The Mapuche of *Puelmapu,* an awakening nation in a changing state

geographies of community, belonging, and nationhood for the Mapuche in Argentina

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Abstract

The Mapuche of Patagonia have a storied history of social mobilization. A nation in two states, the diverging histories, modes of cultural transmission, and notions of citizenship for the *pueblo-nación* (people-nation) Mapuche on either side of the Andes mountain range has led to wholly different cultural and political realities in the modern era. In Argentina, a country that has only recently been to acknowledge the pre-existence of indigenous communities in its territory, the Mapuche have in recent years undergone a process of social and cultural reconstruction, seeking to re-establish tradition and a collective identity vanished following the conquest of Patagonia in the late 19th century. Mobilization of Mapuche communities occurred in a relatively peaceful manner until late 2017, when two confrontations with federal police led to the deaths of a protestor and a young urban Mapuche youth. The resulting crisis within the larger Mapuche community brought to the fore internal questioning around the political interpretations of a Mapuche worldview, the appropriate relationship to the state, and the meaning of autonomy as a collective goal. Using material from 15 interviews and observations from short-term ethnography conducted with communities and organizations in Neuquén province and the Nahuel Huapi National Park and the city of San Carlos de Bariloche, this thesis explores the contemporary tensions and questions of mobilization facing the *pueblo-nación* Mapuche in the wake of recent crises, investigating the movement as geography of kinship formulated as strategic action transcribed on the face of a changing society and structural reality in Argentine Patagonia, investigating how the movement has been so resilient and how the bounds of participation in the movement are negotiated internally.

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Introduction

Roughly one hundred members of the various Mapuche communities of Neuquén had gathered in a circle at the entrance to the judicial complex in the center of the city. Their clothes where a patchwork of styles, with some sporting traditional jewelry, trarilonkos, and woven ponchos, others dressing in the typical hat and bombachas of the gauchos, and still others in unassuming urban attire. It was the final day of the trial of Lof Campo Maripe on the charge of usurpation, and those who had gathered in support were silent, listening to one of the werken (speaker) of the Confederación Mapuche de Neuquén. The werken was recounting the results of the trial to those who had not been able to be part of the audience.

"I would like to thank our lawyers, who gave a master class for the judge and for the prosecution lawyer in indigenous law. They don't understand anything about that. They keep referring to what the 'law of lands' says. Of course, but the 'law of lands' doesn't apply to us. We have other rights!"

The werken turned to a young man, humbly dressed who was listening intently. Earlier the man had been presented as the lonko (head) of a newly established community near the municipality of Aluminé, several hours to the west of the capital, approaching the Andes.

"I'm going to give the word to the lonko now, since you should be introduced. This is our way Lonko to organize ourselves, to carry out every meeting, every political decision…we have lawyers working with us, and we have the whole social sector that accompanies us."

The lonko responded "we felt we needed to come, because what happens here affects all of us, we are all part of this community…" The gathered crowd applauded as several photographers snapped photos. Hanging above the head of the farthest part of the crowd the Wenufoye, Mapuche

national flag, flapped in the gentle breeze, and images of Santiago Maldonado and Rafael Nahuel stared out over the crowd from printed posters reclaiming justice...

I first became interested in the case of the Mapuche in Argentina in the month prior to beginning my master's degree. I had, for reasons related to my personal life, become a frequent reader of the Argentine press, and it was with great interest that I followed the disappearance of a protester in Patagonia in early August 2017. A sustained occupation sparking altercations with the police had been taking place in a remote area of the province of Chubut, where a small assembly of Mapuche activists had established a settlement on land currently owned by the Italian clothing company Benetton. *Pu Lof Resistance Cushamen*, as the settlement was named, formed under the banner of the *Resistencia Ancestral Mapuche* (RAM), described in the press as fighting for the idea of an autonomous *Wallmapu*, (the name for the lands of the Mapuche in Mapudungun) in Patagonia. On August 1st one of the protesters, a non-Mapuche artist named Santiago Maldonado, had disappeared. Two months later his body would be discovered in a river near the site of the protest, official cause of death declared as drowning.

The disappearance and the judicial proceedings over the responsibility for the 28-year old's untimely death captivated the Argentine nation. Among other social questions that the constant media coverage of Maldonado's disappearance brought to the fore was that of the Mapuche in Argentina. Questions of their number, political aspersions, legitimacy in the territory, and eventually organization as terrorists became daily fare. The Mapuche were portrayed as illegitimate Chilean conquerors of the true Argentine indigenous populations of Patagonia, inherent enemies of the state. In the midst of this media furor around the 'Mapuche Question' and the state response, another death occurred, this time of a 22-year old Mapuche man named Rafael

Nahuel, shot on November 24th, 2017 in a confrontation with the police at the Mascardi lake just outside of the popular tourist destination city San Carlos de Bariloche, in the province of Río Negro. Official accounts of the attempted eviction of *Lof Lafken Winkul Mapu*, the Mapuche community occupying land at Mascardi, described the community as an assembly of anti-state forces requiring forceful suppression and eviction. Articles portraying the Mapuche as internal enemies of the state continued to appear almost daily in press outlets throughout the country.

If the general public's exposure to Mapuche political mobilization in Argentina has been through radical actions of land occupation such as those of the RAM and the state's inordinately violent response, the reality of Mapuche social mobilization is far more complex, spanning a variety of strategies, objectives, and social partnerships. As I looked further into the mobilization of the Mapuche in Argentina, I discovered a number of internal disagreements on mobilization strategy within the *pueblo-nación*, the term which is used to denominate the greater community of Mapuche in both Chile and Argentina. In Bariloche, the death of 'Rafa' Nahuel simultaneously galvanized and bitterly divided Mapuche communities, as some of the *Lof*, a term for community or family, and organizations themselves worked within the national park service that was responsible for initiating what later became a violent eviction. Those communities, in striving for a Mapuche political representation as mediated between their organizations and the provincial state and municipal governments, publicly distanced themselves from land occupations that were not coordinated with the national park service, such as the confrontation at Mascardi lake. In so doing they adopt a line similar to that of *Confederación Mapuche de Neuquén* (CMN), operating under a different provincial economic and legal reality in the province of Neuquén. There, in light of exploration of the massive *Vaca Muerta* shale formation and gas and oil extraction in the province on rural lands inhabited by Mapuche communities, the CMN has refined a strategy of land

reclamation and legal defense on the grounds of recent advances in indigenous law and constitutional recognition, a strategy which relies on a carefully curated public image and could be jeopardized by negative press that ascribes the political line of the RAM to the entire *pueblo-nación*. It was clear that the communities of *Puelmapu*, or "eastern lands,"[1] were passing through a process of reckoning, one that required urgent and in-depth study. While deaths at the hands of the state's military or police are not unheard of in Chile, they had never occurred in Argentina, and the shock, outrage, and fear that spread across the region as a result could have lasting effects on the meaning of organization as a national community.

In one month of ethnographic fieldwork in April of 2019, attending a trial for usurpation in Neuquén and then traveling between Neuquén and Bariloche to participate in communal activities, organizational conversations, and various elements of daily life, conducting 15 interviews with Mapuche individuals of various economic and social positions as well as positions within the Mapuche movement, I set out to investigate how these deaths and the contemporary political realities in Argentina in which they had occurred influenced discourses of belonging and meaning in the communal construction of the concept of *pueblo-nación*. I entered the field with a number of questions in mind. How did the memory of these deaths at hand of the state affect those who thought about them? How were their images used in subsequent actions or publications? As one of the deaths was Mapuche and the other not, what sorts of discussions occur around the portrayal of their deaths in the press, and how is the notion of *weychafe*[2] used by different activists and communities? How are boundaries drawn internally amongst the Mapuche themselves, when disagreements can no longer be reconciled in the face of state reprisals? How has identification as

[1] The Mapuche designation for Patagonian land to the East of the Andes in Argentina.
[2] "warrior" in Mapudungun

part of the Mapuche nation, which has seen continual growth in Argentina since the 1990s with more and more communities 'waking up' to their identity as indigenous, become such a resilient movement, and how might that produce new internal tensions at this delicate point for the national movement?

With more than two millennia of history in Patagonia, the Mapuche have deep historical relationships to notions of independence and autonomy. They resisted early Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century, eventually pushing back from the south of contemporary Chile and reconquering lands which make up modern day Argentina's provinces of Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut and Santa Cruz. The only indigenous nation to have been recognized as independent by the Spanish, their history is a source of pride and meaning in the Mapuche contemporary struggle, and notions of illegitimacy of the cultural and social imposition of the Chilean and Argentine states are articulated around the parallel conquests by the fledgling nation-states of Chile and Argentina, known as the Pacification of Araucania[3] in Chile and the Conquest of the Desert[4] in Argentina. Theirs is not merely a discourse of indigenous pre-existence, but also of national history.

Hierarchical and communal, Mapuche life is organized around the *Lof*, with the head of the community (*lonko*) supported by the speaker (*werken*), her or his second in command, the *inkal lonko*, the youth leaders, or *kona*, and traditionally the healer and spiritual leader, the *machi*. Non-Mapuche society is referred to as the world of the *huinca*, the word for invaders. Due to the historical differences in national conquests by the two states in Patagonia, Mapuche history and identity has had an uninterrupted history in Chile while almost entirely disappearing in Argentina, and only in the last half a century has it begun to return to the social and political fore as a category

[3] *Pacificación de la Araucanía*
[4] *Campaña del Desierto*

of identification. This has led to important social differences between Chilean and Argentina communities. For example, the language, Mapudungun, with three competing modern alphabets, has been continually present in Chile yet only recently is undergoing a process of reintroduction in Argentina. Even more importantly, the spiritual dimension of Mapuche life and world view has until recent years been nearly non-existent in Mapuche life and activism in Argentina, symbolized by the lack of a *machi* within Argentine borders since the time of the Conquest of the Desert. Understanding the articulation of these roles, movements, and concepts within contemporary social space in Patagonia, and the tensions produced therein, is central to analysis of political and national-communal consciousness across communities and existing state borders.

Long an object of study for the singular nature of its historical trajectory, the richness of its traditions, and the resilience and success of its mobilization and resistance, the Mapuche provide an important case study in contemporary trends in national consciousness, political understanding and the shifting notions of race, ethnicity and nationalism in an uncertain landscape. I will explore how, in light of the long-standing negation of race and indigenous identity by the Argentine state and society which continued long after indigenous politics became salient realities in other Latin American states and has only in the previous decades begun to change, presents a unique opportunity for interrogation of the changing notions of citizenship, legitimacy of claims to land, and the notion of nationhood. More specifically, I will attempt to argue that previous research into the case of the Mapuche in Argentina, concentrating on the reconstruction of identity in the face of a hegemonic, catholic society, provides characterizations that are no longer entirely sufficient for grasping the burgeoning complexity of Mapuche mobilization. Indeed, it would seem as though the hegemonic nature of Argentine society, well-articulated in the literature, is itself fracturing, opening up to new potentialities for internal boundary-making, coalition building, and changing

hierarchies of legitimacy in national and identity claims. I will investigate these trends through observations and the material from interviews, establishing how Mapuche actors and groups talk about each other, forming boundaries and articulating a geography of meaning and belonging in the *pueblo-nación* Mapuche of *Puelmapu*.

Chapter 1 – The Mapuche in Argentina, a movement in construction

Academic literature on the Mapuche is extensive and diverse. Historians, linguists, anthropologists, and geographers have long been fascinated by the world view, culture, and political life of both its historical and contemporary communities. As the only indigenous community to successfully resist Spanish invasion and become recognized as independent, the historical and social dimensions of the Mapuche as an intractable group within two states has inspired researchers both regionally and globally.[5] Despite this breadth of interest, some sections of the literature remain frustratingly fragmented. This is partially due to language. Whereas there has been in recent years a renewed interest in the Mapuche in the Anglo-Saxon literature, little of the vast literature existing in Spanish has been translated, and curiously appears somewhat under-cited in the wider English-language literature on indigeneity and indigenous movements, although signs point to this changing. Additionally, academics writing in French have developed their own body of literature on the Mapuche which operates within as a semi-hermetic field of research. Hopefully, this Chapter will do a small part in the effort to connect these disparate bodies of literature in the effort to achieve a more complete understanding of social and political transformation of the *pueblo-nación mapuche*.

As another complication to the story, a significant segment of this historical interest and research in the Mapuche has focused on the communities and political movements in Chile and has often considered the Mapuche as a primarily Chilean indigenous community. The reasons for this are varied, but in part mirror the historical contrast between the persistence of the Mapuche as a

[5] Ana Guevara and Fabien Le Bonniec, "Wallmapu, terre de conflits et de réunification du peuple mapuche,"[Wallmapu, land of conflicts and of reunification of the Mapuche people] *Journal de la société des américanistes* 94, no. 94–2 (December 20, 2008): 205–28.

persecuted group in Chile and the negation of the Mapuche (and of indigenous identity as a whole) in Argentina. The worst offenders in this vein border on what Andres Wimmer and Nina Schiller refer to as 'methodological nationalism,' with inadequate consideration of the significance of either signs transborder cooperation between Mapuche movements and communities, or lack thereof.[6] While literature on the Mapuche in Argentina is less extensive, it is rich with material on the re-development of ethnic consciousness, alternative conceptions of national identity and belonging, and increasingly nuanced notions of citizenship, society, and the state. The relevant literature will be considered below, evaluating its insight and pointing out various limitations, gaps, and potential directions for further research.

In this Chapter, I will consider the existing literature on the Mapuche in Argentina light of both this spatial and historical divide between the two states while considering the regional peculiarity of the concept of race in Argentina, exploring the theoretical and conceptual directions taken to elucidate these realities by researchers focusing on social and political tensions within the Mapuche communities in previous decades. I will evaluate notions of ethnogenesis and boundary making contained within readings of Mapuche social movements and point out the predominance of interpreting articulations of political consciousness and nationhood through a Gramscian lens, drawing on notions of hegemony and counter hegemony to describe the cultural and historical negation experienced by the Mapuche in Argentine society. I will point out how this approach is conceptually valuable to understanding the intersection of indigenous identification and class, a crucial junction in the social and political articulation of claims, while at the same time signaling potential limitations of this approach going forward, as the real and existing mechanisms of

[6] Wimmer, Andreas and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology," *The International Migration Review*, no. 3 (2003): 576.

structural and social reproduction of alterity in a diversifying Argentine social reality seem to become ever less clear. Following this, I will explore previous work on boundary making and inter-movement solidarity between mobilized Mapuche communities and both traditional and burgeoning social institutions and movements in Argentina, notably with labor unions, local political parties, and the rising national feminist movement. I will consider illuminating work on the notion of reflexivity within articulations of identity and political consciousness, presaging the current shift in understanding as Mapuche identification reaches a point of diversification within a changing national context in Argentina. The Chapter will conclude by considering starting points in the existing literature which allow us to understand the deaths of Santiago Maldonado and Rafael Nahuel as crystallization moments for inter-movement solidarity and differences in articulation of identity, citizenship, and nationhood.

On race and Argentina

Among Latin American countries Argentina is unique for its long-standing portrayal of itself as a European, or white, nation. Several of my informants repeated to me on numerous occasions their awareness of and frustration with having to live within a "racist, nationalist society." The very fact of the ability to make this criticism of Argentine society as racist is itself a sign of a changing order, as for much of Argentina's history the idea of race as a salient category of social difference and boundary making had little public traction. Sarah Warren points to the Argentine expression that "Mexicans descended from the Aztecs; Peruvians descended from the Incas; Argentines descended from the boats" as emblematic of this cultural negation of the existence of indigenous cultures and the historical distancing from the systems of mestizaje in neighboring countries.[7] This national

[7] Sarah D. Warren, "How Will We Recognize Each Other as Mapuche? Gender and Ethnic Identity Performances in Argentina," *Gender & Society* 23, no. 6 (n.d.): 768–89.

myth developed as part of the nationalism of a developing country which exerted, as in other young Latin American states, significant influence over the form and content of national institutions and organization through centralized institutional control.[8] The process for creating a 'civilized,' urban elite and a provincial system in its service was rationalized through characterization of the untamed provinces as untamed lands of barbarism in need of civilizing order, an opinion documented in the writings of former president Faustino Domingo Sarmiento and which served as a source of moralizing legitimacy for the Campaign in the Desert, also called the Conquest, the Argentine military occupation of the Patagonian lands east of the Andes carried out by General and later President Julio Argentina Roca along with the commander Conrado Villegas.[9] Historian Mariela Eva Rodríguez traces how the erasure of indigenous identity was carried out in the newly conquered Argentine Patagonia, as official documents in Patagonia began introducing the notion of being a descendent, replacing aboriginal identity in official documents with official lineage as a descendent of vanished indigenous groups, reconstructing indigenous identity as an object of the past rather than of the present in order to promote the sense of identification with notions of Argentine citizenship.[10] Across Argentina the numerous pre-colonial communities became objects

[8] Matthias vom Hau, "State Infrastructural Power and Nationalism: Comparative Lessons from Mexico and Argentina," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43, no. 3 (August 7, 2008): 334, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-008-9024-x.

[9] Diana Lenton, "Política indigenista argentina: una construcción inconclusa,"[Argentine indigenous politics, an inconclusive construction] *Anuário Antropológico*, no. I (June 1, 2010): 57–97, https://doi.org/10.4000/aa.781; Mariela Eva Rodríguez, "'Invisible Indians,''Degenerate Descendants': Idiosyncrasies of Mestizaje in Southern Patagonia," in *Rethinking Race in Modern Argentina*, 2016, 126–54; José Bengoa, *Historia del pueblo mapuche: (siglo XIX y XX)[History of the Mapuche people (XIX and XX century]* (Lom Ediciones, 2000); Gaston Gordillo, "The Savage Outside of White Argentina," in *Rethinking Race in Modern Argentina*, 2016, 241–67.

[10] Rodríguez, "'Invisible Indians,''Degenerate Descendants': Idiosyncrasies of Mestizaje in Southern Patagonia."

of historical study rather than social policy, while at the same time a new national racial category was developed, the all-encompassing term 'criollo.'[11]

Ironically, just as official narratives had more or less succeeded in the elimination of indigenous identity as a form of collective identity, Argentine national culture in the mid-20th century underwent a process of folklorization, becoming identified with 'criollo' folkloric tradition, music, and dance with its origins in indigenous communities and movements which, when dislocated from the cultural and political (for many of the songs and traditions had taken on a political tone) role of their origins, became a source of national pride with little apparent indigenous significance.[12] This growing fascination of a national community with cultural production of the remnants of the very cultures and traditions it had long sought to extinguish follows what anthropologist Renato Rosaldo famously described as 'imperialist nostalgia.'[13] This process was not limited to music and dance, and nowhere has this transformation been pushed further than in the province of Neuquén, one of the two cites of my fieldwork. As leadership of the youngest province in Argentina, a political dynasty known as *Movimiento Popular Neuquén (MPN),* in power since the 1960s, worked to create a provincial identity to set it apart from Europeanized Buenos Aires. This imaginary of "*neuquenidad*" appropriated symbols, landmarks, and traditions of Mapuche communities within its provincial jurisdiction in order to promote a provincial cohesion and in so doing negate the potential for Mapuche identity to develop as an oppositional force within the

[11] Claudia Noemi Briones and Sabine Kradolfer, "Dilemas y paradojas de la internaciónalización de los movimientos indígenas en América Latina: una introducción.,"[Dilemmas and paradoxes in the internationalization of indigenous movements in Latin America: an introduction] November 2010, http://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/61176; Oscar Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement: Sugar Elites, Criollo Workers, and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism, 1900-1955* (University of Arizona Press, 2010).
[12] Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*.
[13] Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," *Representations* 26 (April 1, 1989): 107–22, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928525.

province.[14] While these efforts are relegated to a previous era of the provinces' history, and today Mapuche identity is very much alive and independent from the MPN, signs of this strategy can still be found: the provincial anthem contains words in Mapudungun, and throughout the province signs indicating where lottery tickets can be purchase are emblazoned with the smiling face of a cartoon woman in indigenous dress.

Though historically denied official recognition, indigenous communities continued to live in marginalized communities throughout Argentina. In adopting a racial regime far different from the 'pigmentocracies' that characterized the racial hierarchies of its neighbors,[15] Argentina did little to facilitate social inclusion of these communities beyond perfunctory notions of citizenship, making inequalities between the marginalized communities and the ruling, Europeanized class even more stark, with race and class inextricably entwined to separate both those with darker skin and the lower classes from the ruling elite emulating notions of classical European civilization and closely tied to the socio-cultural dominance of the Catholic church.[16] The racism imbued in the class stratification in Argentina is demonstrated in the derogatory attribution *negro*, used for those seen as delinquent, marginal, and uncivilized.[17] In parallel, alterity based on categories of racial

[14] Laura Mombello, "La 'Mística Neuquina'. Marcas y Disputas de Provincianía y Alteridad En Una Provincia Joven,"[The 'Neuquen mystique.' Traces and disputes of province-ness and alterity in a young province] in *Cartografías Argentinas: Políticas Indigenistas y Formaciones Provinciales de Alteridad* (Buenos Aires: Antropofagia, 2008), 139–66.
[15] Edward Telles, *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America* (UNC Press Books, 2014).
[16] Laura E. Masson, "Women in the Military in Argentina: Nationalism, Gender, and Ethnicity," in *Gender Panic, Gender Policy*, vol. 24, 0 vols., Advances in Gender Research 24 (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017), 23–43, https://doi.org/10.1108/S1529-212620170000024002.
[17] Ezequiel Adamovsky, "El Color de La Nación Argentina. Conflictos y Negociaciones Por La Definición de Un Ethnos Naciónal, de La Crisis Al Bicentenario. (Spanish)," *The Color of an Argentinian Nation. Conflicts and Negotiations for the Definition of a National Ethnos, from the Crisis to the Bicentennial. (English)* 49 (December 2012): 343; Pablo Martín Dalle, "Acerca del potencial rebelde de 'lo negro' en la sociedad argentina contemporánea," *Intersticios. Revista sociológica de pensamiento crítico* 3, no. 1 (2009), http://www.intersticios.es/article/view/3505.

othering is likewise subsumed within the extreme inequality of Argentine class hierarchies, both within regional class systems and between the capital and the rural provinces.[18] This construction in turn played heavily in the popular construction of national myths around the Conquest of the Desert and the early history of the Argentine state, where the racial prejudices of its founding intellectual vanish behind a national expression of pride in the creation of a Europeanized and advanced society, formerly one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Comparative work has consider parallels between this phenomenon and the production of similar orders of knowledge and belonging in Mexico.[19] It is this long-standing cultural paradigm that has throughout Argentine history presented a monolithic impediment to the salience of racial categories as a form a of social organization and a source of categorization and identity construction, leaving indigenous social movement historically sidelined or marginalized from access to the public discourse. As I will consider later in this Chapter, this is only recently beginning to change.

Hegemonic discourse and contested citizenship

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that within the literature considering contemporary Mapuche culture and struggles for recognition, a number of prominent anthropologists of Argentine Patagonia characterize Mapuche life and mobilization as a struggle against this implicit racial order's imposition, conceptualizing the confrontation as a challenge to hegemonic dominion over social life and institutions and the result of an awareness of the production of categories of alterity, a response to which Mapuche individuals, communities, and activists attempt to articulate in

[18] Mariano Perelman, "Notes about Racist Argentina and a Class-Based Government," *American Anthropologist* 119, no. 3 (September 2017): 532–34, https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.12919.
[19] Hau, "State Infrastructural Power and Nationalism"; Mónica G. Moreno Figueroa and Emiko Saldívar Tanaka, "'We Are Not Racists, We Are Mexicans': Privilege, Nationalism and Post-Race Ideology in Mexico," *Critical Sociology* 42, no. 4–5 (July 1, 2016): 515–33, https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920515591296.

espousing a distinct worldview and identity. References to "hegemonic national discourse" are nearly ubiquitous in the literature, characterizing the Catholic national culture as pervading institutions, government, schools, and daily life in Argentine Patagonia.[20] This approach, leaning primarly on Gramscian notions of hegemony as interpreted by cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall[21] in the analysis of race as a social phenomenon is a logical one, particularly in allowing researchers to describe the production of consent, and the way in which social practice and institutions inculcate a national culture on the basis of negating indigenous identity. As Diana Lenton notes that, prior to recent legal and constitutional changes, the official category of descendant for indigenous communities gave way to a series of attributions, each communicating a paradigmatic interpretation of the legitimacy of an indigenous identity; "Indians, Indigenous, Aborigines, Original peoples," where each successive term is contrasted against the derogatory "Indian," a continual re-negotiations of the external boundaries of participation and citizenship within larger society.[22]

[20] Claudia Noemi Briones, "Políticas indigenistas en Argentina: entre la hegemonía neoliberal de los años noventa y la 'Naciónal y Popular' de la última década.," [Indigenous politics in Argentina: between the neoliberal hegemony of the 90s and the 'National and Popular; of the last decade] March 2015, https://doi.org/10.7440/antipoda21.2015.02; Lenton, "Política indigenista argentina"[Argentine indigenous politics]; Andrea Szulc, "Becoming Neuquino in Mapuzugun: Teaching Mapuche Language and Culture in the Province of Neuquén, Argentina," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2009): 129–49, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1492.2009.01032.x; Walter Mario Delrío, "Estado y pueblo Mapuche en Argentina,"[The State and the Mapuche people in Argentina] *Anales de la Universidad de Chile*, no. 13 (2017): 133–51, https://doi.org/10.5354/0717-8883.2017.49001; Walter Delrio, "Argentina, Indigenous Popular Protests," in *The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* (American Cancer Society, 2009), 1–3, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198073.wbierp0120.

[21] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (June 1, 1986): 5–27, https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000202.

[22] *Indios, indígenas, aborígenes, Pueblos Originarios*

The incorporation and dissemination of such concepts has been central to institutional support of this cultural hegemony. One of the clearest examples of this is in the study of the primary education system. Anthropologist Andrea Szulc documents how this process occurs for Mapuche children in the province of Neuquén.[23] Other research indicates that a hegemonic cultural consensus of the historical nature of the Mapuche as a Chilean ethnic group, suggesting that while the Mapuche may have existed in Argentina for a time they no longer do now, leads to the invisibility of actually existing Mapuche as provincial and national citizens where being Mapuche, as criollo elsewhere in Argentina, has become a derogatory category to characterize individuals and communities as lazy or drunk.[24] Operating on the basis of a logic of productivity versus sloth, the linkage between class and racial distancing is on full display in this derogatory stereotype.

In striving the understand the internal dynamics of Mapuche social movements, the articulation of a notion of Argentine national hegemony becomes instrumental in understanding the backdrop against which Mapuche claims of legitimacy and strategic mobilizations are articulated. In the case of the afore-mentioned education system, activist have as a result worked on fomenting a discussion around the teaching of Mapuche history, culture, and language has served as the cornerstone for Mapuche activism in the provinces.[25] Central to an alternative interpretation of

[23] Szulc, "Becoming Neuquino in Mapuzugun"; Andrea Szulc, "Concepciones de Niñez e Identidad En Las Experiencias Escolares de Niños Mapuche Del Neuquén,"[Conceptions of childhood and identity in the school experiences of Mapuche children in Neuquen] *Anthropologica* 33, no. 35 (2015): 235–53.

[24] Gastón Gordillo and Silvia María Hirsch, "Indigenous Struggles and Contested Identities in Argentina Histories of Invisibilization and Reemergence," *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (2003): 4–30; Valentina Stella and Ana Margarita Ramos, "Una reflexión política sobre los usos y sentidos de 'ser tehuelche' y 'ser mapuche,'"[A political reflection on the uses and meanings of 'being tehuelche' and 'being mapuche'] December 2017, http://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/61166.

[25] Carolina Alvarez Avila and Lucrecia Petit, "Memorias mapuches y escuelas: desde las fundaciones al presente; entre lo naciónal y lo propio," [Mapuche memories and schools: from the foundaions to the present; between the national and the personal] November 2012,

structural inequality as proposed by Mapuche activists is the notion of "pre-existence," in which asserting simultaneously a reclaimed and living identity alongside the antecedents of its historical claims in the region, which extend far beyond those of the Argentine state, subverts the legitimizing discourse of the existing racial order, producing a hierarchy of legitimacy in which the state is conceived as the illegitimate claimant to territory and society.[26] The notion of pre-existence was present throughout my time in the field, as I will discuss in subsequent Chapters, and indeed did seem to function as a successful subversion of hegemony on the institutional level, evidenced by its centrality in the court case which took place during my fieldwork.

Following Stuart Hall, who stress the structural dimensions of the articulation of race, of which the marginalization of its historicity is hidden behind the hegemonic narrative of a mono-racial state, the counter-arguments of pre-existence and subsequent legitimacy claims underpin what has been characterized in the literature as partial or "incomplete" citizenship for Mapuche (and other indigenous) communities. In a widely cited 2003 study of Mapuche populations in both Chile and Argentina, a work that looks into the formation of national identity for Mapuches across the two state's borders and itself participates as an activist work as an articulation of the legitimacy of said national discourse, anthropologist Isabel Hernandez characterizes the social and institutional

http://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/11167; Claudia Salomón Tarqüini et al., "Rescuing Roots: Indigenous People, Researchers and Cultural Policies in the Construction of Provincial Identities (La Pampa, Argentina, 1960-1993)," *Tabula Rasa*, no. 28 (June 2018): 297–321, https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n28.13; Claudia N. Briones, "Formaciones de Alteridad: Contextos Globales, Procesos Naciónales y Provinciales,"[Formations of Alterity: Global Contexts, National and Provincial Processes] in *Cartografías Argentinas: Políticas Indigenistas y Formaciones Provinciales de Alteridad* (Buenos Aires: Antropofagia, 2008), 9–40.

[26] Matthias vom Hau and Guillermo Wilde, "'We Have Always Lived Here': Indigenous Movements, Citizenship and Poverty in Argentina," *The Journal of Development Studies* 46, no. 7 (August 1, 2010): 1283–1303, https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2010.487098.

discrimination of the Mapuche as "incomplete citizenship."[27] The question of citizenship, and its larger restructuring in light of constitutional and political reform which I will discuss shortly, occurs during a time of similar shifts across the continent, where criticisms of unequal rights for citizens has become a salient point of mobilization for indigenous and racial minorities as well as communities that make up the urban underclass, living in extreme poverty and with little to no access to society or social institutions.[28]

It is worth mentioning here that a number of the academic texts I have cited, which elaborate a criticism of hegemonic Argentine cultural paradigms to describe the discrimination faced by Mapuche communities and individuals, have been employed by Mapuche activists themselves as political tools in mediation with state institutions. In the trial of Lof Campo Maripe, I heard on a number of occasions the names of authors which I cite in this Chapter, among them Diana Lenton, Ana Margarita Ramos, and Claudia Briones, referenced by the lawyers for the defense in explaining the anthropological foundation for the argument of a legitimate indigenous claim to the land in dispute. Likewise, many of the participants in social activities in community centers I visited or individuals with whom I discussed had read and taken interest in academic work conducted on their own community. One of my informants told me that Dr. Lenton was a personal friend. This intimate engagement with the academic world, both as a way to better understand one's own condition by way of a more refined critique of the state and dominant society, and as a way to seek out counter-narratives derived from the very society they seek to challenge, demonstrates the engagement and excitement around concepts and ideas of a social movement in

[27] Isabel Hernández, *Autonomía o ciudadanía incompleta: el pueblo mapuche en Chile y Argentina* [Autonomy or incomplete citizenship: the Mapuche people in Chile and Argentina] (United Nations Publications, 2003).
[28] Sarah D. Warren, "Latin American Identity Politics: Redefining Citizenship," *Sociology Compass* 6, no. 10 (2012): 833–44, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2012.00491.x.

rapid development. Many of the youngest members of communities expressed interest in using education to produce an intellectual class capable of supporting their cause, similar to what has occurred in Chile.[29] In other cases, the relationship with the world of the *huinca* was viewed with total suspicion and disdain, indicating an opposing view. I will consider this divergence between communities in depth in the analysis of the field.

Neoliberal multiculturalism?

The ample use of hegemony as a theoretical concept has undoubtable value for the study of race and, in the case of the Mapuche in Argentina, understanding the historical invisibilization of the Mapuche as a legitimate social category. Nevertheless, recent decades have brought changes which require a re-evaluation how this cultural hegemony is produced, and whether or not the contemporary Mapuche movement agency within larger structures is still sufficiently characterized by conceptual frameworks operating on the basis of a singular cultural hegemony. I have seen two approaches to this question. Significant recent scholarship maintains the focus on hegemony, notably geographer Claudia Briones who argues convincingly that the arrival of "neoliberal multiculturalism," employing the concept developed by Charles Hale in his work on Central America, means that the left and populist turn in the 21st century led to a re-articulation of land and resources rights as 'for the people,' which ultimately reproduced a national culture marginalizing indigenous claims that jeopardize popular legitimacy.[30] Like Briones, Nadia Ameghino draws on Hale's concept of the "permitted Indian" to characterize the cautious inclusion

[29] Joanna Crow, "Negotiating Inclusion in the Nation: Mapuche Intellectuals and the Chilean State," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 1, 2010): 131–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/17442221003787084.

[30] Briones, "Políticas indigenistas en Argentina"[Indigenist policies in Argentina]; Charles R. Hale, "Neoliberal Multiculturalism," *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 10-19, 28, no. 1 (2005).

of select Mapuche actors and associations within the state power structure in the province of Neuquén.[31] Such work represents a large part in the field of study into the current status of Argentine cultural production in the context of Mapuche mobilization.

My reservations concerning the widespread use of hegemony going forward in a world of diversifying Mapuche self-identification and changing national paradigm in Argentina are two-fold. First, it is necessary in a study that employs hegemony as a guiding concept that the notion of consent, an important operator in the creation of a hegemonic narrative, be identified within the fabric of the social reality in question. While historical and contemporary anthropology on the Mapuche such as the works of Briones do aptly describe the intellectual production of a hegemonic discourse and its services to national and regional power structures, it has been more than clear to me that the current situation for Mapuche activism and political thought is one of increasing agency and ability to subvert these narratives, and the consent of both a battered working class a fractured and ideological divisive intellectual class in the country seems in the present day far less clear. Legal and constitutional reforms of recent decades mirror this shift. The 1994 national constitutional reform which recognized the pre-existence of Original Peoples,[32] the Neuquén provincial constitution which would be reformed to similar ends, or national laws such as 26.160 which blocks forceable eviction from occupied land and mandates a census of indigenous populations, upon which much of the current mobilizing strategy of the *Confederación Mapuche de Neuquén* is based, or 23.302 which lays out a host of provisions supporting the health and wellbeing of indigenous communities and served as a turning point for indigenous representation

[31] Nadia Ameghino, "¿Interculturalidad Hegemónica o Emancipatoria?: Una Aproximación a La Gestión Intercultural En Neuquén, Argentina,"[Hegemonic or emancipatory interculturalism?: an approach to intercultural management in Neuquén, Argentina] *Cultura y Representaciones Sociales* 6, no. 11 (2011): 83–108.
[32] *Pueblos originarios*

nationally.[33] These are not simply reformulations of cultural control by the state and a dominant society, but instead provide tools which have increased and diversified the agency under which Mapuche communities and movements have begun to operate. In this way, I follow Will Kymlicka's criticism of the use of neoliberal multi-culturalism as a blanket refutation of agency and the potential for change over time, arguing that the reconstruction of hegemony in a restructured society has been less conclusive than is stated elsewhere in the literature.[34]

Highlighting the potential for A heterogeneity of opinion within dominant society, my second reservation lies in the fact that neoliberal multi-culturalism risks rendering invisible the current relationship between Mapuche movements and other social movements, an essential form of organizational logic for Mapuce political strategy that has been covered in a small but growing corner of the literature on Mapuche in Argentina. For many of the mobilized *Lof* and Mapuche associations, young Mapuche women have been instrumental in building links between the Mapuche movement and the feminist movement currently growing in force in Argentina and across the continent, combining the political goals of ending gender-based violence and legalizing abortion with a criticism of the paternalist state and reclamation of the Mapuche's marginalized position within it.[35] Indeed, while a comprehensive study of the gendered dimensions of Mapuche activism and community are beyond the scope of this thesis, signs of changing ways in how

[33] Lenton, "Política indigenista argentina."[Argentine indigenous politics]
[34] Will Kymlicka, "Neoliberal Multiculturalism?," in *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, 2013, 99–125, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139542425.007.
[35] Warren, "How Will We Recognize Each Other as Mapuche? Gender and Ethnic Identity Performances in Argentina"; Stéphanie Rousseau and Christina Ewig, "Latin America's Left-Turn and the Political Empowerment of Indigenous Women," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 24, no. 4 (December 1, 2017): 425–51, https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxx013; Stella and Ramos, "Una reflexión política sobre los usos y sentidos de 'ser tehuelche' y 'ser mapuche.'" [A political reflection on the uses and meaning of 'being tehuelche' and 'being Mapuche.']

discourses of roles, work, and participation in the movement were articulated were present throughout the field and merit further study. Similarly, connections between Mapuche communities and labor unions have also become an important part of the visibility of Mapuche claims in the public discourse, particularly in the province of Neuquén, where various workers parties have long been mobilized and provided a natural partner of Mapuche activists seeking legitimacy independent from the pittance of operational leeway provided by the state.[36] Ceramic workers, teachers, and other unionists were constantly present in the field during my time in Neuquén as they demonstrated in solidarity with Campo Maripe on trial for land usurpation and were in turn supported by the same communities during their own marches. In Neuquén, this seeking of partnership and building of coalitions is particularly strong and has also been demonstrated in Mapuche involvement in historical farmer's movements in the province.[37]

It would, however, be too overreaching to proclaim the end of hegemonic control over discourse across all of Argentine Patagonia, especially in light of the continuing presence of structural and violent excision of the Mapuche from society, particularly notable in the city of Bariloche, my

[36] Mombello, "La 'Mística Neuquina'. Marcas y Disputas de Provincianía y Alteridad En Una Provincia Joven"; [The 'Neuquén Mystique.' traces and disputes of province-ness and alterity in a young province] José Echenique, "Conflictos sociopolíticos en la región del alto vale de Río Negro y Neuquén, 1966-1976," [Socio-political conflict in the high valley region of Rio Negro and Neuquen, 1966-1976] *Revista de Historia* 0, no. 14 (2013), http://170.210.83.53/htdoc/revele/index.php/historia/article/view/528; Carlos Falaschi O., Fernando M. Sánchez, and Andrea P. Szulc, "Políticas Indigenistas En Neuquén: Pasado y Presente," [Indigenist policies in Neuquén, past and present] in *Cartografías Argentinas: Políticas Indigenistas y Formaciones Provinciales de Alteridad* (Buenos Aires: Antropofagia, 2008), 167–206; Laura Blanco, Maria Laura Martinez, and Paola Invernizzi, "Lucha gremial - Lucha política El conflicto docente en Neuquén" [Guild disputes - political struggle, the teacher's conflict in Neuquén] (VII Jornadas de Sociología, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2007), http://cdsa.aacademica.org/000-106/52.

[37] Jorge Campos Medina, Camilo Farías Durán, and Francisca Vergara Pinto, "Aproximación a la identidad étnica mapuche dentro del Movimiento Campesino Revolucionario,"[An approach to the Mapuche ethnic identity within the Revolutionary Campesino Movement] *Revista Izquierdas*, no. 37 (2017): 120–41.

second cite of research and a contrast which I will attempt to elaborate in Chapter 3. The afore-mentioned stereotype of the lazy or drunk Mapuche, while less pervasive in contemporary discourse, still shapes the treatment of Mapuche and their claims and leads to a blind eye being turned towards police aggression in *los barrios*[38] (slums) in Bariloche.[39] Furthermore, the political right turn in Argentina in the last few years which produced the militarized posture of the federal state in Patagonia leading to the deaths of Santiago Maldonado and Rafael Nahuel indicates that whatever gains and agency acquired by regional Mapuche actors and movements will for the foreseeable future remain on tenuous ground, with steps needing to be carefully chosen in terms of strategy and response in order to sidestep widespread criminalization of Mapuche activism such as that seen in Chile.[40] Internal discourse between disagreements on how to mobilize going forward will make up the core of my analytical evaluation of the fieldwork.

Claims of "a nation in two states"

In order to investigate this disagreement, it is necessary to understand what precisely the political and social claims of Mapuche communities and actors are, and further what about these claims make the burgeoning Mapuche movement in Argentina a valuable case study for understanding recent transformations in indigenous political participation in Latin America. Like movements across continent, the core of Mapuche political claims centers around the notion of *autonomy*, which can be articulated as a territorial, political, or economic goal.[41] In Argentina, demands for

[38] "the neighborhoods"
[39] Claudia N. Briones, "'Our Struggle Has Just Begun.'' Experiences of Belonging and Mapuche Formation of Self,'" in *Indigenous Experience Today* (Berg, 2007).
[40] Francisca Fernández Droguett and Doris Ojeda Cisternas, "Criminalización de la resistencia mapuche como política del miedo," [Criminalization of Mapuche resistance as a politics of fear] *Athenea digital* 15, no. 4 (2015): 267-277–277, https://doi.org/303437.
[41] Miguel González, "Indigenous Territorial Autonomy in Latin America: An Overview," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 10, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 10–36,

autonomy by Mapuche actors have been exercised with extreme caution in light of the tenuous state of official recognition by the government and the risk of a mediatized backlash by re-popularizing what is called in Both Argentina and Chile the "Mapuche Question," a characterization of the Mapuche as a separatist force and internal enemy of the state, fueled by the Mapuche use of the category of 'nation' to describe their people as well as mediatized portrayals of the Mapuche as terrorists.[42]

In the literature and in my own experience in the field, as I will discuss later, the argument for autonomy is framed around the right to territory upon which a community (*Lof*) might live, outside of the confines of an alienating urban reality. Indeed, the articulation of the urban and the rural has been and continues to be a salient social critique on the part of the Mapuche, similar to urban movement across the continent that struggle with the reality that many of their number have for economic and historical reasons became urbanized, living outside of the tradition bounds of communal life, creating new tensions that have been studied throughout Patagonia, but particularly in urban Chile.[43] This has brought several questions to the fore for a movement whose number are

https://doi.org/10.1080/17442222.2015.1034438; Beatriz Brigida Nussbaumer, "Pueblo, Territorio y Autonomía: tensiones en los modos de construcción de los indígenas como sujetos de derecho en la Argentina,"[People, Territory, and Autonomy: tensions in the modes of contruction of the indigenous as legal subjects in Argentina] July 2014, http://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/16816.

[42] Hernández, *Autonomía o ciudadanía incompleta* [Autonomy or incomplete citizenship]; José Marimán, "Cuestión Mapuche, Descentralización Del Estado y Autonomía Regional," [The Mapuche Question, Decentralization of the State and Regional Autonomy] *Caravelle (1988-)*, no. 59 (1992): 189–205.

[43] Figueroa Huencho and Verónica de Lourdes, "Capital social y desarrollo indígena urbano: una propuesta para una convivencia multicultural. Los Mapuches de Santiago de Chile." [Social Capital and indigenous urban development: a proposal for multicultural coextistence] (Ph.D. Thesis, Universitat Ramon Llull, 2007), http://www.tdx.cat/handle/10803/9165; María Laura Weiss, Juan Engelman, and Sebastián Valverde, "Pueblos indígenas urbanos en Argentina: un estado de la cuestión,"[Urban indigenous people in Argentina: the state of affairs.] *Pilquen - Sección Ciencias Sociales* 16, no. 1 (2013): 4–14.

increasingly heterogeneous in their world view as well as cultural and class positions, leading to a variety of responses, especially among a population of young Mapuche urban youth deemed the 'mapurbe' and to which Laura Kropff ascribes three differing negotiations with the urban reality in which the mapurbe find themselves, varying from total rejection of the alterity produced therein and a re-orientation towards the rural to an acceptance of the trappings of urban life and the potential for self-expression and activism that it can afford.[44] As global markets shift, leading to dizzying changes to the structure of cities and their economic networks, the question of Mapuche and indigenous participation in urban life on the periphery of the global system, and their ability to express collective and individual agency in response to said structures, represents a crucial cite of future study,[45] one to which I hope to return in the future.

As in formulations of the cities impediment to living a healthy, traditional existence, protection of the sanctity of land is formulated as a key legitimizing discourse around claims to territory which has been privatized or sold off by the state, a phenomenon in both Chile and Argentina and against which Mapuche activists attempt to build broad-based support on the ground of defense of territory against extraction and exploitation.[46] Leslie Ray documents the politics land defense across Chile and Argentina, noting in both cases that while state response has frequently been cruel and unjust,

[44] Laura Kropff, "'Mapurbe': Jovenes Mapuches Urbanos," ['Mapurbe'" Young Urban Mapuches] *KAIRÓS, Revista de Temas Sociales* 14 (2004): 1–12.

[45] José Aylwin Oyarzún, "Mercados y Derechos Globales: Implicancias Para Los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y Canadá," [Markets and Global Rights: Implication for indigenous peoples of Latin America and Canada] *Revista de Derecho (Valdivia)* 26, no. 2 (December 2013): 67–91, https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-09502013000200003.

[46] Diana Córdoba et al., "Fuelling Social Inclusion? Neo-Extractivism, State–Society Relations and Biofuel Policies in Latin America's Southern Cone," *Development and Change* 49, no. 1 (2018): 63–88, https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12362; Lucas Savino, "Landscapes of Contrast: The Neo-Extractivist State and Indigenous Peoples in 'Post-Neoliberal' Argentina," *The Extractive Industries and Society* 3, no. 2 (April 1, 2016): 404–15, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2016.02.011.

legal challenges have been successful and legitimacy of such efforts has increased due to careful strategizing by activists.[47]

If mobilization around claims of autonomy are not unique to the Mapuche, what does make Mapuche mobilization unique is its formulation around a national identity as a nation within two states. Isabel Hernandez demonstrates the salience of nationhood as a framework of understanding for Mapuche claims of autonomy, social justice, and unified criticism of two conquering states.[48] Population sharing between Chilean and Argentine Patagonia has been a continuous process in Patagonia, with community leaders and activists from across *Wallmapu* working together and exchanging ideas.[49] In the post-dictatorship eras of both states, efforts to build a national movement across state boundaries has become the project of a number of activists, and the *pueblo-nación Mapuche* has sought to define itself based on its historical periods of independence and struggle against invasion, providing an alternative source of identity that offers pride and community in contrast to the alterity produced by official narratives.[50] This reconceptualization of space and history becomes the source of a counter-hegemony for Mapuche communities and activists in Patagonia, which subverts the legitimacy of state claims to history and land.[51]

[47] Leslie Ray, *Language of the Land: The Mapuche in Argentina and Chile* (IWGIA, 2007).
[48] Hernández, *Autonomía o ciudadanía incompleta*. [Autonomy or incomplete citizenship.]
[49] Hans Gundermann, Héctor González, and Larisa De Ruyt, "Migracion y Movilidad Mapuche a La Patagonia Argentina," [Mapuche migration and mobility in Argentina Patagonia] *Magallania (Punta Arenas)* 37, no. 1 (July 2009): 21–35, https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-22442009000100003.
[50] Sarah Warren, "A Nation Divided: Building the Cross-Border Mapuche Nation in Chile and Argentina," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 45, no. 2 (May 2013): 235–64, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X13000023; Lenton, "Política indigenista argentina."
[51] Ana Margarita Ramos and Walter Mario Delrio, "Mapas y narrativas de desplazamiento: memorias mapuche-tehuelche sobre el sometimiento estatal en Norpatagonia,"[Maps and narratives of displacement: Mapuche-Tehuelche memories of subjection by the state in Northern Patagonia] December 2011, https://doi.org/10.5433/1984-3356.2011v4n8p515.

Cosmovisión and the "true Mapuche"

Throughout the literature a growing notion of reflexivity and increasing political consciousness across Mapuche movements has demonstrated the salience of more abstract sources of identity and mobilization such as that of the *pueblo-nación*. Ana Margarita Ramos wrote in 2016 about the translation of ontological paradigms of the Mapuche worldview into political claims, suggesting that Mapuche activists and communities today are more cognizant than ever of the political potential of daily life and actions beyond that which has traditionally been construed as avenues of political participation.[52] The translation of Mapuche *cosmovisión*, or worldview, into a political ethos of the *pueblo-nación* has been accompanied by an increase in the number of individuals and communities that identify as Mapuche. The difference in approach, interpretation, and politicization of communities responding to various social and local political challenges across the region has led to tensions internally as new questions of legitimacy of political actions and the fluidity of crystalizing boundaries of categorization and action.

Ramos, in a subsequent work, cites two examples from Chubut and Río Negro that interpret the notion of autonomy and positions which articulate autonomy claims alongside a rejection of state control, positions which are notably in contrast with official channels of coordination with state bodies and the national parks service and represents a more radical and adversarial position.[53] Published just months before the disappearance of Santiago Maldonado and the killing of Rafael Nahuel, her work provides insight into the political vision behind groups wishing to free

[52] Ana Margarita Ramos, "Un Mundo En Restauración: Relaciones Entre Ontología y Política Entre Los Mapuche.," [A World in Restoration: Relations between Ontology and Politics among the Mapuche] *Avá. Revista de Antropología* 29 (2016): 131–54.
[53] Ana Margarita Ramos, "Los caminos sinuosos del kizugüneun (autonomía): reflexiones situadas en las luchas mapuche," [The sinuous roads of kizugüneun (autonomy): reflections grounded in Mapuche struggles] December 2017, http://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/58503.

themselves of state control, and explains perceived threat of these groups by state institutions and their potential role as an internal enemy, shedding light on the subsequent and violent state response. Before this, however, internal conflict around the notion of legitimacy and the question of the authentic Mapuche identity and political orientation had already been present as borders of internal identity construction and efforts to perform and articulate internal boundaries. While research is very limited into how these dynamics are developing for Mapuche communities in a time when even more individuals and communities are joining the movement as a source of identity, social cohesion, and political representation and right, the wider literature on ethnic boundary making indicates that struggles over the notion of a 'true' Mapuche are only going to increase in the coming future.[54] Already, internalized processes of discursive questioning with regard to authenticity and true-ness have become the object of study amongst the Mapuche in Chile.[55] Here as elsewhere broader theoretical approaches can be illuminating, and I will consider the applications in the wider literature on ethnicity and indigeneity for the study of authenticity in the following Chapter.

It was this potential gap in the literature on the conceptualization of internal dynamics between Mapuche activists and groups that my attention was drawn. While the literature is extensive and charts well the process of politicization of Mapuche claims and the development of a national consciousness, questions remain. For one, much of the ethnography in Argentine Patagonia has dealt with political realities that have recently changed with the elections in 2015 and the

[54] Carolijn Terwindt, "The Demands of the 'True' Mapuche: Ethnic Political Mobilization in the Mapuche Movement," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 15, no. 2 (June 11, 2009): 237–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/13537110902921321.
[55] Teresa Oteíza and María E. Merino, "Am I a Genuine Mapuche? Tensions and Contradictions in the Construction of Ethnic Identity in Mapuche Adolescents from Temuco and Santiago," *Discourse & Society* 23, no. 3 (2012): 297–317.

subsequent change in posture, the effects of which research has not yet had time to study in depth. Furthermore, research on the Mapuche remains for a number of reasons relatively isolated form the larger discussion of ethnicity and nationhood, and it is my belief that further connections can be drawn with larger concerns of the study of race, ethnicity and nationalism. Finally, and most importantly, while research has largely focused on the production of alterity and the articulation of Mapuche identity and consciousness, the study of internal dynamics and how the Mapuche talk about each other remains limited. What defines the difference in posture, approach, and the specificities of worldview, and how are internal conflicts negotiated? How are more radical positions accepted by those Mapuche attempting to work within institutional bounds? How has the crisis produced by the violent actions of the state changed these dynamics, has opinion fractured or have the figures of Maldonado and Nahuel become rallying cries for Mapuche nationhood? It is with these questions in mind that I consider in the following Chapter the wider literature on race, ethnicity, and nationalism and formulate the scope of analysis and an approach to the field.

Chapter 2 – Approaching the field: theory and methodology

In this Chapter I will attempt to draw connections between established concepts and interpretations in existing literature on the Mapuche of *Puelmapu*, as outlined in the previous Chapter, and broader analytical tendencies in the study of indigenous movements and their implications for understanding the contemporary shift order of race, ethnicity, and national identity in the region. I will begin with a consideration of the immense body of work on the anthropology of race and ethnicity in Latin America, placing the study of the Mapuche, and in particular the case of the Mapuche in Argentina, within the context of theoretical shifts in approach with regards to the study of race. In particular, I will focus on the construction of ethnic boundary making and what existing literature on boundaries might provide for the study of internal disagreements between Mapuche organizations and groups. Following this, I will turn literature from the study of nationalism to discuss the particularity of the case of the Mapuche and their discursive construction of nationhood as part of the articulation of a national community in two states. I will consider and suggest why the study of the Mapuche, like other contemporary social movements using national terms and concepts to define their sense of community and identity, merits further study as a national case, and what such movements might be able to tell us about other uses of nationalism and national feeling distinct from those in the existing literature. Finally, I will bring these connections to bear on the scope and method of my work in the field, justifying the approach and commenting on the value of ethnography in revealing delicate social realities in processes of transformation. The theoretical directions outlined in this Chapter will serve to consider, question, and analyze the field, providing clear directions and interpretations in some instances and preliminary notions requiring further study in others.

Race and ethnicity in Latin America

Revisiting the particularities of the racial order in Argentine society discussed in the previous Chapter, it is necessary to consider to what extent the racial order in Argentina is actually distinct from racial hierarchies in the rest of the Latin America. To do so, we must consider what anthropologist Peter Wade, in his foundational work *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*, describes as a wave of movements across Latin America based in a growing awareness of individual racial and indigenous identities and their newfound political salience. Wade points to how these movements, bound together with traditional political claims of class-based movements, are galvanized by the globalization of human rights as a discursive language providing new political legitimacy, going on to characterize these new racial and ethnic movements as distinct for their collaboration with solidarity figures and groups often from the left, their increasing engagement with the state as a mediator, and importantly operating under neoliberal shifts in the notion of citizenship for Latin American state, a shift ostensibly privileging individual claims and rights over collective ones.[56]

Mapuche communities' politicization and forms of mobilization occur in similar conditions. The *Confederation Mapuche de Neuquén*, in elaborating a strategy involving engaging the legal system in order to validate land claims, instrumentalizes changes from the state in order to gain recognition and autonomy over territory. In a similar way, though arguably with less autonomy, Mapuche communities working with the national park service push the provincial government of Río Negro towards joint management of community territory within the park system on the grounds of officially accepted mandates and declarations of interculturalism, such as in the city of Bariloche.

[56] Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (Pluto Press, 2010), http://www.oapen.org/search?identifier=625258, 115-116.

Likewise, the existence of *colaboradores*[57] as per Wade is present in the support of the teachers and ceramic workers unions in the city and surrounding area of Neuquén, and while the individualizing character of shifts in the notion of citizenship is less clear, or is at the very least in parallel with communal forms of representation based on the system of the *Lof* brought together under the confederation, the notion of citizenship is indeed in question, permitting a criticism of state neglect that was previously more marginal and difficult to achieve.[58]

To elaborate further on the particularity of collective/communal claims in the case of the Argentine Mapuche, the political weight to indigenous and race-based claims can be consider via notion of hybridity, which Alberto Moreiras elaborates following W.E.B Du Bois and Bourdieu, pointing to the centrality of hybrid articulations of politics in Latin America following the debt crisis in 1982.[59] Moreiras ultimately argues for the potential of collective identity politics based on Du Bois' notion of double consciousness and how contemporary double consciousness in the Latin American racial order became the impetus for and the foundation of prominent forms of political organization in the shifting paradigms of neoliberal societies.[60] As Wade and others point out, and the general consensus of the shift in political modes under neoliberalism holds, the collective nature of such claims did not develop, and globally a the shift away from traditional boundaries of organization, such as those of class, did not occur, a topic which Argentinian feminist theorist Rita Laura Segato

[57] "Collaborators"
[58] Warren, "Latin American Identity Politics."
[59] Alberto Moreiras, "Hybridity and Double Consciousness," *Cultural Studies* 13, no. 3 (July 1, 1999): 373–407, https://doi.org/10.1080/095023899335149.
[60] Moreiras; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Routledge, 2015), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315631998.

documents exhaustively and at length in her 2007 book *La nación y sus otros* (The nation and its others.)[61]

The Gramscian line that predominates in literature on the Mapuche is likewise found in the wider literature on the intersection between race and nation in Latin America. Peter Wade points to the centrality of the work of Stuart Hall as well as that of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in the field of cultural studies as inspiration for the use of hegemony, particularly in the non-essentialist reading of Gramsci which allowed multiple interpretations of the ways in who ideological elements combine and re-combine.[62] These interpretations hold for Wade particular interest for the study of mestizaje in the study of nationalism, in that "nationalism supposes universal uniformity, but also particularist discriminations..." whereas mestizaje creates the a system which offers to overcome these discriminations, yet at the same time "depends on difference for its meaning; homogeneity may bring security, while alterity can spark desire, but also danger."[63] This fluidity is also theoretically useful in the incorporation of class stratification into a developing movement of regional ethnic politics. As stated in the previous Chapter, Argentina's racial system was historically subordinate to its modes of discrimination by class, where racial discrimination was meted out as part of a reproduction of urban wealthy elite society, but concentrated on the contrast between 'civilized' society versus the barbaric poor, rather than on a hierarchy of racial

[61] Rita Laura Segato, *La nación y sus otros: raza, etnicidad y diversidad religiosa en tiempos de políticas de la identidad* [The nation and its others: race, ethnicity and religious diversity in the time of identity politics](Prometeo Libros Editorial, 2007).
[62] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity"; Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985); Peter Wade, "Racial Identity and Nationalism: A Theoretical View from Latin America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 5 (January 1, 2001): 845–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870120064007.
[63] Wade, "Racial Identity and Nationalism," 853.

categorizations, or 'Pigmentocracies' typical of other Latin American states.[64] This is precisely what makes the case of the Argentine Mapuche so interesting, the fact that as a social movement the *pueblo-nación* has built claims and achieved social and political legitimacy in spite of the lack of historical recognition of the existence of indigenous identity as a category, much less recognition of hierarchies of discrimination.

In order to understand what Wade refers to as 'intersecting dimensions of difference'[65] in Mapuche mobilization, we can consider the traction of Mapuche claims, particularly to land, in light of the crisis of political representation through traditional means, i.e. labor unions and political parties. In Neuquén, where a single political dynasty has ruled in 1961, Mapuche communities have been consistently awarded legal victories in their claims to rural land, and their presence is requested and sought after at the protests of the labor unions, where they are seen as defenders of the land, against foreign capital and corrupt political leaders. At the conclusion of a march of the teacher's union I attended in the provincial capital, the *werken* (speaker) of the Confederation was the first speaker invited to address the crowd and was widely cheered as he spoke. As he would later tell me, the neoliberal turn taken by the current government may have hampered the collective bargaining of traditional unions, but thus far the political strategy of the CMN has continued unabated, with the provincial government fearful of retaliating too directly lest they be seen as violating the international rights of a respected group. When I later asked whether the struggle of the Mapuche was united with a notion of class struggle, the reply was direct and unequivocal: "absolutely."

[64] Telles, *Pigmentocracies*.
[65] Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*, 123.

The Mapuche as a nation

Having established that the conditions against which Mapuche collective identity is formulated, it is necessary to delve further into scholarship on the development of formation of external and internal boundaries in order to characterize the increasingly complex geographies upon which communities and individual must navigate their participation in the *pueblo nación*. The study of nationalism has come a long way from Benedict Anderson's famous assertion that nations are formed of "imagined communities."[66] We can now consider nationalism as a discursive construction of the world that may be alternatively essentializing, restrictive (boundary forming), or instrumental and strategic. When the Mapuche refer to themselves as a nation, on which discursive level is this nation being constructed and how might the study of nationalism both inform and be informed by Mapuche social movements and their articulation of national demands? In many ways writing on the nature of national belonging describes that of belonging in the Mapuche imaginary quite well. As I will demonstrate in the following Chapter, we can see internal disputes between Mapuche activists around posture towards that state, and in particular in the fear of those who work in state meditated or careful crafted strategic roles of what Craig Calhoun calls "collective responsibility," where smaller, more radical groups of Mapuche activists trigger the liability of the Mapuche as a whole in the national majority conception of the other.[67] Despite living thousands of kilometers apart, with local political and social realities that are quite distinct, groups with differences of opinion recognize and act as part of a larger whole, that of the Mapuche

[66] Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London : Verso, 2006, 2006).
[67] Craig Calhoun, "The Variability of Belonging: A Reply to Rogers Brubaker," *Ethnicities* 3, no. 4 (December 1, 2003): 558–68, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796803003004007, 564.

nation, a nation seeking recognition in two states. This plays a key role in articulations for the various forms of seeking autonomy, where pre-existence and former national glory obliterated by a conquering force become central to the formation of individual and group identities. In this way, the ethnogenesis of the Mapuche as a national category follows closely what Michael Herzfeld indicates in discussing the social poetics in the context of "disemia," and indeed Herzfeld pointed to the importance of conquest and domination as key historical producers of national feeling.[68] In the collective imaginary the historical Mapuche nation, spanning the Andes and independent from Spanish rule, is constructed as pore and harmonious in contrast to the inequalities offered by the state and its extractive capitalism. Further analysis of national articulations of autonomy, and of their potential interpretations in light of the study of nationalism, will be addressed in the analysis of the field in Chapter 3.

Social research on the formation of group identity can likewise prove useful in studying the case of the Mapuche. Fedrik Barth, in writing about ethnic groups as a form of social organization, famously indicated that the boundaries of such groups and the grounds for inclusion in them are determined by socially relevant rather than objective factors.[69] Barth cites both descriptive and ascriptive conditions for the formation of said boundaries, although the descriptive, meaning provided externally, always exerts a more powerful force in the case of the constitution of minority groups. Such work was foundational in the understanding of group formation and maintenance, and paved the way for important insight such as those of Henri Tajfel into the variability amongst individuals in terms of how group discourses are interpreted, or later of Daniel Bar-Tal who explored the notion of centrality of group beliefs and how such centrality is supported by what

[68] Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (Routledge, 2014).
[69] Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Waveland Press, 1998).

Bar-Tal terms "epistemic authorities" within the group, both approaches ascribing more internal agency into the formation and maintenance of group boundaries.[70] In this way the discourse around how ontological concerns for the Mapuche is translated into political action, as discussed in the previous Chapter, can be considered in light of the particular conditions and varying agency between leadership and opposing viewpoints.

If these preliminary approaches to group identity are classics of the field, the current era has proved far more complex and in need of ever less rigid forms of theorization, a phenomenon discussed by sociologist Rogers Brubaker as a defining characteristic of current scholarship on race and nationalism. The strategic nature of Mapuche mobilization closely fits what Brubaker calls "group making as a project" where the impetus for the formation of a group stems from a developing awareness of diverging interest (in this particular case an awareness of the structural nature of said divergence) between leaders and constituents.[71] Brubaker advocates for an approach to the understanding of group formation based on processes of categorization, thus opening up the study of groups to an ability to account for both change over time and the role of agency in negotiating these category. This approach is quite useful, however in order to account for the structural influence on these effects in the study of the Mapuche case, I find Andreas Wimmer's portrayal of boundary making in the concept of nationhood, which accounts for both external and internal factors that shape the formation of these boundaries, in which the external factors' influence is tempered by the structure position of the actor in question, particularly enlightening.[72] Furthermore, Wimmer's discussion in response to criticism of his book brings to bear an important consideration

[70] Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (CUP Archive, 1981), 243; Daniel Bar-Tal, "Group Beliefs as an Expression of Social Identity," in *Social Identity: International Perspectives*, 1998, 93–113, 109.
[71] Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Harvard University Press, 2004), 13, 17.
[72] Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (OUP USA, 2013).

in the study of ethnic boundaries in this case, stating that when such boundaries are widely agreed upon they become "constructive of reality," whereas they instead "represent classificatory elements to which individual maintain considerable reflective distance" when they are not.[73] The Mapuche of Argentina represent a curious response to this characterization of the role of boundary making. On the one hand, classificatory elements are widely agreed upon both by the Mapuche themselves and by dominant national culture, on the other hand there is no total agreement across this constructive border, neither in terms of legitimacy claims i.e. territorial rights, nor in terms of authenticity with regards to traditional practice and the notion of pre-existence. Furthermore, the investment in the formation of a national consciousness and movement by disparate communities and organizations, representing dispersed groups living in a variety of social realities and localized political aims, the study of the formation, maintenance, and negotiation of the boundaries of inclusion must necessary reflect geographic difference, an important part of the national imaginary. I suggest using Catherine Nash's concept of "geographies of relatedness," which explores the spatial and temporal imaginary of flexible boundaries of meaning in bonds of kinship and the production of difference, in tandem with Wimmer's more structural approach to studying the formation of boundaries.[74] Understanding the world of *Wallmapu*, split between two states and further fragmented within provincial and local realities, as a geography of relatedness in which activists and a new class of intellectuals seeks to chart a flexible path towards nationhood and a

[73] Andreas Wimmer, "Ethnic Boundary Making as Strategic Action: Reply to My Critics," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 5 (April 16, 2014): 834–42, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2014.887212, 840.
[74] Catherine Nash, "Geographies of Relatedness," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 449–62, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2005.00178.x.

unified front is instrumental in the linking between isolated groups following the crisis produced by the deaths in 2016. I will elaborate on this concept in the conclusion of the following Chapter.

Methodology

From the beginning of my initial research into the formation of Mapuche identity and nationhood, it was clear that the ethnographic method would be uniquely suited to an in-depth exploration of how such a geography of meaning is charted, discussed, and operationalized in the crystallization of Mapuche as an cultural and political identity. The ability to see how worldview is translated into informal interpretations of the trapping of everyday life for invested members of these social movements can reveal the deep construction of meaning and its implications for the structure of related ways of viewing the world, insight that would be inaccessible via other methods of research. Furthermore, my own position offers an insightful starting point for in-depth longitudinal research. As an outsider unlinked from connections to structural power within Argentine society, informants' sense of needing to explain the nature of social codes and relate popular understandings of history and political movements allows for rich social interactions that would not otherwise be possible. Furthermore, my personal life has made me intimately familiar with the codes, customs, slang, and popular culture of Argentina, knowledge that I am able to bring to bear in the analysis of how such cultural icons might be used, interpreted or subverted by informants and in various social contexts. My positionality is, of course, not without limitations. I still am considered as coming from the world of the *huinca*, and my ability to comprehend on an intimate level the feeling of structural discrimination is naturally impeded by my being a white male researcher not having experienced growing up in similar conditions. Nonetheless, being mindful of these limitations, and more importantly being able to deduct how this position influences the social interactions and moments to which I am exposed, would allow me to, in presenting myself as a willing and curious researcher

supportive of the cause on the whole, gather rich material in the effort of developing a cogent analysis of discursive tendencies and shifts within the movement.

Two complications to the completion of an ethnographic study within the bounds of this thesis. The first was unavoidable, that of time. I was able to spend only one month in the field, insufficient for conducting a full ethnographic study. I decided on two responses to this problem. The first response was to accept the inherent limitations of such a short time in the field, treating my notes and findings as provisional and likely missing important pieces of the story. To this end I try to temper more rigid theorization of my findings, instead pointing out connections and suggesting further avenues based on the existing literature laid out in Chapter 1 and the wider theoretical discussion referenced in this Chapter. At the same time, following a growing methodological literature on short-term ethnographies and research designs that seek out intense moments of social interaction,[75] I attempted to create situations in the field that would produce meaning and reveal more abstract concepts in a rich and focused way. To this end I focused my interviews, almost exclusively conducted with informants alongside whom I spent significant time before and after the interviews themselves, as a stage for the discussion of pressing political issues for the Mapuche, hoping to foment reflexives discussions around the themes which guided my own approach to the field.

The second concern in the field design was one of scope. Patagonia is a vast region with diverse human geography and deciding which communities to contact proved a difficult challenge. My

[75] Sarah Pink and Jennie Morgan, "Short-Term Ethnography: Intense Routes to Knowing," *Symbolic Interaction* 36, no. 3 (2013): 351–61, https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.66.

final decision was to focus on both Neuquén and the area of Bariloche and Nahuel Huapi national park, two neighborhood social and political spheres that present a unique opportunity to come into contact with actors and movements advocate for very distinct strategies *vis-à-vis* autonomy, culture, and relationship to the state. I split my time between the two areas, attending an important trial in Neuquén, visiting rural *Lof* in both areas and discussing with members of the community there, attending beginner's classes in Mapudungun language, and visiting leadership in Bariloche who worked within the municipal government and the national park service. I conducted 15 interviews, 8 in Neuquén and 7 in Bariloche, with informants across the age spectrum and in varying degrees of economic stability. 7 of my informants were women, 8 were men. Some held important positions within the movement, others were active and engaged but less prominent as public figures. In accordance with concerns of confidentiality informants were given psuedonyms and identifying characteristics obfuscated. All of my informants presented an informed and individually refined understanding of their own identity as Mapuche, an awareness of the arching questions concerning legitimacy, authenticity, and political and economic realities, and each of them, though their interpretations and methods differed, considered the cultivation of Mapuche culture, autonomy, and respect a core part of their lives and work. While certain discursive questions, such as the complex negotiation of individual legitimacy and authenticity which is both important and understudied, remained out of reach in this approach. For this reason, the scope has been frames around the social experience of participating in a movement, rather than on broader notions of negotiated belonging. Mindful of the existence of such discourses as I was in the field, it is my hope that such a study will be the object of further research conducted in the near future. Returning from the field, I proceeded to code and conceptually organize the interviews and my notes, identifying discursive trends and attempting theorization of the relationship between these. The

following Chapter represent my treatment of and analysis of a brief but intense time in the field, and it is my hope that the richness of response and material collected can be brought to bear in an interrogation of the theoretical constraints and concerns elaborated in this Chapter.

Chapter 3 – Into the field: *Puelmapu* awakening

Neuquén

As the trial continued inside the judicial complex, a half dozen community members sat across from the door in a strip of shade, guarding the signs, flags, and equipment for those who had done in as audience in the court room. Two of the men were intensely concentrated on their phones, somewhat removed from the rest. They had just recorded an interview with one of the werken from the Confederation and were working quickly to send it off for broadcast on the local radio. Further down, two middle aged women dressed in immaculate ukülla and küpam[76] shared recently purchase torta frita (fry bread) as two other men sat nearby exchanging banter.

A woman from the neighborhood approached on a walk accompanying her elderly mother, she to ask what was going on. As the two women put aside their snack to explain what was happening in the trial, the local woman noticed the sign emblazoned with the face of Santiago Maldonado. "Look mother!" she exclaimed, "it's Santiago Maldonado. Do you remember I told you about him?" The elderly women stared at the poster, showing little awareness of what she was seeing or where she was. The woman turned to her new interlocutors. "My mother was so affected by what happened, she really felt it was an injustice how the Mapuche were treated. Right mom?" The two men, catching wind of the conversation, turned briefly to see what was happening. Hearing the new arrival talking about Maldonado, they chuckled briefly in amusement and turned away to resume their previous conversation.

[76] Traditional Mapuche women's head and bodywear, respectively

My fieldwork was conducted between April 2nd and May 1st of 2019. It was early autumn in Patagonia, and the infamous southern winds, known for their strength and persistence, were mercifully more subdued than they tend to be at other times of the year. Nearly a year and a half had passed since the death of Rafael Nahuel, and in Argentina the period since had been marked by severe inflation and a nationwide increase in the number for families living in extreme poverty. Once frequent in the national press, references to Santiago Maldonado, Rafael Nahuel, and the "Mapuche Question" had become less commonplace. I decided to begin my work in Neuquén, where the *Confederación Mapuche de Neuquén* (CMN) and its grouping of 65 *Lof* in the province represented one of the most successful cases for Mapuche mobilization on the Argentine side of the Andes mountain range. I began my work Neuquén's eponymous capital city in order to meet and work with the leadership of the CMN. During my time in the city I made several excursions to communities in the countryside to the north and west of the city, in the heart of the *Vaca Muerta* shale formation and the center of ongoing oil and gas development in the province. The province and city's name are derived from a Mapuche term, and the grid of streets in the modern capital, the newest and fastest-growing city in Patagonia, sported a conflicting mixture of names, some from Mapudungun, others military leaders from the infamous "Conquest of the Desert."

On my first day in the city I walked from the river junction in the south, where the Limay and Neuquén rivers join to form the Black river, Río Negro, the historical demarcation of an independent Mapuche Patagonia, across the city to the *Ruca*, a term used alternatively to refer to a house or a central community building, of the CMN, a route that put on vivid display the inequalities of development in the city. The center, with ample streets, soaring buildings, greenery sustained through relentless watering, and ramblas style city parks of the city loudly proclaim the successes of an urban and provincial economy based around the exploitation of petroleum. Chic

coffee shops and bars dot the cardinal directions of its main north-south thoroughfares that slope gently upward from the river junction towards the dry plateau shelf overlooking the basin with ample parking space along the length of their roads. In the heart of the city, along the Avenida Argentina, a bronze statue of national hero San Martín on horseback rises high above the street on a stone pedestal. Water falls continuously down the stone face of his perch, a recent modification to prevent the common spray-painting by the innumerable protest marches that assembled in the shade of the statue. A well-dressed, youthful population strolls through the center, chatting at the street cafes or animatedly on their phones, the rumble of a constant stream of cars and the hum of the fil the air. As I climbed north up the face of the plateau, the landscaped changed. Gone were the paved roads, green expanses, and the shade of trees. Small kiosks, signs for evangelical churches, and houses in varying states of assembly dotted the streets. The *Ruca* stood at the frontier between the wealthier center and the more impoverish west. Beyond, a meandering network of informal settlements that have been haltingly formalized following confrontations between residents and the municipal government interrupt the orthogonal logic of the city center.

Inside the gates of the *Ruca*, a quiet garden space and a mural lined a large two-story building with ample windows. In the garden, a plaque paid homage to a young woman, an activist who had been disappeared by the military dictatorship in the 1970s, in whose name the space had been given to the CMN for its activities. The building hosts weaving workshops, Mapudungun language classes, and soon a recording studio for *Puel Kona*, a music group of CMN youth that achieved sudden national and international exposure when they opened for Roger Waters in Buenos Aires on his request in November 2018. I arrived at a time when the *lonko* of the CMN was deep in work with a local graphic artist and longtime collaborator with the CMN in developing a map of territory in dispute to prepare a media campaign for the upcoming trial of Lof Campo Maripe. On the walls

of the vast meeting space were photos of the 1992 assembly of Mapuche communities from across Chile and Argentina that had taken place in the countryside of Neuquén and where, following a communal process, the now ubiquitous Mapuche national flag, the *Wenufoye*, had been chosen. Under the line of photographs was an unrelated item that spoke to the CMN's vision of the Mapuche as an oppressed minority, a poster of a masked face from the with the word 'intifada' in red letters.

Vaca Muerta & the trial of *Lof Campo Maripe*

The *Confederación Mapuche de Neuquen* is by any metric a success story in efforts to achieve political victories through a carefully mediated strategy involving legal and constitutional groundwork for indigenous law, particularly in winning cases against communities they represent on the basis of the law 26.160 mentioned in Chapter 1, as well as a by way of a curated public presence via media and radio outlets in the region. While territorial claims in the province have for many years been carried out in the context of oil and gas extraction on the arid lands above the riverbeds, recent years have seen the issue come to a head following a 2013 deal signed between Argentine national oil company YPF and the American petrol giant Chevron to explore non-conventional gas and oil extraction methods (fracking) in the *Vaca Muerta* shale formation. The CMN, seizing the opportunity of increased national and international attention on the new deal, sought to work together with organizations such as Greenpeace to decry the practices of oil companies in the region and publicize the Mapuche presence as defenders of the land.

My time in Neuquén corresponded with the court date of an important case for the CMN, the trial for usurpation of land brought against *Lof Campo Maripe*, a Mapuche community living just outside of the town of Añelo, the epicenter of activity for the international smorgasbord of petrol companies operating in the region, on land allotted for the afore-mentioned arrangement between

YPF and Chevron. The trial gave me crucial insight not only into how historical and political negation of the legitimacy of Mapuche claims plays out in the context of the state apparatus, but more importantly how on a day to day basis leadership of the CMN, the *lonkos*, *kona*, of various communities, young urban Mapuche involved in radio, music, and various activities of the CMN, as well as supporters and advocates from civil society. Reactions to the statement of the prosecution and its witnesses were illuminating. After the prosecution lawyer had spent the morning discussing legal rights afforded to original peoples in the plural in the province, a member of one of the Lof closest to the capital vented to me her frustration concerning statements like these that appear to respect multi-cultural paradigms while in fact negating historical claims. "…there aren't 'original peoples,' there is *one* original people."[77] In other moments the prosecutions blunders, such as apparent ignorance as to the character of rights and protections afforded to indigenous communities, or the accidental contradictions that entered the record thanks to a talkative witness, served as jokes and points of amusement when supporters and family members assembled outside of the courthouse at the end of each day's proceedings. Each evening the leadership of the CMN would post an update on the trial to its Facebook page, using photos from the day and criticizing the logic of the private landowner Vela and the prosecution in denying Campo Maripe's claim to the land.

Pueblo-nación **in action**

Discussion of strategy, meaning, and the construction of a political and cultural geography for the Mapuche nation were daily points of conversation during my time in Neuquen. On one occasion, after a morning spent salvaging wood from palettes used to transport equipment to oil rigs on the

plateau for use in building the structure of a new *ruca* on recently recognized land just outside of the legal perimeter of the capital, the discussion turned back to the trial which had recently concluded with the decision of the judge expected within days. Several of the discussants were convinced that the judge would not be able to rule in favor of the Campo Maripe because of the potential implications for the deal between YPF and Chevron (the CMN has been vocal in its criticism of fracking and fracking's ecological consequences.) Lig, a younger member of the community, was not as convinced, saying that it would be possible to recognize both the legitimacy of Campo Maripe's claim to the land while preserving anterior private claims and the contracts they negotiated. "That's where you see the capitalist logic which reformulates itself to appear to respect human rights…" but meanwhile preserves old economic arrangements. Later, on the same line of discussion, another community member tied the willingness of unions and other political actors to back the CMN to the fact that "we are the only ones talking about these things."

For most of my informants as well as those with whom I conversed during and after the trial, criticism on the grounds of ecological damage was part of living a Mapuche worldview, one connected with nature. The natural world, as opposed to the materialist conditions ascribed to urban life, and one's efforts to maintain or recreate connection to it, were frequently espoused as part of a desire to leave the city and build life in a *lof*. Urban life, seen as forced upon Mapuche individuals due to necessity, is emblematic of the sense of a nation oppressed by a system and culture to which it does not correspond. Interestingly, a number of my informants saw that their small but growing movements could gradually grow in ranked, referring to "brothers and sisters" in the city who do not yet see themselves as Mapuche, but "when you look around and you see the faces of people, there are Mapuches everywhere." This constructs a fluid and expansive boundary of kinship, yet in other conversations the boundary was drawn more tentatively. One informant, a

community leader, in describing a hypothetical urban dweller of Mapuche descent who decided to go into professional life, states that such a person would not then belong to the community and movement. "He made the decision, 'I am not Mapuche, I don't belong, I have Mapuche blood by accident, but I am culturally and ideologically not Mapuche.'"[78] Here the bounds for inclusion are drawn based on cultural performance and ideological position, and not on mere blood ties. On the other hand, the recognition of the large numbers of Mapuches who do not recognize themselves as such serves to illustrate both the legitimacy of the movement and its historical claim to land and culture as well as the extent of historical oppression by the state.

An intimate realization of oppression, and of the Mapuche nation's fight against it, revealed itself as an important part of the identity construction for committed community members. As the poster of the intifada suggested on my first day of fieldwork, comparison to other peoples and communities in occupied lands was a recurring point of interest. Two of my informants, Romina and Sebastian, first generation college students studying history and with aspirations to become teachers, told me that they had studied and discussed the mobilization of the Basques in Spain and the system of regional autonomy in Spain as a useful example of how to organize effectively. Another informant, a member of a rural community close to the Andes, mentioned his fascination with the struggle of the Kurdish people, having read extensively about their situation in Turkey and felt that the struggle of the Kurds held much in common with the autonomy claims of the Mapuche. Discussing strategy, successes, and failures of such movement has been, for those with

[78] "La decisión la tomó él, 'yo no soy mapuche, yo no pertenezco, tuve por accidente biológicamente tengo sangre mapuche, pero yo culturalmente e ideológicamente no soy mapuche.'" Interview with Juan, 10/4/19

whom I spoke, helpful in better framing their own comprehension of *la lucha mapuche* as that of a nation in two states.

The memory of Rafael and Santiago

As I noted in the opening vignette, the images and names of Rafael and Santiago made appearances at many of the larger public manifestations of the CMN. While Santiago's case and memory brought public attention to the Mapuche that was both negative and positive, it was the death of Rafael that resonated more profoundly within the *pueblo-nación* with most of my informants in Neuquén. Romina put quite eloquently to words the sentiments that many expressed:

> "It was like the loss of a brother, here in the university we were the only ones to find out because we were talking about [what was happening] while the rest continued as if everything was normal. There had been another death before which affected us and made us feel more as sibling and more as a people/nation, when Camillo died on the other side of the *La Cordillera*[79]…both of these brothers in such a short time, both shot in the back, it made us think and want to recover and rethink the limits as they were before and as we would like…geographic limits from sea to sea, ocean to ocean, from the south of the province of Buenos Aires to Córdoba, Mendoza…"[80]

Older informants remembered feeling shock, considering it unthinkable that death at the hands of the state would occur in Argentina, as such events were more typical of Chile. Others reflected on what the death of Santiago Maldonado had meant for the Mapuche, suggesting that if Santiago had himself been Mapuche his death would remain unknown to the wider public. A *lonko* and a *werken* of the CMN mentioned frustration at the strategy taken by the community in claiming land in the national park service near Bariloche, citing their previous disagreement over strategy and total

[79] *La Cordillera de los Andes,* the mountain range

[80] "esto fue como la pérdida de un hermano, acá en la universidad solo nos enteramos nosotros porque nosotros estuvimos hablando de esto, el resto siguió caminando, normalmente. Posteriormente hubo otra muerte que nos repercute y nos sentimos más hermanos y más como un pueblo nación, cuando murió Camillo, al otro lado de la cordillera… estos dos hermanos en tan poco tiempo, ambos asesinados por la espalda, nos hizo pensar los limites como eran antes…volvimos a pensar en los límites geográficos de mar a mar, de océano a océano, desde el sur de la provincia de Buenos Aires hasta Córdoba, Mendoza…" Interview with Romina 9/4/19

unwillingness to consider mediation with state actors. They discussed how the ensuing crisis put negotiations with the park service at risk and exposed the movement to criticism and reprisal, and that the death could have been avoided had a less extreme strategy be taken. Still, the *lonko* was clear in that such disputes were to be held internally, not in the public eye, since the overarching goal of both groups was the same, achieving gradual autonomy, even if the interpretation of what autonomy is and how to achieve it differs.

It was at that point that I left for Bariloche in such of different perspectives on the memory and impact of the death of Rafael Nahuel. It was the *lonko* who drove me to the bus station. "It's very important that you go and see what it is like [in Bariloche]," he told me as we passed through the endless grid of dirt rounds in the center west part of the city. "It a very distinct social reality. Here we are poor, but we manage to make do…But down there is real poverty, incredible precarity. And that changes people's ways of thinking."[81]

Bariloche and Nahuel Huapi National Park

It was early evening and the sun was setting over the Mascardi lake. I had returned to the roadside after an interview with members of Lof Lafken Winkul Mapu, the community that occupied the hills above the lake, triggering the confrontation that led to the shooting of Rafael Nahuel a year and a half before. The brilliant mountainside shown with the flashing reds of leaves just beginning to change color in the setting sun. After nearly an hour of waiting, a car had stopped willing to bring me back to the city of Bariloche. As we drove, the three riders in the car asked me what I had been

[81] "Es importante que vayas allá para ver cómo es la situación…es una realidad social distinta. Acá somos pobres, pero podemos llegar a vivir. Pero allá hay pobreza pobreza, gente viviendo en situaciones muy precarias… Y eso cambia la forma de pensar de la gente." A second conversation with Juan 19/4/19

doing. I explained, and there was a brief silence. Then they all began to offer their opinion on the community at once.

"The problem," explained the driver, "is that there are Mapuche mapuches, you know those that dress up in traditional clothes, greet the tourists, and then there are political mapuches, who are using the identity as a way that it shouldn't be used. Just like in Chile." We drove past another sign indicating the presence of a Mapuche community down an access road. "That community there, they are ok," the driver continued "you can approach them, the others just make a big mess and cause problems." We had arrived at the outskirts of Bariloche. This vast expanse of slums and rapidly constructed and precarious buildings, with little or no insulation against the bitter Southern winters, sprawled out over the sloping plain above the tiny center of Bariloche just visible below us. An endless stream of workers, who had been drawn to this city for the hope of jobs in the tourism industry, and their children milled about, waiting at bus stops or buying groceries on their way back to their houses. On each of the concrete bus stops, the same graffiti was spray painted on the wall: A crude circular representation of a kultrun[82] *and the letters R.A.M., or Resistencia Ancestral Mapuche.*

Nearly 400 kilometers to the South and West of Neuquén capital, the city of San Carlos de Bariloche, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Argentina, lies on the coast of Lake Nahuel Huapi, embedded in the lake's eponymous national park. Bariloche is in the province of Río Negro, a political and legal world distinct from that of Neuquén. In spite of this, Bariloche lies close to the border between the two provinces, and a significant portion of the Nahuel Huapi national park is within the borders of Neuquén, as such the CMN hold an interest in and is in

[82] A traditional drum and ubiquitous icon of Mapuche culture.

dialogue with the national parks service's recently established office of liaison with communities living in the park system, called colloquially *Co-Manejo*, or "Joint Management" In Chapter 1, I discussed how in Neuquén the political dynasty first tried to build its legitimacy on a folklorization of its provincial identity, resting on the idea of a vanished indigeneity in the province, a paradigm now turned on its head by an independent and successful CMN. In Bariloche the process of officialization of indigenous identity has been distinct. Bariloche decided in 2015 to declare itself as an inter-cultural municipality. In addition, the province of Río Negro has two formal bodies that coordinate official relationships between indigenous communities and the state, The *Coordinadora del parlamento mapuche-tehuelche en Río Negro* (Coordinator of the mapuche-tehuelche parliament in Río Negro) and *Codesi, Consejo de desarollo de comunidades indigenas* (Counsel on development of indigenous communities) which provide support for long standing and newly established communities throughout the province.

It was just outside of the city of Bariloche, on the coast of the Mascardi lake, that a community formed by various Mapuche families and committed individual living in the impoverished neighborhoods of the city and named *Lof Lafken Winkul Mapu* decided to claim territory in the hills overlooking the lake. The conflict over the territorial reclamation of the community which lead to the death of Rafael Nahuel centered around the National Park Service and another Mapuche community which had previously claimed this same land via official channels. The members of *Lafken Winkul Mapu* decided on the time and place of their reclamation in order to provide space for one of their number, a young woman who was to awaken as a *machi*, or shaman. Vanished from the Argentine side of the Andes since the conquest of the region, the process of rebuilding traditional roles such as that of the *machi* and the consecration of sites of spiritual importance such as the *rehue*, or sacred altar, consists of another major preoccupation for many of my informants.

Each recounted to me the length of the preparatory process in becoming a *machi* (10 years) and the necessity of being chosen, rather than choosing, to awaken as a *machi*. While all my informants expressed respect for this process and its importance, this particular case inspired frustration for some. Rayen, a member of a community on the other side of Lake Nahuel Huapi facing the city of Bariloche and involved in discussions with the national park service joint management, expressed skepticism saying "They claim that the spirits told them to go there at that moment. But there were a lot of things that the spirits didn't take into account!"[83]

In the violent response of the federal state attempting to force out the newly established community, there were a number the factors that state and national park actors likewise did not consider. As former inhabitants of *los barrios altos,*[84] as the slums of Bariloche are called, members of Lafken Winkul Mapu related to me how they face daily persecution by the police and the police of preventative detention. In the community they were finally able to construct a life in a community, they told me. Across the board, my informants in Bariloche were more unequivocal in their condemnation of the nature of life in the city. A city that has grown at a dizzying pace with little infrastructural support, several recounted to me how their parents or grandparents had been forced to move to the city for work, eventually succumbing to an impoverish and alienating life, finding solace in alcohol or in the church. Aylen, an eighteen year-old Mapuche with a newborn son, had spent her adolescence in los altos and indicated that the difficulty of life there was made bearable for the few like her who became interested in the cause of the Mapuche due to a sense of unity in

[83] "Ellos dicen que los espíritus les dijeron que tenían que ir ahí en este momento. ¡Pero los espíritus no tomaron en cuenta muchas cosas!" Interview with Rayen 21/4/19
[84] The high neighborhoods

goal, purpose, and identity. “It’s a small group,” she said of those who mobilized in marches or gatherings, “you always see the same faces.”[85]

“one day there will be a great Mapuche uprising, it will be beautiful”

Aylen, who had seen Rafael Nahuel’s face from time to time before his death, recounted how the larger community was galvanized by the violence of the state. “They wanted to weaken us, to divide us,” she told me. But it didn’t work, I queried. “No,” she responded. “They stoked the flames.”[86] If for Aylen the sentiment was one of injustice and defiance, for others the reaction was one of fear. The leadership of *Codesi* recounted how several communities, themselves in processes of recuperation of land and reconstruction of communal life in a *Lof*, expressed fear at the possibility of reprisal by the state and society against the Mapuche. Like in Neuquén, more established and connected communities expressed frustration with the radical anti-state position of a vocal and visible minority. The frustration was mutual, with a one respected woman who had participated in such guerrilla land reclamations across Patagonia for years snorting in derision as I mentioned the Confederation in Neuquén. “I call them the lapdogs,” she laughed, explaining what she saw as subservience to an imposed culture and society, and the errors of Mapuche communities whose behavior was *ahuinconada*, or corrupted by *huinca* culture. She went on to outline how in the Mapuche cosmology such compromises with the state as sought by the CMN are totally incompatible with a Mapuche worldview. The same was true for the building of relationships with other social movements. As we were deep into our interview, she interjected “luckily you haven’t asked me on my opinion about all these young Mapuche girls with their green

[85] “Es un pequeño grupo, siempre ves las mismas caras.” Interview with Aylen 23/4/19
[86] “Nos quiso debilitar, divisar…avivaron las llamas.” Interview with Aylen 23/4/19

scarfs[87] and feminism, otherwise we'd be here another hour!"[88] While my observations are inconclusive as to the simplicity of a classed bifurcation of opinion, I found that there was a schism in opinion that understood as built along class lines, similar to the reflection of Juan as he drove me to the bus station in Neuquén. Those who opt for more radical action came predominantly from the urban underclass, with little or no access to education, welfare, or path of integration into society, while those communities who seek mediation with the state do so from a position of improved economic stability, better able to negotiate the forms of behavior and the language of bureaucracy and social codes necessary to such a strategy. Rayen reflected on the potential impacts of the economic imperative on the immediate future of the Mapuche as a people:

> "I would love that each community could have the possibility to think about projects like we do, but that is not the reality. The reality is that today there is the problem of the state, a government that is putting us in debt once again…I'm seeing a lot of poverty again, and that is going to make it so many of our people once again distance themselves from the cultural and focus on survival. And survival will separate us, will weaken us as an organization, as a people."[89]

The question of unity and of the growth of the movement concerned many and, as I observed in Neuquén, activists and community members saw many around them who were unrealized Mapuches. "One day there will be a great Mapuche uprising," Maria Nahuel, the aunt of Rafael Nahuel who requested to be referred to by name, told me, "and it will be beautiful." In the same

[87] The green scarf, or *pañuelo verde,* is a symbol of the movement in support of legal abortion rights in the country.

[88] "¡Por suerte no me preguntaste mi opinión sobre estas chicas mapuches con sus panelitos verdes y su feminismo, sino estaríamos por una hora más!"

[89] "Me encantaría que todas las comunidades pudieron tener las posibilidades de pensar proyectos como nosotros, pero no es la realidad. La realidad es al día de hoy hay una problemática estatal, un gobierno que nos está nuevamente endeudando empobreciendo…estoy volviendo a ver mucha pobreza, entonces esto va a reproducir que mucha de nuestra gente vuelve a alejarse de lo cultural y se van a pensar como sobrevivir. Y el sobrevivir nos va alejar, nos va a debilitar como organización, como pueblo." Interview with Rayen 21/4/19

way, the memory of Rafael Nahuel as a *weychafe* (warrior) who would now be remembered in history, was important for those of my informants who identified more closely with the precarity of life in the upper neighborhoods.

Disagreement, harmony, and the future – *Puelmapu* mobilizes

The disparate opinions, visions of the world, strategies, and imaginaries characterized by those I encountered in the field made up a discursive geography of meaning in which the central questions of the significance of being part of a nation of Mapuches in a fragile structural reality were on daily display. Beyond frustration, many saw differences of opinion as a sign that the movement and people had grown and strengthened as a nation:

> "Well yes, there are differences of opinion that exist and what one wants has nothing to do with what the other wants, but there is a strategy as a *pueblo mapuche* in that we also feel that we have the right to think different like any country. A country has individuals on the left, right, republicans, liberals, that can be our right as well, that each organization or each territory… decides what is the best way to organize itself. Obviously that it is necessary to have the possibility of dialogue so that we can have a more prosperous future, but we can't stop supporting each other because the sense of community is there."[90]

[90] "bueno si, son cruces de opiniones que son y no tienen ninguna relación lo que quieren uno y lo que quieren otros, pero hay una estrategia como pueblo mapuche que nosotros consideramos también que tenemos el derecho a hacerlo también pensar distinto como un país, un país tiene habitantes de izquierda, derecha, republicanos liberales, también puede ser un derecho nuestro que cada organización o cada territorio… decidan cual es la mejor forma de organizarse. Obviamente que vemos necesaria la posibilidad de un dialogo que esto se resuelva para un futuro más próspero, sin embargo no podemos dejar de apoyar a uno y a otro, porque el sentido de comunidad esta." Interview with Romina 9/4/19

The various *Lof* and organizations that comprise the *pueblo-nación mapuche* in formulating open bounds of belonging in a geography of cultural production and political action, develop the nationhood of the Mapuche as an articulation of a diverse set of political and social demands. The construction of an imaginary in which the potential for growth is vast, where those who have not yet awakened to their identity as Mapuche present an objective to which activists strive. The crisis of the deaths of Maldonado and Nahuel revealed fragility and schisms within the movement but at the same time has served as a testament to its resilience, with the memory of their death, particularly that of Rafael Nahuel, used as symbols around which communities can rally. The division, as I alluded to earlier, is based on differing conceptions of the nature of collective responsibility, as outlined in Chapter 2, within the *pueblo-nación*. Those communities which work in mediation with the state and strategize based on the building of coalitions within civil society, whose cultural, material, and social positions have improved as a result of careful strategizing, have much to lose in an ascribed responsibility as part of an category of internal enemy. Those who are totally alienated from the possibility of solidarity and mediation tended towards a more rigid interpretation of the spiritual dimensions of autonomy and its incompatibility with *huinca* culture. It is possible to see here two differing reaction to the double consciousness of being both Argentine and Mapuche. In both cases the Mapuche identification is stronger, yet the former invests value in the utility of the secondary consciousness while the latter rejects it completely. At the same time, such distinctions rested primarily in the category of strategic action. Throughout both sites in the field, communities articulated a geography of relations that figured strategic decisions and interpretations such as these on a field of action which did not implicate the underlying belonging in kinship between communities in disagreement. Likewise, a fluidity in the formation of boundaries has strategic value in leaving the door open for those who in the communal

imaginary make up the great population of Mapuche who had not yet awakened to their indigenous identity. While in the future the conditions are such that the bounds of belonging could become more rigid as identification becomes an individually strategic claim, but at the present the processes of auto-categorization and the bounds of the *pueblo-nación Mapuche* remain primarily as a field of strategic actions, a field in which communities and organizations work to articulate communal aims an goals in response to the present structural conditions dictating their lives.

Conclusion

My time in the field occurred during a moment of intense upheaval and crystalizing political positions for the Mapuche communities of *Puelmapu*. The crisis produced by the confrontations leading to the deaths of Rafael and Santiago, now over a year distant, had cleft rifts between putatively unified communities and organizations. Furthermore, the ongoing inflation crisis risked pressuring further the progress made in recent years as the weight of high prices presses on individuals and families. In spite of this, my fieldwork revealed discourses of community and nationhood that were surprisingly resilient. The bonds of collective responsibility, as much as they had produced anxiety and frustration for those that felt implicated in political strategies that was not their own, also demonstrated a profound sense of solidarity between groups in disagreement. Though advocating a more cautious, conservative line, the leadership of the *Confederación Mapuche de Neuquén* recognized the underlying legitimacy of the claim of autonomy in guerrilla actions of land reclamation. Likewise, members of *Lafken Winkul Mapu* and individuals that supported them recognized the underlying fight for justice in the work of the CMN despite their derision for the idea of compromise with the institutions of huinca society.

Thus, the geography of relatedness connecting individual Lof and organizations to a larger transnational concept of nationhood is charted in a singular broad vision of political and cultural autonomy as a final aim, the plurality of localized strategies of achieving that autonomy the result of an ensemble of varied modi operandi, a boundary encompassing an imaginary that stretches across the Andes and dictates the terms of inclusion on ideological commitment to the struggle for recognition. It is in the nature of its discursive delimitations the essence of boundary making as a strategic action, where the processes of categorization center around the structural and historical

factors leading to the creation of said boundary, in so doing delineating a strategic of mobilizing as a core factor of group identity and the concept of Mapuche nationhood as archipelago of numerous localized communities and politics joined under one banner.

As a study of short duration and an admittedly small number of informants, the limitations in asserting bold claims based on the findings of the field are significant, and many questions remain. While this study has concentrated on those individuals expressing a high degree of engagement with the Mapuche movement, many of them part of its intellectual, cultural, and political elite, the question of the operation of the boundaries of belonging on the periphery, with those less centrally involved in the movement, remained out of grasp in the field. Such research does require tradition long-term ethnographic study and urgently requires further research. In this way, I see my work in the field as in part a preliminary investigation into potential avenues for more involved study.

Several such directions present themselves. First, the question of everyday ethnicity in the urban life of the growing slums would allow for a study that could address the question of change over time in the historical linking between poverty and indigenous ethnicity in Argentina. I am particularly interested in the potential for subversion of this classic paradigm, how being characterized as Mapuche or *indio* might shift from a derogatory category to a source of pride. The particular resonance of Mapuche activist critique of the failings of urban life would seem to hold the seeds of a such a paradigm shift. Another potential avenue for further research is that of the crystalizing notions of authenticity and legitimacy. At the moment, vast organizations like the CMN are quite open to new *Lof* of various orientations and degrees of involvement with Mapuche worldview or the larger social critiques evinced by their leadership. As the movement continues to grow, will such boundaries remain as porous and open? Or will instead discourses of legitimacy, and ways of performing a political and cultural identity, become more important to the social

processes of belonging within the *pueblo-nación*? A third and fascinating avenue for further study it that of the signs a schism along class lines mentioned in Chapter 3. I suspect that it is possible to design an approach to the field that looks at the reproduction of Argentine national class structures within coalescing Mapuche communities, investigating how traditional boundaries are maintained, shifted, or subverted entirely.

More generally and in spite of the evident limitations of the research laid out in this thesis, it is clear the consideration of the Mapuche as an important case study in the formation of nationhood within the structural conditions of contemporary society can shed light on how collective categories are formed, operationalized, and disputed, and what their resilience can tell us about shifting categories of citizenship, in cities and in states, and increasingly open and fluid categories of meaning that shift over time as a process of social mobilization, individual and collective agency, and global restructuring. Simultaneously a several thousand-year-old culture and a contemporary social movement in construction across two state borders, the *pueblo-nación Mapuche* presents a unique opportunity for researchers interested in contemporary national mobilization on the global periphery and the complexity of geographies of meaning across a vast, unstable, and varied social reality.

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