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## Indigenous Movements, the State, and new indigenous identities

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Paper to be presented at the  
World Congress of Political Science  
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## **Indigenous Movements, the State, and new indigenous identities**

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### Abstract

Even though no part of the world is untouched by the global economy, the role played by the State continues to have an impact on the resistance of indigenous peoples, and Chile is no exception. At present, the Chilean government presents two contrasting faces to indigenous peoples. On the one hand, it offers multicultural public policies based in “Development with Identity”, whose formal objective is to generate economic and social development from the ground up. In contrast, in areas where the indigenous communities are in conflict with large companies over the control of natural resources, the Chilean government considers these communities to be terrorists, denying their basic legal rights.

At present, there is a diversity of positions within the indigenous movement and in the communities with respect to the Chilean State. Our paper analyzes the way in which different identities influence the relation developed between the State and different indigenous communities in southern Chile.

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## **Indigenous Movements, the State, and new indigenous identities**

Jeanne W. Simon, Claudio González-Parra, and James Fenelon

### **Introduction**

Indigenous peoples all over the globe question the benefits of globalization process because they generally receive less of its economic benefits while paying for many of its costs. Even in the case when there are specially designed programs to assure their inclusion, many indigenous peoples still question globalization because they understand that their very values and beliefs are under attack. These perspectives are often perceived by dominant groups as challenge or even as a threat to the system itself, or at least are used as excuse to dominate or suppress them.

The conflicts over land and cultural systems and the government as an actor that seeks to include the “good Indians” in the economic development process and repress the “bad Indians” are commonly present where conflicts of control of natural resources emerge. Despite their diversity, indigenous resistance to dominant states share important similarities. Lakota, Navajo, Wampanoag and California Indian peoples in the United States, the Warli and Gond adevasi in India, the Maori peoples in New Zealand, and the Zapotec and Zapatista-led Tzotzil peoples in Mexico, all have diverse backgrounds and social systems networks that have given rise to new sites of resistance, new forms of cultural survival, new types of indigeneity, and continued social change, within larger globalizing processes (Fenelon and Hall, 2008; Hall and Fenelon, forthcoming).

Maoris as a treaty-based indigenous people share many characteristics with First Nations and American Indians from North America, struggling over the meaning of sovereignty, and facing social discrimination. The Adevasi of India have moved from being a true periphery to the British colonial rule, to the stratification and suppression by government and corporate forces, involving struggles over land, forests, dams, relocation, and urban issues. Indigenous Australians experienced genocide and social suppression via racial and ethnic discrimination, as victims of both imperial, internal colonial, and globalizing conquest. Native Hawai’ians are involved in struggles over sovereignty claims, cultural autonomy and recognition in their homelands. These indigenous peoples illustrate a wide diversity of indigeneity, in their struggles to revitalize their communities in a world increasingly hostile to collective societies, where

globalization is synonymous with neoliberal individualism and socio-political submersion of the Indigene.

In Mexico the San Andreas Accords, arising from violent struggle with the Zapatistas, used traditional norms and customs (*normas y costumbres*) to establish rights to collective land ownership. The Accords are a form of “self-determination” and “autonomy” meant to maintain separate communities, even while participating in the larger state system. In this they are making Mexico explicitly multi-ethnic. This is understood by many as a fundamental assault on the concept of nation-state and nation-building, with emphasis on collective ownership of land and maintenance of traditions, in reaction to cultural aspects of globalization. For Zapatistas, armed rebellion became nonviolent in an effort to implement local control by providing culturally sensitive, mediating services. Those indigenous peoples that have survived these conflicts have adapted to changing systems of domination, have nearly always included cultural constructs around land tenure, collective distribution, traditional group leadership, and a strong focus on the community. Increasingly this has also meant claims for autonomy of one sort or another, especially in the area of resisting many neoliberal economic forces attempting to penetrate their region.

Similar to events in other parts of the world, the State in Chile presents two contrasting faces to indigenous peoples. On the one hand, it offers multicultural public policies based in “Development with Identity”, whose formal objective is to generate economic and social development from the ground up. In contrast, in areas where the indigenous communities are in conflict with large companies over the control of natural resources, the Chilean government considers these communities to be terrorists, actively repressing them and denying their basic legal rights.

At present, there is a diversity of positions within the indigenous movement and in the communities with respect to the Chilean State. Our paper analyzes the different factors that influence the relation developed between the State and different indigenous communities in southern Chile.

## **The Mapuche<sup>1</sup> and the Chilean State**

### Brief History

The Mapuche are one of the only indigenous peoples in Latin America who were not colonized by the Spanish conquistadores despite constant warring and negotiations. At the time of Chilean Independence (1810), the Mapuche controlled the area south of the Biobio River, approximately half of present-day Chilean territory.

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<sup>1</sup> The media and the Chilean government use the term to refer not only to the Mapuche but also to refer to other related indigenous groups, such as the Lafkenche and Pehuenche. Despite the fact that this term hides important differences, we use the term to emphasize their common cause with respect to the Chilean State.

Shortly after obtaining independence, the new Chilean State began the process to militarily control the southern territory by eliminating Mapuche resistance.

After defeating the Mapuche in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Chilean State began to actively intervene. First, the Chilean government began to offer indigenous lands to foreign and Chilean settlers because this land was considered to be “empty” since the Mapuche were not considered to be people. Subsequently, they legally created “indigenous land”<sup>2</sup> and marginalized the different family groups (lofs) by “giving” limited pieces of land in community property titles to State-defined “indigenous communities”, which are the Chilean equivalent of reservations (*reducciones*). The property associated with each community was determined by the State and did not necessarily correspond to the traditional lands, especially in the case of the Pehuenche who were cattle raisers and not settlers.

These and other state actions have strongly impacted over time the present social organization of the Mapuche in diverse ways. First, Chile is a centralized, unitary State with a well-established presence throughout its territory since mid 1950s.<sup>3</sup> State presence includes police presence as well as public education and health clinics with strong assimilation policies. Additionally, the Chilean State has a dominant role in the definition and enforcement of the rights that indigenous peoples have within its boundaries, although international organizations increasingly influence (but do not determine) government actions.

With the neoliberal policies implemented by a military government in the 1970s and 1980s, state presence was reduced in social services but not in police force. Furthermore, the liberalization and opening up of the Chilean economy, especially to Foreign Direct Investment, resulted in the transformation of many communal property rights into individual property titles and separated water rights from land rights.

Since the return to a liberal democracy in 1990, the Chilean government presents two contrasting faces to indigenous peoples. On the one hand, it offers multicultural public policies based in “Development with Identity”, whose formal objective is to generate economic and social development from the ground up. These policies were designed in collaboration with representatives of different indigenous communities to protect traditional indigenous identity,

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<sup>2</sup> The definition of an “indigenous community” is based the Chilean State’s understanding of the indigenous political structures, and it transformed the original dynamic concept of “lof” into a land-based concept of community based in the authority of the community chief, the lonco.

<sup>3</sup> Public schools and health clinics were first established in indigenous territory in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as part of a public policy to strengthen State presence throughout Chile. In 2008, 57% of the communities have a publicly funded school within community limits, and the rest of schools nearby. As a result, virtually all indigenous persons have attended school, although the majority of the persons born before 1960 did not finish elementary school. Younger generations have received more education in comparison with their parents. (Census 2002)

but the general perception is that they have not because they do not address the structural discrimination existing in the system.

In contrast, in areas where the indigenous communities are in conflict with large companies over the control of natural resources, the Chilean government considers these communities to be terrorists, denying their basic legal rights. For many, these repressive actions show the true nature of the Chilean State. In response, many Mapuche have decided that military defense of Mapuche Territory (Wall Mapu) is the only option.

The social construction of the “Mapuche Conflict” began in the late 1990s and is a product of both past relations as well as the present dynamics of the relations between the Mapuche, the private sector, and the governing coalition, the Concertation. The media has also played an important role in shaping public opinion as well as marginalizing Mapuche voices. Our objective here is to deconstruct the Mapuche conflict by characterizing the different identities present in both the State’s position as well as within the Mapuche Movement.

### **The Mapuche “Conflict”**

The term “Mapuche Conflict” began to appear in Chilean media in the late 1990s, and since then it continues to dominate the public images of Mapuche in Chile. The construction of an image of Mapuche as violent and destroying the private property of law-abiding, tax paying citizens, with references to the “warlike nature of the Mapuche race”, has replaced the previous stereotypes of Mapuche as lazy and drunks. At present, the dominant image is that the Mapuche create problems, are conflictive, and present a dangerous threat to the Chilean economy and society.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the actual conflict is also a struggle over images in the media and popular opinion.

The term “Mapuche Conflict” was first used by the lumber companies in 1997 in the Provinces of Arauco and Malleco (see Map). Javier Lavanchy, one of the Chilean intellectuals dedicated to the analysis and discussion of the “conflict”, argues that it began with acts of Mapuche violence, and specifically with the burning of trucks transporting lumber near the town of Lumaco (Lavanchy 1999). The Chilean media, controlled by many of the same business groups, have constructed an image that the Mapuche are unreasonable and are only interested in stealing and destroying private property.

Although the principal conflict is between the Mapuche and the Private Sector, which is perceived as extracting resources from Mapuche Territory, the private companies involved rarely appear actively participating while the Chilean government emerges as the principal defender of the economic system as well as the “common good”. Frequently, the State appears to “return order” to the

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<sup>4</sup> See especially the press coverage with respect to the land disputes in the town of Ercilla.

territory with a strong police presence and judicial prosecution, protecting the economic interests of national and transnational companies rather than Mapuche rights. At other moments, the State appears as a “mediator”, who looks to promote the common good by facilitating the discussion between the two principal actors.

Due to the diversity of perspectives, the Mapuche Conflict is complex and needs to be analyzed at both the symbolic and material level. At the symbolic level, we characterize the different explications and characterizations of the Mapuche Conflict used by the State, the Private Sector, and the Mapuche movement. At the material level, we analyze how the conflict between the Chilean State (mediating private sector interests) and the Mapuche for control of territory and natural resources is a dispute between capitalist interests and to maintain their environment and way of life, respectively.

### **Scenarios, Actors, Identities and Discourses**

As mentioned earlier, the scenario of the present conflict is within a democratic regime, which assumed power in 1990 after 17 years of military dictatorship, although its roots lie in the military dictatorship and can even be traced back to before Chilean independence. At present, the principal division is between the ruling coalition *Concertación* (who opposed the military dictatorship) and the supporters of the military dictatorship and of neoliberal economic policies. One of the defining elements of the public policies of the four *Concertación* governments in the last 18 years is their desire to demonstrate that economic development and poverty reduction is compatible with democracy (and human rights). Additionally, since the democratic transition was achieved peacefully using the Constitution put in place by the military regime, the government prefers incremental over systemic change and institutional channels rather than public protests.

Most politically active Mapuche participated and/or supported the Concertation based on the agreements reached with Patricio Aylwin in Nueva Imperial prior to the presidential elections of 1989. However, some of the most important points of the agreement (recognition as a people, Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization) were not achieved, generating discontent and deception among many Mapuche leaders. Furthermore, in conflicts between indigenous peoples and private sector companies, such as in the case of hydroelectric dam construction and forest companies, the Chilean government has sided with the private companies, arguing that this position is necessary to ensure Chile's economic development. Still, the government, together with the private sector involved, has increasingly invested money in programs targeted to indigenous populations in order redress previous grievances and to mitigate problems associated with present-day policies.

As can be observed in the brief sketch, there are two principal positions. The first position, supported by the government and the private sector, favors sustainable national economic development. The second position, supported by the Mapuche movement, argues that local populations have the right to define the kind of development desired. The following discussion briefly characterizes the different identities present in two positions.

### *The Government's position*

The government's position is complex and divided in three separate identities: national economic development, development with identity, and governability, where only the "governability" identity directly addresses the Mapuche conflict. This section describes the basic characteristics of state policy based on official documents and comments as well as the perception of indigenous communities.

### National Economic Development and Corporate Social Responsibility

As mentioned earlier, economic growth and economic stability is a fundamental value for the Concertation government. Their position is based on the argument that continued democratic stability and progressive social policies depend on good economic management and continued economic growth. Indeed, the Finance Ministry (*Ministerio de Hacienda*) is considered to be the most influential ministry within the Chilean government.

For economists, Chile is considered to be a model in Latin America for how to achieve sustained economic growth. Indeed, Chile presents itself as a country with both political and economic stability for direct foreign investment. In short, the Chilean government seeks to combine economic development with both environmental and human rights concerns. Changes at the international level have also encouraged many of the transnational and national companies to incorporate corporate social responsibility into their strategic planning.

Within this context, we can understand how President Ricardo Lagos in 2002 saw no contradiction in his position when asked about the construction of the Ralco Dam in Pehuenche ancestral territory during a celebration of the 9th Anniversary of the Indigenous Law. He defended the construction of the dam indicating that "to say no to Ralco would mean an increase in the price of electricity . . . I know that there are problems with Ralco, but I also know that Chile needs electricity to continue to grow." (El Mostrador, 12 October 2002)

Similarly, lumber and associated products are one of the principal motors of the Chilean economy, and indigenous territory is one of the best areas for growing trees. Chile, in international economic negotiations, has prioritized the expansion of lumber plantations in order to assure future growth of this sector. Additionally, the Chilean government continues to finance research to improve the efficiency in this sector.

Due to the increased internationalization of the Chilean economy, Corporate Social Responsibility has been increasingly incorporated into the strategic planning of different national and transnational companies in Chile. In 2001, the Mininco Forestry Company developed a “Good Neighbor Plan” in order to improve their relationships with Mapuche communities, incorporating three principal values: 1) avoid actions that could damage surrounding communities, 2) promote better relations between company employees and neighbors, and 3) develop programs that will mitigate poverty in nearby areas.

In short, the government and the private companies operating in indigenous territory believe that economic development and growth is necessary and can be achieved in cooperation with surrounding communities. As a result, the private sector seeks to develop friendly” relations with surrounding communities and the government seeks to develop culturally conscious social policies that will enable the communities to fully integrate into national development. Those communities that continue to resist are considered to be “unreasonable” and destructive.

#### Development with Identity

At least in official discourse, the democratic governments since 1990 have sought to generate support for its economic and social development model and to respond to Mapuche demands for recognition and greater equality, targeting governmental action through the creation of a new institution, the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI) and new approaches with the establishment of the Indigenous Law (19.253). Despite this effort, the indigenous policies developed are considered by most actors to be insufficient, although for different reasons.<sup>5</sup>

Indigenous policy has changed incrementally over the last 18 years, although its compensatory nature has remained a dominant. The government has introduced changes in response to the demands for more resources from indigenous populations as well as the demand for greater governability in Mapuche territory from the private sector. In short, it seeks to address grievances due to past aggression or violations of human rights, and the majority of government spending lies in the purchase of indigenous land and water rights from private landowners (57% of CONADI’s 2008 budget was spent to purchase land and water rights). Even when in practice the purchase of land often occurs where there is conflict, the evaluation is principally based on the amount of time the community has existed (i.e. recognized by CONADI) rather than on the ancestral claims to that land. Since no information on ancestral claims is required, many purchases are made that have even created

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<sup>5</sup> José Aylwin (2008) considers that the Mapuche conflict is a response to the incapacity of the Indigenous Law to satisfy the needs of indigenous communities. Villalobos-Ruminott (2006) argues that the conflict emerges because the Mapuche live and remain in subsistence conditions due to discrimination, the biopolitics of assimilation, and segregation.

conflicts between communities (González-Palominos, Meza-Lopehandía Glaesser, & Sánchez Curihuentro, 2007).

A second characteristic of indigenous policies is the mitigation of problems generated by private sector activity in indigenous territory. These policies are reactive and emerge in response to the conflicts between the indigenous peoples and the private sector. Some of the most emblematic conflicts are: 1) the construction of hydroelectric dams in Pehuenche territory, 2) conflicts over land ownership with lumber companies in Arauco and Malleco, and 3) the installation of garbage dumps near indigenous communities.

Since the Chilean government is interested in the realization of these private sector activities, it designs policies and/or assures that the private sector implements policies that will mitigate the problems created by their productive activity. In 2000, in an attempt to address the problems and transform the conflict, the government organized a series of public-private commissions to address the issue (such as the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples) and developed new public policies using “Development with identity” as a slogan.

Although these social programs seek to promote “development with identity”, the fact that they are targeted in or near “conflictive” areas has affected the quality as well as the legitimacy of these policies. They are generally perceived to be governmental efforts to buy the support of impoverished indigenous communities. In many cases, these policies have reduced the protests, although their impact on the marginalization and poverty in the indigenous communities (reservations) is questionable.<sup>6</sup>

Since 2000, the government has more actively targeted the indigenous population and specifically recognized ethno-cultural differences. In particular, with the program *Orígenes* financed by the Inter-American Development Bank, the government has sought to develop new instruments that sought to combined economic development while respecting indigenous culture. However, the program placed greater emphasis on the development rather than the identity aspect. Indeed, the program established that 70% of the resources assigned to the Local Planning Commissions must be used in productive activities. The financing was assigned through officially recognized indigenous organizations in the selected rural communities. The policies up to 2008 have favored rural communities over urban Mapuche, although there is now a new policy targeted to urban indigenous population.

These policies did incorporate a limited cultural element that combined an essentialist concept of Mapuche identity with a functionalist approach, often creating dissonance within the Mapuche communities. To illustrate, the implementation of intercultural health programs required a *machi* (medicine woman) to establish her healing hut next to the local public health clinic without

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<sup>6</sup> See for example the discussion in Yañez & Aylwin (2007).

considering the spiritual aspects of the space. Similarly, the bilingual intercultural education programs originally included teaching non-indigenous teachers Mapudungun so they could teach it to native speakers. Animal production programs required the sale of the animals when the Mapuche (and especially the Pehuenche) believe that animals (and not money) are the real wealth.

Despite these problems and the many criticisms of the programs implemented, the programs seem to have strengthened the pride in being of indigenous descent and the recognition of the contributions of Mapuche culture to world culture. Interaction with other indigenous cultures and participation in international events has also contributed to the recognition that Mapuche culture can be financially valuable, promoting the creation of ethno-tourism and artisan products for sale.

A third characteristic of government policy has been consolidated during the government of President Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010) and refers to the recognition of past grievances. The term “recognize” has in Spanish as a double meaning: it means to recognize (*reconocer*) as well as get to know better (*re-conocer*). This idea seeks to promote a less discriminatory treatment by non-indigenous persons. The elaboration of a document on the history of the indigenous peoples in Chile is referred to as a “New Deal” (“*El Nuevo Trato*”) and explicitly recognizes the loss of land and the prior human rights violations, although this recognition has yet to be incorporated into the design of indigenous policy.

The Chilean equivalent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs *CONADI* rarely recognizes the existence of violence. It is not mentioned in official documents, and the government tends to suggest that it is marginal and does not to represent the Mapuche people, creating an image dual image of “good Indian” and “bad Indian”. As can be seen in his evaluation of the advances made, the Commissioner of Indigenous Affairs, Rodrigo Egaña (2008) only mentions the Mapuche conflict indirectly and stated “unsatisfied demands have generated conflicts . . . that often lead to law breaking, generating a “spiral of violence”. Indeed, his evaluation identifies three principal challenges: 1) problem of economic sustainability in indigenous communities, 2) Chilean society does not accept multiculturalism and is not working to promote integration, and 3) the present institutions (such as *CONADI*) dedicated to indigenous policy need to be transformed in order to be more effective.

#### Returning Governability to the Area

As already mentioned, state action, both positive and negative, has been concentrated principally in Mapuche territory where there are more conflicts over land ownership or there is resistance to resource extraction. Even though the government in speeches now recognizes the multicultural nature of Chilean society and the need to address past violations of indigenous rights and there

is an increase of funding in many indigenous communities, there are still cases of flagrant violations of the rights of indigenous peoples, where the State is either the violator or does not effectively protect these rights. One of the constant criticisms is that the State is only concerned with protecting the private sector rather than ensuring the rights of all. The government's position is directly related with its priority on economic development where indigenous people who resist these changes are considered to be "obstacles".

During the government of Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006), the Chilean government decided to apply two special laws (decreed by the military dictatorship but never used) the "Anti-Terrorist Law" and the "State Security Law" to prosecute members of the Mapuche movement who have used violence against people or private property. These Laws allow the use of testimony from unidentified witnesses as well as the possibility of longer prison sentences for crimes such as threats, burning private property, and being part of a "terrorist" organization. Furthermore, the press coverage of these events amplifies public opinion against the Mapuche by focusing almost entirely on the "illegal and illegitimate" nature of the violence used by the Mapuche, and little or no discussion of the declarations from the movements (Acevedo, 2007).

The Ministry of Interior is responsible for maintaining governability, and especially for protecting property rights. The position of the government is well expressed by then Minister of Interior Francisco Vidal who stated in 2006 "to govern a country, and in this case a region, and deal with complex matters such as political violence requires an even hand, which implies respect for Chilean legislation, and to respect the government's political will. . . . In Chile, there is rule of law, and in democracy, the rule of law should be preserved and maintained, and those who do not respect it will receive the sanctions of the law" (author's translation) (Vidal, 2006).

The Minister of Justice, Maldonado, indicated on August 28, 2008 that "the government's principal concern is with the social and development aspects as well as with the general economic situation and quality of life in the territory where the conflicts are occurring. Additionally, the government needs to provide security, so that people feel that they are protected, and this is obtained with a permanent police presence. Additionally, the government has the obligation to collaborate in the investigation and sanctioning of crimes.

Under the government of Michelle Bachelet (2006 – present), the position has been maintained although the discourse is less extreme. For example in April 2009 after the visit of the United Nations Special Relater for Indigenous Affairs, James Anaya, the Sub-secretary of the Interior, Francisco Rosende, indicated that the government is committed to not invoking the Anti-Terrorist Law in the Mapuche conflict, which they understand as a legitimate, just demand for ancestral territory. However, he qualified his statement indicating that when acts are violent, such as those acts carried out by the Coordinator Arauco

Malleco (CAM), the government will use the Law because this violence is considered to be terrorist even when it is performed by someone of indigenous descent (El Mercurio, 2009).

### *Perspective of the Mapuche Movements*

From the Mapuche perspective, the conflict began when the Chilean State decided that Mapuche territory was part of Chilean territory, colonizing the land and taking control of many natural resources. This historical conflict began with the invasion of Mapuche territory, and different terms have been used to describe it, including conquista, colonization, pacification, and reduction of Mapuche territory. Thus, the present conflict is actually the continuation of earlier, century-long struggles that now appear symbolized as the conflict over natural resources.

Most Mapuche perceive that the Chilean State always defends private economic interests over Mapuche rights as was clearly illustrated with the construction of two hydroelectric dams in the Pehuenche-Mapuche territory in the Andes Mountains.<sup>7</sup> The position of the Mapuche movement is that as culturally distinct communities, they have the right to determine the type of development that they desire in their own territory. Their demand is directly related with the earlier demand to recognize the different indigenous peoples within Chilean territory and the right to prioritize their way of life over national economic development.

The government's continuous denial to change the Chilean Constitution in order to recognize the Mapuche's right to organize as a nation within Chilean territory polarized the debate. In response, the Mapuche movement has organized to defend their autonomy, arguing that "the Mapuche do not need the dominator to officially recognize them as a people because they historically have existed as a people. Consequently, recognition is a *winka* (non-indigenous) problem. . . . Indeed, we have rights not because we are indigenous, but rather because we are a People who are acting in self defense" (Naguil, 2007).

While the media and private sector tend to emphasize the violence,<sup>8</sup> Mapuche activists argue that the conflict is about territory and autonomy, and not only about land, poverty, and discrimination. The Coordinator of Communities in Conflict (Coordinadora de Comunidades en Conflicto, 2001) considers it to be an "ethno- and geo-political problem". Others consider it to be the renewal of the historical struggle of a People who refuse to be submissive, as represented in the words of Aukan Wilkaman, leader of All Lands Council: We haven't signed surrender and the War of Arauco is not over ("*No hemos*

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<sup>7</sup> For more information, see Gonzalez and Simon 2007; Namancura 1998; Downing 1996.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Lavanchy & Foerster (2002) identify the political semiotics that highlights the reiteration of violent actions as a constant of the Mapuche problem.

*firmado la derrota, ni la guerra de Arauco no ha terminado)*” (El Mercurio 1992).

The Mapuche Movement uses the label “conflict” to describe their demands for autonomy that have gained visibility and validity in their active resistance to transnational companies and the Chilean police forces that seek to “return order” to these territories. Indeed, the “conflict” has become symbolic of the questioning and challenge to the Chilean State’s sovereignty in Mapuche territories. Within this discourse, the Mapuche movement questions the social programs implemented by the government and the private sector because they do not address the deeper issue of territorial control.

Jose Bengoa (1999) argues that there are two trends in Mapuche thought: integrationism (with V. Coñoeapan as a reference) and autonomism (with M. Aburto Panguilef as a reference), and considers that the present-day Mapuche Movement is an autonomous resistance movement. Fenelon, González-Parra and Simon (2009) argue that the Mapuche Movement is not only a political act that defends and creates autonomy, but that it also offers a new way of doing politics. Indeed, it seeks to defy the concept of State sovereignty in order to establish an alternative way of life that is qualitatively different from capitalist modernity.

Both the words and acts of the CAM (Coordinadora de Comunidades en Conflicto, 2001) define themselves as anti-capitalist:

We are making definitions in the sense of reaffirming our condition as Mapuche and People-Nation; definitions that are in contraposition with a system that is not ours, that oppresses us, and that even condemns us to extermination. Consequently, we define ourselves as anti-capitalists because this system centers its action in extracting resources and placing them in the hands of a few at the cost of the majorities because they exploit people and impose their system of domination, they destroy nature, the ecosystem; situations that are absolutely opposed to our People’s conception of man, life and the world, placing at risk our way of life, our culture, whose base is the maintenance of equilibrium between humans and other natural elements, where the relations are more just and more human. At present, the capitalist system invades our territory, and thus its advance seriously threatens our existence as a Pueblo Nation Mapuche.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Estamos haciendo definiciones en el sentido de reafirmar nuestra condición de mapuche y de Pueblo Nación; definiciones que nos hacen contraponernos a un sistema que no es nuestro, que nos oprime y que, más aún, nos condena al exterminio. Por lo anterior, es que nos definimos de anticapitalistas, porque este sistema centra su acción en la apropiación de la riqueza en manos de unos pocos en desmedro de las mayorías, porque se explota a los hombres y se les impone un sistema de dominación, se destruye la naturaleza, el ecosistema; situaciones absolutamente contrapuestas a la concepción de nuestro Pueblo sobre el hombre, la vida y el mundo, poniéndose en riesgo nuestro sistema de vida,*

This separation between the Mapuche and the capitalist system is fundamental in the definition of the practical and ideological definitions of the Mapuche movement to recover their lands and to reconstruction Mapuche territory.

The sacred spaces of our ancestors are destroyed, they have stolen our valleys, hills, streams. Once we have recovered these ancestral spaces, we will be better able to express our spirituality. Once we recover our ancestral land that belongs to us and we control the territory, the people will find that life will have more meaning. We will respect each other more, we will have a better quality of life and more respect for nature because our ancestors knew that man is not the center of the world but rather only one more . . . .<sup>10</sup>

For the Mapuche, defense of their physical existence means defending their vision of the world and the associated life styles, practices, and values. The Mapuche understand and perceive that they are part of a larger system, which is a single being that includes humans, land, and nature, and where reciprocity is the regulating force. Land is a vital, indispensable component because it is territory that defines where the Mapuche come from, where they live, and where they are going.

As indicated, the fact that a nation-state or the world system decides to recognize (or not) the Mapuche does not affect their existence. In Chile, the State has sought to dominate the Mapuche people since its creation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. First, the Chilean State sought to physically control the Mapuche through the “Pacification of the Araucania”. Then, the State used legislation as the principal means of dominating and controlling the remaining Mapuche, incorporating them into the Nation-State, a process that would result in the transformation (and many argue the degradation) of the Mapuche culture as well as its social structure and political organization. This intent to dissolve the Mapuche as a people was combined with the eviction from their land and natural resources. The combination of a deteriorated social structure and the loss of land and natural resources have resulted in the material impoverishment and the need to redefine the struggle to exist in their own terms in a global system that seeks to eliminate their way of life.

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*nuestra cultura, la que tiene como base de sustentación el equilibrio del hombre con los demás elementos de la naturaleza, en donde las relaciones resultan más justas y más humanas. En la actualidad, el sistema capitalista invade nuestro territorio y, por lo tanto, su avance pone en serio riesgo nuestra existencia como Pueblo Nación Mapuche.*

<sup>10</sup> *espacios sagrados de nuestros antepasados están destruidos, nos han quitado quebradas, montes, arroyos. Al recuperar estos espacios ancestrales, nuestra espiritualidad tendría más capacidad de expresión. Por eso al recuperar tierras que nos pertenecen y ejercer control territorial, la gente le encuentra más sentido a la vida. Hay mayor respeto entre nosotros, una mejor calidad de vida y respeto por la naturaleza, porque nuestros antepasados tenían muy claro que el hombre no es el centro del mundo, sino sólo uno más...*

In their communities (reservations) as well as in the cities, the Mapuche continue to resist even when they demand a dialogue as equals with the Chilean State, which still seeks their incorporation as Chilean citizens and does not guarantee the conditions needed for Mapuche existence.

Faced with both public and private actors who cannot understand the Mapuche world vision, the Mapuche have elaborated autonomous resistance strategies to defend and affirm their way of life, their existence. Their identity is not defined by a folkloric vision of their traditional cultural practices but rather by the living presence of *Ngen* and other spiritual forces that are present in their lands.

In 2006, a group of Mapuche expressed their intention to create a Mapuche political party Wallmapuwen whose objective is to “create a Mapuche political party that is democratic and autonomist so that Mapuche can participate in the democratic system and obtain representative positions through democratic elections as all parties actually do” (Wallmapuwen - Declaración de Principios). Although they also mention autonomy, they clearly state that they seek “greater participation and control over their affairs” rather than secession. Wallmapuwen is supported by the Galician Nationalist Block (Bloque Nacionalista Gallego).

Although the Chilean press and television characterize the “Mapuche conflict” principally as the claim for more land and better living conditions, the Mapuche movements are actually resisting the degradation of their land, water, flora and fauna due to the establishment of large lumber plantations surrounding and transforming their territories and communities. The problem of material poverty often divides the communities, and many community members migrate to urban areas looking for better material conditions. The government solutions of multicultural indigenous policy over the last 18 years have been unable to transform the situation, confirming Mapuche “laziness” for some.

### Reconstructing the Mapuche Conflict

As has been shown in the previous discussion, the description of the Mapuche Conflict as the struggle of isolated, violent groups with little domestic support does not accurately characterize either the motivations or demands of the Mapuche Movement. The government tends to emphasize the investment placed in land and poverty reduction/economic development programs without considering the basic human desire to control one’s way of life and to participate in the decisions that affect it. The division of the government’s position between a national development project, targeted social policies, and maintenance of the rule of law has only polarized the situation creating a conflict with little possibility of dialogue.

At one level, the Mapuche conflict emerges as a dispute between the Chilean State (mediating private sector interests) and the Mapuche for control over the territory and natural resources, as a choice between the promotion of national development and the maintenance of their environment and way of life.

At a symbolic level, the Mapuche question the historical relations of domination established since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, arguing that the State cannot be a valid interlocutor or mediator in the dispute between Mapuche communities and private (capitalist) interests, directly questioning the State's legitimacy to represent the Mapuche. In short, the Mapuche demand their right to participate in the decisions that affect their way of life.

The Chilean State in its refusal to address this fundamental issue has polarized the dispute. In short, the State's non-recognition of the Mapuche's right to accept (or not) external intervention in their communities resulted in the Mapuche denial to accept any right of intervention of the Chilean State. The Chilean government's defense of their national development project whose cost is paid by the Mapuche has generated a questioning of modern, capitalist practices. Thus, the Mapuche movement looks to maintain their way of life as an alternative to capitalist modernity. The dispute for land becomes then a struggle between the dominant forms of exploitation (capitalism) and an alternative form of life where "Mapuche Territory" becomes the resistance itself, receiving support from other nationalist as well as anti-capitalist and anti-globalization movements worldwide.

The Mapuche Movement resists, defending its autonomy and way of life. In contrast, the Chilean State uses the police apparatus to defend and protect the lumber companies and the private sector on the one hand, while with the other hand it offers a variety of "integrated development" programs to "improve the quality of life".

This poverty discourse and its programs that finance the purchase of cattle, barns, community centers, and headdresses (*trarilonkos*) are received but cannot transform the conflict because they do not address the fundamental problem, which is clearly recognized as a "lack of political and economic power" by all Mapuche. Some decide to obtain power by working with the government, while others work against the government. This new indigenous identity emerges as a modern force that clearly understands the nature of power in a global system and seeks to establish their sovereignty through discourse but also by obtaining political and economic power. The State's non-recognition of their autonomy has only increased the legitimacy of this demand at the international level.

## Conclusions

On September 13, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly voted to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.<sup>11</sup> This landmark legislation, in active turmoil for three decades, acknowledges self-determination and autonomous relationships of indigenous peoples as separate communities with the right to organize their own governance, relationship to the land, economic practices, and sense of identity and membership. Only four countries worked against it and voted no – the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Interestingly, each of these countries has at least somewhat of a treaty-basis with indigenous peoples and has a strong and violent history of colonization by the English during the expansion out of Europe into the modern world-system. Additionally, each country claims to be under laws that respect their citizenry and their cultural origins, while at the same time is actively promoting “economic development” that has proven to be the enemy of indigenous peoples. We argue that understanding how these States resist recognizing indigenous nations and peoples and their rights is perfectly exemplary of the issues we discuss in this paper.<sup>12</sup>

Each day, more and more indigenous and non-state peoples around the world have come to understand their need to protect their ways of life as a common cause against the economic and cultural forces of globalization. The Mapuche in Chile and Aymara in Bolivia in South America work with the native nations of the Lakota in the United States and Mohawk in Canada, in the Northern Hemisphere; the Galician Nationalist Block from Spain and Sein Finn from Ireland actively supports the Mapuche’s demand for autonomy.

Coalitions between Indigenous and non-indigenous also hold great prospect throughout Latin America, as seen when the Zapatistas reached out to American Indian resistance groups, notably the Lakota and Mohawk among others, in their international meetings (*Encuentros*), and in alignment with the Bolivian leader Evo Morales, the Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez extended promises of fuel and other support to North American indigenous peoples, including the Lakota on Cheyenne River reservation in South Dakota. Receiving that support, Chairman Joseph Brings Plenty was invited to and attended an international indigenous summit in Caracas where networks with indigenous groups from across the Americas were established and the commonality of struggles was identified:

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<sup>11</sup> This can be found on many websites, an official one is: <http://www.iwgia.org/sw248.asp>, accessed July 17, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> “Sept. 13, 2007, will stand as a day of victory for indigenous peoples worldwide. On that day, the U.N. General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to finally adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The landmark declaration, adopted by a vote of 143 in favor to 4 against, was the culmination of many decades of negotiation and conflict over recognition of Native individual and collective rights. The declaration provides for the strengthening of cultural identities, protection of Native lands and resources, and emphasizes the indigenous right of self-determination.” (*Indian Country Today* 2007).

[When visiting] with the indigenous brother from Argentina... He (told) me the story of an Incan prophecy about a condor and an eagle. He said the Condor and the Eagle will meet in the air and join together, at which time will begin 1,000 years of peace on Earth. This Indian man believes that the Eagle represents the North American nations of indigenous people and the Condor represents the South American tribes. (Brings Plenty, ICT: 2008)

Brings Plenty tells of how another indigenous leader had a “*pipa*” (pipe) given to them long ago from “Northern peoples”, which he believes were certainly the Lakota. In discussing the oppression by the Spanish, and its corollary with Lakota struggles, Brings Plenty sees how similar values, and especially the importance of family (community), land, shared resources, and leadership by responsibility to councils and the people, have shaped these indigenous movements from both American continents.

In this paper, we have seen how the Chilean State in its promotion of national development has violated Mapuche autonomy in South America, privatizing their collective interests and destroying cultural unity, while characterizing their resistance as terrorist. Similar situations are faced by other indigenous nations, such as the Lakota who continue to struggle and seek to unite the different “sovereign” nations as the single Sioux Nation named in the Treaty of 1868 and to defender their legal claim to the Black Hills as well as to their own justice systems. In their struggle against the Nation-State and capitalist development, their movements are typified as being indiscriminately “hostile” in an attempt to de-legitimatize and marginalize their leaders. Still, Globalization has increased the connectivity of these peoples and their struggles, transforming their self-image and strengthening their cause at both a symbolic and material level.

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