Araucanos or 'Mapuches'?

Prejudice vs. recognition in the Chilean media and academia

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In dealing with the question of whether ethnicity is an atemporal, universal categorization or a contingent, historically specific one, the historian often has to confront the phenomenon of naturalization of social and cultural norms. Regardless of the plausibility of the assumption that ethnicity is a human universal, the practices of coexistence in complex societies show to which extent socially constructed differences and boundaries can successfully be adopted as a 'natural' consequence of an enforced otherness.[1] Thus, 'naturalized' prejudice and stereotypes become the dangerous core of everyday racism (cp. Essed 1990; 1991) or of radical nationalism,[2] and they complicate the implementation of integrative and human rights-based policies. Fortunately, the development of social and historical sciences, at least since the end of the Second World War, has provided us with a host of arguments, instruments, methods and strategies with which to critique and deconstruct such beliefs. Nevertheless, the distance between openly discriminating popular attitudes and official, even scholarly discourses may sometimes be smaller than we think or wish.

Let me take an apparently banal example from *El Mercurio*, the leading Chilean conservative newspaper. In a long, typically 'human touch'-style report about adoption, published in 2002, a woman journalist described the reality of

1 Cp. "We reach here the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature" (Barthes 1972: 129). I would like to thank Corinna Di Stefano (Konstanz) and Katharina Motzkau (Cologne/Tucumán) for their very helpful comments and suggestions.

2 Cp. the historical reflection on the German experience of radical nationalism as a xenophobic integration ideology (Wehler 1995).

Chilean childless couples waiting to adopt a baby (Aguilar 2002). Showing obvious empathy with the affected families, the author outlined the legal and institutional mechanism of adoption, delivered some relevant figures, and discussed the fears and hopes of the expectant parents. Central aspects of the report were the possibility of 'choosing one's own child' and the criteria used in order to guarantee the welfare of the new families. Talking with one of the waiting wives, the journalist quoted her main priorities: her baby "should be healthy and not belong to the ethnic group (*etnia*) of the Mapuche". The reason: "here in Temuco we live all together with them, and they truly have a difficult character" (*Acá en Temuco uno convive mucho con ellos, y la verdad es que tienen un carácter difícil*). The woman journalist presented this statement without comment, notwithstanding its obvious racism as well as the fact that the husband, "of Japanese descent", had added other very significant 'hard' criteria ("that the boy or the girl is not conceived by rape or by incest"). *En pedir no hay engaño* ("You can't blame [them] for asking") – the woman journalist continued, in a further display of ignorance and unconscious banalization of the discriminatory attitude of her interviewees. The thoughtless act of effectively putting illness, disability, and Mapuche ethnicity on the same level not only indicates the depth of the interviewees' personal mistrust toward the Mapuche people but also expresses a collective reluctance to come to terms with the other. One could argue that in this case it is a matter of ignorance, or maybe a relic of a situation which, since 2002, has hopefully been overcome. The fact is, however, that the diction of the article is still quite characteristic of the approach of *El Mercurio*, especially with regard to the Mapuche reality, and to issues of ethnic diversity in general.[3] Continuing a tradition from the days of Salvador Allende's *Unidad Popular*, when the newspaper often included reports of marauding Mapuche 'gangs' in the southern provinces, one of its favorite motifs since the 1990s is the reporting of Mapuche 'terrorists' installing panic and fear among the Chilean farmers and putting all economic activities at risk. This asymmetry in the media coverage of the growing social conflicts in Southern Chile and the frequent eruptions of violence between Mapuche activists and agents of the Chilean State reached a peak in the first weeks of 2013 with the occasion of the murder of the Luchsinger-Mackays, a couple who were members of an old colonist family of Swiss descent. On January 4, 2013, Werner Luchsinger's residence in Vilcún, in the *Araucanía* Region, was attacked and burned down by a group of hooded persons. An hour after the act, the Police found Mapuche Celestino Córdova with a gunshot wound on a field near the crime scene. He had been injured by the victim, who had tried to defend his own and his wife's life

3 The same accounts for *El Diario Austral*, its regional subsidiary in Temuco.

by firing a gun at his aggressor. The two lifeless bodies had been found asphyxiated and burned on the floor of their house (Human Rights Watch 2004). From the very beginning of the investigation, security forces, local politicians and government officials, as well as the majority of the mass media in Santiago proceeded on the assumption that this was an act of Mapuche 'terrorism'. In Chile, such an accusation implies significant consequences, since the Anti-Terrorist Law allows an extraordinarily severe treatment of suspects – widely criticized by human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and the UN Human Rights Council (2013). The Anti-Terrorist Law dates from the Pinochet regime (1984) and abrogates due process rights for the accused, including a longer wait before arraignment and access to a lawyer once charged. The law also authorizes the imposition of penalties up to three times higher than those established in the Chilean Criminal Code, and considers that acts perpetrated with the aim of 'causing fear in the population' or 'imposing demands upon authorities' have a 'terrorist intent'.[4] In the case of the Luchsinger-Mackay couple, the insistence of both regional and national *pressure* groups as well as mass media on considering the crime as an act of 'terrorism' negatively affected both the normal course of the trial and the associated public discussion, and prompted a number of discriminatory – if not openly racist – comments about the Mapuche people. No attack on the Mapuche or their houses had ever attracted such intense attention from the media and authorities; neither had the perpetrators of those attacks ever been brought to justice.[5] Almost no attention had been paid to the fact that the pamphlets scattered at the Luchsinger ranch during the arson attack referred to the fifth anniversary of Matías Catrileo's death. Catrileo, a 26-year-old Mapuche activist, had been shot in the back by police during a land rights protest on the property of Jorge Luchsinger, son of the Luchsinger-Mackay couple, on January 3, 2008. But only a few publications went to all the bother of reconstructing the complex background of a neighborhood dispute with historical roots back in the last decades of the 19th century (Bengoa 2014: 103-125).[6] The majority of the print comments in *El*

4 *Ley 18.314, que determina conductas terroristas y fija su penalidad*, (translation: that determines terrorist acts and defines penalties) enacted by the Junta Militar on April 16, 1984 (http://bcn.cl/1m3cx).

5 One year later, Córdova, the only suspect, was found guilty, while the other participants in the arson attack could not be arrested. Celestino Córdova is the *machi* (a kind of spiritual healer) within the Mapuche community in the region.

6 Only alternative newspapers (*El Ciudadano, The Clinic*) and the radio station of the Universidad de Chile have reported on the long-standing work of the historian Martín Correa Cabrera, a researcher of the *Observatorio Ciudadano* (the former *Observatorio*

Mercurio and (to a lesser extent) *La Tercera* continued to reproduce the negative stereotypes regarding the 'violence' of Mapuche activism, thus contributing to the further criminalization of ethnic belonging. The editorial line of these newspapers has been clear and consistent until nowadays: exaggerated reporting of acts of violence, denial of ethnic diversity in the Chilean nation-state, and concentration on the defense of values of 'order' and 'security' – those values supposedly threatened by the 'violent' Mapuche (Foerster/Vergara 2000: 29–33; Crow 2013: 148–49, 167–68; Pairican 2014: 28).

The mainstream media also serve as a platform for the diffusion of a more sophisticated, academic version of the dominant discourse of exclusion. An illustrative case was the controversy that kept both political and scholarly circles in Chile busy throughout March 2014. A new policy regarding indigenous peoples, announced by the just-elected left-wing government of President Michelle Bachelet, included novel approaches to political participation, legal and constitutional recognition, and a reconsideration of the use of the Anti-Terrorist Law against Mapuche activists. Additionally, Bachelet appointed a Mapuche politician, the Christian-democrat Francisco Huenchumilla, as the new governor (*intendente*) of the territory of the *Araucanía* (*IX Región*), with the explicit aim of helping to implement the governmental reforms. These announcements provoked a furious reaction from several conservative Chilean historians and publicists, who rejected the whole project of the new administration. Again making intensive use of the traditional conservative platform of *El Mercurio*, they openly questioned the existence of distinct 'native' or 'indigenous' groups in the Chilean society by categorically denying the validity of collective 'historical' rights, especially in the case of the Chilean Mapuche people. Above all, Sergio Villalobos, professor at the Universidad de Chile and 'grand old man' of Chilean national historiography, insisted in several print and TV interviews on avoiding the use of the term 'Mapuche' at all, which is, in his opinion, purely and simply an 'invention' of leftist intellectuals (Villalobos 2014; Huenchumilla 2014; Antileo/Pairican 2014). Instead, he refers to 'Araucanians', adopting Spanish colonial terminology. Similarly to the 19th-century elites, Villalobos, interviewed in 2014, seems to deal with the reality of ethnic diversity by imagining the pre-conquest past rather than conveying in any sense an indigenous vision. Regarding the current conflict, Villalobos sides with the colonists of Northern and Central European descent (German, Swiss, French, British) in denouncing the 'political violence' the Mapuche organizations have

de Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas), who has described meticulously the economic activities of the Luchsingers since their arrival in Chile (Soto 2013; cp. also Correa Cabrera 2008).

employed. He justifies the repressive aspects of state policy and explains the social underdevelopment of the *Araucanía* by referring to *defectos ancestrales* of Mapuche people, namely to their traditionally supposed disposition toward alcoholism, or their purportedly inadequate aptitude for productive working. According to the opinion of Villalobos, the so-called 'Pacification', i.e. the forced expropriation of Mapuche lands at the end of the 19th century, was the 'necessary' result of progress and the precondition of national modernization. Villalobos' statement of 2014 was consistent with his earlier political comments. He reproduced the same arguments he had already used in May 2000 when criticizing the work of the *Comisión de Verdad Histórica y Nuevo Trato* (CVHNT, Commission for Historical Truth and New Treatment of Indigenous Peoples) (Villalobos 2011: 46–66). The final report of this commission, convoked by President Ricardo Lagos Escobar, had concluded that the occupation of the *Araucanía* by the Chilean state was made possible only "through violent means", and described the fifteen years between 1869 and 1883 as "a period of great violence" (Crow 2013: 187-194). This statement, notwithstanding the lack of real political effects, was contrary to the nationalist-assimilationist consensus, and right-wing historians and publicists did not receive it favorably.[7]

Even if Villalobos' language obviously contains harsh racist elements, the consequences of his political and historiographical positions certainly go beyond a simple matter of political correctness (cp. Pavez 2012; Pairican 2014: 208). His argumentation, supposedly founded on historical evidence, serves the political purpose of invisibilizing ethnic differences (cp. Miller 2003: 197-200, for the link between invisibilization and nonrecognition in Chile). Furthermore, his standpoint consistently supports the idea of a homogeneous and monocultural Chilean society, implicitly contrasting it to the much lesser stable and compact societies of the South American neighborhood (and especially in the Andean region). By using systematically the label 'ancestral', as Villalobos does, the suggestion is that the so-called '*Araucanía* Conflict' is an artificial one. The most effective instrument of its invisibilization is the biased 'historicizing' of its historical causes by dating it in the most recondite past and retrojecting its origins not to the Chilean process of state-building in the 19th century, but to an

7 Paradoxically, the publication of the CVHNT's report activated at the same time the rising of a kind of 'radical' Mapuche historiography 'from below', condemning not only the 'distorted history' contained in the report, but also the 'postcolonial epistemology' behind of the dominant political and scientific approach to the Mapuche issues. The criticism included by the way the most progressive historians and anthropologists (cp. Caniuqueo/Levil/Marimán/Millalén 2006).

indeterminate 'colonial' (i.e. 'Spanish') pre-historical time. So it is not unusual to hear Chilean politicians relativizing current demands of the Mapuche people by referring to a '500-year-old question'. But national historians also play a problematic role when they suggest a (positively connoted) continuity between the Spanish conquest of Chile in the 16th century and the Chilean conquest of the *Araucanía* at the end of the 19th century.[8] As the anthropologist José Bengoa, one of the greatest specialists in Mapuche history, has pointed out, the Chilean public's systematic refusal to accept the 'modernity' of the conflict has both a scientific and a political dimension (Bengoa 2014: 294). A realistic historical explanation of the occupation of the *Araucanía* since the end of the 19th century would include accounts not only of the violence perpetrated against the Mapuche, but also of their dispossession of their own land, the fragmentation of their traditional power structures, their increasing exposure to external socioeconomic and political threats, and, last but not least, their exclusion from the Chilean national project. All these elements would make the 'Mapuche issue' a Chilean national one, because they all contrast with a well-established national consensus on the successful 'Chilean way' and reveal the limits and contradictions of the national modernization process.

The reconstruction of the origins of Villalobos' nationalist-apologetic narrative, besides its relevance for the History of Chilean Historiography, also provides an insight into the ways in which the public role of historians in Chile has been shaped and defined through the 200 years of independent life. Villalobos represents a national tradition of dealing with ethnic diversity, a specifically *wingka*[9] perspective *vis à vis* the Mapuche reality, which also radiates out beyond the historical discipline. Since the end of the 19th century, the conquest of the *Araucanía* has always been presented as an inevitable, quite unproblematic and uncomplicated element of the Chilean nation-building process, fitting perfectly into the self-satisfied discourse of Chilean exceptionalism (Jocelyn-Holt 2005). The occupation of the vast territories southern of the Bío Bío River, whose inhabitants had resisted the Spanish colonial power for almost three centuries, received very little attention in the great historical works of renowned Chilean historians of the *fin de siècle* or the

8 Or suggesting continuity, by declaring that "the task assumed by the Spanish" more than three hundred years before was "thus" finally concluded in the 1880s (Villalobos 2008: 152).

9 The Mapuzugun word '*wingka*' (in Spanish *huinca*), which originally refers to the Inca (*ingka*) and Spanish (*ui-ingka*, i.e., 'new Inca') invaders of Mapuche territory, but also means 'thief' or 'bandit', is a stereotype the Mapuche use, often in a derogatory way, for describing practices or habits conceived as non-Mapuche.

first half of the 20th century (Diego Barros Arana, Francisco Encina, Luis Galdames etc.). The consequence of the dominance of 'minimalist narratives' in the historiography was the diffusion of a biased interpretation in school curricula and in the Chilean State Museums (Crow 2013: 24-25). Even under Pinochet's dictatorship, and although the regime was not known for its rhetorical carefulness, the official interpretation of the occupation was that it had been an example of 'peaceful resolution of border conflicts'. Curiously, the military campaigns against the Mapuche have also been sidelined in the most influential Anglophone studies of Chilean History, especially in those adopting almost enthusiastically the common interpretation of national order and political stability.[10] A cruel war as well as a bloody military occupation regime would seriously put into question this self-satisfied picture of Chilean history. For instance, the professionalism and modernity of the Chilean army belong to the "myths of Chilean democracy" (Portales 2004: 81–98, 263–273), while the inglorious participation of Chilean soldiers in the occupation of the *Araucanía* tends to be overlooked or at least relativized. Chilean forces killed, raped and set fire to the *rukas* (houses) of the Mapuche. The profusion of primary sources confirming the existence of gruesome war crimes on both sides, and the numerous testimonies of the brutality of the post-war occupation contrast with the idyllic discourse of mainstream Chilean historiography until at least the 1980s.

An additional crucial aspect of the historical invisibilization of the Mapuche is the strategy of avoiding a colonial framing of the issue. The acquisition of the *Araucanía* coincided with the annexation of large tracts of Bolivian and Peruvian territory during the War of the Pacific (1879-1883), and was followed shortly thereafter by the appropriation of Rapa Nui/Easter Island (1888). Another specifically colonial trait of the mainstream narrative is the fact that it is a history without Mapuche protagonists. Mapuche people are usually presented as a homogenous and defeated mass. In fact, mainstream Chilean historiography still insists that relations between the Mapuche and Spanish were relatively peaceful and that commercial relations and *mestizaje* proceeded rapidly at the end of the Spanish colonial age. While Villalobos and his followers are absolutely right in emphasizing the long history of frontier relations and the impact of transculturation processes and the mutually beneficial economic relations between the Mapuche and Spanish (with the concomitant decline in

10 A paradigmatic case is the 'classic' handbook of Simon Collier and William Sater (2004), with only 1½ pages dedicated to war and occupation. Cp. the criticism of Jocelyn-Holt (2014: 295–308); for the general historiographical context cp. Sáez Arance (2015).

military aggression), their conclusion in terms of suggesting a 'pacific integration' of the *Araucanía* into Chile and a more or less 'automatic' conversion of 'Mapuche' into 'Araucanian Chilean' is misleading and apologetic (cp. among others Jara 1971; Villalobos 1992: 265–410 and 1995; Blancpain 1996; Bengoa 2003; Rinke 2003). The picture is much more complicated than this, especially if indigenous sources are taken into account. In the exceptionally valuable collection of *Cartas Mapuches*, edited by the historian and anthropologist Jorge Pavez, we find several examples of the ambivalence of the relation between the Mapuche and the Chilean state before, during, and after the 'Pacification' of the *Araucanía* (Pavez Ojeda 2008; cp. also Navarro 2014). In fact, there were Mapuche leaders who supported the Chilean military forces. Continuing a tradition of the colonial time, the so-called *indios amigos* received regular payments from the Chilean government for providing information or for helping to keep peace in their communities. On the other side, the testimonies of the deported Mapuche collected by the German ethnographer Robert Lehmann-Nitsch in the *Museo de Ciencias Naturales* in La Plata (Argentina) reveal the extent of the long-term damages done to the indigenous people (Canio/Pozo 2013). The social and political reality of indigenous people in Chile of the last 125 years certainly looks quite different from the harmonious picture painted by the Chilean national historiography. The main problems they are faced with are indubitably poverty and marginalization. But in addition, for the Mapuche activists, the question is also a matter of (cultural) rights and collective identity seeking expression in a pluralist society. Regarding the trends with respect to the recognition of ethnicity in Latin America, Chile is the most extreme case of legal underdevelopment (Clavero 2008b: 30–33).[11] For instance, Chile's current constitution, which was written by Pinochet and his advisers in 1980, is the only one in the entire South American continent which does not recognize indigenous peoples. Notwithstanding the fact that the number of indigenous people is clearly lower in some other regions than in Chile, neighboring states such as Argentina included such recognition in their constitutions back in 1994. In several Latin American nation states such as Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela, new constitutions designate seats in the national congress specifically for indigenous representatives. Other countries such as Bolivia go even further, declaring the plurinational and multicultural character of the state (Bengoa 2007; Clavero 2008a).[12]

11 Clavero makes explicitly the link between the academic 'ignorance' and the legal nonrecognition of the Mapuche reality.

12 Cp. Bengoa (2007: 93-147) on the social and political background of this indigenous 'emergence'.

How did this special path taken by Chile come about? The described dominant discourse on the Mapuche conflict reunites exemplarily almost all elements of the evolution of the ethnicity discussion in the independent Latin American republics, but it also contains specifically national elements (Crow 2014). Firstly, it is necessary to consider the (historiographical and political) decision to use the term 'Araucanian' or 'Mapuche'. Notwithstanding the relatively recent use of 'ethnicity' as both a technical term and a field of scientific study, historians of ancient, medieval and early modern history have been mostly aware of the centrality of ethnic cleavages in processes of social, political and cultural transformation across the centuries. However, their traditional emphasis on state-building, especially considering the genuine legitimating function of history as a discipline, resulted in a relative neglect of all those dimensions of 'ethnicity' that challenged the conceptual dominance of the State in historical discourse. The rise of state structures in Europe's early modern overseas empires can generally be interpreted as a continuation of domestic state-building processes (e.g. in the case of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies). Hence, the dominant master narratives of the European colonial period tended to emphasize a presumed evolutionary gap between 'highly developed' state-like *civilizations* on the one hand and 'primitive' *peoples*, *nations* or *tribes* on the other. Emergent national historiographies in the young Latin American republics perpetuated this dichotomous approach, in accordance with European and North American social conventions. In the Chilean case, the national historiography received strong European influences from the beginning, and very early on it adopted a methodologically and ideologically conservative matrix, focusing on the 'order' as the central social category and favoring the political exclusion of all those individuals as well as all those social and ethnic groups which potentially could put this 'order' in question (Stuven 2000; Sáez Arance 2014).[13] The presumptive lack, or simply the otherness, of the structures of socio-political organization among the Mapuche became much more than a purely historical argument – to this day it still serves to legitimate the absence of – or at least the weak disposition of Chilean authorities to open – a political dialogue with indigenous activists.

By making the choice for the elder Spanish denomination, the Chilean national(ist) historians also demonstrate their constancy in the defense of the vision of creole elites throughout Spanish America since the wars of independence in the early 19th century. In fact, Spanish American 'patriots' made an extensive use of the pre-conquest Amerindian past for the construction

13 Stuven (2000) makes a systematic treatment of the importance of 'order' categories in all cultural and political debates of this era.

of meaningful national myths and histories *vis à vis* their royalist enemies. Generally speaking, both in humanist-oriented Spanish *crónicas* of the Renaissance and in the republican historiography of the 19th century, heavily influenced by romanticism, authors alluded to conceptions (we should rather say: to *pre*conceptions) of 'ethnicity' as an element deeply rooted in European culture. The existence of 'Romans' and 'Germans', of 'Iberians', 'Lusitans' and 'Visigoths' in Antiquity and the early Middle Ages became a relevant fact for the interpretation and explanation of ongoing ethnic conflicts in the New World. There was not even a lack of bizarre transfers of stereotypes in one way or another (cultural similarities between 'Basques' and '*Araucanos*', *'Flandes indiano'* as a characterization for the not-pacified Southern Chile, in analogy to the Spanish Netherlands, etc.) (Sáez Arance 2010: 137–139). It is obvious that the concerned peoples had little or nothing to do with such heroic clichés, but the evocative power of these bequeathed 'ethnic' terms and categories, combined with additional criteria of social and religious distinction, significantly framed the mutual cultural perception.[14] Sometimes they were even used to justify the quality of the response of the colonial power. After 1820, these traditional narratives, as well as the associated new national symbols, compensated for the lack (or at least for the deficits) of a strong, clear and distinct collective identity among the mostly 'white', Catholic, wealthy and Spanish-speaking actors of the independence in the different regions of the dismembered empire. The British historian Rebecca Earle has underlined the similarities in the development and social implementation of this 'elite nationalism' across Spanish America (2007: 9–15). The Chilean case is outstanding because of the persistence of its identitarian leitmotifs and its extremely contradictory foundations. On the one side, Chilean 'ethno-patriotism' of 1820 was fed through the exaltation of Mapuche (i.e. 'Araucanian') heroism by the Spaniards in literature, especially in Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* (Ercilla 1993 [1569–89]). This epic poem, written in the 16th century by a Basque soldier in Madrid, who had spent no more than a couple of years in the most distant place of the Spanish Monarchy, for a very long time (to some extent, even to the present day!) enjoyed the curious status of being the 'first history book' about Chile (Álvarez Vilela 1986). The Mapuche, or the 'Araucanians', as Ercilla called them, became a people renowned in Spanish America for the ferocity with which they resisted Spanish ambitions of conquest. The success of Mapuche resistance was symbolized by the fact that the Spaniards were never able to establish a permanent foothold in the *Araucanía* south of the river Bío Bío, and of course in the 1820s and 1830s this was a very god reason to be proud to be a 'Chilean'. On the other side, this

14 On the Mapuche 'ethnogenesis' in the context of colonial frontier cp. Boccara 1999.

rhetorical sympathy for the indigenous had no positive consequences for the tense situation at the border of the new state. The Araucanian image began to vary substantially: from 1845 onwards the Mapuche were much less frequently described as hardy and brave ancestors of the Chileans, and much more often as "barbarous savages" instead (Pinto 2003: 151–160). The institutional consolidation of the Republic and the launch of an ambitious settlement program for Central European immigrants in the south of the country brought along a fundamental revision of the official statements with regard to the indigenous. Liberal politicians and positivist-influenced writers started to talk about 'Araucanians' in a similarly disparaging way to Sergio Villalobos nowadays (sometimes their statements were even published by the same newspapers – such as *El Mercurio*). This discursive change became the prelude for the so-called *Pacificación de la Araucanía* (1861–1883) – in other words, for the invasion and the military occupation of the territories south of the Bío Bío (Pinto 2003: 185–208). The justification was the assumption of a civilizing mission towards the indigenous inhabitants by raising their material standard of living as well as "their spirit to the moral and religious truths".[15] The invasion of the *Araucanía* sparked a violent war which caused the death and the displacement of numerous Mapuche, destroyed the communitarian structures, and opened the way for German and Swiss settlers, who were often influenced by modernist racist ideas, and in any case were scarcely sensitive to the historical merits of good old Araucanian warriors.

From this date, the relations between the Mapuche and the Chilean nation state became practically reduced to an economic-assistential dimension on the one hand and, on the other, to an issue of security policy. Seen from a social perspective, the state was (legally) entitled to force an assimilation of living conditions, as the Mapuche should now be perceived as equal citizens of the Chilean nation. This was manifested in a political practice of coercion and repression beyond party-political boundaries, mostly in favor of the big landowners of European descent, and later on in the 20th century, in favor of forestry companies, both local and from abroad (Mallon 1999; Kaltmeier 2004: 93–96, 151–153, 182–185; Pairican 2014: 33–65). The 'Mapuche issue' therefore became a military 'Mapuche conflict'. Nevertheless, the Chilean occupation did not entail the complete elimination of Mapuche cultural practices. Notwithstanding the limits of the reservation system, it allowed the Mapuche a framework within which to continue their communitarian traditions. Long – term local studies such as Florencia Mallon's book on the community of Nicolas Ailio

15 Cp. Pinto (2003: 118–119, 167–170, and 171–179) on the specific role of historians, Bengoa (2014: 51–54) and Bottinelli (2009: 109–113).

show the changing dynamics of social interaction, political tension and cultural appropriation characteristic of the relations between Mapuche and the Chilean state in the 20th century (Mallon 2005). On the other side, the most positive developments in the interethnic dialogue grew out of the initiative of Mapuche intellectuals to occupy their own place in the Chilean public sphere, for instance by creating new indigenous media or simply by participating much more actively in the great 'national' debates.[16] Despite the obsessive concentration of the public discourse on security issues, the mostly pacific activism of today's Mapuche organisations contributes to clarifying the historically grown, real nature of the 'Mapuche problem' by placing emphasis on the question of identity and the recognition of this identity.[17] This recognition is surely compatible with a modern, inclusive and pluralist redefinition of the Chilean state.[18] Furthermore, it would be a real contribution to sociocultural change, for the benefit of all inhabitants of "that *ruka* called Chile".[19] From the perspective of critical historians, an important aim should be to help public opinion to focus on the real problems of the present, instead of helping the political elites to functionally relegate the so-called Mapuche-conflict to the past. It is not the 'ancestral defects' of the Mapuche that are at fault, but rather the structural defects of a colonialist state, which turned out to be unable to manage social and ethnic diversity.

16 This is the case of the quite influential Mapuche publicist Pedro Cayuqueo, who launched the Mapuche newspaper *Azkintuwe* in October 2003 (cp. Cayuqueo 2012b), and became in the following years a prolific political columnist in *The Clinic* and even sometimes in mainstream media as *La Tercera* (Cayuqueo 2012a, 2014).

17 One of the first (and unfortunately quite isolated) scholarly inputs in this sense was the programmatic contribution of the anthropologists Rolf Foerster and Iván Vergara (2000). They proposed an analysis of the Mapuche conflict from the perspective of the "struggle for recognition", i.e. as a dispute over the sense and the character of the relationship between the Mapuches and the Chilean society. The authors connect their analysis with the international philosophical and sociological research on recognition (Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth) and compare it critically with the typically Schmittian 'friend/foe' reductionism of the Chilean mainstream media.

18 A central aspect of this redefinition should be an anyhow necessary process of decentralization and political devolution. For the development of own political concepts among the Mapuche cp. Marimán (2013).

19 I am adopting the programmatic formulation of Pedro Cayuqueo (2014), arguing in the pursuit of a "national dialogue" in Chile. For an earlier reflection on the perspectives of a Chilean 'multiculturalism', which overcomes the traditional reduction of Mapuche to a problematic 'minority', cp. also Foerster and Vergara (2002).

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