contribute to local economic, environmental, cultural, and social development. Taking a qualitative methodological approach, including in-depth interviews of migrants and key local informants, this study sought to identify the motivations for the development of agroecological practices and to analyze their impact on the sustainability of local development.

**Keywords:** Lifestyle migration; agroecological practices; Andean Araucanía; local development; Chile.

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## Introduction

Mountain rural areas, as a result of globalization, are experiencing accelerating processes of change; an important driver of these changes is human mobility (Beyers and Nelson 2000; Moss 2008). This study used the concept of *lifestyle migration*, defined by McIntyre (2009: 232) as “the movements of people, capital, information, and objects associated with the process of voluntary relocation to places that are perceived as providing an enhanced, or at least different, lifestyle.” Amenity and lifestyle migrants, as agents of change and new actors in the rural world, are, according to Abrams et al (2012: 270), contributing to the re-creation of the rural community and modifying the construction of the concept of nature: their arrival implies “substantial social and ecological transformations for receiving landscapes.” The rural world now has a more of a hybrid nature, containing urban elements, and is in constant reconstruction. The rural now differs from its traditional definition, which emphasized the rural–urban dichotomy, based mainly on the lack of (or difficulties in accessing) services and opportunities as compared to cities.

From the Latin American perspective, this change has been referred to as the New Rurality, which is,

according to Rojas (2008: no page number, translation by C. Marchant) defined by the dynamism manifested in “rural–urban links, the rise of nonagricultural rural employment, the provision of environmental services, agroenvironmental certifications, the active role of communities and social organizations, and cultural–environmental diversity as heritage.” Each case of the New Rurality manifests different characteristics, which should be analyzed to understand their impact and to discern future paths for the development of rural areas.

However, as stated by authors such as Moss and Glorioso (2014), the study of the sociocultural implications of this kind of mobility is still developing. A large part of the research done in the global South has focused on understanding the effects of this kind of migration on territorial planning and tourism (for Argentina, Otero et al 2006; for Chile, Zunino and Hidalgo 2010). Other dimensions, such as the social and environmental ones, have hardly been addressed. Glorioso and Moss (2007) pointed out the migrant’s capacity for promoting sustainable development, and Matarrita-Cascante et al (2015) contributed to the evaluation of this impact, stating, for example, that in Costa Rica the amenity migrants are more qualified than local

inhabitants to promote environmental consciousness in the area to which they have moved. Janoschka (2009: 252) stated that “the settlement of new actors somehow connected to lifestyle mobility induce new ways of conceiving local and regional development policies that, among other things, may focus on ecological issues.”

This study focused on the development, by lifestyle migrants, of agroecological practices aimed at promoting a more sustainable development in Pucón, a mountain commune in southern Chile (Marchant 2015) that is considered the capital of adventure tourism in Chile, due to its privileged volcanic landscape and scenic lakes, as well as its biogeographic abundance given its location in the eco-region of Valdivian temperate forests (Borsdorf et al 2011). Historically, the Araucanía region where Pucón is located, has been the object of disputes and claims by the indigenous Mapuche people, culminating in a violent land claim of the Chilean state in the late 19th century.

In Latin America, the agroecological movement is not limited to chemical-free agriculture but has become an alternative movement for the defense and re-signification of rural areas, which have been subjected to the pressures of a neoliberal economy focused on the boundless exploitation of natural resources (Martínez and Rosset 2016). Agroecological practices are seen as a way not only to produce healthy local food but also to care for the environment and “Mother Earth” and preserve rural traditions and cultural practices (Martínez and Rosset 2010). This is concordant with the motivations behind the search for a “green utopia” (Zunino and Hidalgo 2010) that migrants undertake when deciding to make a change in their lifestyle and to contribute to local development, which, according to Carpio (2012), can be viewed as an invigorating process for local society, improving the local community’s quality of life, through a change of attitude and behavior of institutions, groups, and individuals, in which people are protagonists of and participants in their own development.

The main objectives of this study were (1) to identify and classify the motivations behind the development of agroecological practices by lifestyle migrants in Pucón and (2) to analyze the impact of these practices on local sustainable development. It explored the following questions: Have the agroecological practices developed by these migrants promoted local development? Can the migrants be recognized as agents of change in rural mountain areas in the south of Chile?

## Theoretical approach

### From amenity to lifestyle migration

*Amenity migration* was first defined by Moss (2006) as the movement of people to places that they perceive as having better environmental quality and attractive cultural attributes. This trend has been observed in

mountain areas worldwide (eg Chipeniuk 2004; Perlik 2006; Steinicke et al 2010) and has been the focus of growing interest over the last decade, due to its environmental, economic, and cultural implications for the places in which it takes place (Gosnell and Abrams 2009). This complex phenomenon has sparked academic debate over its varied interpretations, since the existence of the amenities is not enough, by itself, to explain the trend, given that there are multiple motivations for migration (eg a desire for a change in lifestyle), which are difficult to identify and tend to change over time.

There are different approaches to the definition of amenity migration. Janoschka (2009) defined it as a type of mobility found on a conceptual continuum between migration and tourism, which is intimately related to 2 global trends: the search for improved economic and social opportunities, better health systems, as well as leisure and quality of life in geographic areas with benign climates. Perlik (2011) described alpine gentrification as a process through which the social fabric of a neighborhood in a newly discovered peripheral region is modified under the influence of middle-class migrants. McIntyre (2009) pointed out the need to add further depth to the term and consider a new contextualization of amenity migration based on the concepts of mobility and lifestyle, since amenity migration has been used to explain movements of people, nationally or internationally, motivated mainly (if not exclusively) by considerations of quality of life (Moss 2006; Benson and O’Reilly 2009; McIntyre 2009). Following this logic, McIntyre (2009: 229) proposed the idea of *lifestyle mobilities*, defined as “the movements of people, capital, information and objects associated with the process of voluntary relocation to places that are perceived as providing an enhanced or, at least, a different lifestyle.” This concept allows for a better consideration of the content and implications of the phenomenon in the case of Pucón. According to Moss (2006), this term may be considered a synonym for amenity migration.

How is the search for a better lifestyle carried out? For McIntyre (2009), lifestyle consists of a set of practices that fulfil utilitarian and self-identity functions for people. This definition allows us to consider how migrants’ agroecological practices help them to achieve sustainability and other goals that are part of their reason for migrating. Understanding migrants’ development of these practices is essential, especially considering that lifestyle migration and the agroecological movement itself have only recently begun to affect southern Chile and their influence there is not yet well understood. To help address this gap in knowledge, this study thus focused on the role of agroecological practices in lifestyle migration in rural southern Chile.

### Lifestyle migrants' contributions to local sustainable development through agroecological practices

This analysis postulates that amenity or lifestyle migration, linked to a change in lifestyle as defined by McIntyre (2009) and Benson and O'Reilly (2009), is closely related to a change in the concept of sustainability and responds to the formation of a “new environmental rationale” (Leff 2004), as a theory that orients a praxis originating from the subversion of the principals that have ordered and legitimized theoretical and instrumental rationality in modernity (in this case, the consequences of neoliberal capitalism manifested in the forms of urban life). Environmental rationale should, likewise, be understood as reason geared toward a life ethic, founded in the sense of existence (culture) and its relation to nature. In this same manner, Leff (2000: 6) stated that environmental rationale is a utopia that forges new existential senses and that in the transition to sustainability, new mechanisms for impelling environmental potential, forming new consciousness, and producing changes mobilized by new values as rationale, are developed.

Agroecological practices undertaken by lifestyle migrants are part of this new environmental rationale. Agroecology was described by Wezel et al (2009: 509) as a discipline that may be defined in terms of multiple dimensions: (1) a search for scientific knowledge of the dynamics of the agroecosystem, (2) a social movement with close links to rural empowerment movements (in particular farmers' movements) that calls for more sustainable development, territorial autonomy, food sovereignty, and more recently environmental protection, and (3) a situated practice that searches for agricultural solutions based on local knowledge that can offer an alternative to the form of agriculture imposed by the green revolution.

Therefore, agroecological practices may be considered the materialization of the environmental ideal that lifestyle migrants profess and see as their contribution to sustainability, favoring the conformation of what Altieri (2000) called a new model of rural development through agroecology, which in Latin America has lately gathered strength due to the redefinition of rural territories (Martínez and Rosset 2016). Agroecological practices include environmentally responsible and organic farming, permaculture, waste (and general environmental footprint) reduction, and reduction in consumption. Lifestyle migrants are also interested in the revitalization and valuation of ancient ecological knowledge, especially linked to indigenous peoples, the promotion of healthy eating, development of responsible-consumption projects that involve associations and cooperatives linked to residents who practice traditional family agriculture, the intensification of links to the local community, and leadership of social groups and movements focused on environmental education and protection of the natural heritage.

The effects of this kind of migration and the development of agroecological practices in the conformation of a new rurality in mountain areas such as Pucón have not yet been analyzed in depth. Zunino and Hidalgo (2010: no page number, translation by C. Marchant) established the first classification of a group of amenity migrants in Pucón, recognizing 2 categories: an urban group, who live in urban and periurban areas, usually on small plots of land where they may benefit from urban infrastructure, connectivity, and services in privileged natural surroundings, and a rural group, called “green amenity migrants,” who “are characterized by a more alternative lifestyle, as seen in their interest in preserving their place of residence's natural features, and by a relatively developed ecocentric stance.” Zunino and Hidalgo (2010) also stated that such migrants contribute to cultural innovation in Pucón. However, they did not carry out an in-depth investigation of the practices undertaken to achieve these objectives.

Migrants are able to develop initiatives for their own benefit, as well as the benefit of the localities that they settle in, due to the important social and cultural capital they possess (Benson and O'Reilly 2009), thus becoming a source of cultural innovation. A case study by Zunino et al (2016) of the main destinations where this type of migration is observed in north Patagonia, Chile, found that “these migrants have the impetus and the cultural, social, and financial conditions necessary to mobilize and generate changes in the local sociocultural sphere where they settle” (Zunino et al 2016: no page number, translation by C. Marchant).

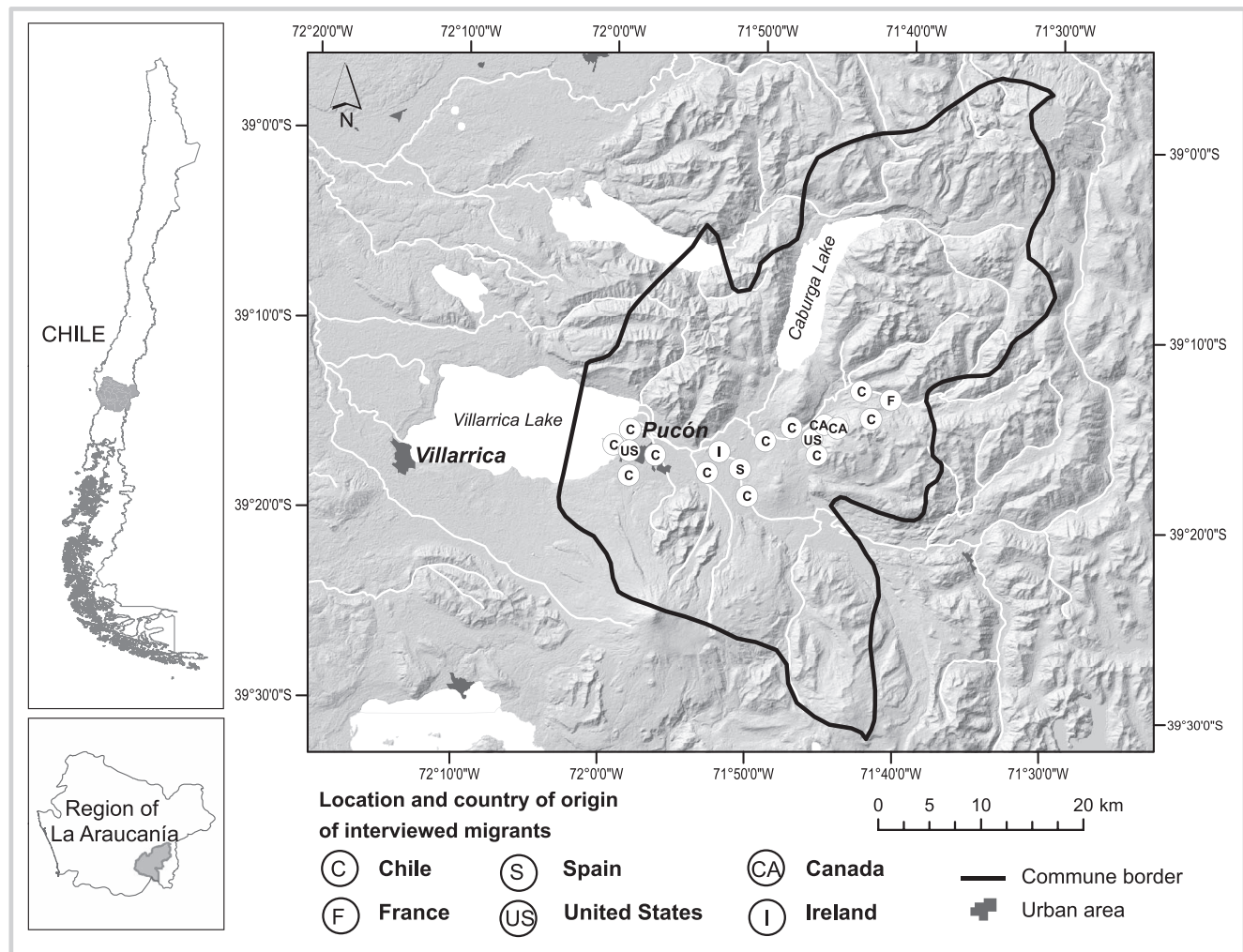
### Study area

The mountain commune of Pucón (Figure 1)—which in Mapudungun, the language of the native Mapuche people, means “entry to the mountains”—is Chile's primary adventure-tourism destination (Borsdorf et al 2011). Pucón and neighboring Villarrica are exceptional in the Chilean mountain regions in their positive levels of demographic growth and good access to services, all of which make them attractive for lifestyle migration (Marchant and Sánchez 2011).

From an environmental perspective, Pucón's development plan for 2016–2020 (Ilustre Municipalidad de Pucón 2016) recognized the following threats to sustainable development: agricultural chemicals leaching into Villarrica lake, loss of native forest due to unregulated urban expansion, and loss of biodiversity due to the replacement of native forest with monocultures of foreign tree species. From a social perspective, the plan referred to the locality's many remote areas, the seasonality of employment, the limited employment options, the insufficient commercialization of rural products, and the lack of diversity of economic activities as limits to development.



**FIGURE 1** Study area, with location and country of origin of interviewed migrants. (Map by Felipe Aros)



## Methodology

During February 2015 and August 2016, semistructured interviews were conducted with 18 amenity migrants and 3 key informants (staff of local government rural development programs). Participant observation of local and community initiatives also took place at agroecological fairs, traditional fairs, local summer markets, and *trafkintuwe*, a Mapuche rite where goods and knowledge are exchanged between members of different communities.

Amenity migrants were selected for interviews through snowball sampling (in which interview participants suggest additional contacts), until the total of 18, considered the point of data saturation (Guest et al 2006), was reached. Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of the interviewees.

Interviews with lifestyle migrants explored 3 main themes: (1) sociocultural (including migratory history and

motivation, agroecological practices, and experiences of relating to the surroundings and local culture), (2) economic (including opinions on local economic development and expectations for their practices), and (3) environmental (including their views on environmental protection, identification of potential environmental threats, long-term vision for the area, and the sustainability of their practices). The interview script was complemented by open-ended questions that arose during the interviews. The interviews were taped, transcribed, coded, and subjected to content analysis, in which key words, themes, sentences, and interpretations were gathered from the transcripts (Gomez and Jones 2010). Atlas.ti software was used to categorize migrants' practices according to the 3 dimensions described above.

Interviews with key informants from the community's rural development programs provided a contrast; as representatives of local government, they had their own views and expectations regarding amenity migrants'

**TABLE 1** Characteristics of migrants interviewed for the study.

Category	Subcategory	Value
Age	<30 years	3
	30–40 years	7
	41–60 years	6
	>60 years	2
Sex	Women	10
	Men	8
Country of origin	Canada	2
	Chile	10
	France	1
	Ireland	1
	Spain	1
	United States	3
Time lived in Pucón	1–5 years	6
	6–10 years	8
	>10 years	4

contributions to local development. Finally, a process of information triangulation was applied, which enabled the analysis, contrasting, and contextualization of the narratives.

## Results

### Migrants' contributions

Interviewees' responses to questions about their agroecological practices and the motivations for them were categorized according to the 3 dimensions of sustainable development to which they contribute: economic, sociocultural, and environmental. These responses are summarized in Table 2.

**Economic dimension:** Some migrants have sought to promote the local economy by, for example, supporting shorter food supply chains and initiatives fostering associativity (community organization to reduce costs, improve market access, and develop economies of scale) for responsible consumption and eating.

In this category with a total of 8 migrants, there were more foreigners than Chilean nationals. The foreigners possessed sufficient financial capital (usually accumulated during years of saving while working in the services sector, during their urban past, or from an inheritance) to start a tourism or gastronomic venture of medium to large size, hire staff, and connect to the local productive chain. The ventures were administered in keeping with the ideals of sustainability and respect for the environment; low-

impact activities predominated and took place in conjunction with environmental-education and responsible-consumption activities. The Chilean nationals belonging to this group were financially well off but did not have the means for large undertakings; therefore they developed other practices that allowed them to form production chains through the promotion of associativity.

One foreign migrant, a French chef, had lived in Pucón for 10 years and owned an “ecological park” consisting of hot springs and a first-class restaurant offering a fusion cuisine mixing local and Mapuche ingredients with international recipes. He said his motivations included creating local jobs and fostering local development by reviving local culture and using it to strengthen Pucón's visibility as an international travel destination. However, achieving these goals has not been easy:

*We have created jobs for about 35 people in the high season and 15 in the low season, all of them from the surrounding area. ... We buy from local small-scale producers, but it's difficult since people do not always have the legal formalities needed to produce and sell; they produce and go to sell in Pucón [the urban center where they sell products informally on the street], so they are not always able to guarantee the volumes we need. I tell those people to think big and to formalize their activities. ... We've helped one of them, who supplies us consistently, he had a strong will and he did it, but it's difficult.*

This experience exemplifies one of the main challenges encountered by migrants who undertake such practices, largely related to the low capacity of rural areas to deal with seasonality: how can they generate constant income throughout the year and consistently meet quality and quantity requirements, in this case, for produce for a restaurant?

In another effort to promote associativity, a Chilean (who moved to Pucón from the city of Santiago 7 years ago) organized a responsible-consumption cooperative, made up primarily of families, which helped finance an organic farmer's crop for their own consumption. This has become a way to strengthen links between consumers and small agroecological producers.

*A friend and I started ... I don't remember why, but we knew a producer and he proposed that we help him finance a crop and he would sell us his production. ... We found a group of people, we told them that we would divide some baskets and we said we had to pay a certain amount in advance, we collected this and gave it to the man and he grew the crop, we knew his productive process, it was organic. ... It was important for us to feel that, on the one hand, we were eating healthy and on the other, that we were working with the community.*

Another participant in the responsible-consumption cooperative (a woman from Santiago who had been living in Pucón for 5 years) commented on how they have formally become an officially recognized community organization. She saw this step as an important accomplishment in her migratory experience, which

**TABLE 2** Lifestyle migrants' agroecological practices and their motivations.

Dimension (goal)	Motivations	Practices	Migrants' countries of origin (no. of migrants)
<b>Economic (enhancing local development)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local producers</li> <li>• Create new jobs</li> <li>• Participate in local networks</li> <li>• Be a conscious entrepreneur</li> <li>• Help foster local development through associativity</li> <li>• Promote Pucón's natural and cultural assets to increase its visibility as an international travel destination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological park</li> <li>• Organic restaurants</li> <li>• Organic shops</li> <li>• Slow-food restaurants</li> <li>• Local food chains</li> <li>• Use of Mapuche products in fusion cuisine</li> <li>• Responsible-consumption cooperative)</li> </ul>	Canada (2) Chile (4) France (1) Spain (1)
<b>Sociocultural (preserving local identities and traditions)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen Mapuche culture</li> <li>• Learn how to work and live by Mapuche values</li> <li>• Strengthen mountain communities' identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapuche horticulture</li> <li>• Trafkintuwe: Seed "curators" (seed trade)</li> </ul>	Chile (4) Ireland (1) United States (1)
<b>Environmental (promoting conservation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote care for the environment and sustainability</li> <li>• Promote conservation</li> <li>• Develop local resilience</li> <li>• Promote environmental consciousness</li> <li>• Prevent the construction of hydroelectric projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local environmental organization</li> <li>• Native plant nurseries</li> </ul>	Chile (3) United States (1)

helped reaffirm the decision to live in Pucón. She emphasized the importance of connecting farmers with buyers in the area, the need to broaden the range of high-quality organic products, and the impact she believed that this promotion of productive links has had on the area:

*We gathered around the issue of local development, care for the territory and healthy eating ... and from then on, in 2010, the municipality recognized us as a community organization; in our statutes [needed for formal recognition as an organization by the municipality] is the development of practices to promote sustainable development through the commercialization of food. That was our focus; we created a job for producers who want to work.*

Interviewees stated that, for them, the development of this initiative was a positive aspect of their migratory experience, increasing their sense of belonging and contributing to the change in lifestyle that they had sought in moving to Pucón. These stories show, that in some cases, the ideals behind migration are fulfilled and that these sorts of initiatives are viable.

**Environmental dimension:** This group is made up of Chileans and foreigners (6 cases) who advocate for initiatives that seek to promote care for the environment and sustainability by networking within the local social framework and participating in grass-roots initiatives. They are motivated mainly by their interest in preserving the amenities linked to the natural surroundings—which

they consider important and which were decisive in their decision to migrate to Pucón—and by the value they found in local traditional practices. This group included migrants who led environmental and alternative-development efforts such as Pucón in Transition (a community organization that promotes sustainable initiatives), part of a "transition" movement that encourages socially sustainable economic growth (Martínez-Alier 2008) and seeks to instill a sustainable lifestyle and develop local resilience. They expressed interest in generating change through links with conventional channels such as the municipality but said that they did not consider this option the only way to achieve their goals, since they believed in community organization.

One interviewee, an elderly migrant from the rural zone of Olmué, Chile, had lived in Pucón for 10 years and was the owner of nurseries for native plants. She shared her views on the surge of environmental activism in the area:

*The threats that are appearing in the area—40 hydroelectric plants, 50-something fish hatcheries—have raised the issue of care for the environment. Local people here don't know their town, they don't value the surroundings; today it is starting to be valued, lamentably because it is at risk. ... I'd say in the last 3 years, because the mayor of Pucón is beginning to realize what natural resources mean.*



This comment reveals the importance of nature in decisions to migrate and how lifestyle migrants consider themselves different from local people in terms of environmental values. The interviewee stressed that this was a key factor in her decision to live in Pucón, a place she considered a “natural paradise.” She sought to preserve the area through conservationist practices, and was confident that it would continue to be protected in the future, given the existence of younger migrants with motivations similar to those that brought her to Pucón.

On the other hand, she saw a recent increase in appreciation by the local government, represented by the mayor, in the area’s natural resources. This change was due not only to the migrants’ arrival but also to the increase in industrial projects, such as hydropower plants, that threaten the area’s natural features, creating concern in the community.

**Sociocultural dimension:** A third group of migrants (4 cases) sought to preserve local culture and identity—primarily the Mapuche culture, but also that of mountain dwellers (*mawida* in native Mapudungun), as both imbue Pucón with a strong identity that they feel a part of and that they recognized as an influential factor in their decision to migrate. This was manifested in a wide range of local knowledge that they sought to preserve and highlight. For example, they have preserved practices associated with traditional Mapuche horticulture.

One amenity migrant, a woman from the United States who had lived in Pucón for less than 5 years, maintained an agroecological garden inspired and guided by elements of the Mapuche worldview.

*We have a beautiful garden that must be cared for, we’re learning to work the land, to care for it, to respect it, and we consider the Mapuche view, to pass that philosophy on to others. ... The Mapuche influence is everywhere; we must have the (Mapuche) worldview very clear; we have been guided by the farmers themselves, learning from them, doing things just as a Mapuche would.*

She clearly placed a high value on the area’s cultural heritage.

### Local perceptions of migrants’ contributions

Based on the previous discussion, the question of whether these migrants’ agroecological practices actually contribute to the development of Pucón may be raised. According to a local government interviewee from the municipal Unit for Rural Development, the practices linked to agroecological production are seen as positive, given that they are aligned with the Unit’s objective for the development of family agriculture in the area (including increasing the development of commercial opportunities and promoting ecological agriculture). The interviewee explained how Pucón’s small farmers perceived the change that the arrival of migrants meant from an economic perspective:

*A couple of years ago, some local farmers produced but did not sell. ... Nowadays they dare [to produce more], they have people who buy their products, foreigners value their work. We have noticed the difference, especially in tourism enterprises, because they have gained a lot, improving their quality of life.*

The Unit recognizes that the migrants, with their commitment to a healthy lifestyle and to producing and eating healthy food, are having a local influence and encouraging changes in the perceptions of local residents, who are increasingly finding value in their activities. However, they also consider this a minority lifestyle in the community.

The strategies adopted by the migrants to Pucón demonstrate their contribution to the creation of a new environmental rationale in the area that is aligned with the aims of the local government: this includes promoting clean agricultural practices, promote cultural integration, supporting local farmers in innovations to improve productivity, creating sustainability programs, increasing the visibility of the Mapuche culture, and improving rural–urban commerce. Nevertheless, this is a recent phenomenon, and as such the local government recognizes that it is restricted to a group of people with economic resources, so there is the risk of the process becoming elitist and leading to other problems, such as social segregation, or of certain aspects of local culture becoming commodified. There is also the risk that migrants seeking to boost economic development who encounter difficulties may abandon their endeavors, affecting the economic networks that have been established.

### Conclusions

The migratory experiences analyzed in this paper represent a range of agroecological practices, from the most well known, such as organic farming, to those linked to movements for local empowerment and environmental protection. This is a distinctive characteristic of the territorial scalability of agroecology in the global South, since in Europe and the United States agroecology has a more-or-less apolitical nature (Holt-Gimenez and Altieri 2016). Within the current debate on the implications of agroecology, the role of emerging social movements, such as that of these migrants in Chile, has gained strength, due to their motivating message and cognitive framework, which mobilizes local actors in rural societies to advance in the adoption of agroecology as an option for local sustainable development. The variety of practices identified coincides with the broad sense of the agroecology concept proposed by Wezel et al (2009). In this case it also made it possible to delve into the mechanisms used by migrants to reach their lifestyle goals, through practices marked by their agroecological ideals, a lesser-known side of the lifestyle migrant phenomenon.



The motivations mentioned most often by the migrants interviewed for this study were preserving the area's amenities and the Mapuche culture, community participation, creating jobs, becoming part of and activating the local economy, and generating change. These are linked mainly to the goal of becoming agents for territorial change, which they promote by encouraging citizen empowerment on environmental issues and contributing to a new appreciation of the area's traditional culture. The general population's new appreciation of these rural areas, which before may have been considered backwaters, has become one of the first observable positive impacts.

However, this process is not always easy; the interviewees spoke of the difficulties faced by migrants who want to contribute to local economic development. Interviewees mentioned difficulties such as the marked seasonality of tourism in the area, the limited infrastructure, government regulations, and the lack of professionalism of local producers. The migrants who had been in the area the longest spoke of the difficulties in becoming established and sustaining their practices, while newer migrants to the Pucón area did not report major problems in the development of their practices. This could be because they had not been in the area for as long a time and their initiatives did not require commercial

networks, but instead reflected more idealistic and altruistic interests, which are another important facet of this type of migration.

Rural mountain life in southern Chile, in areas like Pucón and its surroundings, is undergoing profound changes driven by the increasing heterogeneity of the actors who arrive in these areas, such as members of the nascent agroecological movement with its heavy ideological content and diverse interests. This contributes to the consolidation of a "green" imaginary and an environmental rational, in the terms proposed by Leff (2004), which is manifested in the different types of identified practices oriented toward sustainability and based on integrating local knowledge (*diálogo de saberes*; Leff 2004), which can be seen in the great esteem for Mapuche culture.

Finally, lifestyle migration has led to a change in the general view of rural areas as marginal spaces. The case of Pucón demonstrates that it is advisable to reflect on the proposal made by Kayser (1996 in Méndez 2013) regarding the significance and experimentation of rurality as a space for social innovation, constituted by changes in relations between the individual, nature, and society, centered in awareness of the imbalances caused by the dynamics of a capitalist market, affirming and practicing critical activism against this predominant socioeconomic tendency.

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