

The Recreation of Ethnic Identity in Protest: A Social Systems Theory Reading of Ethnicity, Identity Politics, and the Mapuche Movement in Chile and Argentina

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1. Introduction

The impact of deconstruction has been such that many intellectuals—including conservatives—now like to use this concept for their critique of the ontological discourses of new social movements, especially for their denial of the claims made by social movements and for a denigration of their achievements. This has become a common frame to combat the claims of an explosive identity politics which is spreading worldwide. The adoption of a conservative deconstructionism toward identity politics could be seen as an approach that maintains the distinctions which it deconstructs, which means that it preserves the underlying categories of ordinary language, while the strategies of radical deconstructionism dismiss such distinctions altogether in order to reveal the openness of language (cf. Wheeler 205ff.). This strategy emerges from the suspicions about the spread of identity politics, which represents a threat to the hegemonically constituted differences that the multiple referents of this identity politics question. Thus, Alkoff writes that “many theorists are troubled by the implications of the claim that identity makes a difference. Increasingly, then, the attachment to identity has become suspect. If identity has become suspect, identity politics has been prosecuted, tried, and sentenced to death” (312-13).

In his analysis of a survey of the Mapuche people Aldo Mascareño criticized the claims to a Mapuche culture in Chile from the perspective of social systems theory. This survey had been conducted by the Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP) in 2006. Its results show that the preferences of Mapuche and non-Mapuche that the survey examined did not differ from each other. The “real” differences appear on the political terrain. Therefore, Mascareño concludes that the claims for a Mapuche culture are substantially poor, but politically rich, maybe “too” rich, he surmised. He maintains that “culture cannot be claimed as a category for explaining the actual situation of this ethnic group. Although the concept can acquire a relevance outside of political self-description, it is usually employed to foreground, construct or draw attention to differences” (63; my translation). Beyond the specific case of Mapuche identification, Mascareño argues that in a functionally differentiated and individualized society such as Chile seems to be, the conglomeration of differences, which the concept of culture causes, is only an illusion—but a politically productive illusion. Therefore, his analysis

both are hegemonic discursive constructions, which are based on narratives and collective positioning. Ethnicity discourses and ethnic positioning often relate to structures like class and gender, and political structures and are built as complex ethnified social phenomena. Ethnic semantics are inclusive and simultaneously flexible and porous. The narrativity of ethnic constructions changes because of the internal differences of those constructions (cf. Bhabha). Nationalism and other ethnic representations are ambivalent and hybrid constructions. They are ambivalent because the stories, rites, and rituals of ethnicity are constantly changing and hybrid because the discourses that trace the imagined peripheries around ethnicities are also constantly made and remade. There is always the possibility of crossing the boundaries that divide insiders from outsiders. There is perhaps always the possibility of including and excluding new voices, of creating new sites of meaning, and of generating new social relations. Homi Bhabha argued that the holism of imagined ethnic communities is disrupted by cultural difference, which re-articulates, in different ways, the meanings of the signs of the dominant discourse within those communities. This dissemination of ethnic configurations through contingency and complexity is characterized, too, by actual cultural flows of world society, which are made possible by culture industries, migration and other types of mobility, the construction of transnational spaces, the spread of global media, etc. Identities in a functionally differentiated society are, in terms of social systems theory, highly contingent, so that the alterity, fluidity, constructedness and multiplicity of cultural identities cannot be reduced. According to Nassehi, the paradox of culture as observation schemata lies in the emphasis on contingency, because the cultural formations, i.e., collective identities, cannot totally control and determine the exclusion of alternative observations (cf. "Dialog").

3. Identities and Essentialism in Identity Politics

Culture as an abstract concept is an invisible algorithm of the social world. That algorithm assumes meaning in concrete embedded identities. Identities express complex phenomena and relate them to paradigmatic series (cf. Nassehi, "Dialog"). Sheyla Benhabib writes that "culture has become a ubiquitous synonym for identity, an identity maker and differentiator" (1). According to Heinrich Schäfer, identity is a network of individual and collective dispositions of perception, reasoning, and action in actors, at cognitive, affective, and physical levels (cf. Schäfer 260). These network structures are simultaneously exclusion structures, because it is only through the relation to the other, its constitutive outside, that the positive meaning of identity can be constructed (cf. Hall 4-5).

Culture and cultural identities have become sources of politics, that is, a frame for political communications. The concept of identity politics is widely used in the social sciences to describe diverse phenomena linked to ethnicity and gender; it covers recognition politics, multicultural citizenship, legal pluralism, gender politics, gay/lesbian and transgender movements, separatisms, ethnic violence, racism and xenophobia

in all continents, as well as other identity issues like religious pluralism, emerging sub-cultures and disadvantaged groups, and other identity markers. Although the practices and discourses of identity have been in use politically since the 1960s and its structures have roots in the civil rights movements (Kauffman), paradoxically the first use of the concept of identity politics referred to activism by people with disabilities aimed at transforming both self- and social conceptions of this group (cf. Anspach). The term was then applied to rising ethnic issues and political formations during the 1980s in the context of the struggles of diverse groups for improving the situation of their members, and strengthening their identities. In theoretical debates, the concept referred to the consequences of the poststructuralist critiques of hegemonic identity systems and their link to distributional social conflicts (cf. Bernstein 47-48). Identity politics takes identity into the public sphere, challenging the liberal assumption that one can separate the particular from the universal. According to Hekman, it tears the veil from the abstract, neutral citizenship of liberalism, reveals the subject's contextualized identity, and moves in the direction of an embodied rather than a universal citizenship (81). Identity politics have primarily been born out of the skepticism of many new social movements about universalist claims for the common good that are blind to the oppressive and unequal consequences of differences of race, gender, age, ability, nationality, religion, etc. (Young, *Inclusion* 81).

In the development of the concept of identity politics, a tension between describing processes of identity formation and transformation and normative claims of multiple and changing actors could be observed. This tension involves the usual assumptions of identity politics about the unity and authenticity of its referential identity. Conservative and progressive claims for identity politics—that is, claims to conserve culture and claims to recognize traditionally oppressed cultures and repair misrecognition—have often entailed the assumptions that cultures are clearly delineable entities, that these entities are coextensive to the existence of determinate groups in which non-controversial identity descriptions are possible, and that the existence of many cultures in one group or the existence of many groups that may possess a similar culture is not problematic (cf. Benhabib 4). Under this logic, identity politics is owned by a determinable group which is defined by a set of essential attributes. The group must necessarily share these attributes (Young, *Inclusion* 87). On this basis, identity politics and its results in terms of multicultural rights have been criticized as dangerous for democratic politics. Slavoj Žižek affirmed that multiculturalism and identity politics are no less than a new strain of 'fascism,' because such multiculturalism enacts a form of postmodern 'racism' in which cultures and practices are sanctified insofar as they do not challenge or confront the authority of the gaze (cf. Žižek).

Identity essentialism freezes the fluidity and multiplicity of identity by setting up rigid inside-outside distinctions (Young, "Difference" 387). By contrast, identities are not and can never be accurate representations of the real self, and thus interpellation in a strict sense always fails in its representational claim, even while it succeeds in inciting and disciplining one's practice (cf. Alcoff 321). Identities are discursive constructions

and they change with the dissemination of their discourses (cf. Butler). Additionally, subjects, although they may share a belonging to oppressed and discriminated social categories and although they may converge in their political affinities as well as their self- and other-descriptions, usually, at a more concrete level, express divergent and even contradictory interests and values (cf. Young, *Inclusion* 88).

Essentialism consists really in a discursive strategy that has conscious or unconscious intentions regarding the political perspectives in identity constructions. As a strategy, essentialism could be used for advancing political claims (cf. Spivak). Although identity cannot be pinned down and although its purported homogeneity is an illusion, a unified identity can still be deployed in the public domain as a way to displace hegemonic knowledge and structures of oppression. While strong differences may exist between members of these social categories, and while the members engage in continuous debates amongst themselves, it is sometimes advantageous for them to temporarily 'essentialize' themselves and present their identity in a simplified manner in order to achieve certain political goals. The political role of strategic essentialism that Spivak projects is to enable oppressed people of all kinds—national, ethnic, sexual and other minorities—to present themselves as authentic and formulate their political demands, but without extinguishing internal differences and debates, because otherwise this strategy runs the risk of abuse, such as in chauvinist nationalism, ethnocentrism, purism, fundamentalism, or xenophobia.

However, in dealing with otherness, there are numerous strategies which—instead of defining unified identities—emphasize multiplicity and ambivalence in such a way that it becomes possible to reach the group's own political objectives (cf. Golding). Intersectionalities, hybridizations, border reversions, and other modes of deconstructing categorical differences pertain to these discursive strategies. Identity definitions and their use as resources for political communications depend on the constructed relations to otherness and do not require sharing pre-determined attributes or characteristics. This is precisely how the comparative character of cultural identity devices becomes obvious, because the affinities of the members of a category may be more or less salient, depending only on the point of view of comparison (cf. Young, *Inclusion* 90).

4. Identity Politics in the Postcolonial Southern Cone: The Case of the Mapuche Nation in Chile and Argentina

The justification of identity politics in political theory emphasizes the value of diversity for democracy (cf. Charles Taylor; Will Kymlicka; Iris Young; Axel Honneth; Nancy Fraser). The inclusion of diversity through recognition and redistribution politics fosters the reception of all legitimate interests and values in politics and permits the maintenance and development of frames of meaning for the political participation of citizens. This inclusion of diversity makes an equality that is sensitive to all kind of differences possible and it is not blind to traditional systems of oppression that liberal

democracy does not eliminate. Identity politics focuses on political controversies in meaningful frames and overcomes the self-descriptions of politics as solely a composition of interests. Furthermore, the re-elaboration of society's memory of past asymmetrical and unequal power relations, using the discourses and structures of identity politics, can make more complex *longue durée* fairness arrangements in political systems possible. Finally, identity politics provide politics and other social systems with more diverse knowledge for collective choices than ideological or power politics do in liberal democracies. Accordingly, identity politics could be a fundamental resource for democracy.

Latin America clearly shows trends of ethnic politics in recent decades. These try to overcome the colonial legacies and the institutionalized racial domination that evolved into state-led ideologies of mestizaje or creolization in projects of nation-building (cf. Greene 278). While certain national contexts are dominated by the discussion of indigenous politics, other states view the trend toward ethnic recognition as a trend that relates to both indigenous and Afro-descendant constituencies (cf. 280). Although these processes reveal influences of world society structures like global ethnic movements, policy-networks, and new normative frames (e.g. the United Nations' "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," 2007), this situation reveals characteristics that are closely related to the particular postcolonial history of this region. In colonial times, race and racial identity were established as instruments of basic social classification and as the basis of political domination. The racial axis has proven to be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix it had been established (cf. Quijano 533). However, this axis gained new historical contours. The racist distribution of social identities was combined with a racist distribution of labor and of the forms of exploitation in colonial capitalism. These unequal distributions were associated with a profound, violent, and long-lasting repression among Latin American ethnic peoples, who were condemned to the status of an illiterate peasant subculture stripped of the objectified European intellectual legacy (cf. 541).

The successful resistance of Mapuche people against Spanish colonial power in the Southern Cone of South America explains why this people is still one of the largest indigenous peoples in this region (estimated at 1.500.000 members in Argentina and Chile). The long and intermittent warfare between Spaniards, creoles, and Mapuche—the "Arauco War," which lasted from 1550 to 1883 in Chile and to 1885 in Argentina—positions this indigenous people as a belligerent enemy of the colonial and creole elites. The subsequent construction of a postcolonial state in independent Chile since 1818 was a project of an elite which only later used the state apparatus (state machinery) to shape a national identity (cf. Pinto 94). Nation-building in Chile dismissed caudillo-like experiences and Pan-American projects and concentrated on bringing about progress through European patterns at all levels. An early consensus of elites made it the national project of Chile "to be a corner of Europe in America" (94). This project included the annexation of the territory settled by the Mapuche—as has effectively happened—but not the recognition of the Mapuche as a differentiated identity.

The Mapuche were transformed into impoverished peasants in unfavorable lands, and Mapuche identity was to be totally dissolved and integrated into Chilean nationhood. Consequently, the Mapuche are today the poorest population group in Chile. However, Mapuche identifications did not disappear, but changed in the 20th century through the discourses and structures of a “culture of resistance” in rural communities and through the dynamic and strategic positioning of urban indigenous organizations—e.g., Sociedad Caupolicán, Federación Araucana, Frente Único (cf. Bengoa, *Historia*; Foerster/Montecino). These organizations have a more urban context and do not coincide necessarily with the delimitation of ethnic communities, but they aspire to build a social movement in order to take influence in collective decisions in different political circles. Mapuche organizations were, for example, a notable force in the Chilean re-democratization movement during Pinochet’s dictatorship.

Despite some differences, such as views on federalism and the early role of caudillos, the construction of the national project in Argentina worked in quite similar ways. The “Desert Conquest” of Pampa and Patagonian lands at the end of 19th century pursued also the taking of Mapuche lands and the relocation of Mapuche to national and foreign colonies (cf. Krofft). Like in Chile, the rights of the Mapuche people were disregarded. The Argentine nation-building project also denied the legitimacy of Mapuche difference in that this identity was considered part of a barbarity that Sarmiento’s ideology of civilization wanted to exterminate. In the 19th century Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, the most influential Argentine nation-builder, characterized what was then the border region in southern Argentina not as emptiness or chaos but as an alternative order that had to be considered an enemy and that had to be defeated for the sake of national unity (cf. Navarro). Much more successfully than Chile, Argentina attracted many European immigrants in order “to improve the race.” Furthermore, the Mapuche were not considered authentic Argentine indigenous, but rather Chilean invaders who influenced the culture of Argentinean aboriginals and degenerated it (“Araucanization of Pampa”). Since the 1970s Mapuche organizations that wanted to mobilize the Mapuche of *Puelmapu* (on the east side of the southern Andes in Argentina) have started and grown in Argentinean democratization movements. At the fifth centenary of Columbus’s journey, many organizations converged in the proposal “Tai–Ki–e Getuam” (come back to be one), which deployed claims of a recognition politics for the Mapuche nation and its territories in Argentina, including self-determination and autonomy rights (cf. Briones). The Argentine state adopted Convention Nr. 169 (OIT/1989) for the recognition of indigenous peoples in 1992, while the Chilean state only introduced such a convention into its legal system in 2008.

In effect, national political elites in Chile were for a long time reluctant to implement a recognition politics for the Mapuche (cf. Van Bebber Rios). Gabriel Salazar explains this reluctance through the fear that this recognition might undermine the classic vision of one nation in one state (cf. *Historia* 137). Despite initial agreements between the democratic government and Mapuche organizations, an integral recognition politics could not be adopted, and the indigenous policies were reduced to the lim-

ited fulfillment of demands by rural communities for the recovery of land. Due to the disappointment with the state policies of the new democracy, the so-called ‘Mapuche conflict’ arose in 1992. Mapuche organizations in *Gulumapu* (on the western side of the southern Andes in Chile) like *Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam* and others have pursued a jurisdictional autonomy of Mapuche territories, the recovery of lands, and the recognition of cultural identity. Mapuche organizations demanded the recognition of Mapuche as different from the Chileans (cf. Bengoa, *Historia*). The organizations’ struggles concentrate first on the recovery of land, then on rejecting the construction of dams in rivers of the South, and finally on the protest against the advance of the forest economy in the Mapuche zone, with its consequences for the quality of life of the communities and their ecological environment. The latter conflict has had a special relevance because it touches a central aspect in the neoliberal character of the Chilean economic model.

The neoliberal policies in Chile have implemented the deregulation of several markets, including the market for natural resources, which can be exploited freely since the late seventies. This deregulation applies also to forest resources, which are intensively exploited in order to be exported. Since 1975, monoculture plantations have been allowed to spread in the Mapuche zone. The forest economy is concentrated principally in the hands of two companies, Mininco and Forestal Arauco, which are owned by the two major Chilean economic groups. In recent years, their forestry has reached an extension of 1,500,000 hectares in ancestral Mapuche territories. For 2010 the extension is estimated to be 2.6 million hectares (OLCA 3). Projections for 2020 are in the range of 5 million hectares, which could still increase due to Chile recently signing a free trade agreement with China, for which Chile is the prime supplier of cellulose. The deregulated expansion of the economic system in a neoliberal fashion is confronted in Chile with the solid protest of the Mapuche social movement.

Mapuche organizations frame many issues for a protest against those companies and the Chilean government that tolerates and supports such types of development. Those issues involve the substitution of native forest and the deterioration of biodiversity, the disappearance of traditional medicinal plants, soil erosion due to unrestricted logging and its harmful consequences for agriculture and cattle breeding, soil and water pollution through the use of chemicals, the production of industrial residues, the deterioration of access roads to communities, and the decrease of water supplies due to the water consumption of forest plantations (cf. Cárdenas/Antileo 5-6). These problems often had as a consequence the forced displacement of communities, and they and were not compensated by more work opportunities for the Mapuche people (cf. Toledo 65; Haughney 174ff.). The Mapuche organizations in *Gulumapu* added such claims to other distributional issues, such as the consequences of the privatization of water, the proliferation of waste landfills, private mining and fishing, the scope of poverty, the lack of land and opportunities, and symbolic claims for non-discrimination and recognition of cultural difference (cf. Ray 174ff.). The response of the Chilean governments was twofold. On the one hand, the government implemented diverse

redistribution policies, generally with a *campesinista* approach, for rural communities, and without consistent recognition measures. On the other hand, the Mapuche movement had to deal with a very strong repression and broad criminalization of social protest.

The economic, political, and social crisis in Argentina since 2001 displaced the cultural claims to a secondary position behind assuring the basic survival of people (cf. Kropff 113). However, the new context of multiple and coordinate mobilizations of social movements in Argentinean public spaces offers new possibilities to Mapuche activism in *Puelmapu*. The improved coordination of different social movements facilitates the establishment of countrywide organizations, like ONPIA (National Organization of Argentine Indigenous Peoples), which have acquired a certain measure of participation in policy decisions. The Mapuche organizations in the new context are better able to establish alliances with other kinds of social movements. Moreover, the nationwide organizations can interact directly with interstate organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. Meanwhile, the Mapuche movement has to confront diverse conflicts with private actors that want access to the land and natural resources of Mapuche communities. Conflicts such as judicial controversies with Benetton in Chubut drew national and even worldwide attention. In addition to land claims (Buenos Aires, Rio Negro, Chubut, Neuquén, Cuyo), Mapuche communities confronted the incursions of the North American oil companies Pioneer Natural Resources and Apache Corporation and also of the Spanish Repsol company in Neuquén, of mining companies in Chubut, hydro electrical projects in Esquel, tourism mega projects, etc. (Ray 148ff.). According to Agosto and Briones, in *Puelmapu*,

the Mapuche people confront powerful enemies, multinational enterprises and big national capitals that are appropriating its lands, water, mining resources, oil, biodiversity, which are located in Mapuche territory. Before the strategies used by these enemies, the Mapuche people must construct, in order to defend its interests, encounter points for communities and with non Mapuche organizations which confront similar threats and dispossessions. (299-300)

5. Identity Politics of the Mapuche Protest Movement

In terms of social systems theory (cf. Luhmann, *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*; Hellman), the Mapuche organizations in *Gulumapu* and *Puelmapu* have created an autonomous protest movement against Chilean and Argentine societies, which is independent from the actors of political systems. The focus of this protest is above all the critique that the functional differentiation processes in the Southern Cone are incomplete and that postcolonial political systems continue practical exclusions on an ethnic basis (corruption and instability can be added in Argentina; elitism and lack of participation in Chile). Neoliberal policies have made ethnic groups unable to regulate the predatory logic of the economic system. The Mapuche protest also serves to make evident the poverty of marginalized groups in those regions and to point out the lack of diversity in their semantic frameworks. This protest has been stabilized over the years and has

been infused with other issues (from land claims to the protest against biopiracy and against Windows MS's unilateral translation into *Mapudzungun*—the Mapuche language), which increases the internal complexity of the movement. The addressees of this protest are private economic interests and the Chilean and Argentine governments, which support those interests politically and administratively. The mobilization sources of this social movement are strong normative and descriptive assumptions. On the one hand, the discourses of the Mapuche movement converge in the demand for multicultural rights, which include jurisdiction autonomy (relative self-determination, self-administration, validity of the Mapuche's own law), territorial rights (access to and shared control of sensitive natural resources and traditional spaces) and cultural rights (recognition of and support for their own language, religious, medical, educational, and other ethnic practices). This development implies normative modifications in order to adjust national laws to international human rights laws of indigenous peoples and their underlying concepts of multicultural justice. On the other hand, the Mapuche movement carries out self- and other-descriptions on an ethnic basis—often in an essentialist manner. Discourses of Mapuche organizations discuss the poverty and marginality of the Mapuche people and the effects of nation-building projects on them. They set up a continuity between individuals who belong to the Mapuche people and their historical roots in pre-Hispanic populations. However, the dissemination of ethnic differences through discourse prevents a renewal of Mapuche identity in a new context of globalization. Such discourse re-elaborates the external borders and internal cleavages of Mapuche identity, which can be manipulated in this way precisely because Mapuche identity has become highly contingent in a functionally differentiated world society.

One can identify some shared discursive frames of present-day Mapuche movements in *Wallmapu* (Mapuche territory on both sides of the southern Andes) and their effects on the dislocation and relocation of Mapuche identity:

- Independence with respect to formal politics: Mapuche organizations have built their own structures and will remain independent from the political players of Argentine and Chilean politics. The programs of these organizations do not rely on the support of political parties and coalitions, since as all sides have broken promises and maintain assimilation approaches towards Mapuche identity politics.
- Maintenance of links between claims for redistribution and recognition: According to Boccara, the Mapuche people's struggle for the recuperation of their land and for the reinvention of their territoriality takes place both at a material and at a symbolic level ("Brighter"). Many organizations of *Gulumapu* established in the late nineties the frame of the "historical debt" of the Chilean state toward the Mapuche people. This concept links recognition and redistribution issues in the Mapuche protest. Such concepts have also penetrated the claims of Mapuche organizations in *Puelmapu* from the Argentine state. This frame positions Mapuche people and individuals as morally entitled subjects with respect to the political

system on both sides of *Wallmapu*, and positions the whole political establishment as debtor of a fair deal for the Mapuche.

- Globalization of discursive frames (autonomy and multicultural rights): It is undisputed that many concepts, strategies and positions of the Mapuche movement come from the global indigenous movement, which, for decades, has been committed to ideas of self-determination, autonomy, interculturality, multicultural rights, ethnic development, empowerment, decentralization, deliberative participation, etc. The language of the Mapuche movement for the recreation of Mapuche identity is a rather global political language, which travels with the connections of an incipient global public space in world society.
- Reterritorialization of ethnic questions through the creation of new landscapes of identity, including urban contexts: The Mapuche movement deconstructs administrative and state borders and draws up new cartographies which reconstruct (or reinvent) local differentiations. In Chile, territorial symbolic space like Nagche, Wenteché, Pewenche, Lafkenche, Pikunche, and Williche were internally positioned. In Argentina, the delimitation and redenuation of *Puelmapu* as Mapuche territory competes increasingly with state-designed provincial borders. Meanwhile, on both sides of the Andes, the Mapuche diaspora in urban centers far away from ancestral territories has become an important issue. The Mapuche identity that in the early days of state-building projects in Argentina and Chile had seemed irreversibly lost in the integration into new national identification patterns (Argentine and Chilean) became the focus of a new ethno-space. The emergence of the Mapuche or Warriache inhabitants in big cities with incipient organizations and ethno-cultural institutions and practices is gradually transforming Mapuche self-identification. This process makes the city a new frontier of a symbolic Mapuche presence and questions the peasant and rural focalization of traditional resistance cultures. Simultaneously, this new configuration marks the urban space as a zone of exchange and struggle, in which Mapuche imaginaries change and are newly delimited or oppressed.
- "Trans"-nationalization of the scope of discourse and the structures of mobilization: The Mapuche movement is quickly moving to both a symbolic and an operative reconstitution of a Pan-Mapuche space, the *Wallmapu*, as the whole of Mapuche ancestral territory on the two sides of the southern Andes. In terms of discourse, the semantics of *Wallmapu* have become the imaginary unity of different discourses, social structures and networks of Mapuche identity. The representation of *Wallmapu* claims to reach all that the Mapuche identity applies to. According to Guillaume Boccara,

building on academic ethnological and historical research as well as on elders' testimonies and memories, it stresses the existence of indigenous networks that crisscrossed the Araucanía, the Pampas and northern Patagonia. It also emphasizes the existence of a transcontinental pan-Mapuche web that used to articulate both sides of the Andes through multiple political, economic and matrimonial alliances. Ac-

ording to this alternative view of the Southern Cone, there was no other limit to the indigenous territory but the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. ("Brighter" 1.5).

- This discursive new Pan-Mapuche representation, in which the Andes disappear as a natural border, challenges as counter-hegemonic geopolitics the territorial representations of national states. This challenge performs an encounter-space, which signifies a new semantics of territory regarding religious and other ethnic arenas. In Mapuche cosmivision, the *Wallmapu* means "the whole universe, the cosmos, everything that is material and immaterial, tangible and intangible" (Quidel, qtd. in Boccara, "Brighter" 2.2). Apart from this symbolic reconstitution there is an operative one, which occurs through the progressive networking of Mapuche organizations on the Chilean and Argentine sides of the southern Andes. Regular Pan-Mapuche encounters, the exchange of resources, the discussion of common problems, the distribution of frames, the coordination of solidarity campaigns and other activist initiatives, and permanent communications are becoming routine in the scenario of ethnic politics in the Southern Cone.
- Intensive cyber-politicizing of Mapuche identity politics: For the Mapuche movement on both sides of *Wallmapu* the new media, especially the Internet, have become a privileged substrate for ethnic politics. The use that the Mapuche make of the Internet is astonishing. Mapuche activists, according to Salazar, have embraced these media "as an attempt to reconstruct the Mapuche discourse and knowledge in order to mediate across discontinuities in time and space and to fight prejudice. The network has made possible the circulation of images not available anywhere else (like the children in Boyeco)" ("Digital Media" 10). In the context of the conflict with governments and private companies, the Web increasingly serves as an alternative public sphere which permits the circulation of news, manifestos, papers, images and videos that the traditional media do not spread. This counter-sphere offers new ways of narrating and constructing a new Mapuche imaginary (cf. Salazar, "Digital Media"). The web fosters the publication of manifold types of representation for Mapuche identity: traditional, essentialist, and reflexive ways compete and can be mixed on the Internet (cf. Godoy). Moreover, the memory of Mapuche communities, organizations and individuals is migrating gradually to cyberspace, and many cultural resources are only available online, also in the Mapuche language.
 - Specialization of new forms of cultural production of Mapuche difference: The emergence of an ethnic Mapuche movement was accompanied by the visible eruption of a Mapuche ethnic poetry in the landscape of Chilean literature (cf. Park). This poetry can be seen as an answer to the hegemony of western discourses in national literature (cf. García Barrera, "El discurso"). However, this poetry is an intercultural discourse, a hybridization, which is generated in interaction with the discourses of Chilean literature (cf. Carrasco Muñoz) and shows cross-cultural trans-textual procedures: it stresses the western European canon as a point of reference and it also uses its own cultural elements (*epeu*, *ül*, and

konew), that is, its own textual system, in which a new indigenous discourse that dialogues critically with the Chilean context in which it is placed (cf. García Barrera, "Entre-textos"). The new Mapuche poetry—very often bilingual—has an expressive, testimonial and performative character. It has developed a number of textual strategies (syncretic enunciation, transliterary intertexts and plural codification) and made possible the use of *Mapudzungun* for new literary genres such as personal stories, the didactic *epew* ("story"), the ethnographic essay, and the written poem (cf. Carrasco).

In addition to this established development, there are new forms of Mapuche musical expression. The growing number of musical groups in an urban context that play Mapuche Rock, Mapuche electronic music, and all kinds of Mapuche fusion music (especially Reggae, Hip-Hop, etc.) and the distribution of this music through alternative channels function as an incipient new hybrid Mapuche discourse which dialogues with many musical genres, which also uses its own themes and elements (rhythms, instruments), and which goes far beyond the limits of traditional Mapuche folklore (which introduced occidental instruments and forms like orchestration) and Mapuche traditional songs (ceremonial songs of *machi*, occasional and greeting songs, and improvised songs in social settings). An exponent of this fusion said:

When we talk about 'Mapuchifying' hip-hop and poetry, we mean incorporating them into our culture. Through both these art forms we bring to light our personal and collective struggles. We could also speak of ethno-poetry and ethno-hip-hop, connected in this case with the Mapuche people. (Estrada)

The use of audiovisual tools is a very incipient form of cultural production. Since 1994 (with the short documentary "Wifíometun nimapu meu" by José Ancán and Hernán Dinamarca) there has been Mapuche documentary filmmaking. Female artists like Sofía Painequeo and Jeannette Paillán have also made their own productions. These works dialogue with the visual stereotypes of the natural context of the Mapuche way of life that Chilean documentary filmmaking had created earlier on (cf. Paz Bajas).

6. A Last Word

As we can see, the discourses and structures of identity politics in the Mapuche movement are changing the borders, diagrams, and hierarchies of Mapuche identity, as well as the relationship with national identities in Argentina and Chile. In this sense, the Mapuche movement is both affected by and the producer of contingency in ethnic relations in the Southern Cone. This also involves the complexity of new media and of new forms of cultural production, and the creation of new ethnic spaces in that corner of world society. The dissolution of traditional ways of living that is caused by functional differentiation is the background for the evolution of ethnicities and the transformation of identity representations and related political communications. Ethnicity is

far from losing importance in world society; currently it plays a central role in the increasing complexity of communication. The comparative schemata of cultural identities cannot be considered empty in these processes; on the contrary, they expand and multiply the differentiated ways of life which characterize modern society. The function of Mapuche identity politics as a protest movement which criticizes the faults and lacks of the evolution of political systems in the Southern Cone and their problematic links with economy, media and other systems, makes the claims of Mapuche culture not only analytically rich but overall indispensable for a systems theory analysis of postcolonial developments in social systems of this region in the south of world society.

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