

Political violence against the Mapuche in Chile, 1850-1929

Abstract

This article offers a comparative and historical perspective on political violence exercised against the Mapuche people of the Araucanía region in Chile. We consider two historical periods: the occupation (1850-1883), and the land-granting or *radicación* period (1884-1929). For each, we identify and compare the forms of violence and those responsible: namely, the Chilean State and para-state agents. During the occupation, the conquest of territory predominated, primarily exercised by soldiers or the civil guard. In the land-granting period, political violence included eviction and the seizure of lands and resources, with the police and settlers being the main actors. In both cases, political and judicial authorities shared responsibility. Violence against the Mapuche did not end in 1929, but continued at different levels and in different forms. Delineating the historical context of the violence, however, allows for a better understanding of the relationship between the Chilean State and the Mapuche today.

Keywords: Chile, Mapuche, Araucanía, political violence, *radicación*

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Introduction

Violence exercised by state and para-state agents against the Mapuche Indians of the Araucanía,¹ the main indigenous group in Chile, has a long history. This paper considers two especially important periods:

1. The occupation of Mapuche territory between 1850 and 1883, and
2. The issuance of land grants on behalf of the State (*radicación*) between 1884 and 1929.² The relationship between the Chilean State and the Mapuche remains tainted by this violence, however there is little in the literature delineating the historical context of the problem. By examining the history of political violence against the Mapuche, we can better understand the relationship of these indigenous people with the Chilean State today.

Violence is a frequent instrument of power, but as it is usually sustained, it is not foundational.³ In the case of the Mapuche, however, political violence has played a very important role in their subordination to the Chilean National State. Historians such as Sergio Villalobos and Leonardo León Solís offer two different interpretations of this important fact. According to the former, the definitive occupation of the Araucanía by the Mapuche did not involve an important military battle. There was no dreadful rebellion. Harmonious border relations allowed the integration of the people beginning in the 17th century.^{2,3} In other words, violence was not an important factor for the integration

¹The Araucanía, or Araucanía Region, is one of Chile's administrative divisions and comprises two provinces: Malleco in the north and Cautín in the south. Chile did not incorporate the lands of the Araucanía until the 1880s, when it occupied the area to end resistance by the Mapuche by both military and political means. This opened up the region for Chilean and European immigration and settlement.

²Following the end of the Chilean military invasion in 1883, collective land titles (*Títulos de Merced*) were instituted and a member of each newly founded reservation (*reducción*) was appointed as a local delegate (*cacique*).⁴

³Elsewhere, he states: "There exists a frontier life with multiples and intense relations which are characteristic of peaceful areas where violent clash is sporadic".⁵

of Mapuche territory. Later, Villalobos nuances this position, stating: "although the 1880-1881 uprising was at moments tough, it wasn't a daunting rebellion, but mostly made of fancy words, talks, fears and threats".³

The interpretation of Mapuche integration offered by León Solís differs significantly from that of Villalobos. The author underlines the importance of violence in Mapuche border relations, stating that "the limit between violence and politics was very thin, especially when each segment pretended to capture power in order to survive".⁶ Moreover, León Solís supports the existence of a Hobbesian state of war: "By the end of 1772, the tribal society's chronic disease, the endless war of "man against man" described by Hobbes in the *Leviathan*,⁴ flourished with energy in the *rewes* south of the Bio-Bio".⁶ This situation, he claims, produced the "fracture of the old consensus that made the colonial government possible".⁶ A century later, once the conquest of the Araucanía by the Chilean army had concluded, "the region was immersed in chaos and anarchy" following the dismantlement of the "different governability mechanisms that had made possible the complex frontier life".⁷ The author also explains that there was a Mapuche order previously denied⁵. The territory was "shaken by a brutal ethnic war" that represented the free unfolding of "the frontier or outsider way of being", returning to the "war of all against all that characterized the frontier so many times in the past".⁸

We suggest that neither of the approaches above provide a valid interpretation regarding violence in the two periods under consideration. Villalobos minimizes the importance of political violence, seeing it only as a phenomenon that concludes with the Araucanía's invasion. León Solís, on the other hand, tends to exaggerate violence, suggesting it was an omnipresent and decisive phenomenon. We prefer to consider "forms" of violence using Karl Marx's concept^{9,10} –the mode in which social relationships are constituted–; the manifestation of a common

⁴"The war of man against every man".¹⁷

⁵Near the end of the XVIII century: "The human universe that flourished at the frontier was picturesque and violent... The European and tribal society joined in a dance of solidarity of the excluded, drunk in the joys of an unrestricted liberty".¹⁸

content expressed in different yet internally related ways. We term violence as a social relation based on the exercise of force, of material or physical coercion, or of threats regarding the use of such force or coercion.¹¹ The means of expressing violence occupies a secondary role. The more naked the presence of force, particularly as it becomes increasingly oppressive, the lesser the chances of success based on consensus or persuasion.

Violence expresses itself in a number of ways, although it preserves a pervasive nucleus or central content. In the extreme, the objective of violence is the physical annihilation of the adversary. It may even mean mutual extermination with the destruction of the principles of political life and the very existence of human beings.¹² Individually or massively, violence has an effect beyond its direct victims by generating panic and terror within the oppressed. Violence has three main types:

1. Individual or massive assassinations, including genocide;
2. Damage inflicted on the body without the loss of human life; and
3. Actions that put at risk the conditions of material reproduction of the individual or a group. All three can occur simultaneously, or one or more can affect an individual or group over time.

Political violence in the late conquest of the Araucanía (1859-1883)

The colonial pact subscribed between the Mapuche of the Araucanía and the Spanish Empire established the Bío-Bío River as a frontier between both nations, recognising a politically independent territory up to the Toltén River.⁶ Later, in times of the Republic, the Parliament of Tápahué (1825) ratified the Mapuche autonomy. However, since the decade of 1840s, the Chilean State began to progressively question this pact assuming the need to consolidate its presence throughout the country. The following governments began to conceive the means to occupy the Araucanía, implementing in 1861 the strategy conceived by Colonel Cornelio Saavedra. This included gradually advancing the frontier to the Malleco River by constructing forts and installing Chilean settlers between the Bío-Bío and the Malleco Rivers so as to gain control of the territory.¹³⁻¹⁵

From the beginning of the occupation, the practice of the *parlamento* continued, with the support of the Franciscan fathers settled in the region. The aim was to gain support for the Chilean army against foreign enemies, to agree on the settlement of garrisons and of non-Mapuche in this ancestral territory, calling upon the respect of the indigenous autonomy.^{15,16} This process experienced important breakdowns when some Mapuche sectors –namely, the *Nagche*⁷ and some *Lafkenche*⁸ *rewé* (former allies to the government), as well as those opposed to the occupation of the Araucanía, such as the *Wenteche*,⁹ the *Pewenche*¹⁰ and the *Lafkenche* –, confirmed that the

Chilean State's true intentions were quite different to those declared, since they were trying to invade most of the region so as to make it available to Chilean and foreign settlers.

Mañil Wenu, one of the *Wenteche* leaders of the time, perceived the imminent advancing of the frontier and the region's fragmentation, due to the selling of land for the creation of garrisons and the arrival of the Chilean to the Wallmapu. Quoting the justice and protection given to those badly affected by speculators and land usurpers during past decades, and the violence that all this had brought, he demanded through some missionaries such as Palavecino the State to abandon the idea of occupying the territory and honour the treaties formerly concluded.²²

Violence as a method of subjection can be clearly separated here in two periods: The first, from 1861 to 1869; the second, from 1869 to 1883. In the first period, under Cornelio Saavedra's administration, violence was quite localized and originated from problems concerning land property and usury by Chileans and state agents. In the second, the use of force by Chilean troops increased, affecting plantations, housing, animals and non-combatants.

Although laws established an increased protection for the Mapuche, they had in practice less impact than expected, as they weren't able to stop the usurpations, some of them being carried out by violent means. Violence was mainly exercised by spontaneous settlers, whose penetration in the Araucanía wasn't new but increased with the occupation. It is important to remember that this had been the main cause for the 1859 uprising,¹¹ and immediately used as a pretext to initiate the conquest of the Mapuche territory.^{13,14} Cornelio Saavedra, who clearly was aware of the enmities between the Arauco and the Malleco indigenous groups, disposed of emissaries in order to present his occupation plan to the Mapuche, expressing the need to establish military posts for the defence of Chileans and Mapuche against those criminals who sought protection and caused them great damage. This proposal was well accepted by the majority of the *Lafkenche* and *Nagche* groups.¹²

On behalf of the State, and as the occupation progressed towards the South, Saavedra began buying lands from the Mapuche and building garrisons, settlements and future foreign colonies so as to put an end to the violence exercised by speculators and swindlers when purchasing and selling Mapuche land.¹³ It was the State fighting violence exercised against the Mapuche.¹⁴ These plots of land were

¹¹14This coincided with the civil war between federalists and centralists, where the Mapuches established alliances with both sides.^{14,22} Whereas, according to Bengoa, "The revolution of '59 provoked an almost generalised uprising of the Mapuches. With the exception of the southern coastal groups, closely linked to Valdivia, and the groups from Choll-Choll and Puren (Coñoeñán and Catrileo), all the rest revolted, propelled basically by two factors: the advancement in the north of the Bío-Bío frontier and, in the south, the presence of the German settlers. The Boroanos, in general, apart from the Arribana alliance [wenteche], also participated of the uprising, and also many of the Abajinos group [nagche] led by the cacique Domingo Melin".

¹²15"The diplomatic weapon was used by Saavedra with singular expertise, realizing numerous parlamentos and cleverly using the means of deception, praise, and certainly, the knowledge concerning internal division between the Mapuches"

¹³16Cornelio Saavedra, "Memoria de 1868. Establecimiento de la línea del Malleco", reproduced in Saavedra. 15

¹⁴17As Bengoa explains, "Saavedra was against the complete dispossession of the indigenous, an almost certain consequence of the spontaneous colonization

⁶In this regard, see among others, Bengoa;¹⁸ Contreras Painemal;¹⁹ León Solís,^{20,21} and Marimán.²¹

⁷10Nagche: people from the lower territories of the Nahuelbuta Mountains (Angol, Los Sauces, etc.).

⁸11Basic Mapuche territorial unit, nowadays known as Lof Lafkenche: people from the regions next to the sea (Arauco, Cañete, Tirúa, etc.).

⁹12Wenteche: inhabitants of the central zone of the actual Araucanía Region (Lautaro, Collipulli, Lumaco, etc.).

¹⁰13Pewenche: people from the regions in the Andes Mountains (Alto Bío-Bío, Lonquimay, Llaima, etc.).

measured and sold until the end of the occupation.¹⁵ According to figures provided by Teodoro Schmidt –President of the Engineering Commission in charge of land measurements in the Araucanía–, 123,700 ha had already been measured by 1873. However, only 13,073 ha (10,56%) were recognised (“delivered”, according to Schmidt) as Mapuche property, the rest was auctioned (37,28%) or was in private hands (45,66%) or owned by Chilean settlers (6,46%). This clearly meant an unfavourable land distribution to the Mapuche.¹⁶

In the first period of the occupation, namely during the late 1850s and the early 1860s, violence is consequence of indiscriminate speculation, as the Chilean legislation only then suggested the need to occupy the Wallmapu. In this regard, a letter written by Mañil Wenu to President Manuel Montt, on September 1860, indicates: In November, another intendant arrived, someone they call Villalón,¹⁷ who appeared in our lands on the night of the 24th bringing with him a thousand men and showing canons, and they fell over the Mapuche, the Bureano, the Reinaquino and the Murcheno, and they stole all their animals, which in number were calculated to be nine thousand horses, mares, cows and sheep. They burned houses and took everything they found in them, and they reached the families who went to hide in the mountains. The elderly and women who weren't taken were slaughtered like dogs. Salbo himself gave the order to slaughter an Indian.¹⁸

A close reading of this text shows that these usurpations, thefts and murders took place with the participation of provincial authorities, such as the Intendant of the Arauco Province, as well as local ones, such as the Captain of Infantry and Commander of the Santa Bárbara Division, Domingo Salvo.¹⁹ Here we are not just referring system, which in his opinion wasn't good for anyone”. Instead, he adds, there were military sectors—such as José Manuel Pinto, who replaced Saavedra – which called directly for the annihilation of the Mapuches as the only solution for the Araucanía occupation”.

¹⁵“With the advancement of the line of forts from the Bío-Bío to the Malleco, in 1868, the Treasury acquired by means of deeds of sale large barren wastelands, previously occupied by the indigenous, its delimitation and disposal being carried out from 1868 to 1881. Up to this time, it was the Protector of Indians, the Intendant of the Province and the court judge, which intervened in such things and determined indigenous land grants,” (Teodoro Schmidt, Memoria de la Comisión de Ingenieros correspondiente al año de 1890, Temuco, 27 de mayo de 1891, 10 pages without numbering, in: Archivo Nacional, Archivo de la Intendencia de Cautín, Vol. 50 Asignaciones de terrenos, 1891-1892).

¹⁶Teodoro Schmidt, Memoria de la Comisión de Ingenieros correspondiente al año de 1890, Temuco, 27 de mayo de 1891, 10 fojas sin numeración, in: Archivo Nacional, Archivo de la Intendencia de Cautín, Vol. 50.

¹⁷This must be Colonel Vicente Villalón, Intendent of the Arauco Province between November 19th and December 30th, 1859.²⁴

¹⁸Mañil Wenu, “Carta al Presidente de la República de Chile, Manuel Montt, Mapu, septiembre, 21 de 1860”, selected by Jorge Pavéz.²⁵ Originally published in the newspaper El Mercurio, Valparaíso, May 13th, 1861.

¹⁹“Domingo Salvo”, (web site) Santa Bárbara - Bío-Bío

<http://santabarbarabiobio.blogspot.cl/2009/02/domingo-salvo.html>. Consulted August 4th, 2016. In the expedition by the end of 1859, Domingo Salvo's troop was composed by about 400 militia on horses “generally known as lleulles, [that] went to fight under their own risk, with no other incentive than the plundering among the Indians poorly-armed with firearms, most of them with “picas” (piece of wood with pointed edge) and “laques” (smaller piece of wood with the pointed edge).²⁶ Navarro states that Salvo was “the man who was better versed in the knowledge and customs of the Indians due to his long permanence within them during the period of Benavides and the Pincheiras”. Quoting Horacio Lara, he states that “the name Salvo was so terrible among the Indians that they considered him to be a strange and superstitious being”,

to disputes concerning trials over lands. The displacement of borders deepened and increased the violence and direct actions against the Mapuche society. Chilean troops started to attack the *rewe* near the garrisons, which caused a change in the exercise of war. The Mapuche decided not to confront the army. Instead, at the end of Saavedra's administration in 1869, they proposed a *parlamento* (negotiations between the authorities and the Mapuche leaders) in order to reach peace in the region.

When Saavedra left the post as military chief, in 1869, the most violent period of the occupation commenced with the rebellion headed by the Lonko Kilapán, *Ñidol Toki*²⁰ of the *Weichanmapu*²¹, against the Army commanded by Generals Pinto and Urrutia. Between 1869 and 1881, the most significant acts of state violence against the Mapuche took place during the conflict, with the new displacement of the borders up to the Traiguén and Cautín Rivers, respectively. A letter sent by the Intendant of Valdivia, Epifanio del Canto, to the Minister of War, on May 1871, underlines the dangers to the region, namely: “The poverty amongst the Araucano Indians²² that live to the south of the Cautín River, as a consequence of the constant persecution by the Army from the north of the Malleco line”, adding that this has been the cause that “many of them have made contact with the Indians that live within the territory of this province”²³

The situation aggravated the following years. As the General Basilio Urrutia signals, in 1876: “We know perfectly that the Arribana tribes have completely abandoned their domains near the Cautín, withdrawing to the south of that river and to the far reaches of the Andes Mountains. —The Sub-Andean region lies, therefore, vacant and completely uninhabited”.²³ A first event occurred on January 12th, 1869, when a man named Enrique Greene asked permission from General José Manuel Pinto to gather a group of people to rob animals from the Pewenche of the Andes Mountains. The expedition consisted of 52 men in charge of someone called Saldías, who had the order to “rob as much as they could, and to kill children and grown-ups, male or female”²⁴ He attacked a small *rewe* at Lolco, a peaceful territory. Saldías returned with a great quantity of animals, after killing 20 Pewenche men, women and children, taking prisoner 3 children.¹³ This episode is relevant, since it is the only one where non-military forces carried out such a massive killing. A year later, on January 28th, 1870, a company of Grenadiers caught a group of Mapuche w robbing cattle. The attackers supposedly killed a soldier and two settlers, and they were pursued for a league. The situation turned into a fight with knives: 11 Mapuche were killed and the booty was recovered.²⁷ It was certainly a massive killing, since the military unit didn't respect the official instruction indicating they should have been taken as prisoners for trial, given the crimes committed, and not be immediately killed.²⁵

In the early 1880s state violence against the Mapuches multiplied.

the mere mention of his name instilling great fear.²⁶

²⁰Ñidol Toki: key commander of the Mapuche military force.

²¹Weichan: Going to war; Mapu: Land/Territory. Weichanmapu: Lands/Territories in war.

²²Hispanic-Chilean denomination to refer to the Mapuches.

²³Letter from the Intendent of Valdivia, Epifanio Del Canto, to the Minister of War, Francisco Echaurren, 20 May 1871, in: Archivo Nacional, Ministerio de Guerra, Vol. 597, unknown pages.

²⁴El Meteoro, Los Ángeles, 12 June 1869; quoted by Bengoa.

²⁵“We can say that the Araucanía occupation war was ...a regular war in the manner, but a completely irregular war in the actual deployment”.³⁰

According to Tomás Guevara, on May 7th, 1880, a division of 440 men went to the Mapuche settlements near Chanco. Crossing the Dumo River, 240 of them went, under the command of Bonifacio Burgos, assaulting the *rewes* of Pailahueque, Ñanqucheo and Pancho, where they murdered 13 people and took prisoner 15, as well as a great number of animals.²⁸ A new massacre took place that year, when some Mapuche realized a smash-and-grab of some animals belonging to Bernardo Concha. Concha reported the wrong to the Angol garrison, which provided a group of soldiers to notify Melin, the *lonko* of the reservation where the thieves came from. They were made prisoners, together with the *cacique*, and taken to Angol. However, the party stopped half way and made all the Mapuche descend their horses and shot them, only one of them escaping from the slaughter.²⁸

On November 10th, 1881, the so-called “the massacre of Temuco” took place. In it, 3,500 Mapuche settled in the area were surprised by Army forces, who murdered them in a place that is known till today as the Matanza sector (Killing sector) in current Temuco, causing a deep impact in the Mapuche society due to the cruelty of such an act.²⁹ Only two days after, on November 12th, a similar incident occurred in Lumaco, where 11 Mapuche were killed in the garrison prison under strange circumstances, during the night. It is possible to delve deeper into this episode, since we have a much more complete documentation than any other case, due to the inquiry realized by the Army itself.²⁶ A soldier went to sleep together with the prisoners in the first prison cell facing the street and without the knowledge of the rest of the soldiers. During the night, the Mapuche hit the soldier on the head with a stick, causing his instant death. When the rest of the troop and officials realized the situation, the order to enter the cell was given. Three of the five Mapuche were shot, as they defended themselves with wooden sticks and bars from the cell. The remaining Mapuche were then killed by officials Roselot and Casanueva with their swords.

A few hours later, another bloody incident occurred. According to the first version given by the soldiers, in the early hours of the morning an alarm went on. Other five Mapuche had revolted in the neighbouring cell. They were all shot by the guards, summing up a total of eleven dead. Contradicting this version, the district attorney Ezequiel Villarroel established in his inquiry that all of them were in a pardon attitude and lying on the ground. Moreover, the district attorney made evident the inconsistencies between the soldiers’ statements, leaving without effect the first summary and starting another one. Nevertheless, the judicial proceedings ended without culprits. Another important event occurred on December 13th, 1882, in Alto Biobío. By order of the Hacienda San Ignacio’s stewards, a group of militaries killed nineteen people, including women and children, and burned their bodies. Later, they killed ten men sent by chief Lonquimay. The inquiry revealed that they had previously killed another seven Mapuche, throwing them to the river to hide the crime, bringing the total to thirty-six dead people.²⁸

The second period of the occupation was, thus, clearly characterised by a kind of violence more proper to a dirty war, where murdering innocent people and taking prisoners without resistance became common. Not less important is the lack of trials against those held responsible in each and every case. Moreover, in the case of Lumaco and Alto Bío-Bío, although there was a trial, nobody was found guilty. When comparing both periods, we see that under Cornelio Saavedra’s authority no acts of violence similar to those under the commands of

²⁶“Sumario indagatorio seguido a los indios muertos el 12 del presente mes en el calabozo de este cuartel”, Lumaco, noviembre 11 (sic) de 1881.³¹

Pinto and Urrutia occurred. Violence in the first period was related to problems of land property between the Mapuche and settlers, usury or swindle, but always at a local level. On the contrary, during the second period we find a more generalized violence on behalf of the military: the slaughter of prisoners, of several *rewe* and groups of Mapuche, without previous confrontation, as well as the systematic destruction of houses and crops, the stealing of animals and even the murdering of children.

Violence under the *radicación* period (1884-1929)

The so-called *radicación* didn’t imply the end of violence against the Mapuche. Instead, it acquired a new outline with the participation of Chilean and foreign settlers, often endorsed by the police (policeman or settlement guards). Generally, forced actions destined to take over the Mapuche lands increased. The president of the Sociedad Caupolicán Defensora de la Araucanía (Caupolicán Society), Manuel Antonio Neculmán, states: The procedures used by individuals to take over the interests of the indigenous are the most illegal and condemned by the laws in our country. The indigenous has no guarantee in his home nor in his life, in every moment he is exposed of being snatched away from his house which is inviolable, according the State Constitution, by incidents that many times are fake and that have as a goal to take over the interests of the indigenous, the facts of which are many and various.²⁷

Neculmán reports to the Intendant of Cautín what happened with two Mapuche of the Quepe sector, Yane Filuche and his nephew Curiqueo. A group led by the farmer José del Carmen Sepúlveda, seconded by another person and three policemen arrived at their home. The latter proceeded to tie them up and whip them; subsequently, they took Curiqueo to Sepúlveda’s house. Here they kept him “hanging from an oak, hitting and torturing and forcing him to declare who was the author of the robbery of an animal that Sepúlveda said had been stolen and since he said he didn’t know, he was immersed in a brook where he came out unconscious”²⁸. While Filuche was left free the next day, due to the intermediation of a third Mapuche, Curiqueo was taken to Nicanor Hidalgo’s farm, “where he remained prisoner for four days, making him sleep in a trap without any covers, without caring about the weather’s inclemency, nor his age (seventy years), and he at last was let free on Sunday”²⁹ Neculmán adds: These incidents against the indigenous, Mr. Intendent, are frequent; it is sufficient that any individual reports a robbery or a theft in order to take away from his home the first indigenous pointed out by him and who has always to be someone who has a pair of oxen and is subdued to the cruellest torments until a settlement is convened by which he declares himself guilty.³⁰

The captain in charge of the police squadron denies the previous complaint, saying that it is “fanciful and a lie”. He joins the report of a judge, who also discredited the accusations of torture as “a false and fanciful imputation and that only exists in the mind of bad individuals to discredit the policemen, induced by venomous pencil

²⁷ Letter from M. Antonio Neculmán, President of the Caupolicán Society, to the Intendant of the Cautín Province, Temuco, 23 July 1913, out of pages, in: Archivo Nacional, Intendencia de Cautín, Vol. 111 (Comunicaciones recibidas, 1911-1916).

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

pushers who exploit ignorant people making them incur in falsehoods in order to make money from them"³¹ As it is evident, this open complicity between the police, the settlers and the justice impeded to put end to the multiple and reiterated acts of violence against the Mapuche, mostly to strip them of their goods and their lands. It is also clear that, once the military and political defeat of the Mapuche was accomplished, disputes for land acquired a new dimension. As a matter of fact, the main forms of violence related to these during the legal settlement period were:

1. Legal plunder realized by the State using civil and military agents, and
2. Illegal plunder, realized mainly by Chilean and foreign settlers recently established in the frontiers of the new Mapuche land, established by the Merced Titles, which included a very small area of their ancient territory (6% approx.).

Radicación could not happen if the Mapuche were not in possession of their land; therefore, the lands that were previously bought or despoiled from them could not deserve the attention and action of the Title Granting Commission (*Comisión Radicadora*). The president of the Commission, Leoncio Rivera, in his 1911-1912 annual report, explains that: The task in the southern part of the indigenous territory is becoming day by day more tiresome, because of the different systems put into practice and the cornering of the indigenous lands; and I must repeat today, if especial regulations are not dictated, which protect the property, or render more efficient the work of the indigenous protectors, we will find each day more difficulties and we can end up by being paralyzed due to a lack of space to exercise our action: since there are almost no lands pretended by the indigenous that are not in discussion with individuals, with more or less strong dominium or possession rights. To grant titles in an efficient and fast way, we first need to reclaim.³²

As a matter of fact, the main problems in the Araucanía were related to lawsuits on behalf of the Mapuche against the State or against politically and nationally relevant people with regard to land dispossession and violence, both closely linked. For example, in 1891 the *lonko* Pedro Kayupi addressed the Superior of the Franciscan Order so that he would intercede in face of the impending auction of some lands of the Coyinco and Chanco communities, which comprised 150 families of the Nueva Imperial Department. He requested, besides invalidating the auctions that he should be granted the domain titles of these lands.²⁵ Apart from the land plunder on behalf of the State and the settlers, a new element was added: the use of public force to defend the already usurped lands, in order to control the occupied territory. On November 1896, in the name of his family and of "many prestigious chiefs of the Araucanía", Esteban Romero wrote a letter to President Federico Errázuriz where he tells of the plundering suffered by him and numerous families who belonged to the reduction. In a suggestive passage he adds:

The authorities representing the State and in the name of the Law, cooperate with the looting done by the speculators of lands and animals in the frontier, forcing us to abandon what we love most and where we have lived with our parents, where their corpses lie, with

³¹Ibid.

³²Leoncio Rivera, Annual Report of the Commission for Indigenous Title Grants, Temuco, April 1912, in: Archivo Nacional, Fondo Intendencia de Cautín, Vol. 115 Comunicaciones recibidas, 1912-1914. pp. 1-8. Small caps are ours.

what we have fed our children and where we have shed our blood... We are tormented and sought to be exterminated in all ways possible. The rural policemen harass us and take away our horses and they make us responsible of any robbery that happens in the frontier; we are dragged into jail and there we are abused with cruelty and we are to suffer hunger and die because of these hardships.³³

An equally dramatic incident occurred on April 1913, in the Juan Pinchuleo community, from Quepe. This community asked to obtain and got from the State four plots of land, but the farmer Francisco Tejada bought also three of them from Carlos Concha Subercaseaux, settled in Santiago, for the sum of 5,500 pesos. The dispute arrived to Court and for a long time there was no sentence, since when the authorities intended to carry out the mapping of the lands in dispute, 60 Mapuche resisted the operations. On March 17th, 1917, they were violently expelled by policemen, who were particularly violent with the women.³² In a submission presented by the Caupolicán Society to the General Inspector of Colonization and Immigration, the Commission for the Indigenous title Grants was held responsible, which had declared public these lands, placing their own interests "above our race's most fair rights"³⁴

In the early 20th century, the Mapuche began to reorganize them in order to think in new ways of resistance, making visible and confronting the violence exercised against them. The most important milestone, still present in the Mapuche memory, was the Coz-Coz *parlamento*, which took place in Panguipulli, in 1907, and had two peculiarities. Firstly, the Mapuche turned to their own institutions to unite and reflect over the violence and land dispossession that affected them. Secondly, new elements were added to this ancestral mechanism, namely the presence of a journalist, who published in the *Diario Ilustrado* what he managed to write down and remember. According to the Mapuche's testimony, the habit to use a notary to manipulate contracts continued during the legal settlement process, in order to trick them so as to take over an important part or all of the reduction. Animal theft was also frequent during the occupation, and in the legal settlement period it increased even more. The new cattle companies and new owners of lands created crews specialized in live-stock rustling. The mechanism was simple: arrive to a Mapuche territory and rob during the night or when no one was present; if this wasn't the case, they intimidated and brutalized the residents. Another usual method was to get them drunk and give them little money for their animals and land, leaving them defenceless. At the same time, it was very common to falsely incriminate them of robbery, so as to take actions against them: scourges, detentions, kidnapping with violence and torture, to force them to sell or to escape to neighbouring regions.

Another even more violent method was simple murder. In the *parlamento* before mentioned, the case of Nieves Ayñamco was referred to, who was murdered by orders from Joaquín Mera³⁵ and the San Martín Company, a settlement company that took over the Panguipulli lake, destroying all the Mapuche vessels which navigated its waters, and also responsible for the murders of Mariano Millanguir

³³Esteban Romero, Letter to the President of the Republic, Chillán, 10 November 1896.25

³⁴"Las tierras de Arauco". Presentation of the Caupolicán Society to the general inspector of colonization and immigration, 1915, in: La Época, 23 October 1915, Temuco. Reproduced as an appendix in Pinto.33

³⁵About Joaquín Mera, who Father Sigisfredo describes as "sadly famous as usurper, incendiary and murderer",³⁸ see also, Fraunhäusl.34,38

and his son Manuel, for which they didn't go to court.³⁴ Only a few months after the meeting at Coz-Coz, another Mapuche was murdered in Panguipulli. This is how Father Padre Sigisfredo stamped the event in his diary: On June 24th, the corpse of the old indigenous Neculpán was found in the brook of Coz-Coz. According to the appearance of the corpse, the Indian had been strangled and then thrown to the brook.

At the beginning, it was thought that the perpetrator of the crime was José Calipán. About 10 Indians brought him to the Mission. Interrogated by me he declared that it wasn't him who had committed the crime but it was Rosario Sanhueza, tenant of Joaquín Mera, and Adolfo Jaramillo declared that he had seen Neculpán coming out from Isidoro Jaramillo's property and that he had witnessed that Sanhueza and Jaramillo were following him, pushed him down, strangled him and threw him to the brook. The criminals were taken to Valdivia and were 6 months in jail. As the relatives of Neculpán didn't show any evidence, Sanhueza and Jaramillo were absolved and left free. Joaquín Mera took care of the Indian's house and land. He burned the house and put a fence around the land.³⁴ Besides the fact that the crime remained unpunished, it is striking that the authors were left in the most absolute impunity and, even worse that one of its instigators, or at least accomplice, took over Neculpán's land.

In many cases the police was also involved, as the complaint sent on July 1912 by Manuel Antonio Neculmán, President of the Caupolicán Society, to the Intendant of the Cautín Province shows. Here he requests to investigate the death of Juan Marileo at the police station of Chol-Chol, "caused by the blows and wounds inflicted by the policemen" after being dragged with a rope around the neck.³⁶ The local judge said it wasn't necessary to investigate his death, since Marileo didn't present any lesions and, according to the testimony of the other prisoners, he had died due to the cold temperatures and the lack of blankets. Apart from legal and illegal plunder, there were other kinds of violence that are not related to the land theft or looting as such, but that show that violence comprised all the scopes of life.^{7,8,35,36} The establishment of new cities near La Frontera produced many abuses. José Miguel Varela relates in his autobiography how insecure the city of Temuco was, due to bandits that constantly robbed Chileans and Mapuche: When the Mapuches didn't have any money to buy alcohol, there was always a scoundrel that would offer them some coins in exchange for animals, handwoven fabrics, supplies and even for their lands, and for this purpose they would benefit from the attentive services of some outlaw that acted as a notary, who worked twenty-four hours a day, from Monday to Sunday.³⁷

Something similar happened in the countryside, as the following complaint attests: Under the pretext of celebrating the national day, every year a number of individuals sell alcohol along the road that goes to Huichahue and that runs through my reservation... producing not also several problems but also putting in grave danger our lives because of the disturbances which are as well used as an excuse for the reunion of thieves and crooks.³⁷ The same year the so-called "The Painemal branding" occurred, an event widely condemned by the Mapuche community due to the degree of violence exercised. The act of branding a Mapuche with a red iron by a settler who was accusing him of robbery without any evidence, revealed the deep inequality and injustice present between European settlers and the Mapuche. The repercussion was such that the Caupolicán Society called for a protest

³⁶ Archivo Nacional, Intendencia de Cautín, Vol. 111, out of pages.

³⁷ Letter from Antonio Mariqueo to the Intendant of Cautín, no date, out of pages, in: Archivo Nacional, Intendencia de Cautín, Vol. 111. The Intendant ordered the police to inspect the place, with no results.

at Nueva Imperial, to which more than three thousand Mapuche assisted, to condemn the incident and to ascertain that no other act of violence against the Mapuche could go unpunished.³⁸

Conclusion

In both the occupation of Mapuche territory (1850-1883) and the *radicación* (1884-1929) periods, violence played an important role in weakening the Mapuche resistance. We highlight four aspects of both periods: the historical actors, the type of violence, the role of the State, and defensive actions taken by the Mapuche.

The historical actors that exercise violence are not always the same for the entire period under consideration. The initial invasion was the responsibility of the Chilean Army, followed by actions of the Civil Guard. Both were in charge of the occupation of the Araucanía and carried out significant acts of violence. The victorious soldiers of the Pacific War against Peru and Bolivia realized the last advancement from Temuco to Villarrica, hoping to gain plots of lands and goods from the Mapuche territory as a means to overcome their poverty. During the title granting (*radicación*) process, the police became a relevant actor. Their task was the protection of new settlements, yet they committed numerous acts of violence against the Mapuche. Foreign and national settlers, however, assumed the leading role for violence against the indigenous population during this period, murdering the Mapuche and confiscating their lands, animals and goods. Negligence, if not total complicity, of the State in the administration of justice and failing to guarantee the population's safety, allowed these incidents to continue.

The type of violence also differed between periods. During the conquest of the Araucanía, the Chilean Army inflicted violent actions to weaken the Mapuche. Many of these incidents are now considered serious violations of human rights, particularly those perpetrated in Lolco, Lumaco and Alto Bío-Bío. Indeed, when José Manuel Pinto assumed command in La Frontera, the confrontation turned into a dirty war. The Chilean soldiers burned crops, stole animals, destroyed houses, and terrorized the Mapuche, whose ability to resist decreased over time. During the legal settlement period, the political violence perpetrated by settlers dominated, allowing them to take Mapuche land and property through trickery and force. For both periods, the most common type of political violence was that perpetrated by the State. During the late conquest of the Araucanía, the State set the stage to give a legal appearance to the invasion, not only through negotiations and diplomacy (especially during the command of Cornelio Saavedra), but also through military force. During the *radicación*, the State gave settlers a privileged status, thus allowing them to act as para-state agents. It may seem to some that the State simply failed to predict the results of a foreign colonization policy, one which excluded both the Mapuche and other impoverished Chileans who were victims of violence.³⁹ However, the State was complicit in this political violence as it did not condemn the abuses committed by the settlers or the police.

The last aspect of the problem is the defensive actions taken by the Mapuche. The invasion of Mapuche territory began with the legal and illegal despoliation of their lands north of the Ngulumapu. Mapuche defense of the territory required negotiations and requests addressed to the military chiefs and local political authorities. With the change

³⁸ See: Bengoa 1985: 380-381; Pinto 2015a: 68-71, and the documents gathered by Pinto 2015c: 300-315.

³⁹ We should remember the Suto massacre, in Loncoche, in the current Cautín province, in 1910 (Berger 2014; Pinto 2015c: 94-101, and the press documentation collected by Pinto 2015b: 288-299).

in command and the dirty war practiced by the Armed Forces, the Mapuche focused their defense on their non-occupied territory at that time (1870–Malleco). Some *Trawun* (meetings) helped reorganize forces under the General *Toki* of the Mapuche Army (Kilapán, son of Mañil Wenu) who exercised command until the end of the conquest of the Araucanía. During the legal settlement period, Mapuche society re-grouped its forces, generating new forms of organization and resistance. The most important Mapuche organizations of the first decades of the 20th century, the Sociedad Caupolicán and the Federación Araucana, were the biggest expressions of this change.³⁸ These organizations established links with the Federación Obrera de Chile (FOCH), as well as several student federations and political parties, trying to obtain support for Mapuche demands. While the alliances with both the left and popular sectors prevailed, there were also relationships with the Catholic Church, the Conservative Party, and liberal sectors.

With the *radicación* accomplished, State and para-state violence started to decrease. It was not fully suppressed, as exemplified by the fact that numerous Mapuche and Chilean settlers were killed during the Ranquil uprising of 1934.⁴⁰ After the 1973 military coup, and again towards the end of the 1990s, police re-instituted repression of the most active Mapuche communities. It is important to understand the history of political violence against a people in order to understand how that violence forms the foundation for mistrust between those impacted and their current legislating authority. In the case of the Mapuche and the Chilean State, recognition of how violence perpetrated by multiple actors and supported tacitly, and sometimes actively, by the State laid the foundation for mistrust. Recognition of the history of political violence against the Mapuche is the first step to towards healing that relationship.^{39–47}

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Conflicts of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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⁴⁰Manns, 1972: 51-58; Téllez, 2001; Ulianova, 2003.

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