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Laís Pinto de Carvalho

Escuela de Psicología y Centro de Investigación de Vulnerabilidades e Informalidades Territoriales (CINVIT UV), Universidad de Valparaíso, Valparaíso, Chile, lais.pinto@uv.cl https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9326-515X

Héctor Berroeta

Escuela de Psicología y Centro de Investigación de Vulnerabilidades e Informalidades Territoriales (CINVIT UV), Universidad de Valparaíso, Valparaíso, Chile,

hector.berroeta@uv.cl

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5742-8193

Esteban Silva Peñaloza

Escuela de Psicología, Facultad de Educación y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Andres Bello, Viña del Mar, Chile, e.silvapealoza@uandresbello.edu https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0199-7968

Elisa Tironi Rodó

Centro UC de Desarrollo Local (CEDEL UC), Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Villarrica, Chile,

emtironi@uc.cl https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8735-8392



Interweaving Bodies, Homes, and Territories: Explorations on the Home Unmaking of Chaitén Women

Keywords: body-land, environmental psychology, home unmaking, reconstruction, resettlement.

Abstract:

This article explores the processes by which a home is unmade, problematizing how the neoliberal colonial-patriarchal order crosses bodies and territories, producing discomfort, privatizing rights and desires. This article presents the stories of women who were taken by surprise by the uninhabitability of their homes due to an erratic housing policy after the eruption of the Chaitén Two trajectories volcano. were explored through qualitative methodological strategies: those who returned to Chaitén, and those who settled in Puerto Montt. The results reveal the processes of undoing a home as a dynamic movement that includes diverse expressions, tensions, and traversals: for those who return, the aim is to restore a bond, based on stories of relief and freedom, which are tensioned when intertwined with the restrictions of uncertainty and housing precarity. Their return is a need anchored in the suffering of a home that could not be unmade. For those who do not return, the experience of tension is processed by resisting, from an insistence on complying with an imposed scheme, producing a permanence that configures a melancholic feeling. Alternatives for recuperation are discussed, taking as a horizon the socio-ecological interdependence and the place of the State in guaranteeing conditions of dignity.



Introduction

In May 2008, in Chilean Patagonia, Chaitén volcano unexpectedly started to erupt. More than four thousand people living in the town, located approximately 10 Km from the volcano, were evacuated. Río Blanco, the river surrounding Chaitén, overflowed as a result of the accumulation of volcanic ash, flooding and generating a new riverbed that currently runs through the city, dividing it into two sectors: north and south. In view of the unpredictable evolution of the threat, the government declared a catastrophe zone, ruling the uninhabitability of the entire urban Chaitén. A number of government decisions and community actions took place in the following years: the payment of individual vouchers for the inhabitants to find new housing solutions far from the area, a plan for the construction of a new Chaitén in a different location —Santa Bárbara—, protests, and collective actions for the reconquest of the town, the halt of the new Chaitén plan, and finally the habitability permit. In 2011, the city was refounded in the same location, habitability being authorized only for the northern portion of the division generated by the new course of Río Blanco. The plan for relocation in Santa Barbara is emblematic in Chile's recent history, since it involved the planning of a model city, designed proactively for risk management. One of the clues that explain its failure refers to the asynchrony between State, academia, and community (Rodríguez et al., 2016), demonstrating "how actors with temporalities and interests of diverse content have been unable to materialize a shared action" (p. 79). After this erratic process (Tapia, 2015), not all of the former inhabitants of Chaitén returned. A number of them resettled in other places, especially in the Los Lagos region. According to data from the latest survey, the population decreased by 29,39%, from 7,182 inhabitants in 2002, to 5,071 inhabitants in 2017 (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas [INE], 2017). According to Larenas et al. (2015), the main destinations of the displacements were Dalcahue, Quellón, Castro, Puerto Montt, Futaleufú and Palena. Of these destinations, Puerto Montt is the location most distant from Chaitén (approximately 240 Km) and with the largest population (over 245,000 inhabitants) (INE, 2017).

Through the Chaitén Law (Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales, 2009), the residents of Chaitén were able to sell their properties to the State, and by doing so to settle in a new place. Although some State strategies for the adaptation of displaced persons were implemented in the destinations chosen individually by each family, such as providing study scholarships and quotas for boys and girls, labor training and reconversion programs, Berroeta *et al.* (2017) identified that, when evaluating the levels of attachment to the social and spatial place, identity of place, sense of community and satisfaction with housing among the persons displaced from Chaitén that presently live in Alerce, Puerto Montt, their levels in the current neighborhood are significantly lower than those reported for Chaitén in the past. Compared with persons who lived other disasters in Chile, like Constitución, Dichato, and Tocopilla, the persons displaced from Chaitén are the only group that shows such low levels in the present.

In this complex context, and after an initial process of forced displacement due to the evacuation, we wonder: why did some persons decide to return to Chaitén, and others did not? Why have some persons



not been able to detach themselves from Chaitén and others have? How have those who did not return been able to detach themselves? How do the processes of subjective disengagement occur in order to make a home in another dwelling, neighborhood, or town? What is it that unravels, allowing the rebuilding of a home in another location? How does knowing these processes of detachment allow us to understand the failures in recovery management from a subjective dimension?

To answer these questions, we shall address the notion of home. Its conceptualization, from social sciences, is diverse and has been developed from within multiple perspectives. According to Blunt and Dowling (2006), home is more than a place or a house, it is also an idea and a spatial imaginary that is constituted by feelings of belonging, desire and intimacy, as it can also be crossed by fear, violence, and alienation. The home is material and symbolic, shaped in a permanent process of creation and understanding of the forms of inhabiting and belonging, of practices of making and unmaking a home. It is, therefore, a "challenging and polysemic object of study... made up of a multiplicity of dimensions, which coexist in a simultaneous way and are appealing to many disciplines" (Besoain *et al.*, 2022, p. 1).

The field of studies on the home has recently been explored from the perspective of feminist studies, promoting a reinterpretation of the former traditions, problematizing and posing the gendered nature of spaces. According to Besoain *et al.*, feminist perspectives have allowed the "emergence of a more complex notion of home, which problematizes western domestic imaginaries and understands home as a place of intersecting spheres, challenging private-public binarisms" (Besoain *et al.*, 2021, p. 24). In this vein, Ossul-Vermehren (2018) suggests to expand the notion of home from feminist geography towards a political understanding of the resistance of daily life, arguing that both the materiality of the home as well as the construction of a life project are made possible from reproductive and community practices.

Recent studies (Baxter & Brickell, 2014; Bertolani & Boccagni, 2021; Byrne & Sassi, 2022; Cheshire et al., 2019; Lancione, 2017; Nowicki, 2018; Paul, 2022) have criticized the fixation on the understanding of home by prioritizing the studies around how a home is created. As expressed by Massey (1992), home is open, constructed out of movement. In this sense, we inscribe ourselves in the revindication of analyzing the home in the dynamism of its movements, which implies exploring not only the processes of making home, but also those of unmaking home (Baxter & Brickell, 2014). This discussion is associated to recent advances in environmental psychology around the concept of place attachment (Di Masso et al., 2019), understanding these socio-spatial links as a phenomenon that transits between fixation and flow, which opens new questions about how mobilities affect and reconfigure the meanings regarding space and, in this sense, how people respond to these dynamics to construct, maintain, and adapt their identities.

Considering the above, the present article explores the processes of home unmaking, considering the contributions constructed by feminist geography (Baxter & Brickell, 2014), and environmental psychology around the notion of place attachment (Di Masso *et al.*, 2019). These contributions operate as relevant background facilitating a socio-spatial perspective situated in complex contexts such as relocation.



In doing so, we reflected on the case of the eruption of the Chaitén volcano, located in Chilean Patagonia, and the diverse life stories of people who were taken by surprise by the expulsion from their homes as they were classified as uninhabitable by the intervention processes of an erratic housing policy that lasted over ten years after its occurrence. Specifically, we worked with women who were living in Chaitén when the volcano erupted and who, after the eruption, followed two trajectories: some of them returning to Chaitén; the others, settling in Alerce, Puerto Montt. Based on these trajectories, we explored the ways of unmaking home of these women, and the role of gender in these processes.

How to Unmake a Home?

To answer this question, it is relevant first to understand what we mean by home. We will conceptualize the term home as a field in permanent dispute (Besoain *et al.*, 2021; Massey, 1992). In this sense, the ways in which people configure relations with their homes harbor a plurality of meanings associated to the person-environment relationship. The above comprises values and interpretations produced, negotiated, reconstructed, and assembled by individuals as well as communities, in a movement that invariably involves relations of power, conflicts, and political significations (Manzo *et al.*, 2021; Pinto de Carvalho & Cornejo, 2018).

Home is constructed out of movement, being constantly created and recreated based on daily experiences and practices (Massey, 1992). This understanding, which prioritizes movement, implies a significant theoretical advance in the field of environmental psychology, since it supposes a link between the socio-spatial bonds and the mobility practices. This would imply that mobility does not deny the importance of attachment to a place, nor necessarily generates the rupture of the link, but that it can generate configurations. Di Masso *et al.* (2019) argue that this reconfiguring is based on an interrelation, through a transit from fixation to fluidity. This dynamic understanding has significant practical implications, especially in a context of growing migratory processes and displacements. Understanding the attachment to a place as a flexible bond that can adapt opens up multiple questions about the ways in which it reconfigures itself and how movement can be oriented to the welfare of the communities in the face of changes.

In this sense, home unmaking is defined as the process in which "the material and/or imaginative components of the home are involuntarily or deliberately, temporarily or permanently dissolved, damaged, or even destroyed" (Baxter & Brickell, 2014, p. 134). A home is unmade not only in the situations of domiciles² (Porteous & Smith, 2001), wars, disasters, and climatic crises where the destruction or physical threat to the home is evident, but it is also a symbolic and subjective process, which is present in the biographic trajectories of all the stories with home, in a continuous and permanent state of making, unmaking, and remaking (Lancione, 2017).

Porteous & Smith propose the neologism *domicide*. It is defined as "the deliberate destruction of the home by human agency in pursuit of specified goals (for instance, public interests), which causes suffering to the victims" (Porteous & Smith, 2001, p. 12).



DISASTERS: THE REBUILD VERSUS RECOVER DICHOTOMY

One of the processes that generates profound changes in socio-spatial bonds and results in the unmaking of homes is disaster (Berroeta *et al.*, 2021). The aftermath of the latest disasters occurred in Chile has brought to the forefront the problematization of the inadequacy of positivistic and technocratic approaches (Berroeta *et al.*, 2017; Sandoval *et al.*, 2015; Tapia, 2015) based mainly on strategies of construction and self-construction of housing in the same place of origin, and of individual subsidies for the purchase of a new home. These are based on reactive solutions that prioritize rebuilding infrastructures on the basis of individual strategies, and invisibilizing the need to recover the bonds at a collective level with the territory.

Within this framework, and following the criticism made by Fernández *et al.* (2020), the crisis generated by disasters is overlapped by extractivist territorial configurations that create precarious living conditions, exposing the population to further risks and infringement of rights, deepening the inequalities inherent to Latin American reality and its anthropocentric, patriarchal, colonial, and racist way of life (Lander, 2019).

From a critique of these approaches, we emphasize the processes of recovery led by the affected communities to ensure the reproduction of life, from a critical and reflexive p erspective t hat seeks t o problematize the strategies centered on capitalizing on the crisis economically. In this sense, and in concurrence with feminist economics (Pérez-Orozco, 2012), exploring the person-environment relation in the context of the recuperation post-disaster should place at the center the debate on care, an aspect generally invisibilized, seeking to understand the initiatives and reaccommodations emerging from the crisis, and the role of collectivities to think and configure the territories (Fernández *et al.*, 2020).

Based on the above, recovery implies networked articulation in a territorial-community key, which the processes with an emphasis on reconstruction often do not prioritize. Exploring the complexity of the meanings and practices with which a home is inhabited —including the processes of home unmaking—intends to make visible symbolic and material dimensions that, when neglected, can lead to failures in housing policies, indicating the presence of discomforts and contradictions such as, the revindication and the return to inhabit a locality at risk (Pinto de Carvalho & Cornejo, 2018).

Neocolonial Order, Colonialism, and Patriarchy in Habitation

The dominant paradigm that prioritizes rebuilding over recovering is framed under a particular political order. In the Chilean context, this order is neoliberal, patriarchal, and colonial.

Segato (2016) poses that the modern patriarchal colonial order is characterized by a privatization of domestic space and its otherization and marginalization, which imply various violences for women. Along with this, neoliberal policies also have a direct impact on the construction of affects, especially in the production



of psychic suffering (Safatle & Dunker, 2020). Araujo (2022) argues that, as a consequence of the social and economic model inspired on the premises of neoliberalism present in Chilean society, social bonds are traversed by a circuit of detachment and disengagement, generating a loosening of social bonds and common life. In that direction, Segato (2016) explains that:

The sadness that pervades Chilean society is frequently associated by the same people to the effect of precariousness that this model imprints on life, in a sense of the term precariousness that detaches it from the idea of poverty or deprivation, to signify with precision the precariousness in associated life, the destruction of solidity and stability in relationships that take root, localize, and sediment affections and daily life. The experience of exposure and lack of protection thus takes hold on a nation (Segato, 2016, p. 100).

This detachment or precariousness of relational life makes visible the role of emotions from their political and cultural statute (Pérez & Gregorio, 2020). It is a complex scenario that favors certain values and norms that are adequate for economic development (Larraín, 2001), invisibilizing the importance of the profound relationship of emotions with the home and, at the same time, with the body, in terms of spaces that shelter, embody, and give agency to feelings of belonging and resistance.

To understand the relation between feelings of belonging and body, the proposal from feminist urbanism is to place the patriarchal relations in the center of the analysis, understanding cities as an enclave of the colonial-patriarchal order, especially over the bodies of women, girls, and adolescents, visibilizing it from the productive, disciplining, individualistic and homogenizing uses prioritized by the design of cities. (Collectiu Punt 6, 2019; Fenster, 2005). This normative design of androcentric configuration prioritizes certain experiences over others, conceiving the city for a population understood as universal —male, white, heteronormed, adult—invisibilizing the needs of underprivileged subjects and, therefore, reducing the experience of the female bodies to insecurity, fear and dread.

This political order that builds affections, practices, and ways of inhabiting may also affect the processes of unmaking home, favoring a movement that, by not embracing the symbolic-material complexity, can be retained, producing experiences of discomfort. Following the trail of research work on Chilean housing policy and its processes of neoliberal subjectivation, Ducci (1997) already observed how the implementation of housing programs in Chile has had severe social consequences, such as the lack of a sense of belonging, the generation of processes of distrust and lack of solidarity. Also, Besoain & Cornejo (2015), identify that the Chilean housing policy is configured based on logics of privatization of the ways of life and desire, in which the prioritization of individual capacities invisibilizes the social and political space, resulting in the production of a sacrificial subjectivity that gives value to privatized consumption, thereby sustaining processes of social fragmentation. In the same direction, Hidalgo and Janoschka (2014) who, when reflecting on the neoliberal city, identify urban and territorial dynamics crossed by a commodified and consumerist system that promotes privatization, gentrification, and the socio-territorial segregation of space.



THE RESISTANCE OF THE BODY-TERRITORY

We understand that inhabiting a home is made possible insofar as there is a body that inhabits and a subject that inhabits it. The body and the subjective constitution of the subject from an intersubjective and relational paradigm allow us to understand the construction of the experience of the body from, with, and through the relationships it sustains. According to Jaimsky (2014), the body is originally relational, that is to say, the body is constructed and constituted subjectively from an interplay of complementary factors in constant interaction. This "relational" dimension supposes a relational space sustained by a network of interactions, of physical and affective care, a "living with" that implies an active participation in the world of intersubjectivity (Jaimsky, 2014).

This allows us to understand the body as a stage that is both symbolic as well as real of the sediments and markings of the movements and relational exchanges established between the subject and the world it inhabits. According to Dodds (2011), the relational framework as a constitutive dimension of the body, should be understood from a much more primary didactic dimension: that which exists between the human being and (mother) Earth. The author argues that, apart from recognizing the inextricable human interdependency with the planet's ecologic network, there is a need to expand the understanding of the "relational" and of the subjective conformation, towards an inclusion of the framework of bonds and attachments established with the non-human beings and communities inhabiting this Earth, like animals, territories, rivers, mountains, among others (Dodds, 2011).

This approach leads us to question the narrow and disputed relation between home and family (Besoain *et al.*, 2021), frequently dissociated with the abovementioned ecological web. In Chile, the family is based mainly on the conjugal notion as normative model that regulates relations considered "normal and natural." Based on the matrimonial system, blood ties, and gender roles, this model has implications in Chilean social life, among them in the way public policies understand what constitutes a home (Pinto de Carvalho *et al.*, 2023): presence of a head of household, cohabitation of couples with children, marriage, and common housing (Olavarría, 2014). This implies a dangerous scenario that implicitly determines an adequate form of living that can marginalize and threaten the diversity of forms of making home, family, and their affective bonds (Gorman-Murray *et al.*, 2014).

From the previously mentioned idea of family, it becomes relevant to reflect on the constitution of a family, and how the idea of family in line with ecofeminism and co-responsibility is expanded from assumptions that recognize that life in nature, which includes human and son-human beings, is sustained by cooperation, mutual care, and love (Mies & Shiva, 2014). From an inter-relational paradigm, or as Escobar (2014) calls it, from a relational ontology, the territory emerges necessarily from the relational links between the human and non-human world —nature, animals, mountains, rivers—. Therefore, an articulation might be established with the notion of body-territory proposed by Latin American feminist geography (Haesbaert, 2020), from the idea of territorialized body. This notion invites us to understand bodies in relation to living



and historical territories, inhabited by wounds, memories, desires and, at the same time, it invites us to look at the territories as social bodies that are integrated into the web of life (Cruz Hernández, 2016).

This proposal, developed mainly from the feminist and indigenous movements in Latin America, poses the notion of body as a "first territory" through which we can recognize and feel the territories we inhabit (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017). In this way, the emotions incarnated in the territories materialize directly in the body and, specifically, in the bodies of women. This is the case with sadness, humiliation, or the anguish of violence, exploitation, and loss of autonomy, understanding "the body as a political territory to be defended" (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017, p. 20).

In this sense, the processes of unmaking home as relational movements of subjective detachment are understood from a perspective of subjectivity expanded towards a socio-ecological interdependence that is primary, and constitutive of being-with: inhabiting and being inhabited by the territory. Thus, relational movements of detachment and unmaking point not only to processes of dis-inhabiting a given territory/home, but also to how those bodies being-with-territory are dis-inhabited. This notion of territorialized body, linked to an idea of construction and sedimentation of affections, characteristic of the disengagement and precariousness of bonds of neoliberal policy (Safatle & Dunker, 2020), leads us to question ourselves about how these bodies transit, resist, and at the same time sediment these detachments.

Considering the preceding description, the following is a presentation of the methodological strategies and main results obtained from the exploration of the processes of home unmaking of the Chaitén women and their diverse life stories that were surprised by the eviction from their homes, classified as uninhabitable by erratic intervention processes and housing policies, as a result of a volcanic eruption and that have been in place for more than ten years after its occurrence.



Methodology

A qualitative research was carried out, using the biographic method, with women who had returned to live in Chaitén, and with women that were displaced and presently live in Alerce, Puerto Montt. The work was done on the basis of a qualitative methodology, considering it as a situated activity consisting in a series of interpretative practices that "make the world visible and transform it" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 48), carrying out a methodological design research work of an exploratory and comprehensive logic. The work was done based on the biographic method (Bertaux, 2010) understanding that human practices are pinned to a social and historical context of subjects that are at the same time product, actor, and producer of his/her own historical experience (De Gaulejac, 1999).

DATA PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Life stories were used as technique for the production of data (Bertaux, 2010). With the aim of incorporating reflexivity in the research process, recording devices were implemented (Cornejo *et al.*, 2017), in particular notes by the transcriber, inter-analysis meetings and reflection notebooks kept by the researcher.

PARTICIPANTS

We worked with a total of 19 women participants: seven current inhabitants of South Chaitén and 10 current inhabitants of Alerce, Puerto Montt. All of them had lived in Chaitén before the eruption. An intentioned sampling was done based on key informers and snowball strategy (Patton, 2002).

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis strategies sought to identify the plurality of experiences, their breakdowns, divergencies, and resistances through a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These strategies are based on analytic intentionality (Cornejo *et al.*, 2017), situating them during the whole analytic process from a position of commitment with reflexivity and polyphonic listening.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To safeguard the voluntary nature of participation, informed consent documents were used. The use of the data was consented to by the participants and approved by the Ethics Committee of Universidad de Valparaíso. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants.



Results

The experiences narrated by the women participants give an account of a diversity of expressions, tensions, and crossings that constitute the process of unmaking home. In this article we organize these stories under three subjects:

- 1. Expressions of the body when unmaking a home. Here we can visualize the presence of the body as carnal, emotional, and symptomatic space of habitation, which reproduces and actualizes the detachments with the territory.
- 2. Tensions that hamper home unmaking. Here we can identify mainly two dimensions: (a) Rupture of the ecological relational network, in which women describe the fundamental role of dynamic and always alive interrelations between the territory and its human and non-human inhabitants; (b) Urban fear, in which it is possible to visualize how fear to the city reveals the women's own experiences and the absence of key elements for their sense of belonging.
- 3. Crossings of the political in the body-territory. Here we can identify the implicit and/or explicit presence of the neoliberal colonial-patriarchal order and its institutions in narratives of power, extraction, loss, and normativity.

EXPRESSIONS OF THE BODY WHEN UNMAKING A HOME

The narratives make visible the presence of the body as a first affective, sensitive, and incarnate territory, which inhabits and is inhabited in a particular way by the territory. A territorialized body in which the lived and daily bodily senses and experiences gain fundamental relevance when narrating the multiple links between the person, his/her home, and the territory.

Understanding the body as a space that sustains and is sustained by relational exchanges established between the subject who inhabits, the movements —both emotional as well as physical— generated by the eruption of the volcano, put in tension the bodies in relation, bringing with them symptoms. Hence, the body and its symptoms appear as testimonies of a disarticulation, presenting different forms in the expression of these movements, that is, identifying certain differences in symptoms and feelings according to those people who decide to return to southern Chaitén and those living in Alerce.

It is observed that the corporal and symptomatic process of the movement of unmaking home is made explicit in those women who return to inhabit South Chaitén, configuring a form of suffering that serves as the basis for articulating the reasons behind the return:



I came back here because that year the school opened. And I was happy, I mean, I had panic attacks all the time in Achao. I was not well (Fernanda, 31, Chaitén sur).

Because he was a peasant, and here, no, no, he was like a caged lion, it was useless, and we were already somewhat weak (Enriqueta, 58, Alerce).

Because we have always been from the countryside and a small town, then too many vehicles, too many dogs, too much noise, too much everything, and I am so sensitive, I hear every noise at night. Then all of that bothered me, and I wasn't sleeping well and was feeling badly, and I cried frequently (Rosa, 57, South Chaitén).

The relational and emotional movements that imply the disarticulation of home seem to be a common element, bringing with it a variety of effects and sentiments, however, there seem to be differences in how — and, above all, where— they are channeled. In the stories of the women residents of Alerce, symptomatic and corporal expressions of the home unmaking are evident, while notions of "chaos", "suffocation", "uprooting" start to appear; however, the process of elaboration seems to be different: the decision is to stay, to sustain and not to return, although from a melancholic sentiment:

My husband's health worsened, I had the impression he took to drinking, as plain as that, I mean he didn't care about a thing, days went by, it was chaos during that time... When I first came here, I'll be honest, I couldn't be in Alerce, I suffocated, you know, it was a thing of crying and crying and I had to go to Puerto Montt, sit by the sea to be free, because I felt suffocated. This thing felt like somebody had poured a layer of cement over my body (Liset, 50, Alerce).

When I arrived here, I was very depressed because I didn't, I never had the courage to return to Chaitén, and maybe it would've done me good, I don't know, too late now, but I arrived here very depressed, very down (Amanda, 24, Alerce).

The expression of the body is also present through the movement —like walking— that allows them to inhabit (themselves) and embody (themselves) in the territory/home:

And here I like everything, I mean everything, nature... you walk, and you have mountains, you have beach, you walk and you have river (Alejandra, 45, South Chaitén).

We observe that the demands of home unmaking also intervene this territorial and corporealized relation. Walking, the distances, the issue of "paying", and the relation with the territory from the body change:

That was hard for me because everything was, it wasn't nearby, we were used over there to just go walking there, going to see the doctor, going to buy everything (María, 70, Alerce).

You have to pay for everything, you want to go to the river, you want to go to the beach, all things you have to pay. Not over there, there we had the river shore behind our house, it took us five or ten minutes, we went to the beach in ten minutes, and we were on foot. We wanted to go to the mountains to see the lagoons that were there, I did it on foot. Not over here. Here you have to pay for all, all, all (Rosario, 37, Alerce).



TENSIONS THAT HAMPER HOME UNMAKING

Rupture of the Ecological Relational Network

The participants narrate how the non-human world is present under many forms in the processes of unmaking home. They appear as alive and active agents in the relational, personal, family, and social interweavings between the persons inhabitants and the place:

Because my son thought kept thinking about his dog and his cat and in all his drawings: volcano, lava, the beach, and his animals on the beach (Fernanda, 31, Chaitén sur).

Well, over there we lived around volcanos, there was the Corcovado, I grew up there, all my life there. My grandparents had an estate with animals, and I grew up, I mean, we all grew up, the whole family over there (Margarita, 62, Alerce).

In particular, two non-human agents are recurrent in the narratives of inhabiting, as an inherent part of the socio- ecological interweaving: the water narrated as river, the sea, and the volcano.

The river appears as an entity that comes to make visible —from the real transformation of the geography of the territory—, a psychological and symbolical geography of disarticulation and division. The latter implies a materialization of the territory both geographical spatial and psychosocial. On the other hand, the sea appears as an entity that "gives life" and reminds us of home:

I would go down to Puerto Montt's center, I would go to the square and I would rush to the waterfront because it was like I needed to see the sea, I don't know why, it's because over there we had the sea right in front of us, and it was as if it gave us life, I don't know (Liset, 50, Alerce).

I can manage, but I'd give my life to be back in Chaitén. I go to the countryside to a place that is 25 Kilometers away from Chaitén, you go by vehicle right to the beach. I like to go there because of the tranquility and to be watching the sea. That is what I miss the most (María, 70, Alerce).

The vegetation over here has no mountains, there is nothing. Over there we were used to see the sea, the mountains, the trees, all those things and here we arrived and it's like we were shuffled inside a shack, and I felt suffocated (Liset, 50, Alerce).

The volcano appears as an omnipresent presence in the life narratives of the women, like a historical witness —which is to be respected— of personal, family, and community stories:

We could not live fearing all things, because we need to learn to share, just as with the volcano, one has respect for it (Alicia, 56, South Chaitén).

The rupture of the relational network is also expressed through nostalgic and melancholic narratives associated with the absence of a non-human community that was part of the daily life and chores:



Here it is all cement, it's not the same, and the things we lost, I left my daughter buried there. I get nostalgic all of a sudden because over there I raised my chicks, my piglets, I had the beach right next to me and all those things, but well, that's the way life turned out, and we have to keep moving on (Enriqueta, 58, Alerce).

Narratives of Urban Fear

On repeated occasions it is observed that fear appears associated with inhabiting the city, or rather, by not inhabiting Chaitén. This is reaffirmed inasmuch as these narratives of urban fear only appear in the interviews with inhabitants of Alerce. Fear prevails in the streets and in the city, perceived as spaces that promote crime, insecurity, and unprotectedness:

One felt afraid of everything. "The city is dangerous," "be careful, there are criminals around," "be careful, somebody may follow you on your way to school." Then you, like, come pick me up and drop me off, a terrible thing (Amanda, 24, Alerce).

It is possible to see how the experiences of trust/mistrust in a particular space are intertwined with the movements and dynamisms inherent to inhabiting. Mistrust and insecurity prevail and mark a presence in those inhabitants who seek to unmake a home to inhabit the city, referring to the fact that:

Back there in Chaitén everything is left open, who is going to come in and steal, nobody, and not over here, and here the Carabineros said what's going on with the people from Chaitén, why are they so trusting (Henriqueta, 58, Alerce).

There are also movements around the public/private realm associated to that same insecurity and loss of confidence in the habitation:

"For me it was a loss of my personal space, of my privacy, because when I arrived here everything was: no, do not go downtown; no, you are not going to sneak out; no, don't answer the phone, I'll take it away; because there was overprotection for fear of the unknown (Amanda, 24, Alerce).

Back there you could leave the house open, you left your house entrusted to a neighbor. Neighbor, I'll be away for so many days, can you come and water my plants? The neighbor went and watered them and when you came back the house was the same. Then those were things, habits that later you have to leave behind (María, 70, Alerce).

CROSSINGS OF THE POLITICAL IN THE BODY-TERRITORY

The women participants refer narratives of power, extraction, loss, and normativity of a political order that is personified in diverse ways:

We've had, actually, me, many headaches about that, the government plays dumb. (Fernanda, 31, Chaitén sur).



It is possible to distinguish narratives associated with a political crossing that dismantles the habitat in a material and symbolic dispossession:

They started to tear down houses with machinery, good houses, that was the saddest thing. For them to come and say: hey you, out, It was just like with a pack of animals (Elena, 56, Chaitén sur).

The role of the political, personified in individuals and their positions in the State, operates socially and symbolically determining a form of inhabiting and of home unmaking. Consequently, risk is a factor defined unilaterally and in an incomplete way by the authorities, impacting the ways of living and everyday practices of Chaitén women:

Nowadays we are living, as they say, in uncertainty in the place where I live, because for the authorities it is not inhabitable because there is still like some degree of risk (Adriana, 40, Chaitén sur).

Then when they say we are under risk, in danger, and when they speak about habitability, I've always said to them: people give the habitability, each one sees how to inhabit their space, how to fix it, how to improve it, and we have improved the southern sector (Fernanda, 31, Chaitén sur).

This political determination of a form of home unmaking is also visible in the patriarchal key, affecting and reproducing gender roles these women identify in the form of economic violence:

The government did not realize it and anyway assigned everything in the name of the spouse; the holder was the man. Then what happened? The guys came to get the bonus and took the money: Mine drank the money, with luck I managed to save some for rent and not a single peso. Where was I to work if there were no jobs, then it was very difficult. I always said, why didn't they put the money in the woman's name? (Liset, 50, Alerce).

Discussion

The experience of these women from Chaitén allows us to think about the process of unmaking home as a dynamic movement that encompasses diverse expressions, tensions, and crossings. In their stories, some forms of processing become visible, of which two stand out in particular: Firstly, for those who return to South Chaitén, there is a necessary search for the restitution of a link, based on stories of relief, happiness, and freedom to return; however, this need for restitution is tensioned when intertwined with the restrictions experienced due to housing uncertainty and the precariousness of basic services.

The return is a need described and anchored in the suffering of a home that could not be undone; and secondly, for those who did not return to Chaitén, the experience seems to be processed by resisting it, from an insistence on complying with an imposed normative plan, producing a sustenance of the permanence in Alerce, and configuring from there a melancholic sentiment.



Morales Martínez *et al.* (2017) suggest that melancholic sentiments are associated to a sense of unlocatable loss, which weakens interpersonal bonds. Melancholic feelings allude to loss, but not necessarily of the object itself, but of the link established between the subject/body and that which is lost. Thus, understanding bodies and subjects as relational constructions, the absence —and the unmaking— of the beloved home, is not only narrated as a loss of that, but also as a loss of a part of oneself that was in turn unmade. These voids and feelings cross the bodies of the Chaitén women, leaving symptoms: pains, aches, anxieties and anguish, as testimonial marks of the lack of a caring and constituting bond.

These melancholic sentiments are also described by Besoain & Cornejo (2015) as a withdrawal and a retreat to the private home, produced as a result of housing policies that prioritize delivering houses, forgetting about the subject who inhabits them, and the desires that inhabit these subjects. These are management strategies that express and produce tensions. Neoliberalism, colonialism, and patriarchy are fundamental actors in the production of these tensions, visible as suffering, social weakening, and sadness (Araujo, 2022; Safatle & Dunker, 2020; Segato, 2016).

Sentiments are narrated in many of the cases as emotions that are experimented when transiting through certain spaces, making visible the diverse social categories that cross us and intersect with each other. This makes visible that relationships with space are not natural, neutral, or equal for all people, but are conditioned by the uses, practices, and emotions experienced there (Pérez & Gregorio, 2020). Therefore, belonging, or feeling out of place, are sentiments that are constructed based on the uses of spaces that allow certain bodies to take ownership, feel confidence and intimacy, and others do not, feeling fear, dread, and estrangement.

One of the main sources of discomfort present in the stories of these women from Chaitén is related to the experience of the city as a threatening space. This implies the absence of Chaitén together with the various beings that make up this ecological network (sea, river, volcano, animals, mountains, etc.), which for Escobar (2014) composes an absence of a feeling-thinking with the land. Traditionally, these non-human beings that constitute the network are understood as beings that are subjugated by the human species, a conception that has implied the critical absence of the role of these beings in the relational matrix human beings construct with a place in particular.

These feelings-thoughts are illuminated when we are able to visibilize the relational dimension of these bodies-territories. Which invites us to reflect: what happens when this relation is intervened, or deviated? How does the body respond to those deviations? This constitutive relational interconnection between body and territory allows us to understand the symptoms in territorial key and how these appear (and disappear) in the bodies in various forms of anguish, pain, affection, affective states, etc. They are signals or marks of the fluctuations, interventions, and deregulations of the framework of bonds and relations, or even territorial marks of inhabiting (and/or de-inhabiting) of the subject on the Earth/world (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017; Haesbaert, 2020).



According to the invitation by Di Masso *et al.* (2019) to think about place attachment as a flexible bond that can be adapted, it becomes necessary to question the modes in which this is reconfigured and how the movement can be oriented to the welfare of the communities in the face of changes. Based on this research work, we can attest that, at the subjective level, detachment from a home can be a process that is not completely closed, and that generates movements, displacements, and returns. This process of unmaking seems to transit between fluidity, with the possibility of elaboration and creation of a new home, and rigidity with which diverse expressions, tensions, and traversals hinder the possibility of elaboration and detachment. The experience of these women from Chaitén allows us to understand that achieving the unmaking of a home seems to imply settling in a space where conditions of dignity exist, that feels welcoming, and where feelings of belonging and homeliness are established. In this case, these reconfigurations are anchored and built especially from networks and the reciprocity of the relationship with human beings, non-humans, and nature: they are webs of care that weave a link between the body, home, and the territory.

Conclusions

In this article we present an investigation that sought to explore those processes by which a home is unmade, considering the contributions constructed by feminist geography (Baxter & Brickell, 2014) and the developments of environmental psychology around the concept of place attachment (Di Masso et al., 2019). In doing so, we worked with women that experimented the eruption of Chaitén volcano and who made two trajectories: some, returning to Chaitén; others, settling in Puerto Montt. These trajectories have allowed us to understand the processes of unmaking home as a relational movement between body and territory. This relational movement implies tensions, which can be managed in different ways. One of the ways we have observed in this case is to show symptoms, understood as testimonies of this relational movement. These symptoms respond to an individualization of discomfort, to a testimony of the separation and fragmentation of the bond between persons and territories and to the diverse components that cross this relation. This retained way of experimenting unmaking home implied a diversity of discomforts for the people of Chaitén, many of which are still present, already more than ten years after the volcanic eruption. This tells about how the approach of the neoliberal patriarchal-colonial development model, centered around the delivery of housing solutions, relegates to the background the relational dynamics that construct habitability and that, therefore, does not consider the ways in which to unmake a home.

We pose that an alternative way of managing this relational movement implied in unmaking home is through care and reciprocity, in which, although tension and suffering related to loss and unmaking may exist, an affective and bonding support of containment and care may be enabled by and from a web involving persons, nature, and non-human beings: a web that shelters us and includes all beings.



This approach may seem particularly challenging under the logics of patriarchal-colonial liberalism, in which domination in the anthropocentric key commoditizes the relations with other beings. In this sense, the discomfort experienced in the case of Chaitén relates directly to a transgression that is not referred to the volcano itself, but to experiencing a development model that dispossesses, dismantles, and restricts, managing emotions and bodies through properties.

It is well known that neoliberalism is ruled under a strong ideology of private property and accumulation, associating the production of subjectivity to achieving housing ownership (Donoso & Arrau, 2021; Rolnik, 2015). In this sense, it is not surprising that, when the focus is on the management of properties, without considering the relational aspect (established in the relation bodies-homes, territories), tensions and discomforts are produced. This leads to argue that unmaking a home is a movement that should not be reduced to the specific material loss, but which implies harboring the destruction of a series of significances and dimensions associated with the subjective, intersubjective, spatial, and non-human processes in the body-territory relation. In view of the above, resettlement or relocation policies must not neglect the emotions or the body and should facilitate the conditions for the tensions of unmaking home to be managed and are able to be reconfigured in an adequate place.

Thus we understand that the role of the State in these movements of bonds would be to facilitate the conditions for the communities to be agents of their own transformation, allowing the relational process to flow. This implies encompassing the need for care and reciprocity of this framework, that is, facilitating spaces and resources so that the communities are being taken care of and care themselves, also extending protection networks to non-human beings and ecosystems. In this sense, we consider that it is responsibility of the State to guarantee the conditions of dignity so that the community fabric may restore the broken bonds of homeness, in a horizon of socio-ecological interdependence. In line with the proposals of Segato (2016) and Escobar (2014), we defend that, in a context of precariousness of the relational life, the way is relational and with the Earth.



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