

Original Article

Form, function, and meaning of the identity occupations of the Kawésqar native people: a postcolonial analysis

Forma, función y significado de las ocupaciones identitarias del pueblo originario Kawésqar: un análisis post colonización

Forma, função e significado das ocupações identitárias do povo originário Kawésqar: uma análise pós-colonização

Oskarina Palma Candia^a , Marcela Águila Yáñez^a , Alexis Cárcamo Ojeda^a ,
Omar Mancilla González^a 

^aUniversidad de Magallanes, Punta Arenas, Chile.

How to cite: Palma-Candia, O., Águila Yanez, M., Cárcamo Ojeda, A., & Mancilla Gonzalez, O. Form, function, and meaning of the identity occupations of the Kawésqar native people: a postcolonial analysis. *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, 33, e4037. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2526-8910.ctoAO411340372>

Abstract

Introduction: The native peoples, after the arrival of the Spaniards, undoubtedly altered their way of life, reflected in the various forms of expression of their culture, language, habits, traditions and aspects of political and economic organization. The Kawésqar people settled in the Magallanes region, characterized by being nomadic, canoeists and animal hunters, thus their lifestyle and daily activities were organized around these occupations. **Objectives:** Through this study, from the perspective of occupational justice, we seek to know the form, function and meaning of the ancestral occupations of the Kawésqar people and the changes presented in these, after colonization, in order to know and rescue the cultural legacy of this group in the region. **Methodology:** For this purpose, a qualitative research of descriptive type was carried out using the photovoice technique, allowing for an analysis from the own experiences of those who, lived or received from first source aspects of the evolution of the Kawésqar culture. **Results:** Through the participants' stories, we are able to gain insight into the ancestral occupations of the Kawésqar people, highlighting their relationship with nature, harmony with the environment, freedom, and family ties, emphasizing how these have been forcibly changed in the present day. **Conclusion:** Among the aspects worth highlighting is a significant change in their most relevant occupations related to hunting and fishing, due to the existence of regulations and legislation, previously nonexistent, which cause marginalization and deprivation of significant occupations felt as a cultural hallmark of this ethnic group, altering their occupational and cultural identity.

Received on Jan. 23, 2025; 1st Revision on Feb. 12, 2025; Accepted on May. 30, 2025.



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited

Keywords: Activities of Daily Living, Indigenous People, Identity Recognition, Social Justice.

Resumen

Introducción: Los pueblos originarios, después de la llegada de los españoles, alteraron sin duda su forma de vida, reflejándose en las diversas formas de expresión de su cultura, lenguaje, hábitos, costumbres y aspectos de organización política y económica. El pueblo Kawésqar, se asentaba en la región de Magallanes, Chile, caracterizándose por ser nómades, canoeros y cazadores de animales, de esta manera su estilo de vida y actividades cotidianas se organizaban en torno a dichas ocupaciones. **Objetivos:** A través del presente estudio desde la mirada de justicia ocupacional, buscamos conocer la forma, función y significado de las ocupaciones ancestrales del pueblo Kawésqar y los cambios presentados en estas, posterior a la colonización, con el fin de conocer y rescatar el legado cultural de este grupo en la región. **Metodología:** Para ello se realizó una investigación cualitativa de tipo descriptiva con la utilización de técnica de foto voz, para un análisis desde las propias experiencias de quienes, vivenciaron o recibieron de primera fuente aspectos de la evolución de la cultura Kawésqar. **Resultado:** A través de los relatos las y los participantes, nos permiten acercarnos a las ocupaciones ancestrales del pueblo Kawésqar, destacando su relación con la naturaleza, la armonía con el ambiente, libertad y vínculo familiar, resaltando cómo aquellas han cambiado de forma forzosa en la actualidad. **Conclusiones:** Dentro de los aspectos a destacar se observa una importante alteración de sus ocupaciones más relevantes relacionadas con la caza y la pesca, esto por la existencia de regulaciones y legislación, antes inexistentes que provocan una marginación y privación de ocupaciones significativas sentidas como sello cultural de esta etnia, alterando su identidad ocupacional y cultural.

Palabras-clave: Actividades Cotidianas, Pueblos Indígenas, Reconocimiento de Identidad, Justicia Social.

Resumo

Introdução: Os povos nativos, após a chegada dos espanhóis, sem dúvida alteraram seu modo de vida, o que se refletiu nas diversas formas de expressão de sua cultura, idioma, hábitos, costumes e aspectos da organização política e econômica. O povo Kawésqar se estabeleceu na região de Magallanes, Chile, caracterizado por ser nômade, canoísta e caçador de animais e seu estilo de vida e atividades diárias eram organizados em torno dessas ocupações. **Objetivos:** Por meio deste estudo, sob a perspectiva da justiça ocupacional, buscamos compreender a forma, a função e o significado das ocupações ancestrais do povo Kawésqar e as mudanças que sofreram após a colonização, a fim de conhecer e resgatar o legado cultural desse grupo na região. **Metodologia:** Foi realizada uma pesquisa qualitativa do tipo descritiva com o uso da técnica de *photo voice* para uma análise a partir das próprias experiências daqueles que vivenciaram ou receberam de primeira fonte aspectos da evolução da cultura Kawésqar. **Resultados:** Através dos relatos dos participantes, podemos conhecer melhor as ocupações ancestrais do povo Kawésqar, destacando sua relação com a natureza, a harmonia com o meio ambiente, a liberdade e os laços familiares, ressaltando como tudo isso mudou forçosamente nos dias de hoje. **Conclusões:** Entre os aspectos que merecem destaque está uma mudança significativa em suas ocupações mais relevantes relacionadas à caça e à pesca, devido à existência de regulamentações e legislações, antes inexistentes, que causam

marginalização e privação de ocupações significativas sentidas como marca cultural desta etnia, alterando sua identidade ocupacional e cultural.

Palavras-chave: Atividades Cotidianas, Povos indígenas, Reconhecimento de Identidade, Justiça Social.

Introduction

Since the 1972 Convention, the culture of Indigenous peoples has been recognized as part of the World Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Cultural heritage is defined as an asset—or a group of assets—that constitutes a legacy passed down through generations, serving as a testament to the existence, practices, and ways of life of ancestors. Such heritage is granted historical, aesthetic, scientific, or symbolic value by society (Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura, 1972). In Chile (1978b), Indigenous Law No. 19.253 encompasses both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, recognizing elements such as language, customary law, rites, and traditions as intangible assets, as well as cultural expressions of archaeological, historical, and ethnographic nature as tangible heritage (González Carvajal, 2004, p. 4).

Based on the above, it is important to understand and preserve this heritage expressed in the culture and background of the Kawésqar indigenous people. According to the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE), they are considered an ethnic group: “*a human community defined by racial, linguistic, cultural affinities, etc.*” (Real Academia Española, 2014). This is a group of people who share a set of sociocultural traits, rituals, values, beliefs, as well as artistic expressions, occupations, and/or activities.

According to existing historical records, this group was characterized as canoeists, meaning they traveled in canoes. Their economy was based on hunting and gathering marine mammals, birds, fish, and shellfish. They led a nomadic life through the canals, across different sectors of the Magallanes region. Therefore, they lived primarily with their families for long periods, without functioning as a tribe or as groups or communities. Currently grouped in the Kawésqar Indigenous Community, which lives mainly in Puerto Edén and was recognized by UNESCO as Living Human Treasures in 2009 (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2012).

According to Pulgar (2007), the nomadic lifestyle of the Kawésqar people fostered a social organization based on small, socially autonomous family groups. These groups traveled long distances to meet their subsistence needs. Given their geographic context, it was essential to identify strategic points for shelter and optimal navigational routes to carry out gathering and hunting activities. Interactions between groups were limited to occasional encounters at campsites, where they connected through religious ties and exchanged information about navigation routes, safe shelters, and areas to avoid—often due to the dangers posed by strong waves or the presence of settlers. These social dynamics underscored a strong sense of solidarity when families came together. Notably, this ethnic group did not have a central authority figure; instead of rigid hierarchies, temporary leaders emerged as needed, with a practical focus on ensuring the effective execution of specific tasks (Pulgar, 2007).

In terms of social organization, Kawésqar men and women performed various tasks interchangeably, seemingly without adhering to the stereotypical gender roles present in contemporary society. Responsibilities were assigned based on each individual's specific characteristics or skills (Acuña, 2013). Either men or women could be responsible for hunting and fishing, constructing boats, houses, and tools, caring for children, harvesting vegetables and seafood, preparing animal skins, or weaving rush baskets. Notably, however, Kawésqar women often demonstrated exceptional resilience by diving into the icy waters—sometimes for over an hour—to collect shellfish. Carrying their hand-woven rush baskets, they would dive to the seafloor and extract mussels or sea urchins with their hands, providing sustenance for their families (Aguilera, 2014).

In addition to this ethnic group's incredible navigational skills and vast geographical knowledge, we must add the no less extraordinary feat of living in a hostile climate. These groups found a cold, humid, and rainy climate the perfect place to settle and thrive for millennia. They developed unique knowledge and skills that allowed them to efficiently exploit the resources of their environment (National Geographic, 2021).

For both hunting and fishing, the Kawésqar used the harpoon, made from sea lion or whale bone, as their primary weapon. When gathering, they used rushes as raw material for making baskets. These baskets were not identical, but were distinguished by their purpose. Each basket was made with a different weave depending on the food or elements to be collected, such as clams, mussels, sea urchins, among other shellfish, fish, wild fruits, eggs, stones, seaweed, herbs for tool-making, or for medicinal use (Pulgar, 2007).

Among their characteristics were their high resistance to the cold; their command of the opportunity to hunt cormorants at night with torches; their cunning in catching fish using the corral technique in small inlets; their determination and composure in capturing young sea lion pups; and their courage in confronting adult sea lions. Other food-producing activities appear to be seasonal or sporadic: berry picking, bird trapping, egg collecting, and huemul hunting (Acuña, 2013).

From the perspective of occupational therapy (OT) and Occupational Science, people are considered occupational beings, so participating in occupations is associated with health and well-being (Wilcock, 1993; Law et al., 1998; American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020), and it also allows us to build and reaffirm our identity (Unruh, 2004; Romero Ayuso, 2010). In this way, what is meaningfully carried out by a group that also shares a territory and lineage reinforces and maintains its personal and collective identity.

According to Davis (2001, as cited in Algado, 2016), only around 300 million people worldwide maintain a strong identity as members of an Indigenous culture, with the loss of languages serving as a clear reflection of this ongoing cultural crisis. In the case of the Kawésqar people—like many other Indigenous groups in Chile and the Southern Cone—an abrupt process of cultural change was triggered by European colonization, primarily by the Spanish. This process traumatically imposed a form of cultural imperialism in which the cultures of colonizers and the colonized did not coexist harmoniously but instead clashed, with one being subordinated to the other, perceived as of a supposedly superior hierarchy (Souza, 2005, as cited in Algado, 2016). As a result, many ancestral occupations of the Kawésqar were either lost or profoundly transformed in terms of their form, function, and meaning.

This intercultural transition is not a fluid encounter where cultures engage equally and complement one another's knowledge and traditions. Rather, it often involves the

imposition of the so-called more “evolved” culture upon another, reducing or even eradicating the one deemed “inferior.” This pattern has been replicated throughout Latin America, giving rise to a form of Western cultural hegemony or what has been termed hegemonic or top-down globalization (Santos, 2001, 2005a, as cited in Algado, 2016). In response to this, Boaventura de Sousa Santos has proposed the concept of “diatopical hermeneutics”—a framework that seeks the recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity. It calls for respectful intercultural dialogue that rejects any notion of superiority, fostering the path toward a cosmopolitan citizenship (Algado, 2016).

From this perspective, it is known that, in the 19th century, and in accordance with the colonization process, some of the Kawésqar canoeists were taken or joined the Salesian Mission on Dawson Island, which triggered the beginning of a cultural shift from nomadic to sedentary in some families. It is also known that many died due, among other things, to the use of a new type of cloth clothing that, when wet and not dried promptly, caused them to contract new diseases. Considering that they also stopped covering themselves with sea lion oil or skins and began to perform other activities; “In the missions, evangelization concluded with the teaching of Spanish and various tasks, such as carpentry and weaving, which, in addition to fulfilling the objective of teaching trades to the indigenous people, made the mission self-sustaining” (Aliaga Rojas, 2000, as cited in Butto, 2018, p. 98).

According to historical data, it is estimated that the Kawésqar inhabited Magellan thousands of years ago, traveling through the canals, before the arrival of the Spanish led by Hernando de Magallanes in 1520. Historical data indicates that the Kawésqar population in the 16th century was estimated at 2,500 to 3,000 people (Marchante, 2014). By 1900, it was estimated at 1,000; by 1924, it had dropped to 250 people (Otarola, 2002).

According to data from Chile's National Institute of Statistics (2017), the southernmost part of the country is home to the Kawésqar indigenous people, who make up 0.57% of the regional population of Magallanes, with 955 people declaring themselves as belonging to this ethnic group. In the Aysén region, only 0.11% of the population, or 117 people, identify as Kawésqar.

According to the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2012), the territory associated with the Kawésqar population and their descendants in the Magallanes region is Puerto Natales, Punta Arenas, and Puerto Edén. Their last remaining speakers are part of the Kawésqar Indigenous Community of Puerto Edén, who currently live there, performing various trades and labors very different from those performed by their ancestors.

With this background, we are interested in understanding, through this research, how the colonization process has affected the Kawésqar culture, identifying those ancestral activities that continue to be carried out over time, whether any have disappeared or modified, and how they have been transmitted through the generations, in relation to their form, function, and meaning.

Method

This research used a descriptive, qualitative, cross-sectional methodology with a phenomenological design. It included discourse content analysis, encompassing the opinions and experiences of the individuals themselves regarding their occupations

during the pre- and post-colonization period, based on their experiences, memories, and knowledge. In addition to the semi-structured interview, photos and images relevant to the research topic were reviewed.

The interviewees were descendants of the Kawésqar ethnic group. The universe is considered the entire population belonging to this ethnic group, including first, second, or third generations living in the Magallanes region. The sample consisted of a total of eight individuals representing different accredited communities of the Kawésqar ethnic group, (detailed in Table 1). It should be noted that the research team included a descendant of the Kawésqar culture, who served as a channel of communication to facilitate a more fluid conversation.

All ethical aspects were respected, ensuring voluntary and informed participation, with signed informed consent, data protection, and confidentiality in accordance with national and international regulations.

Table 1. Participants.

Participant	Gender	Age	Ancestors	Occupation	Place of Residence	Who does he/she live with?
P1	Female	37	Kawésqar	Seasonal worker	Seno Obstrucción	Spouse and 2 children
P2	Male	66	Kawésqar	Wood Craftsman	Seno Obstrucción	Alone
P3	Female	50	Kawésqar	Craftswoman	Puerto Natales	Father, Brothers, 1 daughter and 3 grandchildren
P4	Female	45	Kawésqar	Housewife	Puerto Natales	Hijo
P5	Female	57	Kawésqar	Bilingual intercultural monitor	Seno Obstrucción	Spouse 1 son and 1 granddaughter
P6	Female	39	Kawésqar	Bilingual intercultural monitor	Punta Arenas	Children
P7	Female	40	Kawésqar	Housewife	Punta Arenas	Spouse and children
P8	Female	56	Kawésqar	Intercultural teacher	Punta Arenas	Partner, and granddaughter

Results

Through the collected stories, it is possible to identify various ways in which the Kawésqar people adapted to new occupations following colonization — including shifts in lifestyle, expressions of culture, and knowledge passed down from their ancestors — all reflecting their unique perspective on life. These narratives reveal how activities were traditionally carried out, the roles these activities played in meeting needs, and, ultimately,

the deeper meanings of these occupations and their connection to identity. In this final theme, the concepts of occupational justice and injustice (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004) emerge within a context of occupational apartheid, a term that refers to the systematic exclusion of a dominated group from meaningful occupations by a dominant group (Kronenberg et al., 2007). These dynamics directly affect the formation of identity and the transmission of culture to new generations of Indigenous peoples.

All of the above is immersed in a natural context and territory with an extreme climate, where the environment or territory linked to the occupations always appears relevant and significant in the stories.

The following image, (Figure 1), represents the categories established to organize the structure of analysis and presentation of the information.

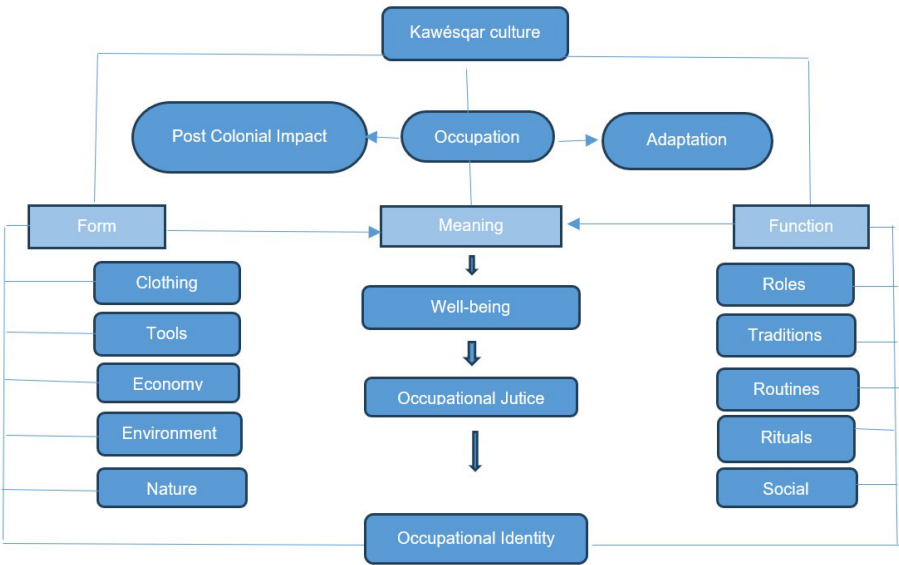


Figure 1. Analysis matrix.

Form

Occupational Form, as defined by Nelson (1988), refers to visible and objective aspects observable when performing an occupation in a given time and space, such as tools, clothing, movements, etc. Thus, the form of the Kawésqar people's identity occupations must be considered in their context, lifestyle, and habitat. Relevant elements include the sea, nature, and the region's extreme climate (low temperatures), their nomadic population, and their experiences in small groups or families. From these, character traits and qualities emanate that shape the archetype or collective image with which they remember and construct the ancestral identity of the Kawésqar people. They are described as resistant to the cold, astute, determined, brave, and highly skilled at hunting and diving (Acuña, 2013). We can also observe in the stories the changes that occurred after colonization.

Clothing

Participants report that the Kawésqar culture used animal hides as clothing before colonization, which provided them with shelter and protection from the extreme climatic conditions of the area they inhabited. They also included accessories such as necklaces and bracelets made of leather or other materials:

“They wore a small otter skin cape on their back, reaching halfway down their back. Women also wore necklaces, bracelets, and anklets made from wolf hide, small snail shells, and also from small sticks that they used to make necklaces.” (P. 3)

After colonization, the Spanish imposed the use of clothing they provided. Most interviewees associate wearing this clothing with the onset of illness and even death:

“Before, I only know that they covered themselves with hides (referring to their ancestors). When the Spanish arrived, “the whites,” as they are called, they came to leave behind clothes, and illnesses began to spread” (P. 1).

Tools

According to the accounts, various tools and materials they used in ancient times for survival are listed, including some that are still used today.

“As tools, I know many scrapers, wolf nets, various baskets, each with different points, flake axes (smooth stone fragments), cholga knives, stone arrows, and later glass arrows, harpoons, and paddles for rowing” (P. 3).

Describing what their arrows were made of and how they differed from other ethnic groups provided further insight:

“I learned to make my harpoons from whale bones, and they were carved from stone. There were large ones and small ones. But the Yahgans made them from stone, and the Kawésqar made them from bone; they were hard bones” (P. 2).

Economy

The economy was based on barter, using the hides of animals such as sea lions, otters, huemuls, and others, which were exchanged for other essential items for their subsistence. Women were the ones who led the domestic economy. This can be seen in the stories presented:

“It was the woman who handled the money, she was the one who brought the food, she managed the house, she was the one who took charge of the household, monetarily, economically, the food supply, and all that” (P. 7).

After colonization, the concept of exchange — which had previously occurred only among Indigenous people — was maintained and later extended to include settlers. Over time, this evolved into the sale of Indigenous products such as rush baskets, tanned

hides, and model canoes, among others, as a means of generating income to purchase goods and meet basic needs.

“They hunted sea lions and furs to sell, and with that they had enough money to buy all the things...making small boats (miniatures) is easier to make than to work on. I did it and made a lot of money...I sold them all” (P. 2).

Function

Roles and gender

Regarding roles, the participants shared that there were no defined roles based on gender in the occupations they carried out, as responsibilities were either shared or assigned to anyone at the moment, regardless of gender:

“Not a defined role. If my father couldn't do something, my mother helped him. If my mother couldn't do something, my father helped her. But it wasn't like a clearly marked role just for the woman or the man — it was more blended.” (P. 4)

However, although the interviewees stated that no specific roles were observed, most activities and responsibilities were assumed and led by women:

“I always saw that the one who ruled the house and did everything... was my mother. For everything... it was my mother. When things were done right or wrong... she was the one who took responsibility.” (P. 8)

This ethnic group has deep respect for their surroundings and shows strong appreciation for elders. In this case, the interviewee describes the role of the grandmother in the family:

“There is respect — for places... because of my grandmother, I imagine... I didn't know her, and even though she was quiet, she was the one who ruled the house and assigned roles and tasks to her sons or daughters. Then, when she was no longer around, the one who took on all of that was my mother.” (P. 8)

Traditions

The informants told us that their traditions changed dramatically in terms of celebrations, language use, and how they had to change their way of life to adapt to the new reality. One of the traditions they remember is that each family was associated with a specific activity or occupation, which was practiced by different family members and continued for generations. In this story, they mention the “river master,” who was in charge of building the caief (canoes in the Kawésqar language). This legacy has been lost over time, as money is now earned through the sale of handicrafts.

“The “river master” was the one who made the boats, the one who made the caief, the boats. So it was a family line. Almost all of our families have a way of making artisanal

boats, as if it comes from the Kawésqar family. My mother made it, my uncle made it... but now that's no longer profitable, only the miniature ones for tourists" (P. 8).

Daily routines and activities

Regarding daily routines, they tell us that their activities were generally based on gathering food like eggs and wild fruits, hunting, or going out to sea to fish.

"In front of the peninsula, where we knew the pelecha changes (the period of bird feather change) were, we would go and get eggs from a ravine, from a very large rock where you obviously cross by boat. And from there we would go to collect the eggs because we arrived at Puntilla Buena (referring to the place)" (P. 8).

Currently, there is legislation that prohibits hunting and selling fur, however, this type of practice still exists in the area surrounding Puerto Edén, albeit fortuitously:

"Going out to hunt was not prohibited, and to this day they hunt wolves and furs to sell, and with that they had income to buy all kinds of things" (P. 2).

Women also stayed in their homes, weaving with rushes to create baskets or ropes, while also caring for their families. (Figura 2, shows a woman with a shuttle for weaving)

"In the hut, they wove these baskets—small ones, large ones, and even larger ones—all with different weaves so as not to confuse them. Some were for collecting mussels or some pretty stones" (p. 2).



Figure 2. [Photograph by Paz Errázuriz]. (Ester Edén Wellington, 1994). Paz Errázuriz Photographic Archive. Work: Nomads of the Sea. Errázuriz (1996).

Rituals

Participants generally perceived a low level of ritual in the Kawésqar culture, apparently due to their nomadic lifestyle and small groups. However, some report that a ceremony was performed in connection with whales, although the accounts are contradictory. As they say, many of the rituals were never shared by their ancestors. As one interviewee tells us:

“When a whale washes up, everyone has to hide. Everyone hides. Only men remain, who paint themselves with black charcoal to protect themselves from the giant spirit that the whale possesses” (P. 3).

Likewise, there are families who lack knowledge about rituals, or who think that because they are nomadic and non-tribal, they weren't used to mass rituals. This is reflected in the story shared by another interviewee:

“No, the Kawésqar didn't have rituals. They weren't like the Selknam or the Tehuelches, who lived in groups or communities. The Kawésqar didn't, the Kawésqar didn't have rituals” (P. 5).

Along with this story, the interviewee expresses their feelings about the risk of ethnic groups without rituals existing, since ancestral knowledge is lost within a culture.

“... Because if you don't have rituals, half of the beliefs your people had are lost...” (P. 5).

Social structure

Being nomadic, the Kawésqar community organized themselves into individual family units with whom they traveled. They did not settle in one place for extended periods, and thus, there was no concept of a tribe or extended community. However, they were known for their solidarity, consistently supporting one another within their family groups. One particularly striking aspect is their account of the dwellings, or AT (Kawésqar shelters), which they would leave set up at each location where they stopped during their journeys. These shelters were left for other groups to use when passing through. This practice can be interpreted as a reflection of their sense of belonging to the land and their harmony with the environment — valuing communal and shared use of resources rather than the concept of private ownership that prevails today.

“In my opinion, no one had the habit of being possessive about things. Everyone was free to roam the territory and use it as they wished. In other words, they were so much a part of the territory that they didn't think selfishly, and the wealth around them was so great that no one ever imagined that another race would arrive. I don't know if it's a race or another culture that had a more selfish mentality” (P. 4).

This participant's comment denotes a sense of admiration for the culture of their ancestors, which they express with pride and longing. However, feelings of suspicion

and resentment are evident in the face of the arrival of the colonizers and their very different way of thinking and acting.

It is mentioned that this type of supportive and supportive behavior is sought to be developed and reintroduced today by the new generations of the ethnic group, who, through their groups, come together to carry out projects and recover their ancestral culture. They mention in the interviews that they would like to preserve the history of their people's culture. Within this context, family gatherings are an important part of the ethnic group's customs. On these occasions, they tell stories and share resources:

“Getting together to talk. Even when things are bad, we all get together and we always talk and tell stories, because that's what I've seen in all the gatherings I've been to: they always end with storytelling” (P. 1).

Meaning

This section aims to explore the deeper sense, personal purpose, or transcendent meaning of occupations within the Kawésqar people, drawing from narratives that allude to freedom, their connection to nature, and harmony with the environment as sources of well-being. These sensations appear to be disrupted in more recent times with the emergence of the city and the adaptation to a Western lifestyle. From this perspective, we can identify two distinct temporal moments — before and after colonization — which may be associated with the concepts of occupational justice and injustice, highlighting their impact on the current identity and worldview of the Kawésqar people.

Occupational justice

Participants in this study described feelings of harmony and well-being, reflected in the freedom to engage in ancestral and meaningful occupations, in connection with nature and without a sense of need or sadness:

“To navigate freely through the territory... I never went hungry, I never felt shame, I never felt sorrow, absolutely nothing... that... while navigating through the territory.” (P. 4)

These occupations are associated with times past and are recalled with nostalgia, along with a sense of greater enjoyment and quality of life, (Figure 3. Shows a woman sailing the channels of Puerto Edén):

“We used to enjoy going out in the boat, for example, to go fishing, to collect eggs, to the beach... things like that, the things we used to do... I would get in the boat... I liked to dive... those things we used to do.” (P. 1)



Figure 3. [Photograph by Paz Errázuriz]. (Ester Edén Wellington, 1994). Paz Errázuriz Photographic Archive. Work: Nomads of the Sea. Errázuriz (1996).

Occupational injustice

Participants describe with sadness and resentment the impossibility of freely pursuing ancestral occupations, associated with the concept of “arriving in the city,” a way of life distinct from the original one tied to the sea and nomadic life (navigation). Currently, in the city, restrictions and prohibitions appear that limit the development of ancestral activities and cause a change in the way they organize themselves as families and their primary self-support activities. Added to this is discrimination against their ethnicity and previous way of life.

“My suffering began when I arrived in the city. It was then that I discovered what it means to suffer hunger, what it means to suffer... to miss your father, to suffer

discrimination... they forced my father to stop traveling because I had to start first grade; otherwise, they would take other measures... so that's where my suffering began..." (P. 4).

The existing regulations have failed to take into account the preservation of ancestral occupations, which appears to affect not only the Kawésqar people's productive activities but also culturally significant occupations passed down through generations. These can no longer be practiced or transmitted to their children in the same way, leading to an impact on their identity and posing a threat to the survival of Kawésqar heritage.

"Now there are a lot of people around, they come to inspect you and that is something terrible, we can no longer go (sail)... I can't take my daughter on the boat, I don't have permission to go on a boat, because I have to have an artisanal fishing permit... I can't teach her either, because it is not allowed to go out bringing a minor, just as I learned I can't teach her..." (P. 1).

Finally, we can note that some participants expressed fear of being identified as belonging to an Indigenous group due to the discrimination they have experienced. They also reported a sense of cultural shock and sadness over the genocide suffered by their people. To provide context, one interviewee shared her reflections, explaining that it was only after her grandmother's death that her family was notified of their Kawésqar heritage:

"We found out that we had this incredible treasure... and we didn't know how to appreciate it... What happened with her was that when she passed away, we learned about our ancestry through CONADI (National Corporation for Indigenous Development), when we were notified... mourning the loss of one of the last descendants — that is, one of the last Kawésqar speakers... She was always afraid... maybe in her mind, the more silent she remained (regarding her origins), the more she was protecting her family." (P. 6)

Identity

In this category, the interviews reveal the importance of identity. Belonging to the Kawésqar culture represents a significant cultural burden for the participants.

"It was my missing link. Because I always had that feeling that I belonged to something. For example, in my family, even though I belong to another family and live here in the countryside, I always felt something different, like when you don't fit in... like something's missing... and then I started thinking maybe I had Indigenous ancestry, because I had an uncle who told me stories about strange things that happened, or my own feelings, and I thought — this was what I was missing." (P. 1)

Participants also expressed a strong sense of duty to preserve cultural memory, a feeling of transcendence, and pride in belonging to this ethnic group. However, they expressed concern over the gradual disappearance of the native language.

“At the same time, I feel proud when someone calls me Kawésqar, because I have no other blood. I am truly Kawésqar. Everyone says there’s a large Kawésqar population, but I don’t know anyone who is pure — I don’t know anyone... Now it’s different because we even forget how to speak (referring to the Kawésqar language). Among the two or three people who share your blood, sometimes you even speak only Spanish with them. With my brother, the one in Natales, I even forgot how to greet him.” (P. 2)

Within the testimonies related to identity and belonging to the Kawésqar people, mixed emotions emerge, a deep sense of pride and spirituality in being part of this group, alongside sorrow over the injustices and abuses suffered by their ancestors.

“There are two paths, two different ways of facing it. One is to feel that spirit within you, the spirit of being Kawésqar... the one who sailed through this territory for thousands of years... and the other is to continue internalizing the fact that you were violated, that your ancestors were violated, that your family was violated — and to accept it and go on living as if none of it ever happened.” (P. 3)

Worldview

Regarding their worldview, we can identify a deep spirituality within the Kawésqar people, closely connected to nature. This spirituality is reflected in their way of life, customs, and everyday practices, all of which are rooted in meaningful beliefs. For example, they avoid eating raw meat, as they believe the spirit of the animal could encounter their own spirit. Similarly, navigating the sea holds a symbolic meaning — associated with a journey after death for spiritual purification. These beliefs are expressed in the following accounts:

*“The sea is also a super-important step toward the other space of life, which is death. To reach the **Jiote del malte** (referring to life after death), the Kawésqar must cross the sea, and it must clearly be, perhaps, as clean and pure as possible” (P. 3).*

The beliefs, care, and importance of the spirits of both themselves and animals are also reflected in the participants' stories:

*“I heard the dead speak... those who came from the **malte** (living in another life after death) and those who came from the **jiote** (path that leads to another life), because when a whale dies, people come too; your deceased relatives come to benefit from this great spirit” (P. 3).*

The great importance of this theme for this ethnic group is reflected in the preparations made for a spiritual encounter. In this case, they comment on whale hunting:

“The Kawésqar never ate raw meat, and it has to do with a spiritual issue. Once everything was ready, women and children also painted themselves with red or black branding and went out to feed... everyone could enter... They painted themselves with black branding and charcoal to protect themselves from the giant spirit that the whale possesses. When a whale dies, it is not eaten immediately; it is eaten after a long time because you have to wait for its spirit to come out to prevent it from clashing with yours inside” (P. 3).

Natural events hold a significant place within the cultural worldview, being reasons for concern and celebration:

“They always waited, with hope, for the eclipse to pass so that it would “catch them alive” and there would be no disasters. Of course, if it passed from darkness to light, it was... wow! We're still alive, we're still alive at home...” (P. 4).

The Kawésqar people viewed the changing seasons differently, as they had a distinct perception of the seasons, having up to nine seasons. These were named according to the abundance of resources during that period or marked by the climate. Currently, there are only four seasons.

“Culture was different, for example, the way we viewed the world. In ancient times, there were nine seasons. These were determined by subsistence, that is, egg season, wind season, snow season, flowering season, among others. There weren't four seasons like there are today, as they are globally shared, so I don't think we'll be able to recover that ancient vision” (P. 3).

Discussion

In both national and international literature, there is clear recognition of the immense cultural richness present in many countries, where the protection of Indigenous peoples forms a foundational part of national identity. *“Institutions from Paraguay and Mexico established an agreement in the Paraguayan capital to strengthen the identity of this country's Indigenous peoples with regard to their languages and cultures”* (Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, México, 2015). However, in Chile, the development of mechanisms for protecting Indigenous territories and their descendants remains insufficient. *“Chile must recognize, as has been stated by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, that Indigenous peoples are the key actors in the protection of their territories”* (Kelleher, 2017, p. 13).

This lack of recognition is acknowledged and criticized by the participants: *“the state doesn't care about any Indigenous peoples — not the Kawésqar, nor the Yagan, nor the Huilliches, nor the Mapuche, nor any other. What the state wants is for this to be a white state.”* (P. 8. This lack of commitment to preserving the traditions and heritage of Indigenous peoples has led to the prohibition or regulation of many traditional

Kawésqar occupations — such as fishing, hunting, and gathering — through restrictive legislation. These legal limitations hinder the practice and transmission of identity-based occupations that were once carried out freely and without restriction. As a result, the Kawésqar experience a disruption in their sense of well-being and quality of life.

From the perspective of occupational therapy, meaningful occupations are closely tied to identity and can generate feelings of satisfaction and well-being (Romero Ayuso, 2010; Palma, 2017). When these occupations are rooted in the territory and particularly in nature, they also serve the purpose of fostering harmony with the environment. In this regard, Do Rozario emphasizes the need to promote *“a harmonious relationship between people and the environment, bringing individuals and communities closer to health, well-being, and sustainability through interaction, occupation, and sociopolitical action”* (Do Rozario, as cited in Algado, 2012, p. 12).

From the concept of “occupational beings” — particularly in relation to being Kawésqar — and through the lens of occupational identity, which is understood as *“the expression of the physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of human nature in interaction with the institutional, social, cultural, and political dimensions of the context during the performance of self-care, productivity, and leisure occupations”* (Unruh et al., 2002, p. 12), the arrival of the “white man” brought about a profound change in Kawésqar culture. The Kawésqar people had their own culture, beliefs, and occupations, and the imposition of new occupations through colonization led to a sense of identity loss — as revealed by the accounts of those interviewed. As Trujillo et al. argue, identity as a concept is intimately linked to occupation: “because it is during the engagement of the being in doing that identity is constructed... Habitual occupations are associated with identity in the sense that they contribute to its construction, as people-beings choose those occupations that are meaningful to their life purposes, their becoming.” (Trujillo Rojas et al., 2011, p. 55). According to the narratives, the loss of both personal and collective occupations has blurred and damaged the construction of life stories, fragmenting aspects of their ethnic identity — an identity they are now forced to reconstruct based on memory and the past.

On the other hand, the restriction of participation in meaningful occupations is understood as occupational injustice, which, term provided by the authors Townsend & Wilcock (2004), which refers to *“situations where participation in occupation is limited, confined, restricted, segregated, prohibited, undeveloped, devalued, alienated, marginalized, exploited, excluded, or otherwise restricted”*, (Trujillo Rojas et al., 2011, p. 122) thus affecting the occupational and human rights of individuals and communities.

The above derives from a concept emerging from occupational therapy and specifically from Occupational Science, which is occupational justice. Its authors, Wilcock & Townsend (2000), define it as the existence of equitable opportunities and resources that allow people to engage in meaningful occupations. They add that it is recognized as a phenomenon with individual and community dimensions that supports the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Regarding the form of occupations, these are generally related to nature, with the use of elements from the sea, skins as clothing and in crafts. Furthermore, occupations are related to their way of life and survival, where the sea and nature take on great relevance,

their habitat, their daily activities, routines, non-tribal family grouping, their nomadic nature, their life spent at sea for long days and weeks. All of this responds to their primary and primary occupation, in which the sea and nature represent the sacred and most relevant to their culture. This link between community or collective occupations and their habitat and nature allows them to “reclaim the ancestral and collective, mutual support, and protection of the environment”, (Nuñez et al., 2022, p. 2).

According to the accounts, we can see how colonization disrupts the existing harmony between their occupations and nature, affecting their entire lifestyles and causing the loss of meaningful occupations and cultural aspects, such as language use. This is consistent with what authors like Simó Algado, De Sousa Santos, and others (Algado, 2016; Santos, 2011; Palacios Tolvett, 2017; Silva et al., 2019) report regarding the impact of Westernization on Indigenous peoples.

In relation to the function of the occupations described, these are primarily connected to subsistence, with occupations such as hunting, fishing, and family caregiving being central. Regarding the roles assumed by individuals within the social and family structure of Kawésqar culture, there was no singular hierarchy within the group. Instead, they functioned mainly as family units, where activities such as diving, fishing, gathering, and childcare — among others — were carried out by both women and men, regardless of gender. There was no binary conception of society with gender-stereotyped roles, as is predominant in Western society (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2019). In addition, based on the testimonies collected, it can be inferred that a matriarchal system existed within the Kawésqar community before the arrival of Europeans. During the colonization period, gender-associated roles began to be introduced, reflecting the imposition of Western cultural norms. As a result, many occupations that were once shared and non-gendered are now no longer carried out collaboratively.

From a functional perspective, Kawésqar occupations underwent a radical transformation. Navigation through the regional channels was initially prohibited to prevent encounters with colonizers along maritime routes. Later, government regulations further restricted traditional navigation practices due to the perceived risks associated with the lightweight boats (canoes) they used, which eventually had to be replaced by motorized vessels. Additional regulations were implemented, such as the prohibition of navigating with minors and the requirement to use larger, safer boats for travel. In summary, canoe navigation and access to certain geographical routes have been restricted, limiting the maritime freedom that this population historically enjoyed.

Article 29 of Decree Law 2,222, which replaces Maritime Law, states: *“Navigation in waters under national jurisdiction is controlled by the Directorate. Navigation, depending on the area where it operates, is maritime, regional, river, lake, and bay, and must comply with professional, technical, and safety standards.”* Ministry of National Defense (Chile, 1978a). This paragraph of the decree contradicts Indigenous Law, since Article 7 states, *“The State recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to maintain and develop their own cultural expressions, insofar as they do not contradict morality (...) The State has the duty to promote Indigenous cultures”* (Chile, 1978a).

Regarding hunting, the Kawésqar hunted sea lions, otters, and huemuls. Currently, because these are endangered, this activity is prohibited within the national territory. There are regulations that restrict hunting and also prevent the transfer of this knowledge, since this teaching can only occur after reaching the age of majority.

Regarding the economy, it was traditionally based on bartering with other Indigenous groups with whom the Kawésqar coexisted. They exchanged items such as animal skins, baskets, tools, and other goods for essentials like food, clothing, and other necessities. Today, they continue to preserve aspects of their ethnic identity by selling handicrafts made using traditional techniques and ancestral materials to visitors and tourists.

Elderly people within the culture were very important, respected for their wisdom and vast knowledge. They were granted a higher status than other members of the family group. Contrary to what is observed today, within our social context. According to a 2015 Ibero-American bulletin, *“aging among indigenous communities is a field that has been little studied. We know that in many communities, older adults were treated with respect. However, migration processes (...) are changing some of these traditions”* (Organización Iberoamericana de Seguridad Social, 2015, p 4). This implies that, in Western culture, the elderly are losing many of their ancestral roles, as well as the place previously assigned to them socially.

The meaning they give to nature and the territory is also highlighted, for example, navigating the canals and the connection with the sea. According to the interviews, the sea provided practical aspects such as food, plants or algae used as medicine, mussel remains for the creation of tools, whalebone harpoons, etc. And spiritually, it appears as the enjoyment of walking (sailing) and the “figure” of navigation after death as a sign of their worldview. Some collective occupations linked to nature convey aspects of their worldview. According to Nuñez et al. (2022), “we define artisanal fishing and herb gathering as ancestral and territorial practices that represent the notion of the cosmos and indigenous peoples... This worldview focuses on life, that all living beings are in a permanent flow of creation; for this reason, we are connected to produce existence reciprocally” (Nuñez et al., 2022, p. 2).

Colonization led to the denial and deprivation of certain occupations. As Whiteford notes, *“Occupational deprivation is the result of direct social and cultural exclusions, but also of institutional policies, technological advances, economic models, and political systems”* (Whiteford, 2005, as cited in Moruno Miralles & Fernández Agudo, 2012, p. 49). The Kawésqar were forced to reinvent themselves in order to survive, adopting new forms of subsistence — including the Spanish language and Western customs. These ultimately became dominant, and the ethnic group, along with its native language and traditions, was marginalized, leaving only a few descendants who continue to uphold them. This has generated deep feelings of nostalgia and grief. Furthermore, the loss of the ability to freely navigate the Magellan Channel, due to government-imposed restrictions, has not only disrupted traditional ways of life but also limited the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. As a result, many descendants view with profound sadness the threat of their roots disappearing.

Thus, concepts related to participation in interrelated occupations emerge, enabling us to understand processes of social and cultural transformation that can be applied to the occupational transition of the Kawésqar people. Ramugondo (2019) argues that collective occupations, occupational choices, and occupational consciousness are key concepts stemming from social occupational therapy and Occupational Science. These concepts are interconnected and arise in response to systems of occupational apartheid, which enable or legitimize the occupational segregation and marginalization of certain groups based on their identity characteristics (Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015).

“Collective occupations”, as described by Palacios Tolvett (2017), are rooted in cultural and social dimensions, involving interactions among people and communities within a specific local context or territory and guided by social intention—that is, a shared goal or collective meaning. In the case of the Kawésqar, traditional occupations such as free navigation and hunting are now prohibited by existing political systems, leading to occupational deprivation and limiting occupational choices. According to Galvaan (2012, as cited in Álvarez et al., 2023), occupational choices are co-constructed through dynamic interactions with the context, and are always informed by historical experiences. As a result, the ability to engage in meaningful occupations linked to their ethnic identity is restricted. This fosters a collective awareness—or what Ramugondo (2019) refers to as occupational consciousness—of such injustice. In response, some individuals strive to be proactive, preserving their ancestral occupations as a form of resistance and cultural continuity.

We can identify how the Kawésqar people's occupations were affected by cultural changes, technological advancements, and the abuse of power by dominant groups. Navigation and hunting ceased to be practiced for their original, practical purposes and instead began to be recalled and reproduced in the form of handicrafts for commercial purposes—through weaving, woodwork, or reed crafting, and even through so-called “ethnic tourism.” This shift represents a form of occupational adaptation, which is necessary for individuals to recognize and update their occupational identity and competencies in relation to their surrounding environment (Cruz et al., 2014). However, while this adaptation has been successful from the perspective of subsistence for the descendants, it has also been highly varied and, at times, painful. They have had to acquire skills and adopt traditions unrelated to those of their ancestors, leading to a blurring of their cultural characteristics and a tendency to blend in with urban populations, sometimes as a strategy to avoid discrimination, which some groups continue to perpetuate today. This adaptation has not led to equal conditions for Indigenous peoples. The 2015 CASEN survey (Chile, 2015) revealed significant gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in areas such as access to higher education, language use and preservation, and poverty. The 2017 CASEN survey (Chile, 2017) further highlighted that La Araucanía region, where the Mapuche culture is predominant (accounting for 79.8% according to the 2017 census summary), registered the highest poverty rate in the country, reaching 17.2%, nearly double the national average.

Conclusion

This research reveals that the Kawésqar people have experienced a loss of their ancestral occupations, clearly demonstrating that colonization profoundly affected their way of life. Today, many cultural aspects have become blurred, creating difficulties in transmitting cultural knowledge and practices to younger generations. The participants shared testimonies from their own perspectives and lived experiences, providing valuable insights that are often absent from the existing literature.

According to the above, they had to adapt to a more structured, modernized, and governmental system, which ignored and rendered invisible their primitive lifestyle and occupational forms, thus impacting their sense of personal and collective identity. They had to change the form, function, and meaning of their activities,

denying themselves the possibility of certain occupations, primarily hunting and navigation, reducing their ability to choose their activities and thus generating injustices and occupational deprivation for their entire community. The above as a product of colonization but that has continued to this day, with the indifference of different governments in turn and the complicity of the regional community, as Ramugondo (2019) mentions, from the Theory of liberation, for the oppression and maintenance of this, there must be people and groups that “tolerate” it, this is clearly reflected in the abolition of the social and family structure of the ethnic group, incorporating systems of formal education, commerce, food, clothing, new displacements, which alters the natural harmony of the people, leading to a strong cultural uprooting and risk of loss of the historical cultural legacy.

Today, the surviving members of the Kawésqar people feel proud of their ethnic identity and are actively seeking to recover and preserve Kawésqar knowledge from elders in order to keep their culture alive. Among them are individuals who demonstrate what Ramugondo (2019) describes as occupational consciousness—a critical awareness that drives them to resist, striving to maintain their traditional collective occupations, as a form of protest and a call for justice in response to the injustices they have experienced. However, these actions are often insufficient or unsustainable when confronted with a governmental system that imposes a societal model vastly different from what their ancestors lived and taught. Their efforts represent a resilient trace of a culture at risk of disappearing.

It should be noted that the government system still does not allow this ethnic group to freely carry out activities that were characteristic of their culture, provoking feelings of sadness and shock in their descendants. Therefore, it is everyone's duty to restore the memory of the Kawésqar and the indigenous peoples of Chile and to encourage understanding of these ethnic groups in our country. Failure to acknowledge the wrongs committed against the Kawésqar people only leads to further deepening them, diminishing opportunities for true cultural learning, and ultimately crippling their knowledge and customs.

References

- Acuña, D. A. (2013). Memoria del pueblo Kawésqar a través de una historia de vida. *Magallania*, 41(1), 99-121. <http://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-22442013000100005>.
- Aguilera, O. (2014). *Lenguas y culturas de Chile*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <http://www.kawesqar.uchile.cl/cultura/index.html>
- Algado, S. S. (2012). Terapia ocupacional eco social: hacia una ecología ocupacional. *Cadernos de Terapia Ocupacional da UFSCar*, 20(1), 7-16. <http://doi.org/10.4322/cto.2012.001>.
- Algado, S. S. (2016). Terapia ocupacional, cultura y diversidad. *Cadernos de Terapia Ocupacional da UFSCar*, 24(1), 163-171. <http://doi.org/10.4322/0104-4931.ctoRE0677>.
- Álvarez Franco, R. J., Duarte Martínez, A. S., Steembecker, D. J., Muñoz Orellana, F., Morrison, R., & Monzeli, G. A. (2023). “Me echaron de mi casa, empecé a trabajar en la calle”: interseccionalidad y apartheid ocupacional en el trabajo sexual. Un estudio de caso. *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, 31, e3441. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.scielo.br/j/cadbto/a/7CwRBMZqTtfvwLMpjS7pQvC/?format=pdf&lang=es>

- American Occupational Therapy Association – AOTA. (2020). Occupational therapy practice framework: domain and process—fourth edition. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(Suppl 2), 1-87. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001> .
- Butto, A. (2018). La representación del espacio misional y los indígenas evangelizados en las fotografías de las misiones anglicanas y salesianas de Tierra del Fuego (1869-1947). *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia*, 7(2), 97-115. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/cadernosaa.1713> .
- Chile. Ministerio de Defensa Nacional. (1978a). Decreto N° 2.222, de 21 de mayo de 1978. Sustituye ley de navegación. *Ministerio de Defensa Nacional*, Santiago. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=6855>
- Chile. Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación. (1978b). Ley Indígena N° 19.253, de 31 de mayo de 1978. Establece Normas Sobre Protección, Fomento y Desarrollo de los Indígenas, y Crea la Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena. *Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación*, Santiago. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=30620>
- Chile. Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile. (2015). *Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional - CASEN*. Santiago: Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/encuesta-casen-2015>
- Chile. Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile. (2017). *Encuesta de Caracterización socioeconómica Nacional - CASEN*. Santiago: Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/encuesta-casen-2017>
- Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes. (2012). *Tesoros Humanos Vivos. Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial*. Santiago: Publicaciones Cultura. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <http://www.cultura.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/THV.pdf>
- Cruz, A., Arias, M. I., Figueroa, K. M., Lavona, D., & Rivera, A. (2014). Factores que promueven la adaptación ocupacional en adultos mayores en Puerto Rico. *TOG (A Coruña)*, 11(20), 1-21.
- Errázuriz, P. (1996). *Los nómadas del mar*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.pazerrazuriz.com/los-nomades-del-mar.html>
- González Carvajal, P. (2004). Protección jurídica del Patrimonio Cultural: logros y encrucijadas del patrimonio antropoarqueológico chileno. *Chungara (Arica)*, 36, 509-522. <http://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-73562004000300051>.
- México. Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas. (2015, 22 del octubre). *México y Paraguay suscriben convenio de cooperación en materia de lenguas indígenas nacionales*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.inali.gob.mx/detalle/mexico-y-paraguay-suscriben-convenio-de-cooperacion-en-materia-de-lenguas-indigenas-nacionales>
- Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas. (2017). *Censo de Población y Vivienda*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.ine.gob.cl/estadisticas/sociales/censos-de-poblacion-y-vivienda/censo-de-poblacion-y-vivienda>
- Kelleher, J. (2017). *Legado del Kawesqar*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.iucn.org/es/news/%C3%A1reas-protegidas/201712/el-legado-kaw%C3%A9sqar>
- Kronenberg, F., Algado, S. S., & Pollard, N. (2007). *Terapia Ocupacional sin fronteras*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Médica Panamericana.
- Law, M., Steinwender, S., & Leclair, L. (1998). Occupation, health and well-being. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65(2), 81-89. <http://doi.org/10.1177/000841749806500204>.
- Marchante, J. L. (2014). *Menéndez, Rey de la Patagonia*. Santiago: Editorial Catalonia.
- Moruno Miralles, P., & Fernández Agudo, P. (2012). Análisis teórico de los conceptos privación, alienación y justicia ocupacional. *TOG (A Coruña)*, 9(5), 44-68.
- National Geographic. (2021). *Cómo vivían los nómadas del mar del sur de Chile*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de https://historia.nationalgeographic.com.es/a/como-vivian-nomadas-mar-sur-chile_16390

- Nelson, D. L. (1988). Occupation: form and performance. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 42(10), 633-641. <http://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.42.10.633>.
- Núñez, C. M. V., Hernández, S. S., & Alarcón, A. H. (2022). Ocupaciones colectivas y naturaleza: Efectos de la colonialidad de la naturaleza en comunidades rurales y pesqueras de Chile. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 29(2), 3-12. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2022.2044437>.
- Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura – UNESCO. (1972). *Convención sobre la Protección del Patrimonio Mundial Cultural y Natural*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-es.pdf>
- Organización Iberoamericana de Seguridad Social – OISS. (2015). *Boletín periódico del Programa Iberoamericano de cooperación sobre la situación de los adultos mayores en la región*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <http://www.oiss.org/wp-content/uploads/2000/01/OISS08-DEF.pdf>
- Otarola, R. (2002). *Guía de antecedentes territoriales y culturales de los pueblos indígenas de Chile*. Santiago: Andros.
- Palacios Tolvet, M. (2017). Reflexiones sobre las prácticas comunitarias: aproximación a una Terapia Ocupacional del Sur. *Revista Ocupación Humana*, 17(1), 73-88. <http://doi.org/10.25214/25907816.157>.
- Palma, O. (2017). *Ocupaciones significativas en el adulto mayor y su relación con la calidad de vida: Estudio cualitativo en población de la región de Magallanes y Antártica chilena* (Tesis doctoral). Universidad de Granada, Granada.
- Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo – PNUD. (2019). *Una década de cambios hacia la igualdad de género (2009-2018): avances y desafíos*. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://www.undp.org/es/chile/publicaciones/una-decada-de-cambios-hacia-la-igualdad-de-genero-2009-2018>
- Pulgar, C. (2007). Vivienda indígena, participación y desarrollo local: el caso de la comunidad indígena Kawésqar de Puerto Edén. *Revista INVI*, 22(60), 59-100.
- Ramugondo, E. L. (2019). Terminología ocupacional: conciencia ocupacional. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 28(4), 574-587. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2019.1613709>.
- Ramugondo, E. L., & Kronenberg, F. (2015). Explaining collective occupations from a human relations perspective: bridging the individual-collective dichotomy. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 22(1), 3-16. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2013.781920>.
- Real Academia Española. (2014). *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. Barcelona: Espasa.
- Romero Ayuso, D. (2010). El sentido de la ocupación. *TOG (A Coruña)*, 7(Suppl 6), 59-77.
- Santos, B. S. (2011). Epistemologías del Sur: utopía y praxis latinoamericana. *Revista Internacional de Filosofía Iberoamericana y Teoría Social*, 16(54), 17-39.
- Silva, C. R., Morrison, R., Calle, Y., & Kronenberg, F. (2019). Terapias Ocupacionales del Sur: demandas actuales desde una perspectiva socio-histórica. *Revista Interinstitucional Brasileira de Terapia Ocupacional*, 3(2), 172-178. <http://doi.org/10.47222/2526-3544.rbto24867>.
- Townsend, E., & Wilcock, A. A. (2004). Occupational justice and client-centred practice: a dialogue in progress. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71(2), 75-87. <http://doi.org/10.1177/000841740407100203>.
- Trujillo Rojas, A., Sanabria Camacho, L., Carrizosa Ferrer, L., Parra Esquivel, E., Rubio Viscaya, S., Uribe Sarmiento, J., Rojas Castillo, C., Pérez Acevedo, L., & Méndez Montaña, J. (2011). *Ocupación: sentido, realización y libertad. Diálogos ocupacionales en torno al sujeto, la sociedad y el medio ambiente*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
- Unruh, A. M., Versnel, J., & Kerr, N. (2022). Spirituality unplugged: A review of commonalities and contentions, and a resolution. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 69, 5-19. Recuperado el 23 de enero de 2025, de <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11852691/>

Wilcock, A. (1993). A theory of the human need for occupation. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 1(1), 17-24. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.1993.9686375>.

Wilcock, A., & Townsend, E. (2000). Occupational terminology interactive dialogue. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 7(2), 84-86. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2000.9686470>.

Author's Contributions

Oskarina Palma Candia was responsible for the conception of the text, provided methodological guidance, conducted analysis, wrote and reviewed the text, and presented the information. Marcela Águila Yañez conducted interviews and information analysis, logistics, and was also responsible for liaising with the Kawésqar community. Alexis Cárcamo Ojeda conducted interviews, information analysis, and bibliographic review of the theoretical framework. Omar Mancilla González conducted interviews, analyzed information, and reviewed the literature for the discussion. All authors approved the final version of the text.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

Corresponding author

Oskarina Palma Candia
e-mail: oskarina.palma@umag.cl

Section editor

Prof. Dr. Patrícia Leme de Oliveira Borba