

# Partisan Participation and Ethnic Autonomy: The Case of the Mapuche Organisation Admapu, in Chile

CHRISTIAN MARTÍNEZ NEIRA *and* PATRICIA RODRÍGUEZ\*

*Abstract.* This article examines the formation of Admapu – an organisation representing a broad sector of Mapuche society that resisted the actions of the Chilean dictatorship during the 1980s. In political memory, the period of agrarian reform marks a time of hope and strong participation, but here we show how an autonomy project developed within Admapu conflicted with those making political alliances with the Chilean Left. We examine the internal dynamics within Admapu, and argue that at the end of the decade the organisation divided into factions that cemented a rupture with the political system and brought about the formation of contemporary resistance movements.

*Keywords:* Mapuche, Chile, Admapu, political participation, autonomy, partisan militancies

## *Introduction*

This article seeks to advance the understanding of the link between partisan participation and ethnic leadership in the case of the Mapuche of Chile. More specifically, we attempt to explain why party politics and the struggle for ethnic rights became two separate strategies for a significant proportion of Mapuche leaders. The autonomy projects that had been proposed since the 1990s were not just about demanding the right for communities to make important decisions about culture, development and the local economy, but also to be able to organise and represent themselves in the public sphere without the need for mediation or partisan alliances. This is something particular to the Mapuche case, in spite of the capacity of the party system in Chile to channel representation via the state. Studies about contemporary Mapuche mobilisation have focused on the tension between

Christian Martínez Neira is an assistant professor of sociology at Universidad de los Lagos (Ceder). Email: [cgmart@gmail.com](mailto:cgmart@gmail.com). Patricia Rodríguez is an assistant professor of politics at Ithaca College, New York. Email: [prodriguez@ithaca.edu](mailto:prodriguez@ithaca.edu).

\* We wish to thank the editors of JLAS and the anonymous referees. This research was funded in part by Fondecyt 3060007.

resistance organisations and the strategies of their adversaries, including government programmes, infrastructure-related plans and productive private-sector projects.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to how the new forms of doing politics within Mapuche communities and organisations have reconfigured the historical linkage between militancy and alliances with Centre and Left parties. The emergence of autonomist movements in the last 20 years has to be understood in large part as a consequence of the break with previous experiences forged during the agrarian reform period in the 1960s and early 1970s, and then in the struggle against the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship.<sup>2</sup> What happened to the alliances during both moments, and when and why did the rupture happen? Our hypothesis is that it occurred primarily in the 1980s within Admapu, the only Mapuche organisation that at the time opposed the division of communal titles during the Pinochet years. The subordinate position of indigenous leaders within political parties did not permit full engagement in the decision-making around an ethnic agenda, despite their strong political experience that enabled them to engage more as protagonists. This fragmented the internal unity of Admapu, and created tensions between the Mapuche Left and autonomous indigenous. It also resulted in elements of the Mapuche leadership forming exclusively ethnic organisations, such as Consejo de Todas las Tierras (CTT), and later Identidad Lafkenche (IL), Coordinadora Arauco y Malleco (CAM), and the Wallmapuwuen Party (WM).

These factors help explain the character of contemporary autonomist discourses but also their limitations in generating new forms of representation of indigenous issues in the Chilean public sphere. As Van Cott, Haughney, Martí, Alcántara and Marengi, and Rice have noted, the Mapuche movement in Chile was unable to form an ethnic party or obtain political representation in the aftermath of the transition to democracy; thus, the Chilean case is considered an anomaly in Latin America.<sup>3</sup> Although the ethnic/partisan rupture

<sup>1</sup> Martín Correa and Eduardo Mella, *Las razones del ilkun/enojo* (Santiago: Lom, 2010); Tito Tricot, *Autonomía, el movimiento mapuche de resistencia* (Santiago: CEIBO, 2013); Patricia Richards, *Race and the Chilean Miracle: Neoliberalism, Democracy, and Indigenous Rights* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013); Fernando Pairican, *Malon, la rebelión del movimiento mapuche, 1990–2013* (Santiago: Pehuen, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Florencia Mallon, *La sangre del Copihue* (Santiago: Lom, 2004); Martín Correa, Raúl Molina and Nancy Yañez, *La reforma agraria en tierras mapuche* (Santiago: Lom, 2005). Augusto Samaniego and Carlos Ruiz, *Mentalidades y política wingka: pueblo mapuche entre golpe y golpe* (Madrid: CSIC, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Donna Lee Van Cott, *From Movements to Parties in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Diane Haughney, *Neoliberal Economics, Democratic Transition, and Mapuche Demands for Rights* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006); Salvador Martí, 'Un estudio prospectivo sobre la presencia y relevancia de los partidos indigenistas en América Latina', *Documentos CIDOB*, n° 10 (2006); Manuel Alcántara and Patricia Marengi, 'Los partidos étnicos en América del sur, algunos factores que explican su rendimiento electoral', in Salvador Martí, *Pueblos indígenas y política en América Latina*

happened in the context of limitations inherent in the democratisation process<sup>4</sup> and the maintenance of a neoliberal economic model in the country,<sup>5</sup> a more specific explanation is found in the history of relations between Mapuche leaders and Chilean political organisations. We think that it is important to inquire into the ethno-genesis of this rupture and its consequences for the Mapuche movement in the broad sense. More specifically, we note that little is known about the internal debates and leaderships within Admapu. An analysis of the decision-making process within Mapuche organisations and communities can shed some light on these shifts in political representation.

In order to expand on these arguments, we first discuss the literature on the resurgence of indigenous movements and political participation in Latin America; second, we focus attention on the creation of the Centros Culturales Mapuche (CCM) and consequently Admapu in the 1980s; third, we detail the internal disputes related to leadership and agenda content in the context of the democratisation process in Chile; and finally we address the creation of a political indigenous framework. We analyse internal documents, media news reports, and in-depth interviews undertaken in the last ten years. The internal documents include small ad hoc publications and public declarations by Admapu. We also use news reports, especially *El Diario Austral* from 1978 until 1992. Some of the testimonies of the principal leaders cited in this work come from published sources, including articles and memoirs. In addition, we interviewed leaders who played a crucial role within Admapu but whose written testimonies do not exist. We used two selection criteria: the leaders' relevance within Admapu and their representation of diverse points of view within the organisation. Between 2004 and 2008, we interviewed 12 leaders in different political positions; this article includes extracts from interviews with six of them, with attention paid to balancing the different perspectives. This material provides a broad view of the distinct political tendencies within Admapu, including the Independents, Christian Democrats, Socialists, Communists, and militants of MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement). We attempt to address this study from a dialogical

---

(Barcelona: CIDOB, 2007); Roberta Rice, *The New Politics of Protest* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Manuel A. Garretón, 'La democracia incompleta en Chile: realidad tras los rankings internacionales', *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 30: 1 (2010), pp. 115–48; Carlos Huneeus, *La democracia semi-soberana* (Santiago: Taurus, 2014); Gonzalo Delamaza, *Enhancing Democracy: Public Policies and Citizen Participation in Chile* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Drake and Ivan Jaksic, *El modelo chileno: democracia y desarrollo en los noventa* (Santiago: Lom, 1999); Haughney, *Neoliberal Economics, Democratic Transition, and Mapuche Demands for Rights*; Richards, *Race and the Chilean Miracle*.

perspective between historiography and political science. We would like to express our thanks to the *lamgen* (sisters in mapudungun) and *peñi* (brothers) who granted us interviews and who are mentioned throughout the text.

*Chile in the Context of the Resurgence of Indigenous Movements: 1960s–1970s*

Many of the insights in the literature about the resurgence of movements in Latin America derive from the study of processes and characteristics of the interrelationships between indigenous groups and states around issues of citizenship, participation and policy outcomes.<sup>6</sup> While a corporatist type of relationship between indigenous and peasant communities solidified in much of the region (especially in the 1950–1970s) and guaranteed some level of indigenous political autonomy and traditional self-rule, indigenous cultural and socio-economic claims in Chile were folded early into the class and identity claims of strongly politicised groups (e.g. workers and *campesinos*).<sup>7</sup> Rice argues that in Chile during the 1960s and 1970s, the agrarian radicalism of Marxist parties brought about the political incorporation of indigenous groups in such a way as to ‘impede the articulation and mobilization of ethnic identities’.<sup>8</sup> This marks a clear distinction with case studies in Ecuador and Bolivia, where this incorporation happened in ways that facilitated indigenous-based claims within a populist political framework. Chilean state officials indeed acknowledged indigenous political activism, but they largely favoured class-based demands over a genuine attention to ethnic rights, regarding Mapuche issues as problems of structural poverty. Crow notes that even under the governments of Presidents Eduardo Frei (1964–1970) and Salvador Allende in the early 1970s, official education and cultural policy reforms seemed patronising and intended to ‘capitalize on’ Mapuche activism via institutional forums, such as the Institute of Indigenous Development, and agrarian reform itself.<sup>9</sup> Allende insisted, for instance, on party/political ideas about collective land ownership and agricultural production for Mapuche groups at a time when many groups might have preferred more autonomy to make their own decisions.<sup>10</sup>

Regardless, agrarian reform and other social policy reforms indeed provided new opportunities for Mapuche mobilisation. Policies granting greater access to education, rural unionisation, land redistribution and broader social

<sup>6</sup> Donna Van Cott, *From Movements to Parties in Latin America*; Miguel Gonzalez, Araceli Burguete and Pablo Ortiz, *La autonomía a debate* (Quito: Flacso, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Deborah Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Post-Liberal Challenge* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005); Rice, *The New Politics of Protest*.

<sup>8</sup> Rice, *The New Politics of Protest*, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Joanna Crow, *Mapuche in Modern Chile, A Cultural History* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2013), p. 122.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

politicisation enabled communities to establish new lines of activism, either via alliances with non-indigenous peasants demanding agrarian reform, or via their own calls for the return of historically usurped lands. That is, communities could demand land and organise territorially alongside peasant unions, in the process establishing links to Left or Centre-left parties, or mobilise along indigenous-specific lines. Of course, these were never exclusive options, but they throw light on the dilemmas involved in what Mallon calls the two axes of Mapuche demands during this period: the communitarian and the partisan.<sup>11</sup> This framework of profound changes in Chilean society coincided as well with changes in the internal organisation of communities, from a focus on *küpalme* (or lineage) to one favouring more egalitarian criteria of legitimate authority according to *tuwün*, or territorial-based identity.<sup>12</sup> In conjunction with this, the 1960s witnessed the decline of the main Mapuche organisation at the time, the Corporación Araucana, as well as the breakdown of the traditional legalism of the *longko* (traditional chief).<sup>13</sup> This resulted in the emergence of more relevant community decision-making roles for a new generation of indigenous leaders with experience as peasant union leaders.

The promotion of more autonomous ethnic-based claims was nevertheless either crushed by repression during the Augusto Pinochet regime or co-opted via the adoption of cultural policies that promoted folklore, sport and theatre festivals which 'sought to anchor Chilean nationality in the virility and military prowess of the Araucanian titans of colonial times'.<sup>14</sup> Crow has argued that although these cultural ventures might sometimes have enabled moments of subtle subversion and even political organisation for some Mapuche groups, they nevertheless took place within the framework of full-scale neoliberal development and multiculturalist policies which largely delimited such spaces of negotiation and subversion. Neoliberal multiculturalism involves the state promotion of cultural and political rights and legislation regarding indigenous issues based on atomised-individuated state-society relations that are non-threatening to the state and largely mediated by the market. Those who adhere to the state's multiculturalist parameters are thus authorised to become part of the national unit (*indio permitido*), while those whose tactics are deemed insurrectionist are classified as outsiders and excluded. Hale and Millaman discuss how cultural agency and political struggle

<sup>11</sup> Florencia Mallon, 'El siglo XX mapuche: esferas públicas, sueños de autodeterminación y articulaciones internacionales', in Christian Martínez Neira and Marco Estrada (eds.), *Las disputas por la etnicidad en América Latina* (Santiago: Catalonia, 2009), p. 180.

<sup>12</sup> Christian Martínez Neira, 'Autonomía, esfera pública y alianza en la sociedad mapuche, siglos XIX y XX', in Gonzalez et al., *La autonomía a debate*, pp. 571–4.

<sup>13</sup> Rolf Foerster and Sonia Montecino, *Líderes y contiendas mapuche* (Santiago: CEM, 1988), pp. 286–7.

<sup>14</sup> Crow, *Mapuche in Modern Chile*, p. 166.

were easily subverted via the language of cultural rights as used by political actors as part of their methods of governance.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to state-indigenous processes, relations between political parties and organisations and the indigenous movement exhibited distinct characteristics in Chile compared with much of the rest of the region. In Ecuador, for instance, collaborative party-movement efforts within the Federación Ecuatoriana Indígena (FEI) and Communist and Socialist Party representatives from the 1920s to the 1960s led to what Becker calls ‘cross-fertilization’ of ethnic and class-based demands, or to what Lucero describes as more local political strategies and more specific forms of authenticity and representation in Ecuador and Bolivia.<sup>16</sup>

In the case of Chile, there are several interpretations regarding exactly how much autonomous space was available for indigenous claims. Richards notes that the Mapuche’s autonomy and cultural demands were not prioritised by leftist parties and organisations (like the Movimiento Campesino Revolucionario, MCR), which emphasised issues such as poverty, social justice and land claims.<sup>17</sup> Foerster and Montecino argue that the Mapuche were thought to have low levels of class consciousness: ‘in other words – more adequate to the indigenous reality – [their] mobilisations fit better within the long-term strategy of recovery of community spaces’.<sup>18</sup> Class alliances can be considered more of an opportunity to mobilise old ethnic-based demands, though that does not mean that some indigenous leaders did not feel represented within leftist party programmes.<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that the MCR was formed in order to incorporate these leaders without formally belonging to the MIR; thereby, the MCR responded to concrete *campesino* demands while still creating the conditions for future guerrilla formations.<sup>20</sup> Within this broader perspective, Mallon argues that leftist parties promoted solidarity with indigenous causes but did not renounce modernisation and the need for key party-political interventions.<sup>21</sup> She notes that the Left engaged more in a symbolic appropriation of the indigenous people

<sup>15</sup> Charles Hale and Rosamel Millamán, ‘Cultural Agency and Political Struggle in the Era of the *Indio Permitido*’, in Doris Sommer (ed.), *Cultural Agency in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 281–304.

<sup>16</sup> Marc Becker, *Indians and Leftists in the Making of Ecuador’s Modern Indigenous Movements* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2008); José Antonio Lucero, ‘Representing “Real Indians”: The Challenges of Indigenous Authenticity and Strategic Constructivism in Ecuador and Bolivia’, *Latin American Research Review*, 41: 2 (2006), pp. 31–56.

<sup>17</sup> Richards, *Race and the Chilean Miracle*, pp. 58–9.

<sup>18</sup> Foerster and Montecino, *Lideres y contiendas mapuche*, p. 287.

<sup>19</sup> Mallon, *La sangre del Copihue*, 108; Correa et al., *La reforma agraria en tierras mapuche*, p. 140; Andrés Carvajal and José Peralta (eds.), *A desalambrar* (Santiago: Ayun, 2006), pp. 42–51.

<sup>20</sup> Julián Bastías, *Memorias de la lucha campesina* (Santiago: Lom, 2009), pp. 57–9.

<sup>21</sup> Florencia Mallon, ‘La piedra en el zapato: el pueblo mapuche y el estado chileno, los pueblos indígenas y los estados de América Latina’, in Claudio Barrientos (ed.), *Aproximaciones a la cuestión mapuche en Chile* (Santiago: RIL, 2014), pp. 35–7.

and did not necessarily have in mind a true dialogue with the Mapuche political tradition. This is reflected in the fact that the indigenous law of 1972 created new forms of organisation within communities that reflected agrarian cooperative and union schemes but did little to address cultural norms. It is important to note, however, that although the Left did not renounce a 'modernising' perspective, the Right continued to perceive the Mapuche as a 'nuisance' to regional development, as Pinto has pointed out.<sup>22</sup>

The struggle for recognition via representation through the party system delimited the spaces for autonomy during the agrarian reform period, but culminated in the breakdown of ethnic-partisan alliances and the broadening of autonomous projects in the post-transition period. The move to stronger ethno-political stances in the late 1980s and in the 1990s occurred in a specific historical context of tense state-party-indigenous relations that generated debates within the organisation. These debates were increasingly centred on the rejection of the hierarchical structure of political representation and instead favoured it being based in communities. Parties were closed to new indigenous discourses espousing autonomy, and land/territorial and cultural recognition, but nevertheless new spaces of reflection emerged within communities that called for more of a protagonist role.

### *The Division of Indigenous Lands and the Founding of Mapuche Cultural Centres*

The dictatorship left profound scars on the Mapuche movement, as persecution was followed by a painful process of agrarian counter-reform. Recriminations abounded within the movement about 'whom or what' was responsible for such events. Some pointed to the politicisation of leaders and, later, their inability to protect their communities.<sup>23</sup> Besides disseminating fear, the coup led to the elimination of the majority of the settlements while 'reformed' lands were returned to previous owners or sold, though more than a third remained in the hands of Mapuche peasants.<sup>24</sup>

On 22 March 1979, Pinochet decreed Law 2.568 to replace Indigenous Law 17.729 (1972). This new legislation allowed for the division of Títulos de Merced (communal titles) into individual properties. One argument was that the Mapuche impeded their own progress because they did not have control over their lands, which prevented them from accessing loans or living freely. According to the local press, this law would put an end to anti-Mapuche discrimination.<sup>25</sup> But there was more; article 1 stated that 'beginning on the date

<sup>22</sup> Jorge Pinto Rodríguez, 'El conflicto estado-pueblo mapuche, 1900–1960', *Universum*, 27: 1 (2012), pp. 186–8.

<sup>23</sup> Mallon, *La sangre del Copihue*, pp. 134–54.

<sup>24</sup> Correa et al., *La reforma agraria*, pp. 248 and 263.

<sup>25</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 23 March 1979, p. 3.

of their inscription in the *Conservador de Bienes Raíces*, the properties that fall under division by this law will no longer be considered indigenous lands, and those who owned them will also not be considered indigenous' (Decree Law 2.568, art. 1). That is, with the implementation of this new law, indigenous populations would no longer exist in Chile.

In this section, we show how Mapuche leaders defended their lands in a repressive context. Our hypothesis is that the application of a law exclusive to the Mapuche in the context of repression of political parties left the communities without a political institutional umbrella that could protect them, which, in turn, favoured the formation of an exclusively Mapuche organisation. The founding of the Centros Culturales Mapuche (CCM) in 1978 was also the first time when a civil society organisation explicitly opposed a policy of the dictatorship. As Hale and Millaman note, this may be because authorities interpreted Mapuche demands as a cultural, not political, expression of the Mapuche.<sup>26</sup>

This would explain why the creation of the first Mapuche organisation was the result of a call by the bishop of Temuco, Monseigneur Sergio Contreras.<sup>27</sup> On 12 September 1978 the bishop summoned an assembly of Mapuche leaders. Monseigneur Contreras did not directly participate in this assembly and wanted the Mapuche to self-organise.<sup>28</sup> As Mario Curihuentro (a member of the Catholic Pastoral and first president of the CCM) remembers, 'one of the staff members of the Instituto Indígena [which was linked to the bishop of Temuco] came to tell us that it was necessary to form an indigenous movement. I told him that it was important and that we should agree, and he told me the institute would be responsible for sending out the invitations to community leaders'.<sup>29</sup> The decision to found the CCM developed from this assembly. They established a pluralistic board headed by Mario Curihuentro himself with José Luis Huilcaman, a *longko* (community leader) from the zone of Lumaco as vice-president; Melillan Painemal, former Communist Party activist became treasurer; and the secretary was Isolde Reuque, from the Catholic Pastoral. The objective of this new organisation was to oppose the division of communal lands.

Nevertheless, this was not the only organisation that was formed during the dictatorship. Following the passing of Resolution 109 (13 August 1977) by the Superintendent of the Araucanía, the Consejo Regional Indígena (CRI) was

<sup>26</sup> Hale and Millaman, 'Cultural Agency and Political Struggle', p. 287.

<sup>27</sup> Sergio Contreras, Exposición, in *Seminario la cultura mapuche y la democracia en Chile* (Brussels: Comité Exterior Mapuche, 1984), p. 21.

<sup>28</sup> José Bengoa, *Historia de un conflicto* (Santiago: Planeta, 2002), p. 162.

<sup>29</sup> Cited in Javier Lavanchy, *Etnogremialismo mapuche. Notas e hipótesis preliminares sobre la organización centros culturales mapuches de Chile/Asociación Gremial de Pequeños Agricultores y Artesanos Ad-Mapu*. Paper written for ethnohistory program, University of Chile (2003), p. 4.



created. This was a consulting organisation linked to the superintendent and consisted of private individuals and public servants. It is evident that these groups did not represent the majority of Mapuche leaders, but their existence cannot be ignored. In practice, the CRI acted as a corporatist mediator between the communities and those in charge of the indigenous policies of the military government. They opened offices in several municipalities, where they gave advice and interceded with authorities. But they also had a main role in promoting the division of communal titles.<sup>30</sup>

This process reignited in a very different political context the disputes of the early twentieth century, about whether or not to divide communal titles and allow indigenous lands to be sold, and about the degree of politicisation of Mapuche organisations.<sup>31</sup> The CRI presented itself as apolitical and condemned the politicisation of the CCM.

The founding of CCM as a Mapuche organisation took place in a climate of extreme caution. That is why 'cultural' was emphasised in the name of the organisation, and restraint was a characteristic of its activities and language. As Mario Curihuentro remembers: 'No one wanted to take responsibility in the new organization for the climate of fear under military rule. The bishop's assistant said there would be no problems. He said that the Church was responsible, they would take care of us, protect us, and nothing would happen to us.'<sup>32</sup> Melillan Painemal himself attests to the role played by the Catholic Church in the formation of the organisation: 'The Catholic Church eagerly summoned the Mapuche from Arauco and Valdivia to discuss their problems.'<sup>33</sup>

The CCM was described as largely 'depoliticised', perhaps due to fear, but also because it was conceived as an organisation with broad representation. Some proposed that Painemal should be the president of this new organisation, but many were opposed. Among them was Isolde Reuque, who according to Curihuentro indicated that 'Melillan cannot run, because he is a communist and the bishop will not permit that'.<sup>34</sup> Finally, Painemal himself gave up his candidacy and agreed to occupy a secondary position, despite having already renounced his communist activism.

The declaration of principles of this organisation contains a summary of the principal aspirations of Mapuche leaders that would soon prove to play a

<sup>30</sup> Christian Martínez Neira and Sergio Caniuqueo Huircapan, 'Las políticas hacia las comunidades mapuche del gobierno militar y la fundación del Consejo Regional Mapuche, 1973–1983', *Veriversitas*, 1 (Universidad Pedro de Valdivia, 2011), pp. 170–9.

<sup>31</sup> Florencia Mallon, 'El siglo XX mapuche: esferas públicas, sueños de autodeterminación y articulaciones internacionales', in Christian Martínez Neira and Marco Estrada (eds.), *Las disputas por la etnicidad en América Latina: movilizaciones indígenas en Chiapas y Araucanía* (Santiago: Catalonia, 2009), pp. 167–79.

<sup>32</sup> Cited in Lavanchy, *Etnogremialismo mapuche*, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 30 Jan. 1979, p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> Cited in Lavanchy, *Etnogremialismo mapuche*, p. 6.

central role in mobilisations in the 1980s and 1990s. It is presented in a language that was acceptable in the context of dictatorship. It speaks of ‘defending land ownership in community’; ‘that we get respect as ethnic peoples’; ‘with all our cultural patrimony’; ‘develop ourselves as an aboriginal people, conserving what is good in our traditional organisational forms and accepting the good in the society that surrounds us’; ‘respect for our artistic-cultural manifestations’; ‘our final objective is to achieve our own autonomy as a people’; and ‘be able to conduct our own destiny’.<sup>35</sup> As we can see, issues such as land, autonomy and culture clearly constitute initial components of the interpretative framework of the organisation. Its members insisted that the main concern ‘is and will continue to be land ownership and life in community’.<sup>36</sup>

### *The Founding of Admapu*

The transformation of the CCM into Admapu in 1980 was due to the need to legalise the organisation and administer its economic resources. However, the public reorganisation of civil society and the semi-clandestinity of the political parties in Chile at that time most likely had an influence as well. Admapu in Mapudungun literally means ‘face of the earth’ and refers to the set of Mapuche norms and traditions. This name was coined by José Luis Huilcaman.<sup>37</sup> The first board of directors of Admapu was slightly more wide-ranging than that of CCM. It consisted of Mario Curihuentro, as president, José Luis Huilcaman as vice-president, Isolde Reuque as secretary, Melillan Painemal as treasurer with Rosamel Millaman, Antonia Painequeo, José Luis Levi, Cecilia Aburto and Miguel Landero as directors.<sup>38</sup> Although there had been an explicit insistence on avoiding the politicisation of the CCM as an organisation, Rosamel Millaman (an activist in the Communist Youth) formed part of the leadership. Millaman was very popular among the membership, as he had been one of first Mapuches to obtain a degree in anthropology. Perhaps this was a form of compensation, since all the other leaders refused to allow José Santos Millao to become a board member.

During the Second National Congress (15–18 December 1980), Melillan Painemal argued that conditions did not exist for the participation on the board of leaders with a well-known partisan affiliation and so a difficult debate ensued with the Communists.

This situation – remembers Santos – did not sit well with our brother Painemal; one night, he called me, warning that I should not stand for the national leadership, for the

<sup>35</sup> Centros Culturales Mapuches de Chile, *Declaración de Principios* (Temuco, 1978), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Cited in Estanislao Gacitúa, ‘Hacia un marco interpretativo de las movilizaciones mapuches en los últimos 17 años’, *Nüttram*, VIII: 28 (1992), p. 30.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Eugenio Alcaman, Santiago, 27 Oct. 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Lavanchy, *Etnogremialismo mapuche*, p. 18.

simple reason – he explained to me – that if I was elected, the Church would immediately rescind its support, that we would be repressed because it was known that I had just arrived from the Soviet Union, and thus it was not opportune for me to become a leader, and much less, the president.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, although Santos Millao was not elected president of the organisation, he was put in charge of the disciplinary and budget revision committee. Admapu maintained the objectives that had been elaborated in the CCM, but it is clear that the new legal status marked its independence from the Catholic Church. Painemal's opposition to the candidacy of Santos Millao reminds us of Reuque's opposition to Painemal's own candidacy; in both cases the arguments centred on the rejection of the politicisation of the organisation and the possible veto by the bishop.

### *The Politicisation of Admapu*

The politicisation of Admapu and the dispute for the control of the organisation were a result of the lost battle against the division of communal titles, and also the new cycle of mobilisation caused by the economic crisis of 1982.<sup>40</sup> Two years after the passing of the new indigenous law, it was clear to Mapuche leaders that despite their opposition to the division of communal titles, the communities began to accept it. The government maintained that it suited the communities because this was how they could apply for state credits and support programmes. Isolde Reuque recognises in her memoirs 'that the people began to think that maybe it was not so bad that lands were divvied up, and that this helped to split the organisation'.<sup>41</sup> The economic crisis triggered the call for massive protests against Pinochet and enabled the regrouping of political dissidence. In this context, the leadership of social organisations became quickly politicised. Within Admapu, the Communists were the best organised, while the Socialists were divided into several factions. Also, the Independents under Admapu's leadership were not able to adapt to the new context.

At the Third Congress of Admapu (27–30 January 1983), internal elections involved open competition between parties. The electoral dispute was caused by the means of electing delegates from the communities, so parties mobilised to get the greater number of delegates to support their candidates, and this included bypassing honest methods of electoral competition. As Guido Huaiquil, a militant from the Socialist youth, notes:

<sup>39</sup> Cited in Sonia Sotomayor, *Comprensión del proceso de formación y gestión de un líder mapuche evolucionado. Análisis del relato de vida de José Santos Millao Palacios*, unpubl., MA diss., Temuco, Universidad de La Frontera (1995), p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> Rice, *The New Politics of Protest*, p. 104; Haughney, *Neoliberal Economics*, p. 60.

<sup>41</sup> Isolde Reuque and Florencia Mallon, *Una flor que renace, autobiografía de una dirigente mapuche* (Santiago: Dibam, 2002), p. 129.

Thus, these were the other great battles, everyone went to the communities, saying that we ‘have to vote *peñi*’ [‘brother’ in Mapudungun], and of course, the communists were working early in the morning to bring in delegates, and this brought many false delegates, and it makes you laugh because it was so ridiculous, but at the time, of course, it wasn’t. Two delegates per community [would arrive], or even four delegates, imagine that, so this was a really strong effort by the parties.<sup>42</sup>

José Santos Millao (Partido Comunista) was elected president with a committee which included Rosamel Millaman (Communist Youth) as secretary, Lucy Traipe (MIR) as vice-president, and Domingo Gineo (PC) as treasurer. The alliance between PC and MIR had triumphed; the old independent leaders only obtained positions as directors, which was the case for Melillan Painemal, José Luis Levi, Isolde Reuque and José Luis Huilcaman. At this moment, according to Isolde Reuque, unity within the Mapuche movement was lost. Reuque does not so much critique the struggle against the dictatorship as to recognise that it ‘does not include the search for cultural strategies, like the *palin* (traditional game), the *ngillatuns* (invocations), the *epew* (story-telling) gatherings, the music festivals, which were our forms of political demonstrations’.<sup>43</sup> In some ways, Reuque perceives a loss of control over the agenda of the organisation: ‘what were demands of communities, now became social demands’.<sup>44</sup>

The interview by Javier Lavanchy with Rosamel Millaman and Domingo Gineo in 2003 is highly relevant, because it asks why Santos Millao was elected as Admapu president when other candidates had more support. Millaman states that:

Santos had arrived from Moscow, and to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, a leader who had been trained in the political-ideological line preached by Moscow, was a safer choice [...] I was then a militant in the Communist Youth, which has an organic structure, and is politically autonomous from the adult party, of old people. It was then that we received news that a decision had been made within the democratic centralist structure that the president needed to be Santos. We then entered into a sort of contradiction with Santos. [...] The Mapuche bases felt betrayed by the left. That was the first conflict that occurred. The people wanted me to be president; everyone still tells me so.<sup>45</sup>

Domingo Gineo confirms the influence of the Communist Party regarding the decision to elect Santos Millao. Gineo argues:

of course, [Santos Millao] was selected as president; they imposed him. Several times, I defeated him in elections. In the typical style of the Central Committee of the PC: ‘this one, this one, and that one are to be elected’ and that is imposed on us, and

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Guido Huaiquil, Santiago, Dec. 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Reuque and Mallon, *Una flor que renace*, p. 149.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>45</sup> Lavanchy, *Etnogremialismo mapuche*, p. 29.

that is what we have to work with at the national level. That occurred, and it began in some ways to degrade the internal structure [of the organisation].<sup>46</sup>

These testimonies are important, because they confirm the partisan disputes that took place within Admapu between those who were active then in distinct sectors of the Communist Party. The PC had strong party discipline and was more organised than the Independents and Socialists, and this explains why Santos Millao was elected and why the PC obtained control of Admapu. The other parties were only beginning to organise around indigenous issues, and were divided into different factions.<sup>47</sup> Although Millaman and Gineo claimed to have more support than Santos Millao, both had worked to obtain a majority among the delegates but in the end voted for Santos Millao based on party discipline. If there were disputes among Mapuche leaders with PC loyalties, these were only revealed 20 years later. In addition, Reuque's complaint that unity had been lost needs to be understood within the context of the new partisan alignments that led to the formation in 1983 of the Movimiento Democrático Popular (MDP), consisting of the PC, MIR and the Almeyda socialist faction. The MDP started to compete with Alianza Democrática (AD) formed by reformed socialist groups, the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), the Partido Radical (PR) and other minor groups. By 1983, the organisation's leadership contest had become a strictly political phenomenon, and the independent sectors and traditional leaders took a backseat. The agenda of Admapu had shifted toward an alliance with other sectors of civil society which called for strikes and protests against the dictatorship. This prevented work in communities from being undertaken, which also needed different types of service, such as legal, administrative and economic assistance.

In the aftermath of the congress, Isolde Reuque decided to leave Admapu. The last public appearance of Reuque as a leader of Admapu was in June 1984, when she called a press conference together with Cecilia Reyes and Juan Neculqueo as members of Admapu's Budget Review Committee. They demanded the resignation of Admapu's board of directors, claiming mal-administration, loss of funds and a general disregard for the organisation's statute and its procedures. To resolve the impasse, they declared that 'we

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> In early 1980, the Socialist Party was divided in at least two broad and completely independent factions. The Almeyda faction was loyal to Clodomiro Almeyda, who called for a socialist revolution and alliances with the Communists and MIR militants. On the other hand, the renewal Socialists were formed by those who questioned real socialism and promoted the value of democracy and individual rights. Headed by Ricardo Nuñez, they made political alliances with the Christian Democrats and the Radical Party (a lay centre-left party). In the first democratic elections in 1989, these factions ran in different electoral lists, and only became reunited in 1991. The Socialist Party – Collective Direction (PSDC) was a small radical faction that split from the Almeyda socialists.

submit our resignation, and ask the rest of the directorate to resign'.<sup>48</sup> The accusations were not made public, but they were clearly related to the disappearance of funds which affected the organisation, the exclusion of Admapu's founding leaders from important decision-making processes and fraudulent past elections. Both Santos Millao and Domingo Gineo had been sentenced to internal exile in the north of the country since April 1984, and when they returned to the region on 30 July 1984, both leaders were welcomed as heroes by members of Admapu and several other social organisations and political parties.<sup>49</sup> Santos Millao intelligently took the opportunity to delegitimise inquiries by the Budget Review Commission, and did not resign or call for a new election.<sup>50</sup>

### *The Creation of a Mapuche Interpretative Framework*

The creation of an interpretative framework refers to the cultural and ideological elaboration of principles and arguments that permit the validation of a mobilisation, its actions and strategies. Its objective is to generate significance to its participants, antagonists and observers.<sup>51</sup> From the founding of the CCM and Admapu, we can track the demands, practices and declarations that began to constitute a *corpus* that represented the core substance of the organisation. Although initially these appeared to be just general ideas, with time they allowed for a broader reflection on indigenous rights, autonomy and the Mapuche political project. It morphed into a collective creation that permitted the mapping out of a shared interpretative framework, based on demands of identity.<sup>52</sup> This reflection was dispersed. Even though it cannot be found in a single academic document, it emerged in distinct reflective opportunities within the organisation. Without a doubt, the figure of a charismatic leader such as Melillan Painemal was very important, but other opportunities that permitted the integration of young and old militants who came from the communities such as the linguistic workshops, the theatre group, or the group of urban residents or those who studied at the same university cannot be ignored. And, we cannot forget the contribution of Mapuche exiled mainly in Canada and Europe and the discussion about indigenous issues that is produced in an international setting.

For the centenary of the founding of the city of Temuco, in December 1981, Admapu decided to have a big *nguillatun* (Mapuche traditional ceremony) on Conun Huenu hill, looking over city. Many authority figures

<sup>48</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 29 June 1984, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 31 July 1984, p. 25.

<sup>50</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 29 Aug. 1984, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> David Snow et al., 'Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation', *American Sociological Review*, 51 (1986), pp. 464–5.

<sup>52</sup> Haughney, *Neoliberal Economics*, pp. 62–3.

were invited, including Nobel laureate Alfonso Pérez Esquivel and Mgr. Sergio Contreras. These activities were important, as they reflected the process of the politicisation of culture undertaken by Admapu. Scholars interpreted the use of Mapudungun, the ritual ceremonies and the diverse cultural practices in different ways. According to José Bengoa, they reflect the emergence of a new discourse, where the Mapuche is separated from the Chilean. Specifically, Bengoa alluded to the words of Melillan Painemal, who spoke of a contrast between Western institutions and Mapuche ones.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, for Javier Lavanchy, 'this discourse appeared only sporadically among the Mapuche leadership. Many were still imbued in a discourse of class struggle, and began to strongly increase their influence in the association'.<sup>54</sup> In our opinion, we agree partly with Bengoa, in that the concepts of peoples and autonomy gained strength, but this thinking was not invented by Painemal himself, nor was it influenced by CISA (Consejo Indio Sudamericano). It was part of a broader reflection, particularly among the young and also the traditional authorities.

It is important to pause briefly to expand on Melillan Painemal, for his ideas had a huge impact on the Mapuche process of reflection. In January 1979, at a CCM meeting with communities in Victoria, Melillan insisted that the Mapuche 'exist as a people within Chilean territory'. A distinct people, he said a bit later, 'who had customs, traditions that needed to be conserved, and that [this is] what they wanted [...] And let's not forget our language and that is why we speak it'.<sup>55</sup> Two years later, Melillan Painemal would insist that the Mapuche are a people who must decide their own affairs.

Do not think that we are anti-*wingka* (extranjero, chileno). We just do a historical analysis so that the world reflects and understands that within Chilean society there is a native people called the Mapuche, and their only desire is to allow the Mapuche to do what they want: to be agents of their own destiny, be actors in their social development.<sup>56</sup>

However, at a seminar that took place at Johns Hopkins University in 1981, Painemal radicalised his position, stating 'we are not Chileans, we are Mapuche and we seek to continue to be Mapuche'.<sup>57</sup> With this, he clearly marked the difference between one and the other. The demand to be 'agents of their own destiny' no longer sounded incongruent. The argument was an appeal for recognition of ethnic differences as a necessary step for the Mapuche's own political project.

<sup>53</sup> Bengoa, *Historia de un conflicto*, p. 161.

<sup>54</sup> Lavanchy, *Etnogremialismo mapuche*, p. 24.

<sup>55</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 30 Jan. 1979, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 24 Feb. 1981.

<sup>57</sup> *SIUSA News*, 1: 1 (1981), p. 4.

Mapuche grammar was the source of another controversy that highlights the disputes that the respected Mapuche linguist Anselmo Raguileo had with university academics. He had spent years studying the Mapuche language, organising linguistic workshops for Admapu and proposing a new Mapudungun alphabet that competed with the unified *wingka* (white/foreign) grapheme alphabet. He also formed a university student group, in which Elisa Loncon was prominent. Loncon would soon become an activist renowned for her struggle for education and linguistic rights for the Mapuche, and for her participation in an Admapu theatre group and in the Socialist youth group. The theatre group realised they needed a uniform Mapudungun alphabet with which to write their plays and began to use the grapheme alphabet of Raguileo.<sup>58</sup>

In 1981, Domingo Colicoy formed a theatre group within Admapu. This group dedicated itself to promoting the Mapuche struggle for cultural, territorial and political rights via this ‘artistic’ route. With the production of the plays and initial support of the Nehuen NGO, they were able to establish strong links with different communities in the region. In addition to performing plays, the theatre served above all as a space for political reflection and activism regarding the autonomous political project which attracted Mapuche youth who came from these communities and were educated to secondary or tertiary level.<sup>59</sup>

Although several of the Admapu theatre group were socialists, others were affiliated with the Communist youth groups, and yet others were independent.<sup>60</sup> Their plays were especially aimed at rural communities, though they were also staged in the halls owned by domestic workers’ union ANECAP in Temuco, or in cities from Santiago to Chiloé. The plays ‘address historic issues, related to social demands, where discrimination, and the defence of land are present, and even themes treated with humor and satire’.<sup>61</sup> Elisa Loncon remembers:

We became close to Admapu, and participated in two groups. One was the group of the urban residents<sup>62</sup> of Temuco with whom we met to analyse land problems, and how to participate in the organisation, or speak about culture or language to residents

<sup>58</sup> Alejandro Clavería, *La lucha por el alfabeto mapuche*, unpubl., MA diss., Universidad Católica del Norte, 2012, p. 27.

<sup>59</sup> Ernesto Huenchulaf et al., ‘La educación como elemento central para un proyecto de desarrollo mapuche’, in T. Carrasco, D. Iturralde and J. Uquillas, *Doce experiencias de desarrollo indígena en América Latina* (Quito: Abya Yala, 2003), pp. 129–42.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Paula Pilquinao, Santiago, 11 Jan. 2011; and Diva Millapan, Santiago, 18 Jan. 2011.

<sup>61</sup> *Cauce*, 102 (1987), p. 31.

<sup>62</sup> Admapu was formed as an association of (rural) communities. The individual or urban militants did not exist, so Admapu created an ad hoc component of ‘urban residents’ to represent those that lived in cities. This group was formed primarily by university students such as José Mariman and César Loncon, who was one of the creators of the Pelquitun bulletin.



at meetings, or to discuss the loss of culture or anything of that type. The other was the Admapu theatre group [...] Within the theatre group we organised presentations, wrote the plays. Some plays were even written by Colicoy, Domingo Carilao, and also by Armando Marileo. We would stage them in Temuco, and at cultural and protest actions, because they touched on the themes of land, culture, and dictatorship. We took many plays to the communities, with the goal to organise them.<sup>63</sup>

The Communist leaders within Admapu regarded the theatre group as something of a resurgence of the previous group of young Socialists and their culture of zealously maintaining their autonomy and doing political work in communities. For this reason, the theatre group was not even financially supported by Admapu. As Domingo Colicoy stated: 'In Admapu, they hated us'.<sup>64</sup>

In turn, in February 1978 the Comité Exterior Mapuche (CEM) was formed by Mapuche exiles in Europe. The CEM played a huge role in raising awareness about the human rights violations that were occurring in Chile, and in establishing networks of solidarity around the Mapuche cause. Within CEM there was a strong critique of the secondary character that the indigenous struggle played within leftist parties, and CEM activists insisted on organising separately from the Chilean exile community.<sup>65</sup> In 1984, Fernando Montupil announced in a seminar held in Belgium that the time to elaborate a Proyecto Histórico Mapuche had arrived. He recognised the need for national unity, but indicated that this project demanded a greater 'understanding from left parties, so that it becomes a *pueblo sujeto* [agent-peoples] that cannot be replaced in their efforts at liberation'.<sup>66</sup> The linguistics workshop, the theatre group, the urban residents, and CEM were all ad hoc groups which enabled the Admapu youth and the older leaders to come together to build relationships in the communities and generate activism and independent reflection about the future path of the organisation.

### *The Dispute between Communists and Socialists for Leadership*

From 1985 the Mapuche who were active on the Left monopolised the official positions in Admapu and aligned themselves with the agendas of two groups in opposition to the dictatorship: the MDP, which supported an insurreccional path, and the Alianza Democrática, which sought a pacted path toward democracy. Our hypothesis is that what kept Admapu united as a pluralist organisation was the defence of communal lands rather than the politicisation, which did not produce consensus in Mapuche society. Political demands

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Elisa Loncon, 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Domingo Colicoy, 2 Aug. 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Arauco Chihuailaf, 'Mapuche: gente de la tierra. Más allá del Ñuke Mapu, el exilio', *Contribuciones desde Coatepec*, 8: enero-junio (2005), pp. 157–71.

<sup>66</sup> Fernando Montupil, Exposición, in *Seminario la cultura mapuche y la sociedad chilena* (Brussels: Comité Exterior Mapuche, 1984), pp. 15–19.

were considered a personal preference issue, where each leader thought in his or her own way about representation.<sup>67</sup> This seems to be a characteristic of Mapuche society. When territorial conflicts emerge, there is solidarity among communities and indigenous organisations. But when the conflicts arise from political concerns, such as the democratisation of the country, only those who are activists participate, or each one defends his or her own political point of view. The Mapuche, this suggests, make a functional differentiation between an exclusively ethnic (culture and land) representation and a political (partisan) representation. They do not see these as opposites and therefore being an active member of one or another party is not perceived as an impediment to belonging to Admapu (though at some point it could be).

At the Fourth National Admapu Congress, on 14 March 1985, the Communist Party and MIR members again took control of the Admapu leadership positions, while displacing the Independents even from secondary positions within the organisation. José Santos Millao (PC) was re-elected president, while Lucy Traipe (MIR) became vice-president, Domingo Marileo (PC) was elected treasurer, and Rosamel Millaman (JJCC – Communist Youth) became secretary. The board of directors was formed by Domingo Gineo (PC), Juventino Velásquez (PS), Ana Llao (PC), Gabriel Chichual and Aucan Huilcaman (PS).<sup>68</sup> This new leadership was interesting, for although it excluded the Independents, it also integrated some Socialist leaders. Although Aucan had been active in JJCC, the alleged stealing of funds destined to Mapuche student scholarships definitively caused him to split from the party. From that moment, he joined the Socialist group of Eugenio Alcaman and Domingo Colicoy. At the congress, leaders agreed to elaborate a year-round Mapuche Historical Project which contemplated ‘autonomy’, a ‘Mapuche alphabet and grammar that emerged from the culture of its people’ and the recovery of usurped lands. In an interview for the magazine *Análisis*, Rosamel Millaman stated:

We cannot just focus on a struggle against a law. We must define who we are, what we want, and what we hope from a democratic society [...]. This project considers the autonomy of the Mapuche people, in the sense that we organise ourselves to define our own destiny, our path of liberation.<sup>69</sup>

Millaman’s words are also important because they demonstrate how the themes of decolonisation and autonomy made an impact on the youth in

<sup>67</sup> See the excellent work of Magnus Course, who shows how the past is represented as an accumulation of narratives about unique and singular individuals, and that Mapuche identity cannot be automatically linked to an ethnic identity. Magnus Course, ‘Los géneros sobre el pasado en la vida mapuche rural’, *Revista Chilena de Antropología (Universidad de Chile)*, 21 (2010), pp. 49–54.

<sup>68</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 15 March 1985, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> *Análisis*, 102, 6 Aug. 1985, p. 25.

Table 1. *Admapu and Other Organisations, 1978–1990*

1978	Centros Culturales Mapuches Comité Exterior Mapuche
1980	Admapu (PDC, PC, PS, MIR, IND)
1986	Nehuen Mapu (PDC) Centros Culturales Mapuches (IND)
1987	Choin Folilche (IND) Lautaro Ñi Ayllarehue (PS) Callfulican (PS-IND)
1989	Comisión 500 Años de Resistencia
1990	Consejo de Todas las Tierras (IND) Admapu (PC, MIR)

Source: Authors.

Admapu, including some Communist Youth militants. That same year (1985), Millaman ceased to be active in JJCC, as he complained about the lack of knowledge of Mapuche culture among PC militants, and argued against the ‘democratic centralism’ of the party, noting that ‘power [was] assigned to an inner circle in which Mapuche leaders would never have a real voice’.<sup>70</sup>

After this fourth congress, Melillan Painemal, Mario Curihuentro and José Luis Levi left Admapu and formed a new organisation called Centros Culturales Mapuche, re-establishing the name of the organisation that they had helped found in 1978.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately there are no records of its precise founding date. The first mention in the press is in *El Diario Austral*, 13 April 1986, which includes a declaration in support of Lucy Traipe and José Santos Millao who had been detained in Santiago along with leaders from the Asamblea de la Civilidad (a civil society group in opposition to Pinochet).

Meanwhile, on 19 February 1986 the Christian Democrats officially founded the Mapuche organisation Nehuen Mapu. O’Higgins Cachaña was named president, Ambrosio Millequeo treasurer, Isolde Reuque secretary, and Carlos Cariqueo assistant director. Their objective was to ‘fight for the recovery of ethnic and cultural identity, and land [...]’ and they added that they were not recognised constitutionally or considered as equal, though they ‘form part of this society but we are culturally and socially distinct’.<sup>72</sup> Table 1 reflects the timeline of the formation of Admapu and other related organisations from 1978 to 1990.

On 10 April 1986, the Admapu assembly decided to join forces with the Comando Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT), a new civil society organisation that opposed the dictatorship. They decided also to continue the Mapuche

<sup>70</sup> Hale and Millaman, ‘Cultural agency and political struggle’, p. 289.

<sup>71</sup> Lavanchy, *Etnogremialismo mapuche*, p. 44.

<sup>72</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 20 Feb. 1986, p. 7.

Historical Project, insisting on ‘our demand so that Chilean society accepts the Mapuche ethnic group as a people, with all of its identity and projection’.<sup>73</sup>

In Admapu, the youth identified strongly with *Almeydismo*. One of its principal leaders was Eugenio Alcaman, who was even nominated for the regional presidency of the MDP. Soon, Eugenio Alcaman and Domingo Colicoy led the Partido Socialista Dirección Colectiva (PSDC), and they were to become known as the ‘commanders’ or ‘comanches’. Aucan Huilcaman, Rosamel Millañanco, Lucy Pichicon, Guido Huaiquil, Elisa Loncon, and Rogelio Nahuel were also part of this group, though the latter preferred to describe himself as an independent. Aucan did not have an interest in participating actively in party politics, but he did maintain a close relationship with Alcaman and Colicoy.

At the Fifth National Congress of Admapu that took place 13–16 April 1987, the Communists did not reach an agreement with the majority of Socialists and only maintained an alliance with the MIR and PSDC. It is probable that this influenced the PC decision to reject participation in the plebiscite and instead opt for all forms of struggle. This came in the aftermath of the attempted murder of Pinochet in 1986 by FPMR, the armed wing of the PC. José Santos Millao (PC) was re-elected as president of Admapu for a third time, with a leadership composed of Elisa Avendaño (MIR) as vice-president; Manuel Pilquil (PC), as secretary-general and Aucan Huilcaman (PSDC), as treasurer.<sup>74</sup> Several commissions were organised during the congress, to analyse ‘the consequences of decrees 2.568 and 2.750; the participation of Mapuche people in the constitution; the concept of autonomy and [self]-determination; the historical Mapuche project; the plan of action supporting other social organisations throughout the country; and land recovery’.<sup>75</sup> It is interesting that in this congress there was indeed a discussion of an ethnic and political agenda, probably due to the influence of Aucan, on the one hand, and Santos Millao on the other.

The exclusion of socialist leaders led to an immediate protest. In a public declaration in *El Diario Austral*, Juventino Velásquez, Juan Huenupi and Ramón Chanqueo explained why they withdrew from the convention. They said that the report from the treasurer general was not transparent, and there was no explanation for why the resolutions from the previous congress were not fulfilled. ‘They affirmed that there was a fraudulent inscription of delegates, that there was no respect for the guidelines in the mission statement or for the organisation’s declaration statute, and that Santos Millao was elected president for the third consecutive time, which contradicts article 22 of the

<sup>73</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 11 April 1986, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 17 April 1987, p. 7.

<sup>75</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 14 April 1987; *El Diario Austral*, 18 March 1987, p. 7.

organisation's statute'.<sup>76</sup> The following day, Lucy Traipe (MIR) and Domingo Marileo (PC) declared that the claims of Juventino Velásquez 'do not concern us. These situations occur regularly within organisations, and in our case, they have solidified Admapu. Shouting out loud in public will not achieve much for the Mapuche people'.<sup>77</sup> The complaints about the fraudulent elections coincided with Isolde Reuque's previous claims. A yet untold part of this story is revealed by Juan Huenupi, who was in charge of the indigenous department of the PS. He notes that there were discrepancies in the accounting of the organisation's funds.<sup>78</sup> But what definitively broke the alliance was the Admapu leadership contest. While the fifth congress was in session, secret negotiations between both parties took place in order to allocate the leadership positions within Admapu.

We knew that we had more young people than MIR, and we had a direct dialogue with them. The PC chose to give the MIR more [positions] than they gave us. They gave us one position in the national leadership, while they gave them two ... just imagine ... four positions, and they would elect perhaps 11 leaders. In the end, we were a minority within both groups. So then we said no. We left, of course. The next day, I went to deliver a letter in the name of the Socialist Party, during the Admapu Congress.<sup>79</sup>

Huenupi directly blamed Santos Millao for having opposed an accord, and highlighted the electoral sham in the selection of delegates. The consequences of this break were soon visible. On 14 May 1987, the Socialist group of Camilo Quilaman founded Callfulican. The leadership of this organisation consisted of Mariano Manquel, who became president, Juan Quilaman, secretary, and José Belmar Painequeo, who was appointed treasurer.<sup>80</sup>

Nevertheless, the Socialists headed by Juan Huenupi, Juventino Velásquez and Ramón Chanqueo decided to create a separate organisation called Lautaro Ñi Ayllarewe. It was a purely political organisation, linked to the Socialist Party, thus differentiating itself from Callfulican, which was more 'mapuchista' (autonomous).<sup>81</sup>

### *Mapuche Coordination and the Struggle for Democracy*

Although between 1985 and 1987 Admapu lost many of its members due to successive desertions, new instances of coordination emerged. As we have suggested above, for there to be a unitary Mapuche organisation, the demands cannot be framed in ideological-political terms. On the contrary, although

<sup>76</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 22 April 1987, p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 23 April 1987, p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Juan Huenupi, Cañete, 23 May 2005.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Juan Huenupi, Cañete, 23 May 2005.

<sup>80</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 15 May 1987, p. 10.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Juan Huenupi, Cañete, 23 May 2005.

there are many Mapuche organisations, unity of action is possible when it comes to issues deeply connected to cultural identity or defence of land. In an interview in April 1987, Víctor Hugo Painemal, from Nehuen Mapu, declared that ‘he desires unification, and notes that within the Assembly for Civility, along with Admapu and the Cultural Centres, we had absolutely the same objectives’.<sup>82</sup> On 13–14 June, a Mapuche parliament ‘Aylla Rewen’ was organised by the different Mapuche organisations. ‘Our ultimate objective – according to Mario Millapi, from Nehuen Mapu – was to form a confederation, not just one sole organisation because it is good that each maintains their own identity’.<sup>83</sup> The Consejo de Caciques de Osorno, the Centros Culturales, Choin Folilche, Admapu, Unión Araucana, and Callfulican were all summoned to this parliament. Choin Folilche was formed by Mario Curihuentro and José Luis Levi, who had split from the Centros Culturales led by Melillan Painemal. At the end of 1987, ‘Futa Trawun’ or the Coordinadora de Organizaciones Mapuche was formed. The negotiations for the transition to democracy in Chile led to a re-alignment of the strategies of the diverse political parties, especially around participation in the plebiscite of 5 October 1988 over Pinochet remaining in power. If the opposition won, free elections would take place the following year. In this context, the political leaders began to discuss the changes in the constitution and new public policies. Mapuche leaders felt a need to influence these debates, and the Mapuche organisations had not been invited. Indigenous themes were beginning to be discussed at the Commission of Human Rights, and with ‘*indigenistas*’ such as José Bengoa or José Aylwin.<sup>84</sup> Isolde Reuque remembers: ‘They got a group together, and drafted a document for the discussion of the (indigenous) law, and they wanted to hand it to the “negotiating table” that now is called the Concertación, or the alliance of parties in Santiago that came to power in 1990 [...] only the Socialists that had left Admapu were there’.<sup>85</sup> It was only at the end of 1988 that the representatives of CCM and Nehuen Mapu were admitted to the discussion.

In fact, the Communist Party did not trust the electoral registry inscription process, although at the last minute José Santos Millao called on people to vote ‘no’. After that, there was no longer any similarity between the Communist and the Socialist youth in Admapu. The MIR and Communist leaders within Admapu were at a crossroads. On the one hand they did not agree to participate in the plebiscite, but on the other, neither did they want to be left out of the debate on the new indigenous law.

<sup>82</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 12 April 1987, p. 8.

<sup>83</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 16 May 1987, p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 15 Oct. 1988, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Reuque and Mallon, *Una flor que renace*, p. 174; ‘Declaración pública Futa Trawun’, *Nüttram*, 2: 4 (1988), pp. 3–4.

In the plebiscite, you see, we were not motivated to vote, because we were for the other, for another path: for the more direct, harsher path. During the dictatorship we participated with weapons, with confrontation, and other things. We were used to confrontation, every day [...] Everything about the strike of 2–3 June 1986 indicated that there was going to be a revolution involving arms [...] But in the end there was so much insistence on the part of all the organised political and social sectors that we thought maybe there was a way to win the plebiscite.<sup>86</sup>

It is interesting that among the Mapuche only the Socialist youth groups, who at that moment did not have an organic party, did not agree with the accord. In fact, shortly after the Fifth Admapu Congress in April 1987, the majority of young Socialists stopped participating in the organisation, and only a few leaders stayed on, like Colicoy, Huilcaman and Nahuel. But the differences with the rest of the Admapu and with other Mapuche organisations' leaders did not just concern the issue of the plebiscite. According to a large number of interviewees, a sector of the Socialist youth, some of the Communist Youth (JJCC), and the Independents thought that the accords with the Concertación would not encompass central aspects of the historical Mapuche project, such as autonomy, self-determination, recognition of traditional authority, and recovery of land.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, they reached the conclusion that it would be impossible to push this agenda through political parties.<sup>88</sup> For instance, there were those who preferred representation of communities based on the level of militancy and a more 'modern' leadership, rather than the qualification of being traditional authorities. Eugenio Alcaman notes, 'the Communists had a negative attitude towards Mapuche culture, and that bothered many who came from the communities, especially people such as Aucan'. For the Communists, these traditional authorities were outdated. Of those who belonged to the older partisan generations, only a few shared the youths' position, though they did not work together. As Melillan Painemal said in a 1988 interview, 'In democracy, the Mapuche people must have participation, and hence we say to the political parties let us Mapuche, through our own organisations, formulate our own plan for development, which aims at its heart and in the long run at autonomy ... not just land, but also our own direction'.<sup>89</sup> Aucan Huilcaman noted that the Communist leaders travelled to Geneva to denounce the violations against Chilean indigenous peoples by the dictatorship, but that they did not

<sup>86</sup> Interview with José Santos Millao, Admapu, Temuco, 1 April 2003.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Ernesto Huenchulaf, Temuco, 29 March 2007; and Domingo Raín, Malalhue, 30 March 2007.

<sup>88</sup> Christian Martínez Neira, 'Transición a la democracia, militancia y proyecto étnico. La fundación de la organización mapuche Consejo de Todas las Tierras (1978–1990)', *Estudios Sociológicos*, 80 (2009), pp. 605ss.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Melillan Painemal by Rolf Foerster, published in *Ñütram*, 3: 4 (1988), p. 8; cf. Haughney, *Neoliberal Economics*, p. 62.

engage with the autonomist reflection that indigenous leaders were having at the international level.<sup>90</sup> This was the background motive for the divisions between those who were willing to make a pact with the Chilean political opposition, and those who decided to create a more autonomous political project. This explains why Aucan Huilcaman and his supporters prioritised the mobilisations focused on land recovery and an active agenda in international indigenous rights defence organisations.

In fact, in the middle of the negotiations between the indigenous leaders and the Concertación in October 1989, Colicoy, Nahuel, and the youth group supported the recovery of lands in Lumaco.<sup>91</sup> This is not a minor detail, because one of the explicit requirements that presidential candidate Patricio Aylwin had made to indigenous organisations during the Nueva Imperial accords on 1 December 1989 was to channel their demands via institutional means; that is, by not occupying the lands, but rather by buying them. Aucan Huilcaman refused to sign this accord with the Concertación. If we add this to the fact that Domingo Colicoy, Rogelio Nahuel and many other young members of Admapu had created the Commission for 500 Years of Resistance in 1989, we can understand the separation of this group from Admapu. On 20 January 1990, Admapu decided to remove Colicoy, Huilcaman and Nahuel from the board of directors of the organisation. As a public declaration in *El Diario Austral* for that day stated, the organisation opted for:

the definitive separation from Admapu of leaders Domingo Colicoy and Rogelio Nahuel for 'having violated all the norms, structures and internal discipline' [...] Colicoy and Nahuel had proposed to 'recover' the lands, overstepping the wish of the majority. [...] in addition to other similar incidents since the last Congress in June 1989 where they expressed their desire to not participate in the political-electoral process. They added that former leader Aucan Huilcaman used the organisation's name at the UN 'without consulting anyone' and went on a tour in Europe. Later, the leaders stated, along with the other two removed leaders, that he formed the 'National Mapuche Commission 500 Years of Resistance.' They [also] added that Nahuel and Colicoy used the theatre group that presented itself as 'Admapu' (today it is no longer) to promote prolonged disobedience, with a two-month tour of Europe 'on its own resolve'. They added also that these former leaders had called for meetings with Huepife (a historian) and Gnenpin (a traditional conveyor of Mapuche knowledge) with the purpose 'of fighting against political manipulation'.<sup>92</sup>

Patricio Aylwin became president of Chile on 23 April 1990, and the majority of Mapuche organisations supported the new government and were soon participating in the new indigenous institutions Capi and Conadi. Colicoy,

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Eugenio Alcaman, 27 October 2008. It is possible that Rosamel Millaman was an exception.

<sup>91</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 12 Oct. 1989, p. 9.

<sup>92</sup> *El Diario Austral*, 20 Jan. 1990.



Huilcaman and many other young and traditional authorities founded the Consejo de Todas las Tierras.<sup>93</sup> From that moment onwards, the movement became divided into the different paths that we still see today.

### *Conclusion*

The historical and political focus adopted here offers a more nuanced understanding of the continuities and ruptures in processes of political participation and in the ethnic-based projects of indigenous groups in Chile. The discussions in the 1960s about agrarian reform marked the beginnings of a more defined stance among indigenous groups regarding indigenous lands, culture and autonomy. This autonomous positioning gained ground in the mobilised political climate of the late 1960s and the structural changes ushered in under the Allende government in the early 1970s. But it was more clearly solidified through the (diverse) partisan *and* ethnic militancies of indigenous groups and leaders themselves. While broad class-based demands were articulated via these leaders' affiliations with their respective political parties, the Mapuche leaders simultaneously worked to carve out spaces for specific ethnic-based demands, for instance as seen in the collective effort to pass the indigenous law of 1972. The mid-to-late 1970s ushered in a period of retrenchment of Mapuche organising due to the political context of the dictatorship and its frontal attack on Mapuche lands and identity, but Mapuche territorial, cultural and autonomous demands did not completely recede.

By the 1980s, Admapu came to represent a greater possibility for this project to gain strength (especially in its emphasis on cultural practices), but it also exposed the tensions between the partisan loyalties and the ethnic-based demands and strategies among Mapuche leaders. Already by 1983, we see the re-emergence of politicised divisions within the Admapu leadership, with Communist Party, MIR, Christian Democrats, and at times Socialist Party militants positing anti-regime strategies as a central goal that had formal dominance within Admapu, though with increasing divergence from other groups inside Admapu. The theatre group, the intellectual youth wing of the Socialist Party and leaders in tune with international efforts to codify indigenous rights increasingly adopted a position of autonomy reflected in a language that invoked the historical process of colonisation and marginalisation, the cultural meanings of the Mapuche language and ceremonies, and their struggle for recognition as indigenous peoples.

<sup>93</sup> José Mariman was an official member of the Socialist Party, and for this reason he has analysed the Admapu split as having a strictly partisan basis. José Mariman, 'La organización mapuche Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam', (1995), pp. 2–3, available at <http://mapuche.info.scorpionshops.com/>. 'Jose Mariman left the group on a strictly political issue [...] He said the PSDC had been taken over by the commanders and he wasn't one'. Interview with Domingo Colicoy, 18 Feb. 2007.

Seen from a temporal perspective, Admapu reflects the efforts by the Mapuche leaders to establish a representative organisational space, despite the political differences of its members. It is the last combined, unified Mapuche organisation of the twentieth century. This suggests that the organisation cannot be understood solely in terms of a political coalition, but also as a space for intra-ethnic debate and consensus about certain central aspects of the Mapuche agenda.

To achieve this broad conviviality, the organisation tried hard to avoid politicisation. This does not mean that Mapuche party militants did not join the organisation at the beginning. Rather, there was a deliberate effort to maintain a structure of representation and an agenda that was centred on rural communities and the fight for their land. In fact, communities participated actively via their delegates in the elections to the board of Admapu, confirming thus an associative organisational process that respected community structures. The politicisation produced in 1980, but more clearly starting in 1983, was perhaps inevitable in the context of the struggle for democracy in Chilean civil society. However, this politicisation occurred at the expense of the agenda centred on ancestral lands, but also of cultural expressions and the organic form of participation of communities in the organisation.

This leaves us with several lessons to be learnt from the Admapu case. At a first level of analysis, it shows that for an organisation to have a certain level of representation in Mapuche society, it needs to maintain community links and be able to distinguish between an ethnic agenda and leadership processes of politicisation. This does not mean that Mapuche society should reject the politicisation of its members, but instead that it needs to establish a functional differentiation between political militancy and exclusively ethnic representation. A second level of analysis is related to the decision-making process within the organisation. The internal disputes reveal that representation within the Mapuche world has more to do with consensus and collegial participation in the affairs of the organisation, rather than hegemonic criteria. For Mapuche groups, common action is only possible when all opinions are represented. When the distinct independent and Socialist groups saw that their issues were not being taken into account, they simply left the organisation and formed new groupings. At the same time, at a third level of analysis, we see that a Mapuche agenda can certainly survive the organisations. Following the organisational diaspora from Admapu, a process of coordination between the different organisations (according to political affinity) ensued.

The departure of community leaders from Admapu cannot just be interpreted as an issue of partisan differences. They began to leave the organisation when they saw that problems associated with land restitution or cultural expressions became secondary to the struggle against the dictatorship. This was reinforced by the fact that the communities lost their decision-making

capacity within the organisation, and especially by the fact that the organic link between the communities, their delegates and Admapu was no longer respected. The *process* of creating a political autonomist ‘framework’ was also fundamental. It was not just about proposing an autonomist political project; instead it seems that autonomy began to be understood in terms of the participation of communities in public matters. It would be an autonomous project when communities participated, and would stop being one when they lost the decision-making role within the organisation. Although all Mapuche leaders, including its leftist leaders, mentioned autonomy as an organisational objective, in practice it was not so clear. In other words, to speak of autonomy without the fundamental role of communities was seen solely as an intellectual exercise without a social basis. This explains why the youth leaders within Admapu and a good proportion of community leaders were the ones able to mobilise successfully in the 500 Years of Resistance Commission. The appeal to traditional authorities, the culture, and the demands for land became the nucleus for the new organisation Consejo de Todas las Tierras. This was not just another discourse (or one somewhat more indigenous) but a demand for a radically distinct political participation where traditional authorities, indigenous leaders and ethnic organisations had a voice. The political parties never accepted this central participation by communities, and continued to think along party/militant/social organisation lines. It is not a coincidence that the more oppositional Mapuche organisations that exist currently, like CAM, AT, ITL, and CTT, have been characterised by the primary role of communities at their forefront; this marks a clear difference between these and other Mapuche organisations that are based in urban settings, or that invite partisan militancy.

The political transition to democracy in Chile introduced a key fracture in the Chilean Mapuche movement. The necessity of recognising the legitimacy of Mapuche political participation could not be raised via the subordinate role that ethnic issues have played even today within parties. The clamping down by Concertación authorities on autonomous claims owes much to the manner in which these issues get ‘negotiated’ in the aftermath of the transition. We think the internal tensions within organisations such as Admapu during the 1980s especially (but not exclusively) represent an important historical reference that should not be ignored, and that has a bearing on the politicisation of class, ethnic and other important debates of the era.

### *Spanish and Portuguese abstracts*

*Spanish abstract.* Este artículo examina la formación de Admapu, una organización que representaba a un amplio sector de la sociedad mapuche que resistió las acciones de la dictadura chilena durante los años 1980. En la memoria política, el periodo de la

reforma agraria marca un tiempo de esperanza y fuerte participación, pero aquí se muestra que un proyecto de autonomía desarrollado al interior de Admapu entró en contradicción con quienes hacían alianzas políticas con la izquierda chilena. Se examinan las dinámicas internas dentro de Admapu, y se argumenta que para fines de la década la organización se dividió en facciones lo que llevó a una ruptura con el sistema político y a la formación de movimientos de resistencia contemporáneos.

*Spanish keywords:* mapuche, Chile, Admapu, participación política, autonomía, militancias de grupo

*Portuguese abstract.* Este artigo examina a formação da Admapu, organização que representa um amplo setor da sociedade Mapuche, a qual resistiu a ações da ditadura chilena durante a década de 1980. Na memória política, o período da reforma agrária marca um momento de esperança e forte participação. No entanto, mostramos nesse trabalho que um projeto de autonomia desenvolvido na esfera da Admapu entrou em contradição com aqueles construindo alianças políticas com a esquerda chilena. Examinamos ainda as dinâmicas internas da Admapu e argumentamos que no final da década a organização dividiu-se em facções que cimentaram uma ruptura com o sistema político, engendrando a formação de movimentos contemporâneos de resistência.

*Portuguese keywords:* mapuche, Chile, Admapu, participação política, autonomia, militâncias partidárias