

# THE PLACE OF THE “INDIO” IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

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## Considerations from Mapuche history

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### Abstract

This article traces pivotal moments in the history of Indigenous participation in social research as “objects” of study, informants, collaborators and researchers. It proposes that these racial and political hierarchies have been forged by colonization. Specific histories reveal the ways these links have developed over time. The Mapuche peoples’ experience with the field of history and knowledge production is understood here as both a political position and a site of enunciation that contributes to understanding these relations. Consequently, I argue that any challenge, weakening or dismantling of colonial relations moves us towards a (self-)criticism of hegemonic ideological and epistemological formations and the racial and political hierarchies that structure these relations.

### Keywords

Mapuche, Indigenous peoples, colonialism, production of knowledge, racial hierarchies

In early 2012, Mapuche researchers in Chile released a declaration questioning the creation of the Interdisciplinary Center for Intercultural and Indigenous Studies (ICIIS), which was publicly financed using approximately US\$8 million of government funding from the National Science and Technology Commission. The declaration criticized not

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only the neoliberal thinking behind the state financing of a centre that would bring private universities and researchers together to research “about Indigenous peoples”. We also explained that such an approach to knowledge production furthers colonial logic and strengthens its racial hierarchies by ignoring the rights of Indigenous peoples because it is not directly controlled by our own communities, organizations and researchers (Comunidad de Historia Mapuche, 2013).

In response to our concerns, the network of universities and researchers connected to the ICIIS remained silent and avoided the opportunity to engage in serious debate about the connections between knowledge, power and Indigenous peoples in Chile. On the contrary, once the ICIIS began its operations, it reproduced the logic of other state institutions facing political and territorial claims by Indigenous peoples in the neoliberal era. Indigenous inclusion was limited to a small number of unemployed Mapuche researchers in marginal and part-time positions, some Mapuche “collaborative research initiatives”, and teaching with organizations and Indigenous communities unaware of the origins of the ICIIS. The centre also invited well-known researchers (including Indigenous researchers) from New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Europe to participate in academic activities designed to justify the expenditure of millions of dollars of public funding to achieve the academic productivity indicators required by the National Science and Technology Commission. This kind of practice transforms research and knowledge about Indigenous peoples into a lucrative product (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 6). Such merchandise circulates in a global economy that regulates academic ideas, salaries and privileges in an inequitable process of exchange.

The controversy generated by the creation of the ICIIS in Chile was not an isolated event, immune to the profound contradictions and structural inequalities that fracture relations connecting social research with Indigenous

peoples. Rather, it is precisely this recent controversy that reveals a new era in the neoliberal cycle in which racial hierarchies in the field of social research are made visible. As a Mapuche researcher, I will explain the historical conditions that have led to this moment, in which these hierarchies and contradictions in Chile and Latin America have become normalized.

This study traces pivotal moments that have led to the normalization of this form of knowledge production. It begins by tracing the clear historical connection between military occupation, religious conversion and the production of knowledge about Mapuche peoples as “Indios”. The category of Indio might be best understood as Bonfil (1972, p. 342) described it—“colonized”—which, in the Latin American context leads us to an understanding of Indigenous peoples as those who have been oppressed but not defeated (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010a). In the second section, I emphasize the active resistance and memory of Mapuche peoples as the epistemological component that underlies forms of Indigenous consciousness and political and historical agency, a form of knowledge production which, similarly to other Indigenous knowledge, is often overlooked in decolonial theories. These sections explain why the inclusion of Indigenous researchers in established institutional frameworks is not sufficient to decolonize knowledge production; instead, these new researchers find that struggles over analysing the binary that constructs Indios in academic studies run parallel to those confronted in other areas of social life. The concluding section analyses the epistemological dichotomy facing the Indigenous researcher, who is both subject and object of analysis, when the preferred forms of social analysis prescribe a distancing of the researcher from the object of research; several possible responses to this quandary are proposed.

## Histories of research and colonization

In 1866, after four years of military conquest in Ngulumapu—the territory of the Mapuche peoples currently occupied by the Chilean state—the minister of war, Federico Errázuriz, commanded Cornelio Saavedra to explore and occupy the Mapuche Lafkenche territory, south of the Imperial River (Errázuriz, 1867, pp. 1–4). Not yet under the sovereignty of the developing Chilean state, these territories were controlled by various *lofche* (Mapuche communities) connected by family ties and political and ritual alliances. *Kisugunewūn* or Mapuche self-government was decentralized (Carcamo-Huechante & Paillan, 2012, p. 347) and based on political connections in which the *trawūn* (councils) facilitated resolution of conflicts, agreements and alliances among diverse communities (Marimán, 2006). The independence of Mapuche peoples had been recognized since the 1598 Mapuche uprising that swept away Spanish settlements south of the Bío Bío River. This independence was then secured by some 40 parliaments or treaties with the Spanish Crown, followed by others with the Chilean Republic in 1823 and 1825 (Contreras, 2010).

Cornelio Saavedra's 1866 exploration envisaged greater geopolitical objectives, so the Ministry of War sent the following instructions for organizing the first operation: "extensively survey the Araucanía coast and precisely determine the best sites for military occupation and population". Subsequently, the colonel in charge of "pacification" had to "begin works of construction for defence and headquarters in Queule and Tolten, to proceed with the occupation of the Imperial area", and advance the study of "the best way to occupy the central valley". The "recognition" of the physical and social geography of Lafkenmapu (the coastal territory) facilitating military advancement had a concrete objective: "to provide industry and commerce to that territory in order to integrate it into the natural boundaries of the Republic" (Errázuriz, 1867, pp. 1–2).

The Exploratory Commission of the Araucanía Coast and Rivers was created months later, and military leaders Juan E. López, Francisco Vidal Gormaz and Santiago Rugg travelled southward from Port Valparaíso, then the economic capital of Chile. Assisting them were Italian Capuchin missionaries, who signed a contract with the Chilean government to establish missions south of the Imperial River (Pamplona, 1911, pp. 76–77).

Rugg (1867) describes how he soon found accommodation at the Imperial mission, went out purportedly to hunt and observe local geography, and made his first records of local "Indios", accompanied by an interpreter named *Pūchi*:

When I arrived at the mission, I met an Indio who asked "What are you looking for? What have you lost? Who gave you permission to enter this territory?" and a number of other similar questions, all answered by the interpreter. Shortly after arriving, I found a letter from the Commander in Chief to Major Urrutia, where he stated that the Indios were not agreeable and that it would be better to return to Tolten. (pp. 138–140)

The retreat of the troops alluded to here occurred amidst rising tensions and concern on the part of the authorities about the "pacification". By that time, a series of uprisings led by the *wenteche* (highlanders) had begun. Their *werkenes* (messengers) travelled through Mapuche territory to make alliances in order to drive the troops out. The political and military authorities of Chile were so concerned that they responded with a "war of resources or extermination", remembered as the most violent and cruel episode of the military occupation of Mapuche territory. Their intermittent invasions by troops saw Mapuche men and women kidnapped, cattle rustled, *rukas* (houses) and sown fields set fire to; anyone who opposed "the advance of civilization" was murdered.

Even a century and a half after this military

exploration, the memory of these practices was still in the minds of a new generation of Mapuche peoples. In 2010, we participated in a *trawün* (meeting) in Yeco, where I learned details of stories of colonization from War Reports held in state archives. One of the *peñi* (brothers) listened as others recalled the past, and he shared a story passed down in his family that detailed how alliances between the military and clergy during the conquest of the Ngulumapu (Chile) also involved the production of knowledge about Mapuche physical and social geography. The *peñi* learned this story from his grandfather, who had heard it directly from his father. He said that in the first years of military occupation, while a group of Mapuche children were “playing ball with the priests”, one of the missionaries left the game to urinate in the bushes. A child hidden in the bushes noticed that the priest

had a pistol on his waist. Then he realized that the supposed priest was not a priest, but a military agent who was always taking notes of things the Mapuche did; he was going around as if studying how to occupy the land and throw people out; that’s the kind of scoundrels they were. (A. Caniullan, personal communication, June 25, 2015)

After seeing that the military official disguised as a missionary had a gun, the child told his family, who informed local Mapuche communities that the military were hiding among the missionaries, studying their social organization, and exploring the territory in order to colonize it, which indeed happened some years later. After the child’s observation, distrust was created by the concealed presence of the military among missionaries, so the Mapuche communities were more careful and alert, noticing later “that the priests and military agents had books with Bible covers and blank pages where they wrote down their observations of the Mapuche” (A. Caniullan, personal communication, June 25, 2015).

These relations blurred the borders between missionary and military activity, especially considering the legibility practices used to facilitate colonization, expressed through occupation as well as evangelization and religious conversion. The information missionaries were required to provide governmental authorities was established by decree on March 20, 1847. Specifically, the Act mandated the submission of annual reports by religious prefects to the Ministry of Colonization and Religion. These colonial legibility practices were not new for Mapuche peoples; records were first kept by 16th-century conquerors, continuing in the form of surveys undertaken by Jesuits and Franciscans during the 17th and 18th centuries, and descriptions made during the first half of the 19th century by naturalists, explorers and travellers. Often, missionaries were expelled, as happened to Adeodato de Bologna when he was about to observe a *ngillatun* (Mapuche religious ceremony).

While I was observing that superstitious ceremony, a drunken *Indio* approached me on his horse. Soon after greeting me with the usual *Mari-Mari*, he told me: “What is your business here? Do you want to see our rituals to make fun of them? Get out of here, *thegua* (dog)!” (Nizza, 1984, p. 9)

Among Mapuche communities there was no unified response to these colonial legibility practices and “production” of knowledge. Colonial relations entail internal agents and mediators from the colonized peoples, who facilitate these relations. The military and missionaries had their collaborative counterparts in some Mapuche authorities and families subjected to evangelization. In these unbalanced power relations, and in a context of military occupation or post-occupation, these Mapuche authorities and families represented the subjugated Mapuche world facing ongoing secular and religious colonial domination, while they also acted as nodes within a network through which a capillary

model of social control was being installed. Only by acknowledging these complexities and subtleties is it possible to understand the complete records of the Mapuche physical and social geography made by the military and missionaries. These records were not limited to scientific objectives; they were also used as a tool to justify colonization, whether expressed through territorial dispossession or through religious conversion.

In fact, acts of colonial conquest and occupation go well beyond exercises of power and stark violence whereby alien territory is occupied, exploited and looted, and its population is assassinated or disciplined. Colonialism is also a cultural project where knowledge enabled or produced by conquest promotes the formation and renovation of relations of social control and subordination.

Documents such as the Scriptures, translated into Mapuzungun, and grammars or dictionaries produced by Bavarian Capuchins at the beginning of the 20th century—which in some cases are valued for their “ethnographic richness”—emerge from this field of coercion in which religious and nation-state projects merged in their aim to “pacify” and “civilize” the Mapuche peoples. For the Capuchins, as for Jesuits and Franciscans centuries earlier, a religious conversion strategy that touched the “heart” of Mapuche families and children required a diligent understanding of Indigenous social life and knowledge of their language. To understand Mapuzungun and systematize it by means of dictionaries would allow them, among other things, to enter into the Mapuche belief system. The goal was to find notions similar to the idea of the Christian God, male and all-powerful, which were at the “hard core” of the Christian truth they wanted to impose, through which they sought to build forms of colonial subjugation by establishing a tutelary link with the Indio. The 1903 introduction to the *Compendio de Historia Sagrada (Compendium of Sacred History)*, used by children attending Catholic schools, translated into Mapuzungun

by Felix de Augusta (1903), offers an explicit example:

First, it is necessary to teach them the truths of our holy religion in their own language, teaching them to read Castilian and Araucano. They have to have this text at hand in their language so once they get out of their missionary schools they can continue educating their spirits with the truths of the history of our salvation. . . . It will serve them as a faithful friend that will follow them to their sad huts, where they can read and teach it to their parents and friends who do not understand Spanish. (pp. vii–viii)

Writers such as Jean and John Comaroff (1991) have emphasized the intricate relations that colonization processes produce through these practices of legibility, ethnography and religious conversion. Thus, not by chance, in certain Mapuche contexts the intergenerational transmission of stories that interweave the military and missionaries’ exploratory and research practices have drawn on representations around Indigenous otherness, acquired through prejudices of the wingka or weñefe (invaders or thieves) (Nahuelpan, 2012). In this sense, the work of Māori intellectual Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) is relevant. She holds that from the perspective of colonized peoples the term “research” is directly related to imperialism, history, writing and colonialism. The mention of this word in an Indigenous context produces silence, painful memories and mistrust because stories about research have usually been connected with stories of colonization and injustice (p. 1).

For these reasons, establishing Mapuche as a “society-object” of legibility and knowledge practices or even as what Trouillot (2011) defined as the “savage slot”, precedes the relations between Mapuche and social and human sciences. These sciences inherited a signifying field previous to their formalization and institutionalization in academic centres (Trouillot,

2011). In effect, the Indio was inscribed in the colonial political economy as an inferior race, an inferior subject or disposable body that should be placed at the service of those who appropriated for themselves a status they legitimated as superior and civilized. From the perspective of the production of knowledge, the place of the Indio was naturalized as an object that should be explored and known as otherness. Social research's relation to the Indio was established within this logic and, apart from some exceptions, contributed to reproducing it. This reveals how the racialization of social relations has also permeated epistemology and social research.

Therefore, among Mapuche and other Indigenous peoples the production of knowledge is related to a series of tensions and contradictions not only for non-Indigenous researchers, but also for researchers who belong to their peoples and communities. How could it be otherwise when, with the exception of some collaborative and progressive social research, the majority of studies carried out on Indigenous communities—including those conducted by researchers from those same communities—reproduce “extractive” logic? (Aubry, 2011; Leyva & Speed, 2008). How could we think otherwise if, except for some collaborative experiences—which we hope will become more frequent—research practices have been interconnected with dispossession of territories, resources and knowledge, and have also contributed to establishing stereotyped and reified representations of Mapuche people as non-contemporaneous and homogeneous otherness, thus shielding their complexities and heterogeneity from view.

These challenges refer not only to newly emerging theorizations or enquiries made by those who have been referred to or call themselves “Indigenous intellectuals”. Nor do they relate exclusively to critiques or rethinking of social research conducted by some scholars in relation to their “objects of study” and their disciplinary endeavours, where currently there is a productive field of discussion. Quite the

opposite; behind these questions lie persistent experiences and long memories of resistance, daily negotiation and anti-colonial subversion sustained by colonized peoples. In other words, even if a number of researchers and social scientists believe they have monopoly ownership over knowledge production and they search for and reduce critical genealogies that confront colonialism in the theoretical field to mere social struggles of colonized peoples, these in fact have been cognitive and epistemological spaces. From these spaces, subalternized knowledges emerge and are re-created, or new concepts and theorizations are forged (Aubry, 2011, pp. 65–66).

I believe it is relevant to begin this reflection on the place of the Indio in social research by reconstructing and problematizing these histories of research and colonization in order to argue that an understanding of the dynamics and circumstances in which Mapuche and other colonized peoples live is partial if we do not incorporate a perspective derived from a longer history. Similarly, analyses of the contradictions and tensions raised by research approaches on/ among/from Indigenous peoples—Mapuche peoples in particular—necessarily must consider and evaluate the strong historical linkage that these research approaches have had with colonization processes in specific contexts, as well as the socio-racial and political hierarchies that have supported them. This knowledge has only recently emerged in academia for the Mapuche context.

### **Decolonizing social research without decolonizing Indigenous peoples?**

Questioning the bonds woven between knowledge production about Indigenous peoples and colonialist practices to which they have been subjected has a long and deep history in the consciousness, political agencies, memories, and public and everyday discourses used by colonized peoples from the first days of conquest. The same is true for the development

of anti-colonial thought that has questioned the wrenching economic, socio-political and ideological dimensions of colonization. These approaches and questions are not isolated but have been in dialogue, at times, with critical theorizations of imperialism, capitalism and colonialism. The very fact that these questions have been so important for colonized peoples reveals how struggles against colonial dispossession of lands and bodies have been and continue to be struggles over the epistemological control of forms of knowledge production. In fact, the colonial acts of taking possession of geography, subjugating Indigenous populations until they are obedient, and displacing language were acts of systematic plunder (Muyolema, 2001, pp. 65–66).

In her study of Zapatista political cultures, Mariana Mora (2011) argues that in neoliberal times the experiences of autonomy and struggles for decolonization are subjected and controlled by social research according to its own conditions. There are other instances in which Indigenous political organizations create their own infrastructural and administrative concepts beyond academic spaces, channelling their work towards their own political and strategic objectives (Rappaport, 2013). These experiences of “epistemological sovereignty” (Nahuelpan et al., 2012), or “intellectual sovereignty” (Warrior, 1995) that are being produced today in diverse contexts of Indigenous struggle in Latin America are not new. On the contrary, they form part of a history of claims and updating of Indigenous political epistemologies. In fact, the process of rebellion or Indigenous insurgency that began in the first years of the Hispanic conquest of the Americas that has continued to our day has never consisted of simple spontaneous reactions. Behind these processes there has always been an epistemological component set in motion when rebellious actions are organized, alliances articulated and adversarial forces measured, the best strategies for action defined, and the possible outcomes analysed.

As a specific example of the case under

review, Mapuche peoples conceptualize *kisug-  
unewūn* as socio-political and territorial control and self-regulation, which is also connected to the fields of *rakizuam* (thought) and *tukul-pazugun* (memory). This can be understood by considering that more than one and a half centuries ago, in 1860, *ñizol lonko wenteche* (the foremost political leader of the highlanders), Mangil Wenu, in a letter to General Justo Urquiza, reiterated Mapuche sovereignty south of the Bío Bío River, supporting his claim with the political and social memory of the treaties and parliaments that were being violated by the consolidation of the Chilean Republic:

The first treaty took place on the 13th of June 1613, and clearly states that the river named Biobio would be the dividing line, granting us complete freedom to use our laws to govern ourselves, without any interference from the King’s authority.

In the following years, these treaties have been repeatedly ratified, with no change whatsoever, until the year of 1793, the last year I witnessed it. I would have been 14 years old. . . . In 1837, the national government sent me a peace proposal, and my answer was this: it would be possible, as long as the Biobio line was respected, and no Christians, or worse, military forces, were allowed to cross and settle.

With no prior right, the government has demarcated a province that crosses the Biobio, which encompasses a considerable part of our territory, which we still inhabit. Therefore, the government wants to hold this under its authority, trampling on all the treaties I mentioned. (as quoted in Pavez, 2008, pp. 312–313)

This letter is an essential source for understanding the contentious political and territorial scenario in which it was sent. Moreover, it expresses how the memory and knowledge of

the long history of Mapuche independence acts as source, resource and instrument for asserting claims. It reveals the epistemological component that underlies forms of Indigenous consciousness and political and historical agency. In this regard, Rivera Cusicanqui (2010b) reminds us that long before Latin American decolonial approaches emerged, out of the praxis of Indigenous peoples themselves a radical and deep decolonization of political, economic, social and mental structures arose.

In the Andean case, Rivera Cusicanqui (2010b) locates this praxis in the Indigenous-campesino rebellions of the 20th century, but she also states that these rebellions were supported by long horizons of historical memory that referred back to anti-colonial struggles against Spanish colonizers. In spite of this, decolonial approaches have opted to locate and restrict the critical genealogies of the linkage between social sciences and colonization histories to the theoretical field. In this sense, the power relations that initiate these processes are silenced. It is quite likely that had the critiques and enquiries posed by Indigenous and colonized subjects themselves in their social research not drawn on their own histories and memories, then researchers who theorize about so called “object-societies” would not have attempted to rupture the colonial logics that permeate the epistemology and methodology from which one “produces” knowledge.

After all, as Rivera Cusicanqui (2010b) reminds us, “there cannot be a decolonization discourse, a decolonization theory, without a decolonizing practice” (p. 62). Therefore, it must be said that the reassessments of social research with Indigenous peoples did not happen in an isolated environment. Nor did they emerge in hermetic and self-referential academic circles. In fact, they emerged from the historical power and creativity of struggles for freedom and direct challenges to colonialism. This is the political and historical context of the Declaración de Barbados (Barbados Declaration) of 1971, proposed by a group of

anthropologists that met in a “Symposium on Inter-ethnic Conflict in South America”:

The sort of anthropology now required in Latin America is not one that looks at Indigenous peoples as mere objects of study, but one that views them as colonized peoples and that is committed to their struggles for liberation. In this context, the function of anthropology is, on the one hand, to provide Indigenous peoples with all the anthropological knowledge available about themselves as well as the knowledge about the society that oppresses them in order to support their struggle for freedom; and on the other hand, to restructure the distorted image that exists in national society about Indigenous peoples, unmasking its ideologically colonialist nature. (Bartolomé et al., 1971)

The condemnation voiced by the Barbados Declaration was aimed at the heart of anthropology as a discipline and at social research with Indigenous peoples. It put pressure on the role of the specialists in the reproduction of colonialist representations and practices. The declaration not only focused on the critique of power at a discursive level; it also directly addressed the strong commitment to and collaboration with the liberation struggles of Indigenous peoples, who had been viewed up to that point as objects of study. There are many points in this declaration that can be critically analysed. However, the challenge that emerges from a critical reading of this declaration is whether a greater commitment and dialogue with the struggles for Indigenous liberation were and are currently sufficient to dismantle privileges that certain Latin American researchers enjoy in comparison with those of their Indigenous peers or the communities they study. To what extent have the declarations of commitment to the development of “collaborative methodologies” simultaneously formed part of a readjustment of hierarchies reproduced in the field of social research?



Today Indigenous participation in social research as object of study, informant, collaborator or even researcher continues to be marked by racial hierarchies that are a product of local, national and global histories of colonization. That is why it becomes absolutely necessary that the most progressive or "collaborative" proposals for social research with Indigenous peoples, communities or subjects—as well as those developed by ourselves as Mapuche men and women researchers—be placed in tension with (self)-critical readings.

Therefore, I agree with Maya Kakchikel researcher Aura Cumes (2008) when she asserts that the emergence of Indigenous researchers in academic spaces and research sites signals the beginning of one more struggle, as these spaces are also fields of power. We must struggle in these sites as well, to have our voices heard and legitimated among academic voices and legitimized elites. For his part, Stuart Hall (2010) has studied these struggles for representation and suggests that in the first phase we find access and rights for self-representation, and that the second phase be characterized by politics specifically about this representation. These two phases are intermingled. One of the main areas of concern is precisely the struggle we have to undergo to break away from hierarchical relations we confront on a daily basis. This struggle cannot be taken lightly, because these hierarchies are established among subjects who are unequally positioned within relations of class, gender, race and age in socio-historical formations where academic spaces themselves are also inscribed and reproduced. That is to say, there are conditions of hierarchy structured by colonial history that converge with growing neoliberalization of academic spaces, and these explain, among other things, why the place of the Indigenous in social research is that of a subaltern subject. It is exactly from this historically produced disadvantaged place or positioning that it makes sense to question whether it is possible to decolonize the human and social sciences as they relate to Indigenous

peoples. More than anything else, this is the case if this questioning is carried out without a profound dismantling of racial hierarchies, and the political and economic structures that form the foundation of the production of knowledge. A first step toward answering this question may be to denounce the "savage slot" that social research introduced into the field as well as the logic and hierarchies of research with Indigenous peoples that have accompanied it.

### **Subject-object epistemology and the "loyalty" of the "Indigenous intellectual"**

The Cartesian expression *cogito ergo sum* alludes to the existence of a subject who thinks and therefore exists, and who is abstracted from the situational conditions of his or her social existence. This subject has its correlative in the field of research, defined by the presumption of a subject that researches "from all positions, and from no place" (Haraway, 1995, p. 392), in order to guarantee the impartiality of the knowledge produced. This subject and field also gave rise to the construction of otherness as the basis of the relation between researching subject and Indigenous or colonized peoples being researched. Such is the case with anthropology, which, as a branch of imperialism and colonialism played a fundamental role in the subjugation of Indigenous peoples and also defined otherness as its main focus of study by being based on a dualist ontology and epistemology of subjects and objects.

The dissociation between researching subject and researched object was constructed by fixating and normalizing as the primary category the anthropologist, that is, the researcher from the metropolis, the academy, at the writing desk or in an ethnographic or historiographical office. The secondary category is reserved for the natives, that is, Indigenous peoples or colonized subjects. Anthropology was created as a practice for explorers, travellers and colonial

officials to “learn” about “peoples without history” (Wolf, 2009). The exercise of learning about peoples without history, who were now “entering it” or to whom historicity was granted through colonization, had and still has a very concrete methodology: field research and participant observation of a particular area. This process always “threatens” the “objectivity” that should be primarily based on one’s ability to be detached from any sign of subjectivity, and therefore to be distanced from the object to be investigated. The distance that was established was not only spatial (metropolis-colony, centre-periphery, university-community), but also temporal. Because the “other” represented as “Indio”, “native”, “natural”, “aboriginal”, “original” or “indigenous” was placed “outside” of civilization, instituted as part of “simple societies”, and also anchored in “non-coeval” time-space (Fabian, 1983), change could only be introduced from outside. For this reason, if the “other” was stripped of the capacity and historical initiative to act, the same was true as an epistemological subject. Such intellectual action and creativity was reduced to “myth”, to “cosmivision”, or to the sphere of traditional knowledge to be appropriated through the ethnographic register or, nowadays, through bio-piracy.

In this sense, I agree with Palestinian intellectual Edward Said (1996a) when he states that anthropology is above all a discipline historically constructed from its very origin through an ethnographic encounter between

a sovereign European observer and a non-European native who was placed, so to speak, in a minor status and at a distance; only recently, at the end of the twentieth century, some anthropologists, concerned by the embarrassment they feel about the discipline itself, are searching for a new “other”. (pp. 34–35).

This new “other” identified by Said could just as well be the “Indigenous intellectuals” whose

discourses are studied with “meta-theoretical” approaches.

What are the implications of Cartesian dualism for Indigenous researchers when it disassociates the researching subject from the researched object as a condition for objectivity and impartiality in the production of knowledge? First, by naturalizing the position of the native, the Indigenous person as researched object, the practice of the non-Indigenous researcher is legitimized as the subject that represents us and speaks in our name. Second, if we manage to represent ourselves and “produce” knowledge about our contexts, usually our voices do not acquire a dialogical status, since immediately the issue of the lack of “impartiality” in our works is raised, due to the fact that from a hegemonic perspective it is impossible to be “object” and “subject” of the research at the same time. Furthermore, when we do manage to have our voices acquire a dialogical status, this develops as a hierarchical dialogue where Indigenous languages and theorizations are subalternized by the languages of the various colonialisms of the nation-state, which are, in turn, imperialist languages. This is why, in the global economy of ideas founded on racial and colonial hierarchies, a condition for validation is that one read, write about and cite authors in English, but authors whose native language is English are not necessarily required to read or cite Indigenous works, even if these studies deal with the past and present lives of Indigenous peoples.

A frequent option for Indigenous researchers has been to adopt “scientifically legitimized” modes of academic research, often reproducing the “extractive” character of social research. This option both emerges as an expression of our “formative” process in the field of social and human sciences in order to avoid questioning about our work and enables the expression of forms of subaltern action through which we seek to break through the place historically constructed for us as “objects of investigation”. Contradictorily, in the attempt to “go

beyond" established hierarchies, these subaltern actions end up reinforcing the logic, practices and discourses that reproduce them. In this context, Fanon's (1973) approach acquires resonance, particularly in its relation to the colonial dialectic that introduces an asymmetrical configuration whereby the colonizer or the dominant subject defines and marks the colonized subject, inscribing on the colonized the desire to be recognized and legitimized by the colonizer, which contributes to the reproduction of patterns of dependency and subalternity.

In view of these criticisms, another option, or way out of this contradiction, is to focus our efforts on analysing inequalities, assuming and denouncing the way the origins of these are found in the main dichotomy between colonizers and colonized. Colonizers, thus represented under the rubric of the "Western world", imposed themselves on us, and are to blame for all our "maladies and misfortunes". This reading seems to inform the predominant solution in the majority of the studies undertaken by Indigenous researchers in Latin America since the 1980s, mostly influenced by critiques of imperialism and issues related to dependency theory.

Another solution, and perhaps the most complex and challenging I see developing among the new generation of Indigenous researchers, is to analyse inequalities and domination wherever they take place. That is, to begin by recognizing that colonialism is a historical phenomenon rooted in our societies that permeates practically every sphere of our social and ideological lives. Therefore, colonialism has been reproduced through processes of subjectivity building and through historical agencies of Indigenous subjects. In this sense, it seems important to me to consider the words of Said (1999b), inspired by Fanon and Césaire:

Although there is inestimable value to what an intellectual does to ensure the community's survival during periods of extreme national emergency, loyalty to the group's fight for

survival cannot draw the intellectual so far as to narcotize the critical sense, or to reduce its imperatives, which are always to go beyond survival to questions of political liberation, to critiques of the leadership, to presenting alternatives that are too often marginalized or pushed aside as irrelevant to the main battle at hand. Even among oppressed there are also victors and losers, and the intellectual's loyalty must not be restricted only to joining the collective march. (p. 41)

I therefore consider that the power to critique and analyse domination and inequality cannot be tied to the loyalty we Indigenous or Mapuche researchers have to our respective movements—the visible ones as well as those which have no public profile. However, as Indigenous researchers, we should also consider that, as public subjects, we are exposed to the loss of control over the use that certain dominant groups make of the information that we disseminate or publish. That is why published descriptions of forms of internal inequality that we can occasionally produce because of the "privileged" positioning we have by engaging with our communities, organizations or movements, can certainly reveal dimensions that are often overlooked in order to focus on the understanding of "external" oppressions that are considered more relevant than daily forms of inequality and oppression. However, in the context of territorial conflict and low-intensity warfare such as those in which most Indigenous peoples live today, these same descriptions can be used, for example, as fuel for actions of counterinsurgency by revealing critical and sensitive pressure points that can deepen internal divisions, and conflicts that can worsen rifts and exhaustion within communities or movements. This happens in local contexts where extractive and energy industries exert pressure on the social and communal fabric, thereby re-creating historical patterns of colonial dispossession.

These tensions help elucidate the fact that the "old" contradictions between social research

and colonial relations did not disappear when Indigenous researchers arrived in the field of social research. Quite the opposite, they are reactivated and coexist with other tensions, such as the danger of institutionalizing Indigenous research, in particular Mapuche research, through its struggle for representation. Yet at the same time, this struggle can lead to a distancing from political and social processes, which a significant part of Indigenous researchers undertake to establish their critical views.

The way in which we can adopt these contradictions is an open and unfinished historical process. The progressive arrival of Indigenous researchers to academic spaces is far from dismantling the logic, and the socio-racial and class hierarchies, that are reproduced in these spaces. More importantly, even if we have entered these spaces, given the rearrangement of the forms of political-intellectual co-optation that colonial relations assume today, the place of the Indio in social research will still be that of a “inferior race and being”, if these socio-racial and political hierarchies, and the ideological and epistemological formations at the root of colonialism, are not dismantled.

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### Glossary

campesino	rural farm worker
kisugunewūn	Mapuche self-government, socio-political and territorial control, and self-regulation
Lafkenche	Mapuche population living on the Pacific Coast of Chile
Lafkenmapu	coastal territory of the Lafkenche
lonko	head, or Mapuche political leader
lofche	Mapuche communities
Mapuzungun	language of the Mapuche peoples of Chile and Argentina
Maya	one of the Indigenous peoples of Guatemala
Kakchikel	
ngillatun	Mapuche religious ceremony
Ngulumapu	territory of the Mapuche peoples militarily occupied and stolen by the Chilean state
ñizol lonko	foremost Mapuche political leader
peñi	brothers
rakizuum	thought, Mapuche thinking
rukas	houses
trawūn	Mapuche council or meeting
tukulpazugun	memory
weñefe	thief
wenteche	Mapuche highlanders
werkenes	messengers
wingka	from the Mapuzungun verb wingkūn (to usurp, dispossess): a subject who carries out such dispossession; by extension the semantic equivalent of “colonizer” or “invader”

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