Musical Practices and the Invention of a Tradition: The Case of the *We Tripantü*, the Celebration of the Mapuche New Year

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Abstract: The Mapuche people is the largest indigenous group in Chile and also has a significant presence in some provinces in Argentina. This article primarily addresses the Chilean Mapuche. The *we tripantü* celebration is a festival held around the second half of June that commemorates the beginning of the Mapuche year. In comparison with other collective Mapuche cultural practices, the *we tripantü* celebration usually brings together a larger number of people, systematically incorporates non-Mapuche participants, and receives significantly more attention in the media. This article addresses features of this festival, the role played by its musical practices, and how some aspects of identity have been articulated in the development of the festival's activities. Furthermore, the article reviews how the *we tripantü* celebration was created in the 1980s by the ethnicization of the Christian celebration of St. John the Baptist despite the wide-spread belief that it corresponds to an ancestral indigenous gathering.

Keywords: Mapuche. Indigenous. Tradition. Ethnomusicology. Solstice.

Práticas musicais e a invenção de uma tradição: o caso do *we tripantü*, a celebração do Ano Novo Mapuche

Resumo: *Os mapuche correspondem ao grupo indígena mais numeroso do Chile, que também possui presença marcante em algumas províncias da Argentina. Este artigo refere-se principalmente aos mapuche no Chile. A celebração do we tripantü é uma festividade que acontece por volta da segunda quinzena de junho, quando se comemora o início do ano mapuche. Comparada a outras práticas coletivas desta cultura, a celebração do we tripantü costuma reunir um número maior de pessoas, incorpora sistematicamente participantes ao mapuche e recebe atenção significativa dos meios de comunicação. Este artigo aborda os elementos estruturais desta festividade, o papel que desempenham certas práticas musicais em seu desenvolvimento e a forma como certos elementos identitários são articulados na realização das atividades. Além disso, este artigo discute a criação da celebração do we tripantü na década de 1980, a partir da etnização da celebração cristã de São João Batista, contrapondo-se à arraigada crença de que esta festividade corresponde a uma cerimônia indígena de caráter ancestral.*

Palavras-chave: *Mapuche. Indígena. Tradição. Etnomusicologia. Solstício.*

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The Mapuche people is the largest indigenous group in Chile and the third largest in Latin America after the Aymara and Kechua (GREBE, 2010: 55). They also have a significant presence in some Argentinian provinces sharing their language and other important cultural aspects (BRIONES, 2007: 99-105. QUILAQUEO; FERNÁNDEZ, 2010: 9-10). To delimit my topic, this article primarily addresses the Chilean Mapuche. The *we tripantü* celebration is a festival held around the second half of June that commemorates the beginning of the Mapuche year. Regarded as the traditional way to hold the festival, it begins with a social gathering at sunset and finishes by noon the next day. In comparison to other Mapuche cultural practices such as the *ngillatun*, *machitun,* and *palin*, the celebration of the *we tripantü* usually brings together a greater number of people, systematically incorporates non-Mapuche participants, and receives significantly more attention in the media. In this article, I intend to discuss characteristics that compose the *we tripantü* celebration, the role played by certain musical practices, and how some aspects of identity have been articulated in the development of the festival's activities. Furthermore, as will be discussed, empirical evidence suggests that the festival corresponds to a tradition created in the 1980s, rather than a long-standing indigenous cultural gathering as is generally believed. Thus, I will address the widely held beliefs about the existence of an ancestral celebration of the *we tripantü*.

It is worth noting that the particularities of this festival are a topic of little discussion. The few scholarly sources I located, namely Bengoa (2012c: 208-211), Foerster (1993: 100-101), Marileo (2009: 1-4) and Titiev (1951: 122-124), provide no comprehensive description of the activities. Therefore, the detailed information I provide in this paper seeks to fill this lacuna. To contextualize and support the relevance of the findings, I will begin by explaining my fieldwork and how the data was gathered and analyzed.

Gathering Data about the *We Tripantü* Celebration

In June 2014, I attended eleven *we tripantü* celebrations held in different locations from Villa Alemana in the north to Labranza in the south (see Map 1). These events were organized by Mapuche communities and Mapuche and non-Mapuche organizations such as student associations, museums, libraries, and municipalities (see Table 1). I attended all the celebrations in the company of at least one of the following three Mapuche collaborators: Elisa Avendaño,[1] Gonzalo Huichalaf,[2] and Joel Maripil.[3] They are traditional authorities and Mapuche musical performers who provided oral-based knowledge about all aspects linked to the *we tripantü*

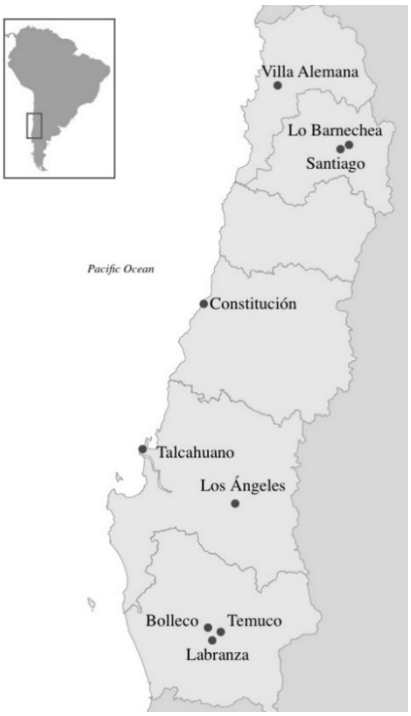
[1] Elisa Avendaño is a traditional singer or ülkantufe. She holds several traditional titles relating to Mapuche medicine and spirituality that allow her to conduct certain religious ceremonies. Avendaño has published two books on Mapuche culture, one focused on traditional music (AVENDAÑO et al., 2010) and the other on women's traditional dress (AVENDAÑO, 2013). She has recorded three music albums: *Kalfüray* Ñi *Lawen*, *Wenuntutu Aiñ Tañi Mapuche Kimvn* and *Wilipag*.

[2] Gonzalo Huichalaf is a traditional dancer or *choykefe*. He has been chosen by his community as a lead dancer to perform in the *ngillatun* held annually in his community and to be part of other traditional gatherings organized by other Mapuche communities. Huichalaf has been regularly involved in activities that pursue the dissemination of the Mapuche culture within urban contexts, such as *we tripantü* celebrations and dance performances based on Mapuche cultural elements. He was part of *I am Mapuche*, a dance drama written and directed by the New Zealander artist Lemi Ponifasio.

[3] Joel Maripil is a traditional singer or ülkantufe and a traditional entertainer or *ayekafe*. His community named him *ngenpin* and *werken*, traditional titles that allow him to conduct certain religious ceremonies. In 2004, he created the Children's Mapuche Orchestra of Tirúa, where he developed teaching and conducting activities until 2010. In 2009, he produced a music album called *Akun Budi* that comprises a compilation of traditional Mapuche songs performed by traditional Mapuche singers. He released two music albums, *Akun Awkin: La Llamada del Eco* in 2011, and *Choyün* Ülkantun*: Música Mapuche para la Infancia* in 2019. In 2020, he was awarded the Pulsar Prize by The Copyright Society of Chile (SCD) for his contributions in the diffusion of music of the indigenous peoples of Chile.

celebration[4] and introduced me to the organizers and several participants of the activities we attended. My collaborators, Avendaño, Huichalaf and Maripil, had been invited to the *we tripantü* celebrations to reinforce or lead the religious activities and to perform in the entertainment activities called *ayekan*. My involvement in the celebrations included being an active participant in the religious activities, which involves dancing, shouting, and playing Mapuche musical instruments along with other participants, as well as occasionally playing non-Mapuche music together with some of my collaborators.

Before attending the *we tripantü* celebrations, I researched information about the festival to compare and complement the data I was going to gather from the field. At that time, I was unable to find any formal publication about the celebration; but I did identify several electronic articles hosted on websites belonging to Mapuche organizations. Among them, I found to be particularly worth *Reflexión sobre: El We-Tripantu Ancestral y Contemporáneo* (Reflection about: The Ancestral and Contemporaneous *We-Tripantü*) by Armando Marileo Lefio (2009), mainly because it was well written and had been cited in several other electronic sources. As will be expanded, Marileo's article is a precise, oral-based account of the historical and social aspects of the *We-Tripantü* celebration and provides credibility to his ideas and assertions. I discussed the content of this article with my collaborators, who endorsed all of Marileo's views such as the existence of an "ancestral *we-tripantü* celebration", a "contemporaneous" way to hold the festival, the "interference of Christianity" in its development, and the revival process experienced over the last few decades (MARILEO, 2009: 1-3). Furthermore, Avendaño, Huichalaf, and Maripil provided several other aspects about the festival not addressed by Marileo, mainly in relation to its structure and phases, the function of music, and the role of musical performers.



Map 1: Fieldwork locations.

[4] The oral-based knowledge informed by my collaborators was gathered during the celebrations we attended together, as well as in several meetings taking place before and after the celebrations in 2014. Furthermore, it is necessary to acknowledge the important role played by the three Mapuche musicians in carrying out the fieldwork that made this article possible.

Dates (in June 2014)	**Organizer/Host**	**Location**	**Venue**	***Rewe*** (sacred altar)
Thu 19th	National Historic Museum of Santiago	Santiago	Courtyard	Provisional
	Reader Library of Lo Barnechea	Lo Barnechea	Library hall	None
Fri 20th	Bolleco School community	Bolleco	School yard	Provisional
Fri 20th to Sat 21st	Mapuche Student Home Pelontwe	Temuco	Ceremonial site	Permanent
Sat 21st	Neighbours' Association of Tumbes and St. Francis School community	Talcahuano	School hall	Provisional
	Mapuche Organisation Talcahueñu Ñi Folil	Talcahuano	Beach and hall	Provisional
Sun 22nd	Mapuche Community of Lo Barnechea	Lo Barnechea	Indoor area	None
Sun 22nd to Mon 23rd	A Mapuche Community in Labranza	Labranza	Ceremonial site	Permanent
Tue 24th	Mapuche Community of Constitución	Constitución	Gymnasium	Provisional
Wed 25th	Municipality of Villa Alemana and Mapuche Organisation of Villa Alemana	Villa Alemana	Large tent in a park	Provisional
Thu 27th	A Pewenche Community in Los Ángeles	Los Ángeles	Gymnasium	None

Table 1: *We tripantü* celebrations covered in my fieldwork in June 2014.

In the eleven celebrations I attended, I engaged in informal conversations with all the organizers and many participants as a means of incorporating their views into my findings. Once the *we tripantü* celebrations were concluded, I formulated some preliminary findings and discussed them with my collaborators to corroborate, adjust, and complement my ideas. In doing so, I asked them about other *we tripantü* celebrations they had attended and about any significant aspects I did not mention in my initial findings. Subsequently, the information I present in this article aims to cover a wide range of musical practices and methods for conducting this festival, consistently incorporating the views of organizers, participants, some experts such as my collaborators, and my field observations. Although the fieldwork was carried out in 2014, I have participated in other *we tripantü* celebrations over the years and I realize that the findings presented here are still relevant.

In the next section, I will present a general description of the festival to provide a framework for further discussions that comprises only the oral-based information provided by Avendaño, Huichalaf, and Maripil, excluding my field observations and data obtained from other sources as these matters will be discussed later. Considering the expertise of my collaborators and the consistency of their arguments, I estimate that the following descriptions represent pertinent oral-based accounts of the ancestral and present-day *we tripantü* celebrations that, certainly, address the bibliographic lacuna regarding this festival.

A Construct of the Ancestral and Present-Day *We Tripantü* Celebrations

It is commonly argued that the *we tripantü* celebration has been held since ancestral times until its decline at the end of the nineteenth century, while the present-day celebration is the result of a revival process of the ancestral festival. However, as will be addressed in the next section of this article, the empirical evidence suggests that the ancestral *we tripantü* celebration actually never existed and that current activities are a result of the ethnicization of the Christian celebration of St. John the Baptist. Although historically inaccurate, the oral-based accounts comprise an imaginary construct that articulates aspects of identity, exemplifying how certain traditions have been adapted into the present-day festivities and providing a glimpse into the way some Mapuche tend to manage traditional knowledge.

The ancestral *we tripantü* celebration is depicted by my collaborators mainly as a family event held at home. In the past, the activities were conducted in and around a "traditional house" or *ruka*, where people gathered in the evening to participate in an all-night vigil, perform entertainment activities called *ayekan* and consume food and drinks. The *ayekan* activities included "singing" or ülkantun, the playing of Mapuche musical instruments, dancing, and storytelling, among other activities. The performance of religious practices may have been included in the vigil, but not necessarily. At sunrise, the participants performed an act of renewal by bathing themselves with buckets filled with cold water or in a nearby river, lake, or sea. Afterwards, the people leading the activities sounded out several calls consisting of yells named *afafan* and playing of instruments referred as *toques*. The calls were made for the purpose of gathering the attendees outside the *ruka* to take part in the most important activity of the entire celebration−a religious ritual. This ritual could have been conducted by any person with the required "traditional knowledge" or *kimün* and not necessarily by a traditional authority, because the ancestral festival was a family event, not a community one.

Once the people gathered together, offerings were placed in a "ceremonial altar" or *rewe*, which may have included food, drinks, seeds, and tree branches, among other objects. The offerings were addressed to "God the Father" or *Chaungünechen*, "mother earth" or Ñukemapu*,* as well as to several "spirits" or *ngen*. With the offerings placed, all the participants then performed a collective prayer in front of the *rewe* followed by collective dances in front of and around the *rewe* and around the *ruka*. The ritual concluded at the end of the collective dances. Right after this religious activity, a few skilled dancers would perform some *ayekan* dances such as *choyke purrun* or *tregül purrun* of a non-religious character. Afterwards, people returned to the *ruka* for activities, which were similar to those carried out during the vigil, but in this case until midday or evening. The festivities were considered concluded when people spontaneously began to leave the *ruka*.

With regard to present-day festivities, my collaborators argue that they are the result of the revival of the ancestral *we tripantü* celebration but are now mainly community-centered rather than family-centered. The ways in which current festivals are carried out often differ from the ancestral ones, an aspect considered a natural consequence of the new contexts and needs of the Mapuche society. As my collaborators claim, Mapuche traditions are strongly linked to a rural community lifestyle, but nowadays most Mapuche live in urban settings and coexist with non-Mapuche people. Therefore, some traditional elements that were part of the ancestral celebrations must be adapted to fit urban and modern contexts, including using the festival as a means for enhancing aspects of identity among the Mapuche and to share their culture with the non-Mapuche. For reasons that I will explain below, my collaborators contend that the traditional elements that can be adapted to the present-day ceremony relate to its setting and duration, the performance of the act of renewal, the time of day for performing the ritual, the language used in reciting prayers, and the incorporation of non-traditional and non-Mapuche music.

The ancestral *we tripantü* celebration is regarded as a family event, thus its natural and traditional context corresponds to a "traditional house" or *ruka* fitted with a "ceremonial altar" or *rewe*. But present-day festivities can also be conducted as community events, in which case the ceremonial site should be proper to collective characteristics. Furthermore, present-day festivals do not necessarily have to be held in a traditional *ruka* since many Mapuche communities and organizations do not own one or have access to one. Any venue such as a theatre, gymnasium, or park could be used to host a *we tripantü* celebration in which a provisional *rewe* could be placed.

The present-day *we tripantü* celebration does not necessarily have to include an all-night vigil or act of renewal, as on practical grounds, many people may not be able to attend such a long

event or may not feel comfortable bathing themselves in cold water in mid-winter. In relation to Mapuche rituals, they are traditionally conducted in the Mapuche language called Mapudungun and performed before noon. However, most people do not understand Mapudungun and may not be able to participate in the activities in the morning because of their work schedules. As a means to encourage participation and engage people in activities, today's celebrations may be held in the afternoon or evening and include Spanish when conducting collective prayers. The non-religious activities called *ayekan* are intended to entertain attendees of any social gathering, which in the case of the present-day *we tripantü* celebration includes the participation of both Mapuche and non-Mapuche people. Furthermore, current festivities should correlate with the present-day Mapuche society and in doing so, it should incorporate what today's Mapuche people listen to, sing, and dance. Therefore, *ayekan* activities may include music outside the scope of Mapuche music, such as hip-hop, Chilean folklore, pop music, and Mexican *rancheras*.

The Alleged Ancestral Origin, Decline, and Revival of the *We Tripantü* Celebration

Among the organizers and participants of the *we tripantü* celebrations addressed in my field research, they widely accept the notion that this festival has been held since ancestral times, that it virtually disappeared at the end of the nineteenth century, and that it is undergoing significant revival over the last few decades. My collaborators also share the same notion, articulating highly consistent arguments about the factors involved in the decline and revival of the festival. Based on oral knowledge, for example, Avendaño and Maripil explain that the establishment of "indigenous reservations" or *reducciones indígenas* had been severely detrimental to the Mapuche culture.[5] In this context, Christian and non-Mapuche people were highly effective in imposing their beliefs and traditions, weakening several Mapuche cultural practices, including the *we tripantü* celebration. They add that the introduction of St. John's Day festivities was particularly detrimental because it resulted in the incorporation of Western elements into the *we tripantü* festival, superseding Mapuche elements. Additionally, many Mapuche completely abandoned their traditional customs when they fully adopted Christian festivities.

In all the celebrations I attended, people who led the activities gave speeches about the origin and evolution of the festival, presenting the beliefs discussed above as historical facts. However, the empirical evidence that will be discussed below suggests otherwise, that such an ancestral festival is unlikely and that the present-day celebration has grown significantly since the 1980s as a result of the ethnicization of St. John's Day rather than a revival of an ancestral indigenous gathering.

St. John's Day is a Christian celebration of pagan origin held on the eve of June 24th. As in the rest of the world where it is celebrated, in Chile this festival combines local supernatural beliefs and Christian elements linked to St. John the Baptist (CNCA 2013: 49). As Plath (2009: 241, my translation)[6] explains, "this night is full of manifestations ranging from witchcraft to

[5] In 1883, the Chilean state finally annexed the Mapuche territories and started a period referred as "the eradication process" (BENGOA, 2000: 354-355). From 1884 to 1929, an estimated population of 150,000 Mapuche people was relocated in over 3,000 "indigenous reservations" or *reducciones indígenas*. Collective land titles called "titles of mercy" or *Títulos de Merced* were given to the local chiefs as the representatives of these new communities (BENGOA, 2012a: 75-78. SAAVEDRA, 2002: 57-61). Arguably, the most significant cultural change experienced by the Mapuche occurred during this period; it was widely thought that the Mapuche culture would not endure in the reservations, indeed, that it might disappear (BENGOA, 2000: 366-367. PÉREZ DE ARCE, 2007: 49).

[6] Original text in Spanish: "Esta noche es abundante en manifestaciones que van de los sortilegios a las fogatas, ceremonias tradicionales que están incorporadas a la nacionalidad desde los tiempos de la Conquista" (PLATH, 2009: 241).

bonfires, traditional ceremonies that are incorporated into the [Chilean] nationality since the [Spanish] conquest". In the case of the Mapuche, Bengoa (2012c: 208-209) points out that the way they celebrate St. John may be shaped by a conjunction of Mapuche and foreign elements, but there is no evidence of certainty. Bengoa describes some of the activities carried out by the Mapuche during St. John festivities that share some similarities with the construct of the *we tripantü* celebration I mentioned earlier. For example, he mentions that the Mapuche bathe themselves to celebrate St. John (BENGOA, 2012c: 208), which correlates with the act of renewal performed in the *we tripantü* celebration.

It is certainly possible that the chronological proximity between St. John's Day with the winter solstice in the southern hemisphere has facilitated the ethnicization of this Christian celebration, due mainly to the religious and ideological aspects commonly ascribed to a solstice. Bengoa (2012c: 209) explains that the winter solstice has become a symbolic date that "represents our belonging to the opposite hemisphere" and stresses our "Americanism". Sammells (2011: 251-253) points out that several religious connotations have been ascribed to this date, mainly a kind of "pan-indigenous connection" that supposedly dates back to pre-Columbian times.[7]

A few organizers and most participants of the *we tripantü* celebrations I attended believe that this festival is meant to be held on the 24th of June, a notion that is often echoed by the media and in literature. Foerster (1993: 100, my translation),[8] for example, argues that the "*wetripantu*" is a "sacred and festive day for the Mapuche, which is celebrated every 24th of June." In 1998, the Chilean state established the 24th of June as "the national day" of the Original Peoples by a decree that states that this date relates to "a traditional celebration of these peoples corresponding to the beginning of the year" (CHILE, 1998, my translation).[9]

On the contrary, my collaborators claim that there are two Mapuche views on when this celebration should be held, and neither of them correlates with the notion of a fixed date of June 24th. As Avendaño, Huichalaf, and Maripil point out, most of the wise Mapuche believe that the *we tripantü* celebration is about particular changes in nature that occur within a period of a few weeks around the second half of June. Maripil adds that this period begins when birds and other animals become more active, and plants and trees begin to sprout. Therefore, the *we tripantü* celebration can be held on any date after these seasonal changes are noted. On the other hand, a minority of wise Mapuche believe that this festival is meant to be held specifically on the first day of the Mapuche year, although there is no consensus on exactly when. Huichalaf explains that some Mapuche believe that the Mapuche calendar is solar like the Aymara and Kechua, hence the Mapuche year begins on the winter solstice. On the other hand, Huichalaf adds that other Mapuche believe their calendar is based on lunar cycles and that the Mapuche year begins with a new moon called "ash moon" or *trüfken küyen*, which usually occurs during the second fortnight of June. As mentioned, the matter of ancestral origin of the *we tripantü* celebration is widely accepted by most people involved in this celebration. In the literature, Marileo (2009:1-4) provides some details of the oral accounts about the ancestral celebrations but claiming these events as empirical facts. Similarly, Foerster (1993: 100-101) mentions and briefly describes the *we tripantü* celebration as one of the several "rites" of the Mapuche culture,

[7] There may be similarities among different American indigenous festivities related to the winter solstice; Sammells (2011: 246-248), for example, mentions several political elements articulated in the celebration of the Aymara year in Bolivia. Due to the lack of literature on the Mapuche festivities, I decided to address specifically the particular aspects of the *we tripantü*; I consider that further comparisons require research focused particularly on that topic.

[8] Original text in Spanish: "un día sagrado y festivo para los mapuches, el que es celebrado todos los 24 de junio" (FOERSTER, 1993: 100).

[9] Original text in Spanish: "una fiesta tradicional de dichos pueblos, correspondiente al inicio de cada año" (CHILE, 1998).

stressing the notion of this festival as a long-standing traditional gathering. In doing so, he cites a definition of "*wetripantu*" by De Augusta (1916: 254, my translation)[10] as "New Year, the time when the days begin to grow until the longest day", and provides a brief description by Titiev (1951: 123).[11] From what Foerster articulates, it can be inferred that the "*wetripantu*" corresponds to an important traditional gathering held annually at the time De Augusta and Titiev conducted their field research. However, two situations from Foerster's explanation need to be pointed out.

First, the definition provided by De Augusta (1916: 254) makes no allusion to a rite or celebration, rather it refers to a time of year. Second, Titiev (1951: 123) is clear in stating that he refers to "one of the most important assemblies, held annually on St. John's Day," making no reference to a celebration called "*wetripantu*." Although Titiev (1951: 123) mentions that "Saint John's Day marks the coming of spring and the start of the new year" and that such a date is known as "*rañiñtripantu*" or "*wetripantu*," he does not refer the word "assembly" as being "*wetripantu*" as does Foerster.

On the contrary, Bengoa (2012c: 208-211) sets out the hypothesis that the Mapuche did not hold a festival like an ancestral *we tripantü* celebration, and that the current festivities are the result of the ethnicization of St. John's Day. In all the important and comprehensive works about the Mapuche culture, Bengoa explains, there is no mention of a Mapuche festival with the features and names associated to an ancestral *we tripantü* celebration, but in contrast there are many references to St. John's Day. Bengoa adds that the present-day Mapuche society is the result of a process characterized by *mestizaje* and cultural borrowing, thus it is probable that at some point during the last few centuries the Mapuche began to celebrate St. John's Day (BENGOA, 2012c: 208-209).

To provide more evidence on his point, Bengoa describes a meeting organized by a group of wise Mapuche elders who gathered to discuss the *we tripantü* celebration. In the meeting, which was held in 2011 in the Lake Budi area, the elders recognized that none of them were aware of the existence of a festival celebrated in the past related to the *we tripantü*, but that St. John's Day was widely celebrated (BENGOA, 2012c: 209). Bengoa points out that all those wise elders were not against this new Mapuche festival; rather, they regarded the "transformation" of St. John's Day into a *we tripantü* celebration as being beneficial to the Mapuche culture (BENGOA, 2012c: 209).

Bengoa's hypothesis as to the absence of an ancestral *we tripantü* celebration is essentially not discussed. Although I have not found any other scholarly or written document that call into question the ancestral origin of this celebration, I consider Bengoa's hypothesis highly plausible due to the consistency of his arguments. Furthermore, in my bibliographic research comprising the Mapuche musical practices from the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, I have found no reference to a social gathering that matches the names associated with and features ascribed to this ancestral celebration; although I did find the term "*wé tripantu*", this was used with a different meaning, a fact that supports the hypothesis of the absence of this ancestral festivity by the means I discuss below.

Félix De Augusta (1910), in his work on grammar, phonetics, and linguistics entitled Lecturas Araucanas (Araucanian Readings), provides a variety of accounts on aspects of Mapuche daily-life, including funerals, traditional tales, and religious ceremonies, among several other topics. To gather information, De Augusta consulted a select group of Mapuche people using an

[10] Original text in Spanish: "(año nuevo) el tiempo en que en que vuelven a crecer los días hasta el día más largo" (DE AUGUSTA 1916: 254).

[11] Foerster (1993:101) cites this description as Titiev (1951:94), but in the edition I found the text is in Titiev (1951:123).

indigenous language he called "Araucanian tongue". In doing so, he first provides a transcription of these accounts in the "Araucanian tongue" and then a Spanish translation. In the account about the seasons of the year, De Augusta (1910: 44-45) uses the term "wé tripantu" three times to refer to a period of time which he translates as "spring". This account corresponds to the testimony of longko Pascual Painemilla, the local chief of a community on Huapi Island in the Lake Budi area. In the account, longko Pascual explains that,

"Spring/*wé tripantu* begins with St. John; after St. John we enter another year. Spring/*wé tripantu* lasts until the end of December, but only in August its arrival is noticeable; in December it ends" (DE AUGUSTA, 1910: 44-45, my translation).[12]

Although De Augusta does not provide a definition for the term "*wé* tripantu," his use to refer to it to a season or a period of the year is clear. Arguably, the fact that *longko* Pascual cites St. John's Day as a reference for the season and not a Mapuche celebration casts doubt on the existence of an ancestral social gathering linked to the beginning of the Mapuche year, or at least one that did not include a significant number of Western elements as ancestral celebrations are regarded today. Furthermore, *longko* Pascual's testimony takes on greater significance if the date on which the account was collected and the singularities of his community are considered.[13] *Longko* Pascual was interviewed in the 1890s on Huapi Island that is an extremely isolated rural community located in the Lake Budi area. This Mapuche region is often considered a "repository" and "cradle" of Mapuche culture due to its high level of preservation for Mapuche traditions (CANIGUAN, 2012: 55-57. CANIGUAN; VILLARROEL, 2011: 82-83). Nevertheless, *longko* Pascual does not mention any type of festival with the characteristics attributed to the ancestral *we tripantü* celebration.

In relation to the process of ethnicization of St. John's Day, Bengoa (2012c: 209-210) explains that a similar situation occurred previously in Peru and Bolivia, where indigenist movements articulated the celebration of the indigenous new year connecting the winter solstice with religious aspects of their own cultures. As in Chile, Peru and Bolivia also argued that an ancestral celebration had disappeared due to foreign influences. Bengoa (2012c: 209-210) adds that in the early festivals, it seemed they were "invented" traditions, but in the present-day they are "massively" and "enthusiastically" celebrated, and there now seems to be no doubt about their "traditional" character.

In the case of Chile, Bengoa (2012b: 29, 2012c: 209) recognizes that there is no evidence of certainty as to exactly how this ethnicization or so-called revival began, but it seems connected to the "ethnic demands" of various student and political groups that emerged in Temuco in the 1990s, two organizations in particular. The first corresponds to the student organization *Longko* Kilapan which, as part of its "ethnic claims," decided to celebrate the beginning of the Mapuche year and, in doing so, literally translated the Western term "New Year" to Mapudungun as "*We Tripantü*" (BENGOA, 2012c: 209). The second corresponds to the Ad Mapu political organization.

[12] Original text in Mapudungun with the spelling as well as phonetic and grammar indications provided by De Augusta (1910: 44-45): "Təfachi wé tripantu tuukei *San Juan* meu; rupan *San Juan* meu konkeiñ ká tripantu meu. Wé tripantu puwí *Diciembre* kùyen· meu, welu *Agosto* kùyen· meu məṇel kimṇekei ñi wefpan wé tripantu; afkei *Diciembre* kùyen· meu." Spanish translation provided by De Augusta (1910:44-45): "La primavera principia por San Juan; después de San Juan entramos en otro año. La primavera llega hasta fines de Diciembre, pero no antes del mes de Agosto se hace nota que ya ha aparecido; con el mes de Diciembre se concluye."

[13] According to Caniguan (2012: 55-57), the effects of the Western world on the Mapuche people from the Lake Budi area, where longko Pascual's community was located, were less adverse than in other Mapuche territories. This is because the Lake Budi area has been historically a hard place to access due to its geography and was annexed to the Chilean territory only in 1881 in a relatively peaceful process.

Based on ethnographic information provided by Armando Marileo, Bengoa makes mention of this organization but provides no further details about it (BENGOA, 2012c: 209).

Indeed, Armando Marileo (2009: 3) argues that "the contemporaneous *we-tripantu*" began in 1986 as part of the activities carried out by the Ad Mapu political and cultural organization, specifically by its drama group. He claims that there was an "ancestral *we-tripantu*" that existed until "50, 60, 70 years ago," when the school system, and then Christianity, and finally the St. John's celebration began to obscure the Mapuche festival (MARILEO, 2009: 2). Although Marileo considers the "contemporaneous *we-tripantu*" as an important means of recovering ancestral traditions, he criticizes the lack of coherence between the present-day festivities and the ancestral ones. For example, he mentions that this celebration has been "folklorized" and became "merely a social and political" gathering rather than a sacred celebration as the "ancestral *we-tripantu*" used to be (MARILEO, 2009: 3).

My collaborator Elisa Avendaño was a member of Ad Mapu and its drama group in 1986, providing some perspectives on the revival that are not mentioned by Bengoa (2012c: 209) or Marileo (2009: 3). Avendaño explains that Ad Mapu used to organize Mapuche cultural activities as a means of achieving its "political" objectives, which were mainly related to strengthening the Mapuche identity and supporting Mapuche's social and cultural claims. She explains that the activities were Mapuche centered as feelings of distrust towards the non-Mapuche were still very strong, but also because it was always the way it had been done. However, Avendaño mentions that some members of the drama group realized that there were non-Mapuche who had a genuine interest in their traditional culture and came to believe that including them in their activities would help them better achieve their "political" goals. As she details, in the mid-1980s Ad Mapu members began to change the way certain cultural practices were carried out, facilitating, and encouraging the participation of non-Mapuche people in Mapuche cultural activities. Therefore, the Ad Mapu drama group began to organize workshops on Mapuche culture and to perform traditional music and dance in various schools, universities, and cultural festivals around Temuco, targeting not only a Mapuche audience but also non-Mapuche. In such a way, the Ad Mapu drama group began to articulate a revival of the *we tripantü* celebration, which quickly began to have a significant impact on local schools and universities.

It appears that schools and universities played a significant role in the so-called revival of the *we tripantü* celebration. As Avendaño claims, the celebrations organized by Ad Mapu in schools and universities "planted the seed" of what the festival is today. Avendaño and Maripil explain that in the 1990s several Mapuche student-teachers learned about this festival at their universities and, later as teachers, they began to organize *we tripantü* celebrations. Moreover, Avendaño and Maripil mention that at that time there were only a few traditional communities holding *we tripantü* celebrations, but the local schools provided the "spiritual energy" or *newen* to start celebrating the festival again.

The revival of *we tripantü* facilitated the production of oral accounts of the celebration that, in my view, articulate key aspects of identity that sustain present-day festivals. Arguably, such identity discourse is based on certain cultural meanings, principles, and social functions that reflect a mix of ideas related to indigenism and ethnicity. Indigenism tends to address issues related to perceived discrimination by the exaltation and idealization of indigenous traits, as well as by attributing negative implications to mestizo and foreign elements (GRAHAM, 1990: 3. KNIGHT, 1990: 95-96). Indigenism also attempts to create an "indigenous identity," which is articulated by a minority of educated leaders who present "invented" historic aspects as a counterpoint against the dominant nation-state (NIEZEN, 2003: 9-13). As already pointed out, the ancestral

celebration corresponds to an account invented and articulated by a group of leaders, in this case Mapuche organizations. By so doing, the "invented" accounts portray idealized indigenous aspects that have been belittled by Christianity and Western culture.

On the other hand, ethnicity comprises the articulation of an "ethnic identity" based on "cultural differentiation" from "others" (DEVEREUX, 1975: 385-395) and the attributions of cultural meaning to "empty symbols" to emphasize cultural "distinctiveness" (PARSONS, 1975: 65). Indeed, the ethnicization of St. John's Day corresponds to a cultural process that attributes ethnic meanings to a Christian celebration. Such ethnicization is based on an empty symbol such as the winter solstice, to which distinct cultural aspects of the Mapuche were incorporated.

In my field research, I have found that the ways to conduct the present-day *we tripantü* celebration vary widely. As my collaborators claim, on the one hand there are festivities that are not much different from the ancestral ones, while on the other hand there are celebrations that maintain only a few ancestral elements. To exemplify the diversity, I will describe two *we tripantü* celebrations that, considering the eleven festivals I attended, exemplify the two disparate examples mentioned above. In doing so, I will provide details about the components of the celebrations and the role played by some musical practices. The first festival corresponds to a celebration held in a traditional rural context that presented a high degree of alignment with the alleged ancestral festivities, while the second one was hosted in a non-traditional urban context that adapted several traditional elements. As was mentioned in the introduction, the few written sources that exist on the *we tripantü* celebration do not provide comprehensive descriptions of the activities, therefore the following section presents this detailed information to fill this lacuna.

Musical Practices in Two Present-Day *We Tripantü* Celebrations

The first *we tripantü* celebration that I will describe was hosted in a community center belonging to a traditional Mapuche community in Labranza, a rural area located south-west of the city of Temuco. The premises were fitted with a "traditional house" or *ruka*, a ceremonial site, and a "ceremonial altar" or *rewe* (see Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3, and Fig. 4).

Fig. 1: A *ruka* at a Mapuche community in Labranza. Exterior view.

Fig. 2: A *ruka* at a Mapuche community in Labranza. Interior view.

Fig. 3: A *rewe* in the middle of ceremonial site at a Mapuche community in Labranza.

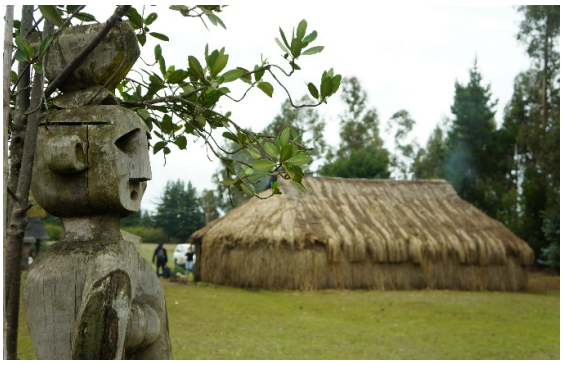


Fig. 4: A *rewe* and *ruka* at a Mapuche community in Labranza.

The activities began on the evening of Sunday, June 22, 2014, but most participants arrived on Monday around 4:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. The organizers explicitly invited Elisa Avendaño, Joel Maripil, and a guest "traditional dancer" or *choykefe* to lead and support the religious and dancing activities. There were approximately forty participants, about one third of them being Mapuche. Between the arrival of the participants and sunrise, there was no religious or other traditional activity. Instead, people gathered around the fireplace in the *ruka* to drink hot beverages, eat food, and chat.

At sunrise around 6:45 a.m., people began to prepare for a religious activity by wearing traditional clothing, and musicians began to warm up playing Mapuche musical instruments like the *kultrun*, *pifilka* and *trutruka* (kettle drum, wooden flute, and natural trumpet respectively). As in all the other *we tripantü* celebrations I participated in, this religious activity was organized around a ritual called *ngellipun*. While most of the participants were still inside the *ruka*, Avendaño and a few other people went to the *rewe* to sound out a call to announce the beginning of the *ngellipun*. The call was produced by "playing an instrument" called a *toque* led by the *kultrun* played by Avendaño. The call was accompanied by the *trutruka* and shouts called *afafan* that are characterized by the onomatopoeia "*ah ya ya ya ya ya ya*!". With the first call, everyone began to gather outside the *ruka* and head towards the *rewe*. A few minutes later, there was a second call when most participants were positioned in column format in front of the *rewe*. When everyone was in place and ready, there was a third call and the *ngellipun* began.

The *ngellipun* began with a prayer in Mapudungun recited by Avendaño, who spontaneously accompanied it by playing short *kultrun toques*. After that, Avendaño recited the same prayer but in Spanish. All the participants accompanied the prayer by spontaneously shouting some *afafan*, as a few people accompanied them with some short *toques* on the *trutruka* and *pifilka* and other Mapuche musical instruments. The alternation between Mapudungun and Spanish in reciting the prayer occurred several times and, as the *ngellipun* ritual was progressing, the intensity and frequency of the *toques* increased. At the end of the *ngellipun*, the *kultrun* began to play a steady binary pattern that was reinforced by spontaneous and intermittent *toques* played by other participants. At that moment, the guest *choykefe* dancer and Maripil announced that all the participants were going to perform a group dance called *masatun*.

The steady binary *toque* played at the end of the *ngellipun* was used as a bridge to connect the *toque* that accompanied the *masatun*. This dance started by keeping time in the binary pattern by stepping in place. After about one minute, Avendaño indicated the end of the binary *toque* by yelling an *afafan* and playing one strong stroke on her *kultrun*. After a very short pause, a new *toque* began that was composed of a steady ternary pattern. With the new *toque*, all the participants began to dance moving back and forth, and all musical instruments began

to play steadily. After a few minutes in front of the *rewe*, the group danced towards the *ruka* performing an entire lap around it. Once Avendaño was in the entrance to the *ruka*, she indicated the end of the dance by shouting out an *afafan* and playing a binary *toque* that ended with one strong stroke on her *kultrun*. With the end of the *masatun*, the religious activity was concluded.

The *ngellipun* and *masatun* combined lasted approximately thirty minutes, and once it was over, most of the participants gathered in the *ruka* to eat and drink. About an hour later, there was second call for another *ngellipun* that was performed in a similar fashion. It was also followed by a *masatun* dance that ended at the entrance of the *ruka*, but the binary *toque* at the end of the group dance was intertwined with a call to the dancers that indicated, in this case, that Maripil and the guest dancer *choykefe* would perform a dance called *choyke purrun*. After the call, Avendaño positioned herself next to the *ruka* facing the *rewe* and organized the participants in a semi-circle. Then there was a second call and, a few minutes later, a final call intermixed with a binary *toque* that was the cue for the *choykefe* to make their entry. The dance was performed within the semi-circle formed by the participants.

After the dance was finished, Maripil spoke to the participants and explained that a *choyke purrun* usually involves four *choykefe* who perform four dances together as a group. But, because of the level of physical exertion and effort required when there are only two *choykefe*, Maripil informed that they would only perform one more dance. The second *choyke purrun* was similar to the first one and once it was finished, all the participants entered the *ruka* for the main meal. Once in the *ruka*, Maripil and Avendaño performed several traditional songs or ül, and the organizers and a few participants talked about how the celebration used to be conducted in the past and about the importance of maintaining the tradition in the present. Around 11:00 a.m., the celebration spontaneously finished when some people started to leave the *ruka*.

The second *we tripantü* celebration, which I will describe, was jointly organized by a neighborhood association and a school community in Talcahuano. The activities took place in a school assembly hall that was arranged with a stage, seats, and a provisional *rewe* (see Fig. 5 and Fig. 6). The celebration was structured as a civic act and was attended by approximately one hundred people, including Mapuche and non-Mapuche neighbors, members of the school community, the mayor of Talcahuano, representatives of the local police and local education authorities. The activities began at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 21, 2014, with a welcome speech by a non-Mapuche teacher who officiated as host of the entire event.

Fig. 5: The *Rewe* and stage. *We tripantü* celebration in Talcahuano.

Fig. 6: Participants of the *we tripantü* celebration in Talcahuano.

After the welcome speech, one of the Mapuche organizers addressed the participants to announce the performance of an *ngellipun* ritual. The organizers invited a "chief" or *longko*

from a nearby urban Mapuche community to lead the *ngellipun*, who was supported by Maripil and two Mapuche couples from the neighborhood association. The *ngellipun* began with a call played on a *kultrun* by the guest *longko*, who conducted the ceremony with a *kultrun* and recited prayers in Mapudungun followed by Spanish. The prayer was accompanied by spontaneous binary *toques* played by the *longko* that were followed by the sounding of the *trutruka* played by Maripil and other participants. The intensity and frequency of the *toques* increased, becoming a steady binary pattern that ended by a strong *kultrun* stroke. After a short pause, the *longko* began to play a ternary pattern and, with his supporting participants, began to dance a *masatun* in front of and around the *rewe*. After several turns, the *longko* concluded the *masatun* by playing a binary *toque* that ended with a strong stroke on the *kultrun* and an *afafan* shout.

During the *ngellipun* and *masatun*, most people were very engaged in the prayers, dancing in place, and yelling out the *afafan*. Also a few people participated by bringing *pifilka* and *trutruka* instruments and playing them during the performance. Once the *ngellipun* and *masatun* were concluded, the host addressed the audience, explaining that a group of three students had prepared a *choyke purrun* (see Fig. 7 and Fig. 8). He added that the students learned the dance by watching a YouTube video clip of the *Choyke Purrun* produced by Maripil, and that the evening's performance of the students would be accompanied by Maripil playing live music. There was no rehearsal with Maripil, instead, Maripil provided the three non-Mapuche students with some cues he would play to indicate the dance sections.

Fig. 7: Students dancing a *choyke purrun* in Talcahuano.

Fig. 8: Students dancing a *choyke purrun*. Saint Francis School, Talcahuano.

From the stage, Maripil made a call with the *kultrun* and the *trutruka* and then started a binary *toque* that indicated the dancers' entrance. With the end of the *choyke purrun*, Maripil congratulated the dancers and addressed the audience informing them that there would be a second dance. To give the dancers time to rest, Maripil talked to the audience about the religious meaning of the *we tripantü* celebration and the traditional and ancestral ways to celebrate it. In doing so, he explained that a *choyke purrun* traditionally involves four dances performed by a group of four dancers, but that tradition sometimes must be adapted to the capabilities of the communities.

After the second *choyke purrun*, there were two speeches made by the school principal and a representative of the Talcahuano municipality, both about the importance of reviving Mapuche traditions. Then there were prizes awarded to the students who participated in the Mapuche cultural contests in painting, and the writing of poetry and essays, followed by the reading and exhibition of some of the prize-winning works. Then, it was time for Maripil's musical performance that included traditional Mapuche music and two popular songs sung in

Mapudungun. In the traditional repertoire, Maripil sang and played *kultrun* and *trutruka* along with other Mapuche instruments, and for the popular songs, I accompanied him on guitar. After Maripil's performance, the host concluded the event and people stayed around for approximately thirty minutes talking, eating, and drinking.

Conclusion

The two present-day *we tripantü* celebrations described above differ in many aspects, mainly in the length of the activities and their settings. While the first celebration lasted approximately fifteen hours and was held in a ceremonial site fitted with a permanent *rewe* and a *ruka*, the second one lasted around two hours and was hosted in a school assembly hall set up with a provisional *rewe*, stage, and seating. In my view, the stage is the element that most differentiates the two celebrations, as it gives the event a presentational character.[14] However, in both cases the *choyke purrun* and the music performed to entertain the attendees were grounded by a sense of presentation, while the *ngellipun* and *masatun* were more participatory.[15]

Although this celebration is a recent tradition that resulted from the ethnicization of St. John's Day, it is widely believed that the present-day festivities are the product of a revival process of an ancestral Mapuche celebration. Accordingly, the construct of those alleged ancestral festivities is an element that guided the eleven celebrations covered in my field research. In all of them, the people who conducted the activities engaged in discussions about how the Mapuche used to celebrate the beginning of the Mapuche year and most importantly, pointed out some of the elements that they were unable to perform according to some ancestral precepts. Furthermore, the notion is well spread that this festival is an instance for enhancing aspects of identity among the Mapuche and improving the coexistence between the Mapuche and non-Mapuche.

The *we tripantü* celebrations may differ widely from one another primarily due to the context in which they are held, but there are some important musical practices that are common. The *toques* comprising the calls and *ngellipun*, the music accompanying the *masatun* and *choyke purrun*, and the music performances to entertain the attendees were a mainstay of the eleven *we tripantü* celebrations I attended. Based on the information gathered from my fieldwork, particularly that provided by experts like my collaborators, these musical practices play an essential role in the development of present-day *we tripantü* celebrations.

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[14] As Turino (2008: 51-54, 2009: 107) points out, a presentational practice stresses the roles of artists making music and an audience listening to it, focusing on the musical result of a performance.

[15] As Turino (2008: 29-31) points out, in a participatory practice there is no clear distinctions between artist and audience, and musical quality is not necessarily pursued.

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