3. An Ethnography of and in Solidarity

The following chapter introduces my methodological approach to studying the expressions of international solidarity and transnational advocacy with and of the Mapuche. After briefly laying down the epistemological and methodological foundations of my approach, I will detail the development of my research between 2014 and 2017 as a networked, activist ethnography of and in solidarity between Europe and Chile. Towards the end of this chapter, I will discuss some methodological challenges that I encountered during my research. These challenges include the questions of how to balance research between academic and political spaces, how to deal with the involved actors' (including my own) vulnerabilities, and, finally, how to do research in solidarity by giving back and redistributing the products of the investigation.

This chapter follows the aim of presenting a research agenda on the expressions and experiences of international solidarity that is being conducted in solidarity with the involved actors. This is why this research agenda is presented as an ethnography of and in solidarity. Based on my position as a researcher in solidarity, I am able to compose my own position in (possible or limited) solidarity as an object of study within the ethnographic process.

Epistemological and Methodological Foundations

The first section of this chapter presents the epistemological and methodological foundations as well as the research methods that I have chosen to discuss my research questions and to make sense of international solidarity and transnational advocacy with the Mapuche.[1]

1 This approach follows a differentiation between an epistemology as an "adequate theory of knowledge or justificatory strategy", a methodology as "a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed [including] accounts of how 'the general structure

The justificatory strategy for my research methodology is based on the argument that solidarity can be investigated more adequately from a standpoint of solidarity. Marxist (Fals-Borda 2009; 2010; Lukács 2012), feminist (Haraway 1988; Harding 1987a; 1987b; 1991; 1994; Hinton 2014), and Black feminist scholars (Hill Collins 2002) have argued that a particular standpoint has an epistemological advantage compared to supposed objectivity and that this epistemological advantage is achieved by theorising the positionality of the subject who conducts the research. By theorising a particular positionality, it is possible to generate more general statements about the wider social experience. For example, capitalism can be better understood by looking at and departing from the experience of the working class (Lukács 2012) as well as racism can be studied more thoroughly through its impact on and analysis by People of Colour (Hill Collins 2002). The argument here is that these structures basically determine the total social experience of these groups and they have a practical interest in overcoming them. This is why their positionality not only holds the key to understand these social conditions, but also to change them (Lukács 2012, 173–74).

I want to transfer this epistemological argument to the present research approach in the following way: by committing to a political activism in solidarity with the Mapuche, I will be able to understand the complex experiences of international solidarity better. At the same time, a committed activist perspective—through its disposition to change reality—is able to make qualitatively better statements than so-called neutral inquiries. Finally, I want to adopt the insight that only an active engagement with the social reality leads to the particular arguments that I develop in this thesis. Any abstract argument for possibilities of solidarity with the Mapuche thus has to be cross-checked with the actual practices of solidarity in social life.

In recent decades, critical (Black) feminists like Sandra Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, and Donna Haraway have made important interventions in the field of research epistemologies and methodologies in the social sciences. These debates set out with the reasonable suspicion of the appropriation of male- and white-centred, bourgeois sciences for emancipatory, primarily feminist purposes (Harding 1991, 7). Rather, in order to support emancipatory politics and research, the epistemological foundations (and not just research

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of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines'", and finally a research method as a particular "technique for (or a way of proceeding in) gathering evidence" (Harding 1987b, 2–3).

methods or methodologies) of the modern sciences need to be scrutinised (Harding 1987b, 28).

For these theorists, the positionality and standpoint of "women's lives make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male supremacy" (Hartsock 1987, 159), providing a strategic epistemological and scientific benefit (Harding 1991, 158–59). Feminist standpoint theory thus argues that the social, cultural, and gendered identity of the researcher does not define, but does strongly influence, his or her results. It further challenges the idea of scientific objectivity by stating that a neutral positionality cannot contribute to analyse, alleviate, or overcome socioeconomic hierarchies. In summation, it paves the way for an argument of "situated knowledges" (Haraway 1988).

This results in a claim for a "strong objectivity" (Harding 1994, 165–68; my translation) that integrates the sociocultural, economic, racial, and gender background conditions of the process of knowledge production, which have remained unquestioned in traditional research. This claim demands me to critically reflect and make my sociocultural positionality as a white, middle-class man visible, as well as to scrutinise how this positionality determines my research process and results. It follows that my perspective is not only a privileged one, but is also limited and partial. Thus, it cannot produce universal truths or objective statements. At the same time, strong objectivity urges to think and evaluate our research based on the sociocultural locations that are oppressed and dominated. This means recognising the perspective of those Others and relocating our thinking to their social positionality in order to be able to look back at ourselves from this distanced, critical, and objectifying location (Harding 1994, 194). This is why one of the central epistemological premises of this research is to understand solidarity by discussing it with and departing from Mapuche positionalities.

The argument against universal objectivity and in favour of a strong objectivity as situated knowledge demands an epistemological standpoint of the researcher that is constantly and critically reflected upon (Juris and Khasnabish 2013c, 373). This means recognising and highlighting my own location and positionality, as well as my knowledge, its formative contexts, constraints, and products, as well as my social background and bodily inscribed meanings (Haraway 1988, 589). In that way, the insights produced through this research are results of the "objectivation of the objectifying subject," that is, the complex ways I enter into a relationship with the sociocultural space of my research (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013, 238–49; my translation). A critical standpoint is not the result of a capacity that comes along naturally with a

certain sociopolitical positionality, but is rather created and struggled for. It is hence the result of taking responsibility and making an autonomous decision (Harding 1994, 306).

My research methodology is thus guided by the epistemological guiding principle of critically observing and understanding solidarity from a committed, activist perspective that contributes to the quest for possibilities of solidarity. From that position, I can not only reflect on my sociocultural positionality and its limitations and privileges, but also on that of other fellow non-Indigenous solidarity actors. Finally, it follows to research solidarity by engaging with the parameters that are articulated from the perspective of the different experiences of Mapuche community and diaspora members.

Whilst standpoint theory can count as an epistemological basis for research, it has not been translated into a thorough methodology—understood as a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed concretely—and thus has not found an application in particular scientific disciplines. Nevertheless, the research programme of Participatory Action Research (PAR), primarily developed by the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda in the 1960s and '70s, can serve as an inspiration of how the claim that research can and should contribute to social change is adopted in social science investigations (Fals-Borda 2009; 2010; Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991; Moser and Ornauer 1978; Robles Lomeli and Rappaport 2018). PAR claims that social research and political action can productively work together to make political action more efficient and social reality more comprehensible (Fals-Borda 2009, 273). It is a research design for engaged and politically committed researchers, who "may play a catalytic and supportive role but will not dominate" (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991, 13). PAR is thus

> not merely […] a methodology of research with the subject/subject relationship evolving in symmetrical, horizontal or non-exploitative patterns in social, economic and political life. [It is] also a part of social activism with an ideological and spiritual commitment to promote people's (collective) praxis. (Ibid., 25)

The peculiarity of PAR lies in the fact that in every step of the research process, all research participants are supposed to work on a horizontal basis. More precisely, the researcher should equip the social group affected by a certain problem with the faculties to define, determine, and change the relations of knowledge production (Murcia Florian 1990, 23–28).

The methodological guidelines of PAR can be summed up by the following elements (Fals-Borda 2009, 184–91): 1) The researcher's commitment or engagement with the social and political change that the marginalised group seeks;[2] 2) PAR is an essentially pragmatic research methodology, where those methods are valid that contribute to the political purposes of the marginalised group;[3] 3) The systematic devolution of material to the people involved in the research process, which is sensitive to the type of knowledges of the involved people, their current needs and preoccupations, communicational standards, abilities, and privileges; 4) A constant and dynamic rhythm between reflection and social action, which leads to cycles of knowledge production and political engagement; and 5) Epistemological equality amongst the research participants, meaning that every participant is a legitimate agent of knowledge production.

For the purpose of my research, PAR constitutes an ideal and inspiration. The main difference is that my research project is designed and carried out by myself and not as part of a collective effort. The aforementioned elements of PAR thus serve only as important methodological guidelines for my research design.

My methodological approach to understanding the possibilities and limitations of international solidarity with the Mapuche is an ethnographic one. The different critiques towards traditional research methodologies of the social sciences, amongst them ethnography, (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Deloria 1988; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Boatcă, and Costa 2016; Lander 2005; Smith 2008; Wallerstein et al. 1996) do allow for a flexible but critical use of research methods and practices deriving from sociological and anthropological traditions (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991, 10; Harding 1987).

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2 This is further described as a *compromiso*, which can be translated as a responsibility towards the social, political, and cultural processes that are pushed forward by a certain group and as an identification with the proposed historical alternatives and political ways of achieving these ends. This doesn't mean an uncritical accordance with those alternatives, but rather taking an accompanying and supportive role. According to Fals-Borda (2009, 243), a *compromiso* is an action or an attitude of the intellectual who achieves consciousness about his positionality in society, renounces his role as a mere spectator, and starts to put her or his thinking or production at the service of a particular cause.

3 For an extensive argument in favour of a methodological pragmatism, see Paul Feyerabend (1986).

Contrary to its traditional application, the object of my ethnographic approach is a particular sociopolitical and cultural problem, rather than a particular group of people (Casa-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2013, 217). That is, the focus of my ethnography comprises the complex and contradictory forms, encounters, and practices of international solidarity between unequally positioned groups of people. Ethnography describes both a product and a research process generated during a certain time frame, generally called fieldwork, as a sensitive, understanding, interpretative endeavour from within the social situation that is the object of study. Ethnographic knowledge is created through constant participation and observation in a microsocial setting. Its distinctive feature is that it does not seek to make general claims on societies or cultures, but rather to explain those cultural and social situations by how they are lived, experienced, practiced, and transformed (Geertz 1987, 42).

Ethnography is not bound to, but rather is influenced by, the spatial field in which it takes place and the relationships that people have with that surrounding (Ibid., 32). In recent decades, ethnographic research has moved "from its conventional single-site location […] to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global' […]. Resulting ethnographies are therefore both in and out of the world system" (Marcus 1995, 95). My ethnography is thus multisited, as it includes accounts of practices and encounters of solidarity in Europe and Chile but avoids a "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). At the same time, it is transnational, as it "transcends, yet also incorporates, other levels of analysis, including the local, regional, and national" (Juris and Khasnabish 2013c, 8) and refers "to a political space constituted beyond the national and the international" (Khasnabish 2013, 71). Instead of focusing on similarities and/or differences between these multiple sites, the present investigation suggests to highlight "the specific features of shared political cultural forms" (Pleyers 2013, 111) expressed through solidarity. These are translocal expressions of solidarity, as they connect and establish relationships "between different place-based (but not place-restricted)" (Routledge 2013, 253) actors, groups, and communities. My ethnographic approach is thus transnational as well as translocal, as the different sites of research are connected to many different spaces and, at the same time, are locally bound by political and sociocultural restrictions:

> Grasping such [transnational and translocal] dynamics requires not so much an ethnographic strategy that is multisited (although that can be a critical

> component) as one that is networked: attuned to the complex place-based meanings, flows, and sensibilities that interact within momentary spaces of encounter. The political significance of such transnationally networked ethnographies lies in their capacity to generate strategic insights related to the tensions, obstacles, and opportunities that emerge within networked spaces of transnational encounter. (Juris and Khasnabish 2013c, 5)

This networked ethnographic strategy allows me to, first, follow the transnational ramifications (expressed in solidarity actions) of the local conflict from Wallmapu to Europe and back. Second, this ethnographic strategy focuses on certain people and organisations who organise solidarity campaigns across Europe—primarily Mapuche representatives, who visit Europe as part of solidarity and advocacy campaigns. Third, this research approach tracks those moments and events in which non-Indigenous people and organisations in Europe address the conflict in Wallmapu and the Mapuche people (Marcus 1995, 106–10). With this follow-up strategy, a networked ethnography makes the networked expressions of solidarity between/in Europe and Chile visible.

One central claim in ethnographic research is the adequacy of research methodology and theory (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013; Crang and Cook 2007; Flick 2005). The prominent role of this required reflexiveness within ethnographic research thus does justice to the claims of reflexivity in standpoint theory and PAR; since the researcher holds a central position in the research process, he or she is required to develop a deep and insightful understanding of his or her research object. He or she is, in short, her/himself a tool for gathering knowledge and therefore must be reflected upon, because the only possible way for the researcher to access the social field is through social and cultural relationships of which he or she is part of. To see myself, the researcher, as a representative of certain sociocultural categories and turn that representation into a category of analysis is the task of an "objectification of the objectifying self" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013, 238–49; my translation) in ethnography. In light of my position as a researcher in solidarity, I am thus no longer only the subject analysing the solidarity of others but compose my own position in (possible or limited) solidarity as an object of study that equally might undergo processes of transformation within the ethnographic encounter (Juris and Khasnabish 2013c, 9).

As detailed in the epistemological argument, my research design aims to combine knowledge production and political activism. How is an ethnographic strategy that combines both possible? I hereby want to relate to what

has been called "militant" (Juris and Khasnabish 2013c, 26), "engaged" (Casa-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2013), or "activist" (Routledge 2013) ethnography for researching and becoming active within different expressions of contemporary transnational solidarity and advocacy activism. An ethnographic account of activist spaces like that of this study "allows us to capture the subjective mood, feeling, and tone of such events" and "provide a vivid sense of actually 'being there' during transnational social movement actions and gatherings" (Juris and Khasnabish 2013b, 3). Essentially, this brings the thick description of ethnography to transnational activism.

As proposed within standpoint theory and PAR, a militant ethnography is "able to uncover important empirical issues and generate critical theoretical insights that are simply not accessible through traditional objectivist methods" (Juris and Khasnabish 2013b, 4). This ultimately leads to "a deeper cognitive understanding" of a political movement (Ibid., 26). A contribution of such a committed ethnography for activism is that these insights might help to face or even solve a movement's problem, mediate between different understandings within academia and activism (Ibid., 4), and contribute to the self-reflection of the movement's aims, goals, practices, or imaginations (Juris 2013, 77; Pleyers 2013, 112). This approach can also have practical political outcomes, such as supporting a court case, generating concepts, establishing contacts, recording conversations, etc. (Casa-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2013, 224–25). Thus, the result of such a politically engaged ethnography is not only an academic product, but also the practical and political contributions for the movement that are created within the ethnographic process itself. This ultimately leads to the fact that the researcher's positionality oscillates between spaces within and outside of academia. However, this neither creates horizontality with the research participants nor does it erase the researcher's privileges. Rather, "the ethnographer is [still] woven into the relational web that constitutes his or her own research topic intermeshed with her or his life trajectory" (Casa-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2013, 224).

My research project seeks to engage productively with the decolonisation efforts that Mapuche communities and organisations in Wallmapu and the diaspora in Europe pursue. Producing knowledge beyond the constraints of Eurocentrism and in autonomy has been and still is an essential part of the struggle for decolonisation of Indigenous people, who not only appropriate and challenge research methodologies from the social sciences but also strengthen their own ways of knowing the world (Nahuelpan Moreno et al. 2013; Smith 2008). One aim of my activist ethnography is to contribute to

such decolonising strategies and methodologies of the Mapuche, which are expressed in solidarity action in Chile and Europe.[4]

But how is it possible for a white male, positioned as a PhD researcher at a Western university, to engage in these decolonisation efforts? The methodological approaches through PAR and militant ethnography already point towards some strategies for a researcher to productively engage in political emancipatory projects. A critical stance towards the epistemic violence perpetrated by Eurocentric and colonial modes of representations and investigations further demands to push the research practice towards an ideal of a horizontal and reciprocal dialogue with the Other (the research participants), whose conditions need to be negotiated constantly (Berkin and Kaltmeier 2012, 7). This negotiation refers to the fact that "ethnographic research needs to be contextualized within a framework of social and geopolitical inequalities and 'colonial difference'" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010a, 19). In addition to the already outlined research methodologies, this requires a self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher, as well as conducting the investigation as a communal process and a political act (Kaltmeier 2012, 39–42).

This decolonial reflection challenges the Eurocentric assumption that the researcher's task is to uncover so-called hidden truths within social life or to help the research participants to understand them.[5] Rather, I argue for an understanding of the ethnographer, who "is one voice or participant in a *crowded field* of knowledge producers" (Casa-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2013, 199; emphasis in original). Thus, an ethnography with decolonial political projects needs to consider its participants and interlocutors as knowledge producers, even though these knowledges might engage in epistemological traditions and expressions that are different to the Western and Eurocentric academic standard. This is why it is even more "crucial to take the movements we work with seriously *on their own terms*" (Juris and Khasnabish 2013a, 379; my emphasis).

4 According to Smith (2008, 142–63), these strategies consist of claiming, giving testimonies, storytelling, celebrating survival, remembering, Indigenising, intervening, revitalising, connecting, reading, writing, representing, gendering, envisioning, reframing, restoring, returning, democratising, networking, naming, protecting, creating, negotiating, discovering, and sharing.

5 Unfortunately, this seems to be a problematic underlying assumption of some proposals for a politically committed ethnography, for example in Pleyers (2013).

But how is an ethnographic praxis conducted in a way that takes the terms of the research collaborators seriously? I hereby want to follow the proposal of ethnographic translation (Casa-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2013; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010a). Ethnographic translation connects different situated knowledges instead of reaffirming authority over other knowledges through practices of representation that silence subaltern voices (Spivak 1988). This effort is thus "a critical step of putting distinct spheres of knowledges into conversation" by "spreading, sharing, and building connections amongst transnational nodes of engaged knowledge producers" (Casa-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2013, 222–23) This type of ethnographic translation is best described as a process of transculturalisation that "reflects our positionalities, in which commonalities but also differences are made known," thus creating a "simultaneity of creative exchanges and social conflict" embedded in the ethnographic encounter (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010a, 24). From this it follows that "translation in research requires the openness to learning to unlearn our own privileges, recognizing the 'pluriversality' and 'un-translatability' of our encounters" (Ibid., 29).

A Networked Activist Ethnography of and in Solidarity (2014–2017)

This networked, activist ethnography of and in solidarity between 2014 and 2017 can be broken down into a contact phase, participation and observation in a series of solidarity events in Europe, interviews with non-Mapuche supporters, and finally, the ethnographisation of solidarity by following the expressions of solidarity from Europe to Chile.

In the preparation phase for the networked activist ethnography in 2014, I began creating an overview of solidarity activism in Europe via a series of tracing strategies from the multisited ethnography approach (Marcus 1995, 106–10). I thus started to follow up on solidarity events in Europe through social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, newsletters, online research, and nonacademic journals with a focus on Latin American culture and politics. In that way, I was able to identify key actors (local groups and NGOs) of the solidarity scene in Europe, as well as cultural and political Mapuche actors who (regularly) travel to Europe for solidarity activism. From 2014 to 2017, I developed a mapping system, creating an overview of solidarity events and their topics across Europe. Slowly, particular nodal points (Purcell 2009, 303) of solidarity that were more active than others appeared and particular cities

started to stand out, wherein solidarity events were hosted; connections between these hubs became visible if, for example, they were visited by the same Mapuche delegation.

In Northwestern Europe, two decentral, networked structures of solidarity efforts with the Mapuche became visible: On the one hand, the *Coordinación Mapuche de Europa* (CME),[6] with a more active presence in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland. On the other, the International Defence Network of the Mapuche People (IDNMP) connects the cities of Oslo in Norway, Hamburg in Germany, and Milan in Italy. Amongst the more visible solidarity groups across Europe there are *FOLIL* in the Netherlands; *Tierra y Libertad para Arauco* in France; the *Comité de Solidarité avec le Peuple Mapuche* (Comabe) and *FEWLA* in Belgium; a regional group of the Society for Threatened People (GfbV, according to the German acronym) in Cologne, Germany; the *3. Welt Forum* in Hannover, Germany; the *Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika* (FDCL) in Berlin, Germany; and finally the *Asociación KIMUN* and *Red Mapuche Suiza* in Switzerland. Amongst the NGOs operating across Europe in solidarity action with the Mapuche are the GfbV, the Unrepresented Peoples Organisation (UNPO) in the Netherlands and Belgium, the Heinrich Böll Foundation of the German Green Party, and the Episcopal Action Adveniat as an institution of the German Bishops' Conference.

By coincidence, at a conference in early 2014 in Cologne, I met a representative of the Mapuche diaspora in Europe and of the regional group of the GfbV, Alina Rodenkirchen. In a long conversation, I laid out my research interest, including my aim to support the solidarity action beyond my PhD project. Cautiously, she gave me the consent to pursue my committed ethnography amongst her activist circles and put me in contact with other solidarity activists in Germany and the Netherlands, included me in e-mail newsletters, forwarded news, and invited me to solidarity events. Until meeting her, I was convinced that solidarity action in Europe was done mostly by non-Indigenous people living in Europe. The encounter with Alina Rodenkirchen proved me wrong and troubled my initial research design (as well as my Eurocentric ignorance about an Indigenous presence in Europe). This is because during the initial phase of my ethnography, I found out that international solidarity with the Mapuche was essentially solidarity carried out by Mapuche people themselves, only supported by non-Mapuche actors and organisations. This made me redesign my research questions by focusing, on the one hand,

6 Mapuche Coordination in Europe.

on the experiences and (dis)encounters between Mapuche and non-Mapuche people coming together in solidarity and, on the other, on the networked structure and strategies of transnational advocacy of the involved actors and organisations. Chapters four and five will discuss the latter questions, and chapters six and seven, the former.

Experiencing international solidarity in Europe as something carried out by Mapuche themselves was intensified in my first participation in a solidarity event, where I learnt that the Mapuche diaspora was much larger and more active than I had assumed. This event was the *2nd Academia Mapuche*, which took place on October 23–26, 2014 in Cologne, organised by members of the Mapuche diaspora with the institutional support of the GfbV. The *Academia* was a sociopolitical and cultural gathering and workshop, where the Mapuche diaspora from across Europe, Mapuche visiting Europe, and non-Indigenous, mostly white German supporters came together. The *Academia* consisted of talks, mainly given by Mapuche, about their history, culture, language, and political struggle, and provided a space for art presentations through drawings and performances by Mapuche artists. Some aspects of the Mapuche culture were put into practice by cooking together, having a Mapuche-style exchange (*trafkintu*) between the participants, and language courses. The *Academia* had roughly three to four dozen participants, half of which were Mapuche. The rest were non-Indigenous (mostly white Germans).

My experience at the *Academia* allows to make a particular feature of my ethnographic encounters visible. Gatherings and spaces of international solidarity with and of the Mapuche in Europe were filled with cultural meanings, symbols, and proceedings of Mapuche culture. That means that many encounters of international solidarity were transcultural and 'Mapuchised' spaces, in which Mapuche ceremonies, rituals, sounds, and smells were present. Also, many practices and proceedings, unfamiliar to my Eurocentric expectations about solidarity events, were important elements of these encounters. These practices included, for example, long and apparently informal conversations amongst the participants in between the official programme, cooking and eating together, or the already mentioned exchanges. Sharing and participating in such practices became a crucial element in my ethnography, which hereby became methodologically 'Mapuchised.'

My role in the *Academia* was that of a regular participant, but I introduced myself as a researcher who was pursuing an engaged ethnography in that space. I got to know almost all of the Mapuche and non-Mapuche participants, had long informal conversations, and exchanged contact details and

Facebook friendships. Towards the end of the event, I managed to gather the non-Indigenous participants and presented my research project (again) in more detail. I concluded by asking if they were willing to participate in my research project in the form of an interview. A dozen agreed to do so and gave me their contact information.

At the same time, I got in contact with different people from the Mapuche diaspora across Europe. Some of them challenged me by asking what I was doing here by pushing me to describe my *compromiso* of how I think to commit myself to their efforts. So, before I had a chance to pose these questions to non-Indigenous solidarity actors, I had to answer them not only for myself but for the Mapuche living in Europe. These critical questions included inquiries about my political positionality and sociocultural background (Fals-Borda 2009, 246) as well about the ownership, benefits, and interest of my research (Smith 2008, 10). All these conversations count as informal, open-ended interviews in order to understand "other realities through the way they are explained by those who inhabit them" and how "people narrate their own experiences and understandings of their own social realities" (Khasnabish 2013, 69) within activist ethnography. At the same time, some actors of the Mapuche diaspora became key informants for my research project. Those are people "who you can talk to easily, who understand the information you need, and who are glad to give it to you or get it for you" (Bernard 2006, 196). Becoming Facebook friends with most of the participants also helped me to keep track not only of the different solidarity activities across Europe but also of the political and sociocultural developments in Wallmapu.

But most importantly, my participation at the *Academia* changed my positionality within the research context—something that was initiated in the encounter with Alina Rodenkirchen. I understood that the Mapuche diaspora are the gatekeepers for solidarity activism within Europe, which is supported by non-Indigenous actors and organisations. Thus, I needed to bring the orientation of my research in tune with that reality. For my research, this demanded an increasing attention to not falling in the colonialist trap of replicating the Mapuche diaspora as research objects. For my planned engagement in solidarity action, this situation required an even more careful reflexivity towards power relations and privileges in the solidarity work within Europe and not only in Wallmapu (as initially assumed). It called for a positionality as an activist researcher, who listens instead of talks and who lowers his impulse towards action and protagonism in favour of other people's agency. This role is reflected in the following picture taken during the *Academia*.

Figure 2. Academia attendee. 2014. "Academia Mapuche 2."

Facebook, December 11, 2014. Screenshot by the author, taken December 11, 2014; other people's faces are anonymised.

At the centre of that picture, I am one non-Indigenous actor amongst many, whose disposition for political action might become activated by the activities of the Mapuche diaspora. At the same time, I am one of many non-Indigenous actors who was listening to a Mapuche person talking at that moment. The picture thus represents the gaze of my research agenda: a critical reflection about my own and the engagement of other non-Indigenous actors in solidarity action whilst the Mapuche diaspora are the protagonists.[7]

Between 2014 and 2017, I participated or was actively involved in a total of nine events related to solidarity with the Mapuche. From May 9–11, 2014, I participated in a congress about decolonisation in Latin America, which is where I met Alina Rodenkirchen. She digitally introduced me to the solidarity group in Frankfurt, who I got to know at a solidarity event on June 18, 2014 in a community centre. The contact with that group unfortunately tapered off and—at least to my knowledge—they have not been active since. Then, as already mentioned, in October 2014 I participated in the 2nd *Academia Mapuche*.

In May 2015, I was invited to a demonstration and conference organised by the Mapuche diaspora in The Hague. Based on my participation in and support of this event, I was then invited to the Mapuche celebration, *wetripantu*, between June 20–21, 2015. The *wetripantu* has been regularly organised (with some interruptions) by the Mapuche diaspora in the Netherlands. Both events were organised by the European Mapuche diaspora, although not always with

7 I would like to thank my dear colleague Andrea Sempertegui for inspiring me to analyse the researcher's gaze in that way.

the same participants. At the same time, I got to meet their families as well as other non-Indigenous supporters from across Europe.

In September 2015, together with Alina Rodenkirchen, I visited a public cultural festival in the German city of Bad Ems, where Chilean public defence lawyer Barbara Katz held a presentation about the general situation of the Mapuche in Chile and her human rights work as—according to the festival's programme—the "defender of the Mapuche Indians." After my first research stay in Chile in early 2016, in April of the same year I participated in a rally in Cologne against the violent raid of a Mapuche community and the incarceration of Mapuche community members, amongst them *machi*[8] Francisca Linconao. In November 2016, I organised a solidarity event together with Alina Rodenkirchen at the *Internationales Zentrum* in Frankfurt, where she gave a presentation about the linguistic decolonisation struggles in Chile. Towards the end of my ethnography in November 2017, I had the chance to invite the Mapuche poet Rayen Kvyeh to my undergraduate seminar at Justus-Liebig University in Giessen, where she introduced the students to Mapuche cosmology, history, and culture.

I understand these events as "networked spaces of encounter" (Escárcega 2013, 133) of the transnational and translocal solidarity efforts with the Mapuche. In these spaces, people, resources, information, and meanings come into contact, subjectivities co-inhabit and might even clash, relationships and even communities are created, and activism and knowledges are articulated and put into practice. These encounters further constitute "a critical node in a network or plateau in a rhizome that is particular in space and time" (Conway 2013, 272). This means that these encounters are the moments in which a rhizomatic network constitutes and reproduces (but also transforms) itself.

In order to document these events, I referred to ethnographic methods such as the field diary as a preliminary step in the construction of the experienced reality as a written product (Flick 2005, 248), participation, observation, and open-ended, dialogic conversations of sharing experiences and knowledge (Berkin and Kaltmeier 2012, 7; Fals-Borda 2009, 263–64). I summed up these dialogues and conversations in my field diary but preferred not to interrupt the flow of events in these encounters for the purpose of a structured interview situation. I further used the diary to condense what has happened, how I experienced the situations, to collect contact information, and pin down

8 Healer or spiritual leader.

further research ideas as well as reflections, feelings, and contradictions about my role as a committed researcher.

Due to online coverage, mostly on social media, I was also able to closely follow a series of solidarity events in Europe without being present. These events include rallies at the visits of former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet in Cologne and Leuven, Belgium, solidarity campaigns in support of a Mapuche community threatened by the construction of a hydroelectric power dam in the cities of Hamburg and Oslo, protests in various European cities against the visit of the Chilean military ship *La Esmeralda*, and visits by Mapuche representatives such as Jaime Huenchullán from the autonomous community of Temucuicui and Aucán Huilcamán from the *Consejo de Todas las Tierras* (CTT).[9]

Between November 2015 and July 2017, I conducted a total of 17 semi-structured interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors from the European solidarity network. These included three interviews with people from the Mapuche diaspora, which were conducted as a mixed-method interview with problem-centred, expert, biographical, and narrative elements (Bernard 2006, 298; Flick 2005, 117–67).

More importantly though, and according to other decolonial and critical race approaches to solidarity (Land 2015; Mahrouse 2014), most of these interviews aimed to critically discuss the role and vision of non-Mapuche supporters involved in international solidarity and advocacy. This element of my ethnography was designed in collaboration with Alina Rodenkirchen.

These interviews were with non-Indigenous individuals who were, are, or wanted to become involved in a solidarity project with the Mapuche.[10] In the solidarity events, I met several non-Indigenous people who agreed to do an interview with me. Amina had supported the organisation of the *Academia* in Cologne and had visited Mapuche communities in resistance in Wallmapu. Sybille is a German photographer, whom I also met at the *Academia* and had just realised a photography project about Wallmapu in order to raise awareness in Germany. At the *Academia*, I got in contact with two other young white German women, Verena and Rike, whom I later interviewed. Rike became a very active supporter of the regional group of the GfbV and travelled to Chile as a human rights observer. At the event in The Hague in 2015, I met Amanda, who is a non-Indigenous US citizen living and working in the Netherlands

9 Council of All Territories.

10 All of their names have been changed, and the contexts, if possible, anonymised.

and supporting the work of the diasporic Mapuche organisation *FOLIL*. One year later, I conducted an interview with her.

I was put in contact with another group of future interview partners by Alina Rodenkirchen. As one of the most prominent and visible figures of the European solidarity efforts, as she told me once, many non-Indigenous people, especially from Germany, contact her because of their interest in the Mapuche. Most of the time, these people are already engaged in a project related to the Mapuche or want to become involved. Answering these e-mails and engaging with everyone became very time consuming, stressful, and even disappointing to her. This is because, she felt, some engage with that issue only as some kind of hobby or even want her to support their project. She thus suggested that, in accordance with my research design, I could contact these people on her behalf and critically engage with them in a conversation about their motivation, commitment, and project design. I would thus relieve her from some of her workload and, as she ironically remarked, become an anthropologist working for the Mapuche diaspora instead of researching them. This suggestion further supports the agenda of (critical) whiteness studies investigating "how white people experience their whiteness" (Ahmed 2004, 2) applied to the context of (international) solidarity activism, which only a few studies have done (Land 2015; Mahrouse 2014).

All of the following seven interviewees are non-Indigenous people living in Germany who had contacted Alina regarding support for their projects related to the Mapuche or to get information about the Mapuche. Peter and Greta had already completed two different visual arts projects in which they made some aspect of Mapuche culture and their political struggle internationally visible. At the time of the interview, Eva was organising a microcredit development project targeted at Mapuche communities in Wallmapu with the support of an NGO from Europe. Clarissa had already stayed in Wallmapu for a longer period and was thus interested in collaborating with the Mapuche regional group of the GfbV. Madelaine was preparing for a several-months-long stay in Wallmapu as part of a research collaboration between Chilean and German universities to investigate capitalist land seizures in Southern Chile. Karin and Sabrina had a general interest in Mapuche culture and society, the conflict in Chile, and international solidarity efforts. Following my semi-structured questionnaire (designed with the support of Alina), I asked them about their reasons for contacting Alina in the first place, their projects, their knowledge and imaginations about the Mapuche and Indigenous societies in general, and finally their positionality and motivations. With the last part, we aimed to

engage them in a critical reflection about agency, the benefit of their projects, their reaction towards possible demands by the Mapuche, and finally their political beliefs.

In June 2016, I conducted another set of three semi-structured, problem-centred interviews with employees of the GfbV headquarters in Göttingen.[11] At that moment, the GfbV was the most engaged and visible NGO involved in Mapuche advocacy and collaborating with the Mapuche diaspora. The GfbV is a NGO born out the (internationalist) student mobilisations in Western Germany after 1968 (Slobodian 2012, 207–8), becoming one of the major players of the "Fourth World Activism" (Kemner 2014) in solidarity with oppressed, persecuted, and marginalised Indigenous people and minorities across the world. Especially through the efforts of the Mapuche diaspora in Cologne, Germany, the GfbV became involved with the support of the Mapuche. As I became more and more committed to solidarity activism during my ethnography, I was already regularly talking to people at the GfbV headquarters, so interviews could be arranged easily. I conducted interviews with Isidora (June 9, 2016), a non-Indigenous Chilean woman in charge of the GfbV archive; Maike, responsible for online editing and external communication; and finally Isabell, a long-term staff member of the GfbV and head of the human rights division for Indigenous people—thus, the person mostly involved with issues concerning the Mapuche. The interview basically covered three topics: their role in and opinions about the GfbV in general, the working and operating structure in their field, and finally their involvement with the Mapuche and Indigenous people in general. In the last section, I aimed at discussing their motivations, knowledges, and perceived contradictions about working in that area.

At the *Academia* in Cologne I met, amongst others, Alex Mora, a Mapuche artist who has been based in Germany for almost two decades and is a very active member of the regional group of the GfbV. He quickly became interested in supporting my endeavour of researching solidarity by becoming an active supporter of solidarity efforts. At the *Academia* we talked at length about my possible contribution to the solidarity activities and on another occasion he decided that he wanted to introduce me to Jaime Huenchullán, *werken*[12] of the autonomous community of Temucuicui. I met them briefly at Alex's apartment in Cologne, together with two women from the Mapuche diaspora, also

11 Their names have been changed and anonymised as well.

12 Community spokesperson.

in order to ask for his permission to visit his community. Before my first visit to Chile, I had two more preparation meetings with members of the regional group of the GfbV. Finally, they agreed to support my application at the GfbV headquarters to receive the status of a human rights observer.

In these preparation meetings, I increasingly became aware of some challenges of my project. First of all, it was important to pursue my project with the approval of the involved people, especially from the Mapuche diaspora and representatives. They challenged me to critically reflect about my privileges and positionality as a white European male and how this might cause problems in Wallmapu for me and for the Mapuche people I encounter.[13] They also made me aware to which extent I am putting myself at risk and of how to protect myself, my findings, and my interlocutors. In these meetings, they contributed from their sociocultural positionality to a process of reflecting on my own situatedness in the context of international solidarity. Epistemologically speaking, they contributed with a "strong objectivity" (Harding 1994, 165–68) to my research, based on their standpoints.

This part of the preparation had practical (making contacts), ethical (permission), political (critical reflection about privileges and danger in fieldwork), and epistemological dimensions. But besides the preparation for my role as a human rights observer, I still needed to design my research agenda.

With the aim to ethnographically investigate solidarity, I planned a two-months-long research stay, from February to April 2016, in the Araucanía region in Southern Chile, its capital Temuco, and the country's capital, Santiago de Chile. The research aims were threefold: First, I planned to conduct semi-structured interviews with Mapuche and non-Mapuche people, groups, and activists who have experienced, participated in, or benefitted from international solidarity and advocacy efforts. The second aim involved ongoing ethnographic fieldwork with participant observation and interviews in Wallmapu and amongst sectors of the Mapuche movement. The third aim concerned archive and literature research in public, university, and activist libraries in Temuco and Chile.

The idea of ethnographying solidarity here means, on the one hand, following the solidarity activism in Europe back to Chile (Marcus 1995, 106–10). The aim thus was to meet those people, communities, and organisations in Chile, who are at the 'receiving end' of solidarity. As part of my ethnography in Europe, I was able to get the contacts in Chile through the regional

13 I introduced some of these issues in the questionnaires for the interviews in Europe.

group of the GfbV, Adveniat, and the microcredit development project coordinated by Eva. On the other hand, ethnographying solidarity means collecting testimonies about international solidarity from the Mapuche themselves. A critical discussion about the limitations and possibilities of international solidarity thus needs to include their perspective. My aim was to collect these notions ethnographically, make them available through transcultural and interepistemic translation (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010a), and support their strong sense of objectivity (Harding 1994, 165–68). In short, ethnographying solidarity means making solidarity the object of an empirical study through ethnographic research with Mapuche informants.

For that purpose, I applied a mix of informal, unstructured, and semi-structured interview techniques during my ethnographic fieldwork, due to the need of adapting spontaneously to a potential interview partner, the surroundings, context, and time (Bernard 2006, 211–12). Within these interviews, I aimed to discuss the informant's experiences with international solidarity, the expectations towards international solidarity, and its relevance to their particular organisation or community. Finally, I raised the issue of how colonial representations and stereotypes still seem to inform non-Indigenous people's perspectives within solidarity and advocacy activism. Towards the end of the interviews, I left room for other issues my interlocutor might want to raise.

Preparing and organising interviews before my actual departure to Chile was discouraging, especially since for the funding of my research trip, I needed to provide the details of my prospective interview partners. During my ethnography, I came across a huge number of names of government, embassy, or NGO officials in Chile, as well as Mapuche artists, spokespersons, intellectuals, and researchers whom I wanted to consider for interviews. I selected some people and started sending infinite e-mails, Facebook messages, and friend requests, introducing myself as a researcher and human rights activist. This was a disappointing experience, since I only received one (positive) answer and I had to travel to Chile with only a few confirmed contacts and interview partners.[14]

I was really anxious whilst travelling to Chile and feared that my research plan might not work out. It was not that hard to figure out the reason why I was welcomed by some future interlocutors whilst others did not even reply.

14 These were, as mentioned above, established with the help of the regional group of the GfbV, Adveniat, and the project coordinated by Eva.

What the people who already agreed to meet me had in common was that I already met them or I knew someone they knew very well. Especially the experience of meeting Jaime Huenchullán in Cologne kept spinning in my head. Alex had invited me to meet them in Cologne but, due to schedule problems, we knew beforehand that I would not be able to spend much time with them. Still, Alex insisted on my visit. I thus travelled to Cologne during the day, met Jaime and sat down with him and the others for only a little more than an hour. Then, Jaime had to continue his trip. I felt that I just went there to shake his hand. But whilst travelling to Chile I wondered whether the only reason he was welcoming me was because we had met in person. If I would not have gone to Cologne that day, would he still receive me?

With this reflection in my head, I convinced myself that I had to trust meeting the right people in person and see where it went. I arrived in Santiago de Chile and, since I did not have any scheduled interview, I chose to engage in some tourism. I remembered that I had read about a newly opened restaurant in the capital, whose chef was Mapuche and prepared Mapuche dishes. I did some background research about the chef, José Luis Calfucura, and found out that he is a quite prominent, public Mapuche figure. I decided that I might as well try to interview him. I called the restaurant, asked if he was around and willing to do an interview, and he accepted. As always whilst travelling, I was carrying some small gifts from Germany, because you never know whom you might need to thank. I was happy that José agreed to have a conversation and I gave him a small jar of German fruit marmalade. At the end of the interview, he became very serious and highlighted the importance of that token as a symbol for a reciprocal gift exchange in Mapuche culture. I felt that he was putting me on guard about respecting this reciprocity and not instrumentalising people for my research without giving something back (José Luis Calfucura, interview with the author, February 16, 2016a).

These two experiences with Jaime and José were path-breaking for how to approach and engage with future interview partners. Not only was it insightful to learn that I needed to rely on coincidence or on other people to be introduced to informants; what is more, these experiences showed me that eventual interviews are almost only possible as the result of a personal encounter or even an intimate relationship with someone. For example, the Mapuche poet Rayen Kvyeh only agreed to an interview with me after two weeks of getting to know each other (during which it is fair to say that we began cultivating a friendship). On the other side, the question of reciprocity was crucial, and thus I needed to be able to articulate how I aim to reciprocate

the information granted in an interview.[15] For example, before agreeing to an interview, Isabel Cañet from the autonomist Mapuche party *Wallmapuwen* challenged me to articulate how I aim to redistribute information and possible benefits for the Mapuche from this interview.[16] After meeting José Calfucura, when requesting an interview I anticipated the demand of reciprocity by explaining my double role as researcher and human rights observer: whilst I would receive information and knowledge, I would reciprocate in the form of solidarity and human rights activism to the extent my interlocutors see a benefit in doing so.

Besides the interviews with José Calfucura, Rayen Kvyeh, and Isabel Cañet, I conducted individual interviews with Gloria Marivil and Vicente Painel from the Mapuche cooperative *Kvme Mogen*, as well as another in-depth, expert interview with Vicente Painel later on; an interview with Mauricio Vergaras, executive secretary of the *Asociación de Municipalidades con Alcalde Mapuche* (AMCAM); Federico Aguirre, head of the regional office of the *Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos* (INDH);[17] Victor Carilaf from the Mapuche pedagogical collective *Kimeltuwe*; Rubén Sánchez from the *Observatorio Ciudadano* (OC)[18] (all in Temuco) and Jaime Huenchullán in Temucuicui; Cristián and Matías, two Mapuche actors involved in the microcredit development programme organised by Eva; two individual and two group interviews with the Mapuche tourist project in Llaguepulli; two individual and one group interview with the people contacted through Adveniat in Santiago de Chile, Tirúa, and Padre de las Casas; and an interview with the Mapuche weaver María Teresa Loncón in Villarica. Another group interview was conducted with the non-Indigenous researchers Rodrigo Garrido and Manuel Morales from the *Centro de Investigaciones de la Inclusión digital y la Sociedad de Conocimiento* (CIISOC)[19] of the *Universidad de la Frontera* in Temuco. The informal interviews were with other non-Indigenous solidarity activists from the Global North, non-Indigenous Chilean supporters of the Mapuche, and Mapuche community members and activists.

15 This question of a "systematic devolution" (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991, 9) is also a central aspect in PAR.

16 In the following interview, Isabel Cañet used the term redistribution (*retribución*) to describe this aspect (interview with the author, February 24, 2016).

17 National Human Rights Institute.

18 Citizens' Observatory.

19 Research Centre for Digital Inclusion and Social Knowledge.

Mainly as part of human rights observation, I visited two Mapuche communities in resistance and two political prisoners on several occasions. As part of an activist ethnography, these experiences gave me a lot of insights about the limitations, possibilities, and dangers of international solidarity activism in the form of human rights observation through direct immersion, participation, and critical and systematised self-reflection.

All data I obtained during the period of my ethnography, mostly in the form of interviews, was analysed according to qualitative research methods in social science research (Flick 2005, 243–359), ethnographic analysis of field materials (Crang and Cook 2007, 131–59), and qualitative text analysis (Kuckartz 2014).

Reflection and Redistribution

As outlined above, feminist, decolonial, and committed methodologies call for the researcher's reflexivity and demand a political benefit for the people who participate in the research. Reflections about my positionality and standpoint within—as well as my possible contribution to—solidarity activism with the Mapuche will be addressed in the rest of this chapter and inform discussions in the chapters to come.

The contradictions between activism and research are one of the main difficulties of an engaged and committed ethnographic approach (Juris and Khasnabish 2013b, 27–28). Contrary to the epistemological and methodological framework, my research agenda does not fulfil the demand of a horizontal and equal participation between researcher and research participants. I clearly dominated and controlled the research process in each step, from the initial research questions until the final writing process. The main reason for this is the institutional constraint of pursuing a PhD investigation at a Western university, which foremost rewards individual achievements and excellency. So, if only I am going to be rewarded, why should others put in the same effort in this process? I think it is important to reflect on the institutional constraints and backgrounds of each research project regarding questions of horizontality and participation because they might just be codewords under which the labour of research participants might get exploited. Consequently, I opted for a contingent approach to horizontality and participation, depending on the explicit interest of and possible benefit for my research partners. These moments of horizontality and democratisation took

place, for example, whilst designing the questionnaire for the non-Mapuche solidarity actors with Alina Rodenkirchen or whilst planning my engagement as a human rights observer in Wallmapu with Alex Mora.

Whilst I remained in control of the research process itself, I was still depending on others to be able to access or to participate in the field of international solidarity. This dependency counters the modern/colonial ideal of the independent, self-confident, and determined researcher. Engaging in a different positionality as a researcher thus implies a process of "unlearning one's privilege" (Spivak 1990, 10) by starting to need to rely on others. For example, I needed the approval of people from the Mapuche diaspora in Europe and of Mapuche organisations and communities in Wallmapu in order to pursue an ethnography on solidarity. Whilst my presence as a researcher and activist was accepted, my agency should not become a dominating and paternalising force in this field. In that way, I opted for a very cautious and even passive approach to solidarity activism by accompanying and supporting solidarity actions only on demand by the Mapuche diaspora. The guideline, as noted earlier, was that my positionality "may play a catalytic and supportive role but will not dominate" (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991, 13). For example, I always had reservations of holding the Mapuche flag *wenufoye* at rallies by myself, which could be a form of paternalistic representation or appropriation. On one occasion though, I was handed the *wenufoye* by a Mapuche with an explicitly approving gesture. This experience symbolises nicely how my role became more active following the demands or invitations of Mapuche actors rather than on my own initiative.[20]

At the same time, this reactive positionality sometimes slowed down my research process. For example, on several occasions I had to wait until a solidarity event was organised that served my research interests. Also, several of these events were planned on very short notice and sometimes I found out about them only a few days before. This made it difficult for me to attend, because those events took place in Belgium, the Netherlands, or other cities in Germany. Especially during my first research stay in Wallmapu, I immediately got sucked into the contingency of the political struggles. Within the first days, I was invited to meet several important people, visit the court trials and the political Mapuche prisoners, etc. and barely had time to write down any notes or press pause. My commitment as a human rights observer was

20 As a "symbol of ideological decolonisation" (Pairican 2019; my translation), sharing the *wenufoye* with me is therefore very meaningful.

warmly welcomed and demanded by local Mapuche activists. This activism thus created its own flow of events and my research agenda could barely keep up. At the same time, I needed these experiences as an international solidarity activist to answer my research question from a committed perspective.

In many situations, I thought of myself as standing at a crossroads between research and activism. Taking out my voice recorder and asking for an interview sometimes interrupted an important conversation, was not appropriate, or reinstated a distance between me and my interlocutor. This is why I began to prioritise the openness and spontaneity of an encounter or conversation within solidarity activism. Most of the time, I still ended up discussing topics that are relevant to my research. These situations were created spontaneously without my incentive and without foregrounding my research, but rather my activist positionality.

This demands another moment of reflecting on the ambiguity between research and activism, because in these situations I was given information as a fellow activist and not necessarily as a researcher. So, how should I treat information that is given off the record? One option is that information obtained through activism can be treated as "deep background," that is, "information that can be used to inform general analyses but not in a way that provides a description of a specific event or person" (Hess 2013, 162). Information that could compromise or endanger my interlocutors or their political projects is excluded from my ethnographic material. Thus, I mostly rely on anonymous material, public statements, and interviews given with consent, as required by ethical research standards (Crang and Cook 2007, 26–33).

Whilst opting for a dialogic exchange with my interlocutors from an activist perspective, some valuable empirical material did not find its way into a recorded interview or field notes. This does not make these encounters worthless. Instead, "[t]he connections and affinities forged with resisting others form a key part of activist ethnographic research" and are even able to "nurture a politics of affinity with others" (Routledge 2013, 255). This approach highlights activism in solidarity as a transformative relationship (Featherstone 2012) by creating social and affective ties based on a political commitment. Solidarity thus does not only aim at political change, but towards a transformation of the social relationships forged in activism.

Engaged ethnographies take place within politically disputed arenas characterised by different degrees of vulnerability for the involved actors. Nevertheless, not all actors are equally vulnerable in their contexts. The vulnerability

itself and its heterogeneity is another major challenge for an engaged ethnography.

Decolonial and critical race scholars like Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Gada Mahrouse have brought forward an important critique of how the grievability of lives is shaped along racialised, colonial, and gendered axes (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2019; Mahrouse 2014). Connected to this research, Mahrouse (2014) analyses further how the different vulnerabilities of actors involved in transnational solidarity activism are situated within an international—and, I would add, interpersonal—"hierarchy of grief" (30–31). She hereby criticises how the stories of white activists in danger receive considerably more attention than the everyday vulnerability of those who actually live in conflict zones like Palestine or Wallmapu. This creates a situation in which the vulnerability of white, well-meaning, and individualised activists who visit these places is put in the spotlight whilst the suffering of others is rendered invisible (Ibid., 43). This racialised logic of emotional responses turns the focus away from the structural violence against a particular group and favours the "compelling story of the white, First World activist in the war zone" (Ibid., 71). Following this critique, I do not aim to put the vulnerability I experienced during my ethnography at the forefront, but rather reflect on its methodological consequences.

In the preparation meetings before my engagement as a human rights observer, my contacts amongst the Mapuche diaspora started to prepare me for how the conflict in Wallmapu might constitute a risk to my research, liberty, and physical integrity. Mapuche communities and organisations in the Araucanía region in Southern Chile are under constant surveillance and militarised police and private security actors have an enormous presence in those territories. This is one of the reasons for solidarity activism in the first place. The human rights observer status, granted by a recognised German NGO, might offer some protection but maybe not enough, my contacts warned me. I still might be arrested for a short period of time, my belongings (including my research material) scanned or even taken away from me, or, in the worst case, I might be deported from Chile. There are several well-documented cases of European solidarity activists who have been expelled from Chile and are not allowed to visit the country again. This is based on a highly dubious argumentation that the international activists were supporting terrorist activity of the Mapuche movement. One prominent example is the one of Basque activist Iban Gartzía (Bajo Malleko Mapu 2016). Even the most committed and

engaged research designs do not prepare for these kind of situations, neither logistically nor mentally.

I talked at length with Alex Mora about how to avoid situations in Wallmapu that might put me in danger and how to protect myself. I always travelled with my identification documents as a human rights observer and as a researcher from my home institution to signal my institutional support in possible police controls. It was paramount that someone I trusted and could reach easily would always know for how long and where I was staying in Wallmapu. Alex Mora also advised me about not delivering sensitive information during phone calls and about the importance of being surrounded by people, especially at night. Besides these general precautions, I opted for a series of measures to protect my research material, especially the interview recordings and photographs, as well as my communications, through secure file storage and encryption software.

I particularly felt vulnerable and threatened after I left a Mapuche community resistance just before it was raided by the military police and several community members were arrested. If I had stayed there, I might have gotten arrested and accused of supporting terrorist activity. I was shocked and relieved at the same, only feeling a small proportion of the vulnerability that is experienced on an everyday basis in Wallmapu. Shortly after coming back to Germany, there was a rally in Cologne to denounce this raid and the imprisonment of those Mapuche community members. For me, there was something different about this protest compared to the others. Suddenly, I realised that I was protesting as someone who was almost affected himself by this event. It was a much more intense solidarity that I experienced at that moment, as a result of my own vulnerability whilst staying in Wallmapu. This type of solidarity and my commitment to it felt much more real, because "to be committed is to be in danger" (Baldwin quoted in Yancy 2018, 116). Experiencing a small proportion of vulnerability thus transformed my view on the calls and actions for solidarity from a safe distance that I was experiencing during my research in Europe.

But what is an adequate way of dealing with this feeling of vulnerability from a privileged position, compared to many Mapuche community members, political leaders, or activists? How can feeling this danger be addressed without reproducing a hierarchy of grief? After a few weeks during my first research stay in Wallmapu, I was overwhelmed by the conflict that I had chosen to do research in. After visiting political prisoners and observing cases in court, I felt deeply affected by the violence, injustices, and dehumanisa-

tions I witnessed in such a brief time. In that period, I was staying in the house of Rayen Kvyeh, a Mapuche poet living in Temuco, with whom I built a trustful relationship. In her company, I felt comfortable enough to address that I did not know how to deal with these feelings without falling into the trap of the hierarchy of grief. I told her that I do not think that it is fair if my feelings of despair and frustration occupy too much space, especially in the interpersonal encounters with people, including her, who experienced the colonial, racialised, and gendered violence in Wallmapu almost throughout their whole lives. Whilst she agreed that this hierarchy of grief needs to be treated critically, she also added an important element to our discussion: she said straightforwardly that it is good that I feel that way because it means that I care. And if I care, she went on, I am able to tell a better, more committed, and more empathic story in my research. In that way, she urged me to engage in a "labour of mourning"—and, I would add, a labour of empathy and solidarity— that "transcends representable justice by converting it into a matter of justice in the sense of the ethics of care" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2019, 356). Therefore, feeling vulnerable and recognising the hierarchy of grief can become methodologically productive by urging the research(er) to contribute to an ethics of care and justice.

Another central element of decolonial and participatory action research agendas is the question of how the participants benefit from their involvement in the investigation. Instead of joining the calls for a devolution of research material or final results, I want to argue for the need of a redistribution within the research context itself. This idea was proposed by two Mapuche interlocutors, Isabel Cañet (interview with the author, February 24, 2016), who insists on a "redistribution in terms of knowledge and experiences," and Nadia Painefil (interview with the author, March 10, 2016), who criticises researchers who do not leave "a redistribution of what they investigated."

I prefer this idea over the concept of devolution because the latter is limited to a voluntary understanding of the researcher individually choosing to give back material whose rightful owners are the informants anyway.[21] This is why I want to conceptualise this final step as a redistribution—a result of a

21 This refers to the difference between complementary action and reciprocity in theoretical debates on solidarity. The idea of redistribution hereby connects with reciprocity, which "connotes that *each* party has rights *and* duties" (Gouldner 1960, 169; emphasis in original) .

negotiation between the researcher and research participants about the mutual benefits of their collaboration on a horizontal and reciprocal basis. This redistribution has been demanded by Mapuche interlocutors before agreeing on (but also before rejecting) an interview. Others told me about their negative experiences with non-Indigenous researchers not giving back anything, which I understood as a call to do things differently.

Highlighting my redistribution and the ways of how I gave back can be read as a self-congratulatory praxis displaying commitment, authority, and even morality (Land 2015, 244–46). Instead, the aim is to make my actions transparent. This display is not meant to be decisive about my authority in the field, the level of my commitment, or the morality of my actions. Making these decisions transparent should rather contribute to the critical evaluation of such practices of redistribution in the context of engaged and committed research practices in general.

To begin with, I am critical towards the devolution of research materials or results in written form because they might only be partially interesting or useful for the research partners. There is some sense of intellectual and academic arrogance in the assumption that my final results have the same value to them as their narrations and experiences had to me, or as this text might have to other academics. The devolution of written material is also limited because it sometimes can only be given back after a considerable amount of time. In the present case of a PhD study, there might be years between an interview and the publication of the dissertation. This is why I choose to begin with the redistribution of texts and materials, as well as through praxis during the research process.

After my first fieldtrip to Chile, I was invited to publish an article of my historical understanding of the conflict in Wallmapu in a Mapuche-run magazine, *Ñuke Mapu*. Around the same time, my reports as human rights observer in Wallmapu were quoted in a letter of the GfbV to the former German Federal President, Joachim Gauck, demanding to critically address the situation of the Mapuche during his visit in Chile. I further published two articles in German-speaking newspapers about the situation of the Mapuche and was interviewed in one of them regarding my experiences as a human rights observer. One of these articles was specifically demanded by Guido Carihuentru, a Mapuche political prisoner that I had visited in jail in Temuco. Furthermore, I edited one part of the interview with the Mapuche chef José Luis Calfucura and sent it to the Netherlands-based solidarity group *FOLIL*, who published the interview on their online radio. With these efforts, I aimed to contribute

to the international solidarity efforts with the Mapuche and comply with the ethnographic duty of developing rapport with interlocutors.

As agreed beforehand, after my first fieldtrip to Chile I shared my research materials (interviews and photographs) with actors from the Mapuche diaspora. During my second fieldtrip to Chile, I began to systematically redistribute the already published material, as well as the interviews with my respective interlocutors. These situations of redistribution were important because they also created moments of shared reflection about my role, possible contributions, and preliminary results. I was able to meet most, but unfortunately not all, of my interlocutors from the first fieldtrip.

As part of my engagement with the solidarity efforts in Europe, I created verbal or written reports about the interviews with non-Indigenous supporters, evaluating if they could make a possible contribution to the already ongoing solidarity action. For example, one German student was particularly interested in doing human rights observation in Chile, since she was planning an academic exchange year in Santiago de Chile. On the basis of my interview with her, the activists from the Mapuche regional group of the GfbV finally agreed on sending her to Wallmapu in that function and provided her with their contacts. During that year, she collected important information and sent detailed reports about cases of human rights violations in Wallmapu to Germany.

As already argued, redistribution includes more than giving back research material or results. Redistribution also takes place in the researcher's commitment put to political praxis and at the service of the involved groups. In that way, I also aimed to give back through my activism in support of the activities of the Mapuche diaspora by translating texts or supporting the organisation of an event. If needed, they thus knew that they could count on my support when inviting me to a solidarity activity. Similarly, I felt that my engagement as a human rights observer was appreciated by most of the Mapuche interlocutors in Wallmapu and made my parallel role as a researcher acceptable. On several occasions, for example in a Mapuche community in a resistance, I was asked to clarify what I was doing there. After explaining my double role and engagement as a human rights observer, my presence was generally nodded off with approval. It seemed that my mere presence in that role was considered a small contribution, and thus an accepted redistribution, for my presence in the role of a researcher.

This chapter outlined my methodological approach of doing ethnography on and in solidarity inspired by (Black) feminist and Marxist standpoint theory. I hereby related to critical research programmes like PAR or decolonising methodologies, as well as to traditional empirical, qualitative, ethnographic methods. I outlined a multisited, networked, and committed ethnographic approach on and in solidarity that demands a high and critical degree of reflexivity and that combines activism and research. As a key element of this methodological approach, I introduced the idea of an ethnographic translation that puts different knowledges within a crowded field of thoughts and ideas into conversation.

This chapter further detailed my research process between 2014 and 2017 and its different stages, from the initial contact phase, through the participation and observation in a series of solidarity events in Europe, and the interviews with non-Mapuche supporters, to the ethnographisation of solidarity by following the expressions of solidarity from Europe to Chile. My research underwent a major change at the beginning, when I realised that solidarity with the Mapuche is essentially solidarity by the Mapuche. This demanded to reconsider my positionality within the research context and to become aware of and critically reflect about my own engagement (and the engagement of other non-Indigenous actors) in solidarity action, with the Mapuche actors as the protagonists.

I also critically discussed three of the methodological challenges that I encountered during my research process. Those include the questions about how to balance my academic agenda and political engagement; how to deal with my own vulnerability across racialised, colonial, and gendered differences; and finally how to make my research material useful and beneficial for my research partners.

Having laid down the theoretical and methodological groundwork, the following chapters will discuss the empirical material from my ethnographic encounters of, and in solidarity with, Mapuche and non-Mapuche actors.