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Review Article

“Today There Are No Indigenous People” in Chile?: Connecting the Mapuche Struggle to Anti-Neoliberal Mobilizations in South America

Kevin Funk

Drake, Paul W., and Eric Hershberg (eds) (2006), *State and Society in Conflict: Comparative Perspectives on Andean Crises*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Haughney, Diane (2006), *Neoliberal Economics, Democratic Transition, and Mapuche Demands for Rights in Chile*, Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

Silva, Eduardo (2009), *Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Yashar, Deborah J. (2005), *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Abstract: The books under review all deal with the same fundamental phenomenon: mobilization against neoliberal policies by South American indigenous groups. These works fall into two groups: those that focus on the Mapuche struggle in Chile, and those that consider anti-neoliberal indigenous mobilization in the region more broadly. Just as literature in the former group fails to draw any linkages between the Mapuche and other South American indigenous struggles, the latter body of literature does not engage with Chile as a case worthy of consideration. This essay delineates the arguments made by scholars from both groups and argues that they must be brought into dialogue with one another in order to develop both a more holistic conceptualization of the Mapuche struggle in Chile and a more complete understanding of indigenous mobilization in the region. Further empirical work is needed on how Mapuche mobilization relates to other indigenous, anti-neoliberal mobilizations in South America.

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Introduction

Perhaps no country figures as prominently in neoliberal economic history as Chile.¹ Under the iron fist of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973–90), the country served as a Petri dish for radical experimentation by Milton Friedman and the Chicago Boy economists, who sought to remake Chilean society in the image of monetarist, and more importantly, neoliberal theories² – policies that have more or less been sustained since the return to democracy in 1990 (Valdés 2008; Haughney 2006).

Such is the foundational nature of the Chilean case that it continues to play the role of neoliberal poster-country for others, even beyond the global South. For their part, Republicans in the U.S. have made frequent reference to Chilean-style privatized pensions as a highly coveted objective in their platform, demonstrating, according to David Harvey (2005: 9, 160), how a “brutal experiment [...] in the periphery” can become “a model for the formulation of policies in the center.” As if to ratify Friedman’s famed reference to the “Miracle of Chile,” in 2010 the country was brought into the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an elite grouping of “democratic” and “developed” states.

While Chile’s astronomical income inequality – the worst in the OECD – is the subject of frequent comment, social class is only one prism through which to view neoliberalism’s casualties. The indigenous populations of Chile, often overlooked in the dominant narrative of a quasi-European, white-*mestizo* Chilean nation, have suffered in both cultural and material terms as a result of the state’s love affair with neoliberalism, as a growing body of literature has documented (see, *inter alia*: Carruthers and Rodriguez

1 The author would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions, as well as Ana Margheritis for reviewing a previous draft.

2 Notably, many of the works under review fail to offer to a precise definition of “neoliberalism.” Silva (2009: 3), for example, obliquely refers to the neoliberal project as the desire to “build an entire new order that [...] subordinated politics and social welfare to the needs of an economy built on the logic of free-market economics,” but neglects to delineate what it looks like in practice. Here, neoliberalism will be conceptualized in broad strokes as “part of a hegemonic project concentrating power and wealth in elite groups around the world” (Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005: 1–2), based on a “new order” that operates according to the “logic” of free-market capitalism (Silva 2009: 3), and that is manifested in a number of different spheres, including: reductions in government spending on social services; privatization; global “free trade” (Lapavitsas 2005: 38–40); the idea that markets can “self-regulate” free from government meddling; the “depoliticization” of economic issues and their removal from the arena of democratic politics (Munck 2005: 61, 63–65); the prioritization of financial over productive capital (Campbell 2005: 188); and finally, “flexibilizing” the labor market (Saad-Filho 2005: 114).

2009; Richards 2010). Further, they – much like their more numerous indigenous counterparts in Bolivia and Ecuador – have often been at the front lines of resistance against the implementation of neoliberal policies, thus putting to rest the notion that Chile is above the fray of regional manifestations of contentious politics.

The question of how to understand in empirical and theoretical terms this indigenous struggle against neoliberalism in Chile, and, more broadly, its relation to indigenous mobilization in Latin America, forms the basis for this review. After a brief survey of indigenous issues in Chile, this essay will explore theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing anti-neoliberal struggles in Latin America (Drake and Hershberg 2006; Silva 2009; Yashar 2005), as well as the specific nature of Mapuche resistance in Chile (Haughney 2006). Regrettably, these bodies of literature exist in isolation from one another. Thus, on one side, Silva (2009), Yashar (2005), and Drake and Hershberg (2006) argue that Chile is not “neoliberal” or “indigenous” enough to be included in their analyses of anti-neoliberal and/or indigenous mobilizations, or that it lacks the “Andean” traits shared by its northern neighbors. On the other side, Haughney (2006) focuses exclusively on the Chilean case yet fails to relate the Mapuche struggle to broader frameworks concerning indigenous and anti-neoliberal mobilization in the Americas. Future research on both the general dynamics of these forms of mobilization in Latin America as well as the specific nature of the Chilean case would benefit greatly from increased mutual engagement. Just as those seeking broad theoretical frameworks should include Chile as a neoliberal state facing sustained indigenous mobilization, Chile specialists likewise should seek to relate the Mapuche struggle to other anti-neoliberal indigenous mobilizations in the region.

Indigenous Peoples of Chile

In popular lore, the Chilean “race” was born from the (violent) encounter between Spaniards and indigenous groups, from which arose a more or less ethnically homogeneous *mestizo* nation (Carter 2010: 59–62). According to this construction, the indigenous live on in the bloodlines of modern Chileans, but today’s actual living and breathing indigenous peoples are both actively ignored and “excluded symbolically and materially” from Chilean society (Richards 2010: 63).³ They are a people with a history (and immortal-

3 For example, the quotation in this essay’s title – that “today there are no indigenous people” in Chile – is from a 1978 report by the Chilean government’s Agricultural and Livestock Development Agency (INDAP – Instituto de Desarrollo Agropec-

ized on a special 100-peso coin to boot), but no present. As a result, Chile purportedly has no “Indian problem,” unlike its more “indigenous” and “backwards” (the two words being largely coterminous in this discourse) geopolitical rivals and neighbors, Bolivia and Peru. This notion plays into a longstanding “narrative of Chilean exceptionalism” vis-à-vis much of the rest of South America (Carter 2010: 59).

While the percentage of indigenous peoples in Chile is indeed small in comparison to its Andean neighbors, they nevertheless form a significant part of the Chilean population numerically, in addition to having a greater symbolic resonance. Though only 4.6 percent of Chileans self-identified as indigenous in the 2002 Chilean census, the true numbers are surely greater, if ultimately unknown; data from the previous census, in 1992, registered 9.6 percent of the Chilean population as indigenous, the discrepancy apparently due to a change in wording in the 2002 census, which appears to have discouraged positive responses (Haughney 2006: 4).⁴ Four percent is frequently used as a baseline figure, with some estimates as high as 10 percent (Haughney 2006: 4; Carter 2010: 61; Sznajder 2003: 18). Notably excluded from these figures are the large numbers of Chileans who self-identify as *mestizos* (Carter 2010: 61), as well as those who refrain from identifying themselves as indigenous or *mestizo* due to social stigma.

Encompassed by the rubric of “indigenous” in Chile is a plethora of groups, including the Mapuche (concentrated in ancestral homelands in the south as well as the capital, Santiago), the Aymara, Atacameño, and Quechua (in northern Chile), and the Polynesian Rapa Nui (of Easter Island), among others. The Mapuche – itself a meta-category for numerous smaller groups – comprise approximately 90 percent of the indigenous in Chile and are the third-largest indigenous group in South America (Barrera-Hernández 2005: 1; Azócar et al. 2005).

Legendary warriors, the Mapuche were the most successful indigenous group in the Americas at resisting Spanish colonialism, maintaining an independent existence in their homelands until conquered by Chile’s violent “pacification” campaign in 1883 (Sznajder 2003: 19; Carter 2010: 62). More recently, the Mapuche have also been the most active indigenous group in Chile in resisting neoliberal policies, though the recent clashes between the Rapa Nui and state authorities over development and tourism policies also suggest a need for scholars to examine indigenous issues in Chile as a whole instead of exclusively within a Mapuche-centric framework.

uario), summarizing the Pinochet regime’s posture towards indigenous claims (Haughney 2006: 56).

4 A new national census is to be conducted starting in April 2012.

Resisting Neoliberalism: Theoretical Frameworks

Indigenous mobilization in South America has attracted significant scholarly attention, particularly in the cases of the Andean countries of Ecuador and Bolivia, where these movements have been the most active (Becker 2008; Yashar 2005; Yashar 2006; Silva 2009; Lucero 2008). Scholars have proposed different theoretical frameworks in their attempts to explain these movements and to elucidate why the indigenous have mobilized more in some states (Bolivia, Ecuador) than in others (Peru). However, much of this theorizing fails to take into account Mapuche mobilization or, more generally, the Chilean case – whether due to structural characteristics of the Chilean state or the relatively small size of the indigenous population in the country. As I will argue, this is an unfortunate omission, as this theoretical work appears highly relevant to understanding the Mapuche struggle. The intention is not to place blame on individual authors for this neglect, but rather to lament the *collective* lack of attention to this case and to suggest why it merits inclusion in their accounts.

Though they do not focus exclusively on indigenous mobilization or anti-neoliberal movements, Drake and Hershberg (2006) nevertheless provide a framework for “state–society” conflict in the Andes that speaks to both themes. As they note, the Andean states are plagued by four interconnected factors that explain the region’s current “crisis” in state–society relations: the “lack of a national project” to unite elites and placate other groups; “the absence of an alternative economic model” to move beyond the general failure of neoliberalism; “unmediated forms of participation” by the popular sector, due to a lack of institutional channels for political participation; and finally, “institutional weaknesses and challenges to governability,” spurred by the challenge to state authority posed by different social groups as well as neoliberal policies that have “undercut the relevance of the state” (Drake and Hershberg 2006: 1, 10–23). This does not portend a hopeful future for the region, though the authors do acknowledge the “remarkable” relative stability of the region’s democracies in recent years, as well as the potential for mass mobilization to push for much-needed reforms (Drake and Hershberg 2006: 31).

In Drake and Hershberg’s analysis, Chile is different from the other Andean states because of its relatively high levels of wealth and urbanization, its relatively large working and middle classes, and the strength of its political institutions; thus, despite being an Andean state geographically, Chile does not share the requisite political and socioeconomic traits that would make it an “Andean country” in the vein of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and to a lesser extent, Venezuela and Colombia (Drake and Hershberg 2006: 9–10). Other contributors to this volume also pick up on this theme. For

example, Jeremy Adelman (2006: 41–42) argues that Andean states are “works in progress” in comparison to their Southern Cone counterparts, for they lack widespread legitimacy among the general population. According to Donna Lee Van Cott (2006: 157), the Andean region is distinguished by “the intensity and depth of ethnic and racial cleavages,” as well as the exclusion of certain groups from meaningful political participation. That Chilean political institutions have evinced greater stability than those of its northern neighbors is doubtless, as is the country’s overall higher level of social and economic welfare. Nevertheless, given the widespread disenchantment in Chile with the country’s political and economic systems – and such frequent eruptions of mass mobilizations by different social sectors in the country, as will be further explored below – the differences between Chile and the other Andean states appear to be less of kind than degree. Thus, the useful framework that Drake and Hershberg (2006) develop appears applicable to the undeniable “crisis” in Chile’s state–society relations as well.

For Deborah J. Yashar (2005: 8, 71), indigenous mobilization in the region is the result of a change in “citizenship regimes” that has “politicized indigenous identities” by challenging the autonomy of indigenous groups; this shift, accompanied by 1) an open “political associational space” in which to organize and 2) “transcommunity networks,” which provide “organizational capacity,” is responsible for the (re-)emergence of indigenous movements in South America. Most important is the regional move away from a “corporatist” citizenship regime, which, whatever its flaws, granted the indigenous some measure of freedom by classifying them as “peasants” and incorporating them into a larger structure of social- and class-based resource distribution (Yashar 2005: 55–65). The neoliberal citizenship regime that has replaced this corporatist citizenship regime has recast the indigenous as “individuals” rather than members of a larger class or social group, leading to both reduced spending on social programs that have benefited the indigenous and the elimination of channels through which they could claim their “social rights” (Yashar 2005: 57, 66–69). It is in this sense that the neoliberal Pinochet regime declared that “today there are no indigenous people” in Chile.

As Yashar (2005: 67) writes, under the neoliberal citizenship regime “indigenous communities definitively lost their interlocutors with the state, land security, and social resources.” In response, by seeking recognition less as individuals than as a community, these movements are launching a “post-liberal challenge” to the prevailing neoliberal order (Yashar 2006: 208). Akin to Drake and Hershberg (2006), in *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America* Yashar (2005: 21) devotes her case studies to the three states with the highest percentages of indigenous peoples in the Americas: Bolivia, Peru and

Ecuador (with some additional discussion of Mexico and Guatemala).⁵ While she is explicit in choosing cases by percentage of indigenous population, insofar as Chile is ostensibly a wholehearted proponent of the “neoliberal citizenship regime” this analysis should apply to the mobilization of the Mapuche as well. Indeed, though the Chilean government created the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI – Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena) after Pinochet’s departure, Mapuche groups allege that little has changed, and they continue to frame their struggle – along the lines that Yashar suggests for other countries – in terms of a “postliberal” conception of communal rights (Haughney 2006). In this sense, Chile does not seem fundamentally different from how Yashar describes Bolivia or Ecuador. Thus, Yashar makes a compelling case for the salience of the shift to neoliberal citizenship regimes; now it needs to be applied to the Chilean case.

In *Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America*, Eduardo Silva (2009: 1–3) explicitly engages with the “inconvenient fact of anti-neoliberal mass mobilization,” in which Latin American social movements, often led by indigenous peoples, have challenged Francis Fukuyama’s (1992) thesis of an “end of history” characterized by liberal democracies and “free” markets. Seeking to address the discrepancy between where social movements in South America have and have not brought down neoliberal governments – with Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela in the former group, and Chile and Peru in the latter – Silva (2009: 2–3, 13) settles on the imposition of a “market society” as the primary factor motivating the unrest. Drawing from Karl Polanyi, Silva argues that the “market society” is “a *specific* type of capitalism” that submits “*all* social relations [...] to market principles,” thus generating a backlash from indigenous groups and other sectors (2009: 17; emphasis in original).

The “market society,” based on neoliberalism, was a necessary condition for the rise of social movements in the aforementioned four countries; however, it was not a sufficient condition, as it does not address the “capacity” of mobilized sectors to actually resist neoliberal policies (Silva 2009: 29). Chile does not qualify as a full-fledged “market society,” as it “has been *reforming* market society” to a “mild (but sufficient)” extent in the post-Pinochet era through increased social spending and protection, and also because of its sustained macroeconomic growth (Silva 2009: 54, 267; emphasis in

5 Based on Yashar’s (2005: 21) rather dated list, which extends only to 1991, Chile would appear by current numbers to rank between sixth and eighth in Latin America in terms of percentage of indigenous population (after Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador and Mexico, and virtually tied with Belize and Panama), and sixth in the overall number of indigenous peoples (behind the aforementioned five).

original). However, in an apparent argument against his own thesis that the “market society” is a necessary condition for major social unrest, Silva (2009: 264–265) writes that increasing social agitation by the Mapuche, as well as labor unions and student groups, may “spark a resurrection of contentious politics” in Chile – as occurred even prior to Sebastián Piñera’s assumption of the presidency in 2010.

The contention here is that Silva misclassifies Chile as a “reforming” market society. While various Chilean administrations have indeed contravened neoliberal logic by contributing to the building of the social safety net in the two decades since Pinochet’s exit, Silva overestimates the extent to which this marks a fundamental rupture with the “market society” that was undoubtedly established during military rule. Instead, as has been the case in many of its neighboring states, it is the “market society” based on neoliberalism that is driving massive social unrest in Chile. As the sociologist William Robinson comments:

Chile is the first country to have started neoliberal restructuring and globalization, and it is probably the “purest” neoliberal republic in the hemisphere in terms of its level of integration into global markets, deregulation, privatization, domination by private capital, the atomization of the working class, and the hegemony of neoliberal ideology and global capitalist culture. Chile’s neoliberal transformation began earlier and is more “complete” than anywhere else in the hemisphere, perhaps the world (Robinson 2008: 77).

Indeed, even during the presidency of Michelle Bachelet (2006–10), ostensibly the most skeptical of the post-Pinochet heads of state towards neoliberalism, the better part of a million students went on strike and launched a several-month-long protest movement precisely to oppose neoliberal policies and call for a greater state role in providing a quality education for all. Bachelet made no substantive concessions, leaving the private sector in control of many of the country’s schools and universities. In the 2011 “Chilean Winter,” students returned en masse to the streets under Piñera, protesting against Chile’s archetypical “market society” national educational policies; student protests again erupted in March 2012 with the start of the new academic year.

Meanwhile, a mass movement has coalesced in recent years to oppose the planned construction of a series of hydroelectric dams in the country’s south, with protestors claiming that the government is prioritizing capitalist interests over environmental and indigenous concerns.⁶ Early 2012 has also

6 The project is called HidroAysén, referring to the Aysén region, where the dams would be built.

seen the mushrooming of broader-based protest movements in the southern region of Aysén and, more recently, in the northern mining city of Calama, over issues including high fuel costs, the over-centralization of decision-making in Santiago, and a lack of investment in health care and education. For their part, Mapuche actions have continued unabated. In short, there may be little appetite for forcing neoliberal presidents out of office in Chile, as has previously occurred in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela. Yet social agitation in the country against neoliberal policies and the “market society” is nevertheless alive and well in Chile among the Mapuche and other social sectors. That they clearly see themselves as struggling against a “market society” suggests that episodes of contentious politics in Chile need to be considered right alongside those in Bolivia, Ecuador, and elsewhere. The next section will further delineate why current Mapuche mobilizations should to a significant degree be classified, with these other cases, as movements struggling against neoliberalism.

From Theory to Practice: The Mapuche Struggle in Context

Scholars have delineated numerous planes on which the Mapuche are actively resisting the neoliberal policies of the Chilean state and transnational corporations (TNCs). Mario Sznajder (2003: 26) stresses the material level, such as the inability of neoliberalism to be reconciled with the Mapuche demand for communal land ownership. Daniel Carter (2010: 71–72) considers the operations of logging companies in Mapuche-claimed lands to be a “prime example of the neoliberal model at work,” with some 500 Mapuche communities combating the loss of both land and “space where culture can be renewed collectively and [...] Mapuche knowledge and values can be kept alive.” Lila Barrera-Hernández (2005) examines the conflict between the “right to water” asserted in both cultural and material terms by the Mapuche, and Chile’s privatization of water sources, which has led to the construction of hydroelectric dams in Mapuche-populated areas. Gerardo Azócar et al. (2005: 69) continue with this theme, commenting that the Mapuche “may own the land but they do not own the water rights, whilst the Spanish hydroelectric company⁷ owns the water, but not the land that will be flooded.” On a more ideational level, Patricia Richards (2010: 66) describes the Mapuche struggle against “neoliberal multiculturalism,” a project that seeks

7 This refers to ENDESA Chile, a Chilean state-owned enterprise until its privatization in 1989. As Barrera-Hernández (2005: 23) notes, ENDESA might own approximately 90 percent of the water rights in all of Chile.

indigenous consent for neoliberalism by overtly accepting indigenous values and cultures, but without addressing their “redistributive” demands. This of course is reminiscent of the above discussion of Chile’s neoliberal citizenship regime and the founding of CONADI.

The most comprehensive and insightful account of the Mapuche struggle is Diana Haughney’s (2006) *Neoliberal Economics, Democratic Transition, and Mapuche Demands for Rights in Chile*. In this account, Haughney (2006: 13) situates the Mapuche struggle against neoliberalism as operating at the material level – as explained above – and also as a “deeper” challenge to the individualist framework of neoliberalism, against which the Mapuche assert their status as “a distinctive people with collective rights.” This again coincides with Yashar’s (2005) reference to the “postliberal challenge” posed by South American indigenous groups, and speaks to the need to bridge these two literatures as well as to interrogate the Chilean neoliberal citizenship regime from a comparative perspective.

While Carter (2010: 72) recognizes Mapuche mobilization as being “no exception” to the surge in indigenous activism in Latin America, there remains, as noted, a wide gap between the theoretical literature on indigenous mobilization against neoliberalism in the region, on one hand, and scholarship on the Mapuche struggle, on the other. As noted, broader theoretical works on this topic often exclude the Mapuche and Chile from consideration, due to the relatively small size of Chile’s indigenous population (Yashar 2005), the political and socioeconomic differences between Chile and its Andean neighbors (Drake and Hershberg 2006), or the contention that Chile, unlike its neighbors, is not a strict enough adherent to neoliberal policies (and the laws of the “market society”) to drive the populace to mass mobilization (Silva 2009) – an argument that, as I have sought to demonstrate, is both theoretically and empirically untenable.

Haughney (2006: 2, 76, 94) also disputes Silva’s contention by arguing that the then-governing Concertación’s essential political program was the “maintenance of neoliberal policies” and that the Chilean state in general promotes an “economic citizenship” regime in which “all major parties express rights in liberal terms.”⁸ While her work presents an exemplary case study of the Mapuche struggle, as well as the national political context in which it operates, it is largely descriptive in nature. Where Haughney (2006: 8–10) does invoke more theoretical concerns, she does so mostly vis-à-vis the literature on democratization, and the extent to which Chile’s embrace of the liberal tradition has left it unable to accommodate the Mapuche de-

8 The Chilean Concertación (the Concert of Parties for Democracy) held power from the end of the Pinochet regime in 1990 until Piñera’s victory over Eduardo Frei in 2010.

mand for “collective rights.” Thus, she makes little attempt to place the Mapuche struggle within the larger context of indigenous mobilization against neoliberalism in South or Latin America (let alone offer an explicit definition of what “neoliberalism” is).

This is not an argument that her work is flawed for this reason, but rather a signal that a fruitful research area for scholars looking to carry forward her work lies in making this linkage. The theoretical literature either downplays the relevance of Chile or entirely ignores the country, while Chile specialists do not articulate linkages with larger theories of contentious politics or the other cases of indigenous mobilizations upon which they are based. Analysis of the Mapuche case and theories of indigenous anti-neoliberal mobilizations in South America both suffer as a result of this lack of dialogue.

While it is evident, as noted, that the aforementioned existing frameworks of indigenous struggle against neoliberal policies can help to elucidate the Mapuche case, the inverse is also true – the Mapuche case can add to broader understandings of indigenous mobilization in the region. As perceptively noted by Van Cott (2010: 400), this literature’s focus on only the more “dramatic” or “successful” cases of indigenous mobilization – particularly Ecuador, Bolivia and Mexico – “has presented a distorted picture of indigenous politics in Latin America.” In order to understand “ordinary indigenous politics” in the region, beyond these exceptional cases, more scholarly attention needs to be paid to the dynamics of indigenous struggles in countries where these movements are not engaged in open revolt and have not been able to influence national politics in such significant ways.

A further issue related to selection bias is that by focusing on countries with large indigenous populations, this literature is effectively holding constant a factor – the indigenous-identifying proportion of the population – that could itself play a determining role in the outcomes under examination (Van Cott 2010: 400). Looking at countries with smaller indigenous populations – a category that includes not only Chile but also, in fact, the majority of Latin American countries – would allow for 1) a comparison of how the dynamics of indigenous mobilization unfold in these different groups of states and 2) the elaboration of more holistic theories concerning this phenomenon. The Mapuche in particular are an ideal case to study in this regard, for they have sustained long periods of mobilization despite forming a relatively small part of the Chilean population. In this sense, they also make for a particularly compelling case to compare with Peru, which has a significantly larger indigenous population, but has seen relatively less mobilization.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

The Mapuche conflict shows no signs of abating. Recent years have borne witness to open conflicts over land rights and violent repression – including several killings of Mapuche activists – by the Chilean state, which has been condemned by the Organization of American States’ (OAS) Inter-American Court of Human Rights for violating international law by trying Mapuche activists under the Pinochet-era Anti-Terrorism Law (Planas 2009). Several scholarly works have sought to conceptualize this resistance vis-à-vis a neoliberal agenda that promotes the privatization and exploitation of Mapuche lands, TNC ownership of symbolically and materially important resources such as water, and a citizenship regime that refuses to acknowledge the Mapuche as a people with community-specific rights. Although the Mapuche struggle has proceeded largely simultaneously with cases of indigenous mobilization in Bolivia, Ecuador and elsewhere, notions of Chile as a “reforming market society” with an insufficiently large indigenous population have impeded closer consideration of how indigenous mobilization in Chile relates to this larger regional trend.

For their own part, Mapuche specialists have also generally neglected to engage with this broader, more theoretical literature, or to grapple in a systematic way with the implications of neoliberal policies for the indigenous. This is to the detriment of both groups of scholars. Though the indigenous peoples of Chile may lack the numbers to affect national politics to the same extent as their counterparts in other countries, the Mapuche struggle is clearly of sufficient significance to be studied under the framework of contentious politics, and, more specifically, as another instance of anti-neoliberal mobilization in South America. Further, by moving beyond the cases of countries with larger and more influential indigenous movements, studying the Mapuche struggle can help shed light on 1) how indigenous groups mobilize when they form a small part of the national population – as is the case in the majority of Latin American countries – and 2) whether there are broad similarities or differences between these cases and those on the other end of the spectrum, such as Bolivia and Ecuador.

In brief, more needs to be done to connect the Mapuche struggle to other instances of indigenous mobilization in the region. Though the perceived growth of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) has attracted significant attention in the scholarly literature on inter-American relations – often with a focus on human rights issues and democratization (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Santa-Cruz 2007; Smith and Korzeniewicz 2007; Brysk 2000) – little has been said about the Mapuche in this regard. Nevertheless, the Mapuche struggle is itself transnational, with advocacy networks operating from outside of the country, such as the England-based Mapuche International

Link (<www.mapuche-nation.org>) and the Mapuche Foundation FOLIL in the Netherlands (<www.mapuche.nl>). That the latter group was founded mainly by Mapuche who had fled the Pinochet regime for Europe indicates an additional need for Mapuche scholars to connect with the broader literature on diaspora politics to better conceptualize how the Mapuche diaspora (or even internal Mapuche migrants who have left traditional Mapuche lands for large urban centers such as Santiago) is engaged in shaping the Mapuche struggle and promoting democratization in Chile (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Koslowski 2005). That the Mapuche “have formed an intriguing web of social movement ties” with actors both inside and outside of Chile raises the question of whether Latin America’s relatively smaller indigenous groups engage in “linkage politics” as a strategy to compensate for their size and bring greater pressure to bear on their governments (Caruthers and Rodriguez 2009: 753).

The argument I have presented here is that the literature on anti-neoliberal and indigenous mobilization in South America should engage with the Chilean case, just as the Mapuche struggle must be considered within a larger context of rising political involvement by indigenous groups in different parts of the region. The extent to which there has been any cross-pollination and social learning between these groups presents a promising avenue for future research, as does the inherently transnational nature of the Mapuche struggle. This is especially true given the politically active Mapuche diaspora, as well as the linkages between the Mapuche population in Chile and smaller groups of Mapuche in Argentina, and ties between the Mapuche and other indigenous groups in the Americas – potentially through forums such as the International Indian Treaty Council, the South American Indian Council, or the Campaign for 500 Years of Indigenous, Black, and Popular Resistance (Robinson 2008: 302).

The nature of neoliberal policies, often implemented in Chile at the behest of foreign corporations, and as part of a hegemonic project ultimately emanating from the global North (Silva 2009: 39), reinforces the need to reconceptualize the Mapuche struggle as a transnational phenomenon. Indeed, similar neoliberal policies are responsible for inciting indigenous mobilization not only in Bolivia and Ecuador, but also in Chile. In terms of the salience of neoliberalism, then, Chile is no exception in South America. Rather, it is part of a larger regional trend.

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¿“Hoy en día no hay pueblos indígenas” en Chile?: Conectando la lucha Mapuche con las movilizaciones anti-neoliberales en Sudamérica

Resumen: Los libros discutidos en este ensayo tratan del mismo problema fundamental: la movilización contra las políticas neoliberales por los grupos indígenas en Sudamérica. Estas obras se dividen en dos grupos: los que se enfocan en la lucha de los Mapuche en Chile, y los que consideran la movilización anti-neoliberal de los indígenas más ampliamente. Tal como la literatura en el primer grupo no vincula la lucha Mapuche con otras luchas indígenas en Sudamérica, los del segundo grupo no contemplan el caso chileno. Este ensayo delinea los argumentos hechos por ambos grupos, y sostiene que tiene que haber un diálogo entre sí para poder desarrollar una conceptualización más holística de la lucha de los Mapuche en Chile, y una comprensión más completa de la movilización indígena en la región. Se requieren más investigaciones empíricas acerca de cómo la movilización Mapuche se relaciona con otras movilizaciones indígenas y anti-neoliberales en Sudamérica.

Palabras claves: Chile, Mapuche, neoliberalismo, movilización indígena