Appropriation and Resistance Mechanisms in (Post-) Colonial Constellations of Actors

The Latin American Frontiers in the 18th and 19th Century

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Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

DFG

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Abstract

This working paper offers a longitudinal analysis of appropriation and resistance mechanisms in a culturally heterogeneous context. The study is based on a micro-historical investigation of intercultural communication and cooperation on Latin American frontiers during the transition from colonies to early republics. It begins with the assumption that governance mechanisms implemented by the state were necessarily adapted to the needs of the local population. Our case studies confirm the difficulty of empirically separating mechanisms of appropriation from mechanisms of resistance; appropriation is generally eclectic in situations of cultural heterogeneity and, as a mechanism, usually counteracts the intentions of state actors.

Zusammenfassung

Das Working Paper präsentiert eine Langzeitstudie von Aneignungs- und Abwehrmechanismen im kulturell heterogenen Kontext. Die mikrohistorische Untersuchung interkultureller Kommunikation und Kooperation an den lateinamerikanischen *Frontiers* zwischen Kolonie und Republik geht davon aus, dass staatlich implementierte Governance-Mechanismen auf der lokalen Ebene an die Bedürfnisse der entsprechenden Residenzgruppen angepasst werden müssen. Die Fallbeispiele bestätigen dabei die Schwierigkeit, Aneignungs- und Abwehrmechanismen empirisch zu trennen, da Aneignungen im kulturell heterogenen Kontext grundsätzlich eklektisch vorgenommen werden und, als Mechanismus, zumeist einer Vereinnahmung durch staatliche Strukturen vorbeugen.

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1. Introduction: Appropriation or Resistance?[1]

In postcolonial criticism, appropriation and resistance mechanisms are increasingly considered a necessary reaction to the failure of colonial and postcolonial governance mechanisms to adapt to socio-economic circumstances on a regional and local level (Draude/Neuweiler 2010: 24). Governance mechanisms implemented by the state require modifications that can only take place locally with the collaboration of the affected population. Experience shows that this type of process can take decades or centuries, as the population's familiarity with governance mechanisms is a decisive factor in their acceptance.

For some time now, historians have conceived of the appropriation processes of non-local governance forms under the heading of intercultural transfer (Muhs 1998; Paulmann 1998; Roldán Vera 2003; Patel 1994; Verhoeven 2001). It has been shown that binary appropriation and resistance is only suited to a certain extent to analyzing the use of the opportunities offered by (newly) introduced state structures, either spontaneously or over the long term (Rinke 2004; Füllberg-Stolberg 2001: 3-31). In effect, the term "appropriation" refers to the presence of both an adjustment and a defined intention (Burke 2000: 13, 22-23). This intention on the part of the appropriating collective or individuals provides a basis for their interactions with the state actors, not only in pursuing their interests, but also in keeping sovereign government actions or the one-sided implementation of state interests at bay. "In reality, forms of resistance and appropriation present themselves as ambivalent and, empirically, are almost inseparable" (Pinheiro 2004: 46).[2]

This paper, based on the study of indigenous peoples in the frontiers of the Southern Cone and northwestern Mexico in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, proposes a classification of different manifestations of appropriation between two extremes of resistance: flight, or the rejection of all communication with the interaction counterpart, and violence used to expel or exterminate the interaction counterpart. Indigenous groups, however, have rarely sought to attain the latter by way of the use of force, whereas state actors have frequently favored "once-and-for-all" solutions. As we will show in the following, some kinds of violence should rather be understood as a way of *negotiating* violence and considered a form of appropriation. In the border area of Araucania, for example, the Mapuche groups often held women and children of Hispanic background hostage with the intention of learning Spanish from them and integrating these captives into their society (Operé 2001). Over time, these captives became advocates of the interests of their new society and eased processes of appropriation through their familiarity with both societies.

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2 In the most recent governance investigations, appropriation also is understood as a re-*interpretation*, which puts the emphasis on an interest-guided change in external or new forms of government. See De la Rosa (2008: 80–99).

In view of Latin America's colonial history, James Lockhart coined the term "double mistaken identity," meaning that "each side of the cultural exchange presumes that a given form or concept is functioning in the way familiar within its own tradition and is unaware of or unimpressed by the other side's interpretation" (Lockhart 1999). We define appropriation as the capacity of a group to interpret foreign practices or institutions according to its own values and conceptions and to utilize them towards its own goals. Therefore, the "resistance mechanism" category indicates the refusal to make an appropriation. As a result, refusal of social cohabitation (i.e., flight/extermination) or rejection of communication are understood as (absolute) resistance mechanisms.

2. Appropriation and Resistance in the Context of Cultural Diversity on the Frontiers

During the invasion of Gran Chichimeca (the area north of the Valley of Mexico), the military campaigns of the Spanish conquistadores in many cases forced formerly settled farming communities to leave their fields and to live as hunters and gatherers. They subsequently adapted the horse to their lifestyle and began to raid the Spanish settlements. The so-called "Chichimecan Wars" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries thus in many ways created the so-called "barbarians" against whom the Spaniards fought in the centuries following (Gradie 1994: 82-83). In this paper, this form of (forced) ethnogenesis is understood as an appropriation mechanism despite the mutual violent rejection it includes.

Despite often conflictual cohabitation, frontiers have been rightly described as spaces of mutual cultural encounters and interpenetration between expansive civilizations and non-state societies (Riekenberg 1997: 31). Under this definition, the frontiers of Latin America can be seen as a particularly fruitful field for investigating appropriation and resistance mechanisms. Here, indigenous groups exhibiting primarily egalitarian political organizations encountered representatives of the European colonial powers, which were trying to create state structures (and thus hierarchies) in these territories.

The egalitarian organization of these groups was anchored in equal access to the most important means of production (i.e., knowledge of the environment and techniques for its exploitation), which could not be monopolized. All members of egalitarian societies had equal opportunities in terms of individual development. Yet hierarchical structures along gender and generational lines remained. These arose out of the rational authority of more experienced group members (such as elder councils) or differentiated individual abilities, but were not upheld by order and obedience structures, as is the case within state administrative organizations or institutions like missions or the military. The only specialized activity, shamanism, was open to both sexes (Endicott 2004: 413).[3]

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3 For examples from Latin America see Saeger (2000: 150) and Paraíso (2006: 425).

In agricultural societies, territorial usage rights were transferred from collective ownership and could then be gradually allocated to familial lines. In Araucania in southern Chile, the representatives of chieftain lines, which had already formed in pre-colonial times, specialized more and more in the regulation of collective matters and appeared as mediators in disputes over usage rights. The leaders – called lonkos – could not discontinue ritualized mediation, but needed to convince their followers of their decisions without resorting to compulsory measures. While the generally highly mobile farming societies of the Mexican Northwest did not establish similar chieftain dynasties, they also settled collective matters in locally restricted general assemblies (Spicer 1962; Radding 1997).

Interactions between egalitarian and state societies in a colonial and postcolonial context that either entirely lack conflict or exhibit only limited conflict can only be explained in terms of appropriation. For some time now, this field of investigation has benefitted from the use of the "middle ground" metaphor. The term originates from Richard White's influential study of the interactions between the colonial powers and later state forms and the indigenous groups in the Great Lakes region of eastern Canada and the northwestern United States. White shows that the encounters and negotiations between the different actors only proved successful when a common denominator could be found in their efforts to communicate (White 1991). Crucial elements – such as the use of paternalistic rhetoric or the offering of gifts – show that the ideas of both societies, indigenous or European, had to be incorporated into negotiations to achieve a mutually amicable agreement. The "middle ground" therefore does not denote a border territory where the representatives of the two societies meet, but rather a type of communication[4] in which both sides are able to recognize a sufficient number of familiar things that convey trust in their interactions. Of course, ecologically common spaces could also form a certain middle ground between indigenous and state societies (Santos 1992). But in our understanding, the use of (forcefully) shared living grounds or roaming areas remains a question of negotiation and should therefore be seen as a matter of social competition.

As shown by the example of the conquest and colonization of America, a pre-colonial history involving the development of indigenous tribute empires eased the implementation of European (monarchic/feudal, administrative) forms of government. In the Valley of Mexico or in the central region of the Andes, the European conquistadors were able to make use of pre-existing institutions that were not fundamentally different from the colonial structures of domination. As was the case in Europe as well, state-building processes contained ethnocidal practices that aimed at the abolition of local cultural elements and their substitution with state-implemented governance mechanisms (Clastres 2008: 17-18).[5] The *tlatoque* in Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) and the Incas in Cuzco (Peru) also nominally ruled populations that possessed different languages and cultural attributes. They demanded labor, tributes, and military service from these subjected peoples, just as the Spaniards would later on (Spalding 1999: 936; Hassig

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4 Richard White expressly points to this conceptual aspect of middle ground in a later discussion (White 2006).

5 This type of strategy, however, seldom achieved more than the superimposition of such mechanisms onto those already in place locally.

1985: Chapter 5). The conquistadors could dock onto existing structures of domination and, over time, an alliance between colonial rulers and indigenous elites fostered a balance of interests.

Thus, it is not surprising that the colonial powers in North America, Central America, or the South American lowlands had more difficulties establishing their claim to rule, although the non-state societies living in these areas had much less potential for mobilizing military forces than the pre-colonial empires. The necessity of establishing leadership structures and identifiable governance addressees delayed the subjugation of these autochthonous populations (Garavaglia 1999: 21-22), often well into the nineteenth century, beyond the collapse of the colonial system and the achievement of independence. The colonial powers' attempts to influence indigenous groups by improving the material conditions of individual leaders were mostly thwarted by the leveling mechanisms inherent to these societies (Woodburn 1982). Although the redistribution of these goods imported from the outside to the group's followers gave prestige to the leaders, they did not trigger the formation of power positions based on the unequal distribution of possessions. Given that decisions on collective property issues were made in general assemblies, it was impossible for corrupt leaders to establish themselves (Hämäläinen 2008: 132-137; Barfield 1989: 7-8).

During the eighteenth century, cattle raiding gangs in northern Mexico became increasingly multi-ethnic, including *criollos* (local settlers of Spanish descent) as well as renegades from the Spanish army. They also maintained – partially through these renegades – good relationships with the local "notable" families, who were ready to buy back the animals that had been stolen from different settlements (Ortelli 2007: 130, 159; Saeger 2000: 11-18). It was not uncommon that these raiders were led by Europeans who had been abducted in their youth and grown up in indigenous societies. In contrast to the isolated settler society, autochthonous groups were traditionally open to integrate foreigners and made opportunities for social promotion available to them (Anderson 1999: 132; Saeger 2000: 78, 96). This flexibility allowed for the rapid appropriation of external knowledge and goods without fundamentally changing or questioning the egalitarian character of society.

3. Mechanisms of Appropriation and Resistance

In contrast to settled farmland, the topographical and demographic conditions in frontier areas permitted nomadic indigenous groups to choose with relative freedom among the three possibilities of flight, appropriation, and violent resistance until the end of the nineteenth century. What distinguishes the interactions of these non-state societies with colonial authorities is their potential to escape or move away from domination (Scott 2009: 7-8). Nonetheless, just as in other colonial and postcolonial areas around the world, the imposition of new practices of state governance and population control, new conceptions of territoriality, a fierce competition between nation-states for the control of so-called empty spaces, and a shift towards direct exploitation of natural resources played distinct roles in closing these frontiers (Harvey 2006:

71-116; Maybury-Lewis/Macdonald/Maybury-Lewis 2009). Additionally, technological advances, including new modes of transportation and communication (telegraphy, railways, and steamships), largely curtailed the possibility of flight for the indigenous groups, while repeating rifles and machine guns eliminated the former superiority of autochthonous weapon technology. The use of violence as a last measure of resistance turned into a deadly trap for the numerically inferior indigenous groups.

Ute Frevert has suggested that violence and trust are like "fire and water": the violent settlement of a conflict is not compatible with the anticipation that fellow human beings will act cooperatively and be fundamentally interested in the well-being of others. As a result, the monopolization of force inherent to state-building is the foundation of a society based on mutual trust between its individual members (Frevert 2003: 20, 38). Her view is, however, deeply rooted in European political history and cannot be transferred conceptually to the situation created by European expansion overseas.

The social situation in the European overseas colonies and the postcolonial states governed by *criollo* elites was hardly suited to guarantee safety or to ensure trust through a monopoly of power. Until the present day, the governments of the culturally heterogeneous nation-states of the Americas can claim only partial acceptance by all population groups in their territory. As the case studies of our project show (see below), the lack of legitimization has spurred periodic eruptions of violence and therefore should be considered a cause of existing security issues. Consequently, and in view of the territorial unity within respective state borders, the tense constellation between the states' claim to power (monopoly on violence) and indigenous peoples striving for autonomy will not provide for a quick and definitive solution in the future.

But since communication existed for centuries on the middle ground, new hybrid types of interactions formed, with which both sides became familiar over time. Implemented governance mechanisms were appropriated by being combined with familiar forms and elements of interactions and, in this way, integrated into the respective value systems. As a result, in a protracted process that can be characterized as appropriation, the interethnic relationships necessitated constant adjustments by the state/government complex of actors on the one hand and the indigenous society on the other.

Consequently, a process of ethnogenesis was initiated on many frontiers in America, uniting groups that were estranged from each other but (often) presented linguistic similarities, who also found a common enemy in the colonial rulers they mutually confronted (Langfur 2006: 29; Boccara 1999). Yet, not only the conflicts engendered by the Europeans' claim to rule brought about new forms of society. For instance, several indigenous prairie peoples in North America (e.g. Pawnee, Wichita, Cheyenne) are known to have given up their soil tilling and gardening activities when they adopted the horse and began to live as riding nomads (Hämäläinen 2003: 856). This particular cultural transformation rarely took place between Europeans and autochthonous populations, but was usually a purely indigenous exchange. On the prairie, the Ute people served as a model in domesticating horses and using European finished products. Their

"enemies" (*kumantsi*), later becoming famous as the Comanche, learned from them and subsequently taught their riding skills to the Cheyenne, who also relinquished their farming activities to become riding nomads (Hämäläinen 2008: 25-26, 170-171).[6]

Just like their cultural counterparts in South America, the Guaycuruanos of the Gran Chaco, the riding warriors of the prairie exploited rivalries among colonial powers to obtain concessions and material benefits ("gifts" in colonial rhetoric). They did not orient themselves according to the imperial or national affiliations of the settler societies, but rather pursued different political strategies in relation to smaller administrative unities such as New Mexico, Texas, or individual settlement centers. Seen from the perspective of these "indigenous empires," the frontiers constructed in the historiography of the North and South of Spanish America ultimately dissolve, permitting alternate spatial structures to be discerned (Saeger 2000: 134; Hämäläinen 2008: 182). The European satellites of the Comanche Empire, for example, were forced to accept indigenous ideas of governance in the face of threats or the implementation of violent sanctions.

As in many other places, the hostile relationship with the conquerors is what allowed "tribes" or ethnicities to develop into political units through the integrative effects of common resistance interests against foreign intruders, or the preferential access to European military means or property as a reward for military cooperation with the conquerors. Conversely, the cultural properties of the local indigenous groups also left a lasting mark on the colonial state, which was only able to establish itself slowly: "Tribes make states and states make tribes," as Neil Whitehead has remarked (Whitehead 1999: 127-150).

4. Case Study: Sonora, Mexico[7]

4.1 The Comcáac

The foraging groups of the Comcáac ("Seri") in Sonora did not adapt their lifestyle to the horse, nor did they make any systematic use of firearms. In the Sonora Desert, these cultural goods of the European colonial rulers proved useless, since they caused the groups to be dependent on supplies: grazing land, water, or ammunition.

The coexistence of hunters and gatherers with the Spanish settlers was marked by the contrasting principals of their respective economic systems until the late nineteenth century. The cattle

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6 In the first century BC, riding animals imported from Europe had a similar socio-revolutionary effect in the Eurasian region as they would later have on the autochthonous populations of America. The adaptation of the horse by population groups of the Eurasian steppes led to a socio-economic change in the "Old World" from seasonal farmers to riding nomads, and under changing circumstances also to the creation of empires. See Barfield (1989: 29).

7 The following case study is based on archival documents presented in the doctoral thesis by Lasse Hölck ("Die strenge Liebkosung der Heimat". Vertrauen als ethnohistorische Analysekategorie am Beispiel der Comcáac (Seris) von Sonora (Mexiko), Freie Universität Berlin 2012).

of the settlers, which wandered freely on the traditional roaming grounds of the Comcáac, were generally considered by the foragers to be available hunting prey, and, true to the optimal prey choice principle, were killed with preference by the hunters. The cattle breeders, however, viewed the livestock as private property and demanded protection from the state. When the state did not respond to their satisfaction, they took measures into their own hands and killed the hunters. These contradictory views of territorial usage rights and individual property probably laid the most explosive foundation for potential conflict on Latin America's cattle frontiers.

Due to these contradictory perceptions of the environment, warlike disputes would erupt periodically between the Comcáac and the settlers. In these situations, the Spaniards noted the Comcáacs' appropriation of symbolic communication early on. When they wished to end hostilities, the Comcáac would demonstrate their peaceful intentions by using Christian symbolism: erecting elaborately manufactured crosses close to the Spanish forts. The European colonists had been familiar with the significance of these symbolic forms of communication since the early eighteenth century and, after seeing them, would send ambassadors to invite the family units of the Comcáac to a special meeting. Depending on strategic considerations, however, they also feigned ignorance at times if they considered it too early for peace negotiations or thought it was necessary to give further proof of their (supposed) military superiority. Thus, we see the rejection of symbolic communication by the colonial power as form of state resistance mechanism.

The peaceful cohabitation of hunters and gatherers and *colonists* in Sonora failed in large part because of the hierarchical structures of the colonial and republican state institutions. During times when individual representatives of the administration (governor), the military (commanding officer of the fort), or missionaries were able to build up personal trust relationships with individual leaders of the Comcáac, small family groups could be temporarily persuaded to comply with the expectations of colonial rulers. The transfer of locally stationed personnel by higher administrative levels, however, regularly terminated these bonds of personal trust. As a consequence, a recently founded mission, for instance, might be deserted from one day to the next (flight).

Some colonial officials nevertheless adapted to these circumstances and accepted the semi-nomadic lifestyle of these groups. Along the northern border of Mexico, as well as in other places, Spaniards observed that the independent indigenous groups brought the products of their hunting and gathering activities to the settlements of the farmers, exchanging them for the carbohydrate-rich agricultural products the farmers had to offer (Weber 2005: 132; Ortelli 2007: 136; Anderson 1999: 107; Villalpando 2000: 541). If permitted, the Comcáac included Spanish missions, settlements, and fortresses on the routes of their seasonal migration, since their familiar relations with neighboring agricultural groups were easily transferable to the European newcomers. This trust-based governance mechanism allowed for regular contact between colonists and foragers, reducing conflict to a minimum. The Comcáac, therefore, insisted on the voluntary nature of their relationship with the colonists and only resorted to flight or violence to repel attempts by the colonial power to exert control over their movements. Nevertheless,

protest of the missionaries usually ended these rare phases of free interaction between foragers and colonists, since it undermined their attempts to indoctrinate the neophytes. In response to the complaints, the viceroy and the king would order a definitive subordination of the roaming families, which resulted in a renewed outbreak of violent resistance.

A long-term micro-historical study of these conflicts shows that although the egalitarian societies rejected the hierarchical structures of their *criollo* neighbors for their own social organization, they nevertheless understood how to use them to their advantage. When independent families were overtaken by a military squad with the intention of bringing them to the mission site, they reminded the military that the governor had given orders allowing them to freely roam their habitat. They creatively appropriated the post-independence state regulation stipulating that individual landownership should be implemented as the basis for free-market economic development. Those family groups among the Comcáac who had accepted a life in the mission towards the end of colonial rule insisted upon their ownership of the former mission lands. When land property rights were negotiated on a regional level during the first decades after independence in Sonora (1821-1848), the former foragers were put at the back of the line by the local government representatives because they did not do a lot of work on these fields. The Comcáac complained to the next higher authority, the prefect of Hermosillo, who also disappointed them, as he was dependent on the good will of the local landowners who wanted to divide the mission land among them. Consequently, the Comcáac sent a delegation to visit the republican governor of Sonora and denounced the occupation of their land. The governor, concerned about the peacefulness Comcáacand subsistence of the Comcáac population, ordered the return of the lands to the Comcáac. As a result, under the protest of the *mestizo* landowners, each of these Comcáac heads of family was given a small piece of land (called *suerte*) as private property, which was deemed sufficient to feed a nuclear family. However, the settled Comcáac once again made optimal use of the opportunities of the free-market system: instead of working the fields themselves, they leased their plots to neighboring *mestizos* and collected an annual lease fee. In this way, they acted as micro-landowners instead of becoming small farmers as the government had intended. The government's declared goal was not achieved, but the Comcáac acted entirely within the established legal framework.

Finally, in the Mexican Northwest, independence introduced local knowledge about indigenous groups on higher administrative levels. In colonial times, officials, missionaries, and the military were almost exclusively made up of non-local staff. While their loyalty to the crown was proven, they lacked any knowledge about the socio-economic particularities of the indigenous groups they were to govern. The republic, on the other hand, could not fall back on external actors and was therefore obliged to rely on recruitment from the local *criollo* population as state actors. Although they were often characterized by the sovereign administrative center as disobedient to orders, they were often highly knowledgeable about the local indigenous population, essentially the territory most familiar to them. Soon after independence, a *criollo* commanding officer brought to the attention of the government that the semi-nomadic forager groups of the Comcáac needed permission to visit their roaming grounds on a regular basis, even when they had agreed on settling in a Mexican village. In consequence of his corresponding orders, the

Comcáac returned voluntarily to the village after a few weeks or months, as they had done for short periods during the colonial era, too. However, this trust-based form of conflict resolution, by applying local knowledge about indigenous groups to governance mechanisms, did not last long. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Sonoran policies moved towards an aggressive solution of conflict.

4.2 The Comcáac

South of the Comcáac territory, the Cahita-speaking Yaqui and Mayo (*yoeme*) groups had made a living by farming since pre-colonial times, maintaining an egalitarian social organization. Agricultural products and techniques introduced by the Europeans were more attractive to them than to forager groups and fostered a successful establishment of the Jesuit mission system in the early 1600s. After a fierce uprising against the colonial system was crushed in 1741, the Yaqui became the most populous ethnic group in Sonora, serving the Spaniards as grain producers, mineworkers, and soldiers in campaigns against other ethnic groups in the province. In spreading the Spanish language (*castellanización*), colonial and republican governments tried to homogenize the populations in the area they governed and to create a uniform *demos*. During the course of the eighteenth century, Spanish replaced the autochthonous languages as the *lingua franca* in Sonora, even though the greater part of the indigenous population remained at least bilingual. Some leaders of indigenous rebellions, however, increasingly utilized Spanish in order to unite the multilingual population against the "whites," turning the official language policy upside down.

Immediately after independence, a certain Juan Ignacio Jusacamea a.k.a. Juan de la Bandera was able to elevate himself to captain general of the Yaqui and Mayo groups in the southern part of the province. The Spaniards and Jesuits had already introduced the civil-military position of captain general in the eighteenth century to make the egalitarian groups of Yaqui and Mayo farmers governable in the European fashion. Although the captain general was usually appointed by the state authorities, Jusacamea appointed himself and turned against the republican government of Sonora. He dictated speeches aimed at the indigenous communities in Sonora to some of his literate followers and had them taken to the villages by messengers. In Spanish, Jusacamea called for a general uprising against the Mexican settlers, declared himself the successor of King Moctezuma (the last Aztec ruler), and emphasized his call to leadership with an apparition of the Virgin Mary (*Virgen de Guadalupe*, Patron Saint of Mexico). The Spanish language, Christian religion, and indigenous traditions of the Valley of Mexico had been introduced as elements of *criollo* culture during colonial times and served as a common denominator for the extremely heterogeneous population during independence as well. Jusacamea, however, used all three elements to win over the indigenous people in Sonora against the *criollos*. Moreover, Jusacamea appropriated elements of the new governing system, too. When the *criollo* government deposed him as captain general and had him replaced by a successor more sympathetic to the Mexican side, he countered with a plebiscite in a populous Yaqui village that put him back in this position. As a gifted guerrilla warrior, he was able to keep the periphery of the

Sonora province restless for eight years (1825-1833), assembling a broad, multi-ethnic coalition of indigenous resistance until he was finally captured and executed (Spicer 1962: 130-133; Hu de Hart 1984: especially Chapter 2; Hu de Hart 2003: 135).[8]

5. Case Study *Cono Sur*: The Mapuche in Southern Chile[9]

In the case-study region of the border areas in southern Chile, colonial and republican actors also had to appropriate indigenous ideas of governance in order to find a way of getting along with the groups called the "Mapuche."[10] In pre-colonial times, the Mapuche were already farming the lands on which they had settled, and organized themselves according to a horizontal hierarchy. These hierarchies were based on the existence of traditional lineages, from which the respective *lonkos* (leaders) were chosen. The Mapuche groups, often quarrelling among themselves, settled collective property issues through common rituals in which the *lonkos* presented the requests of their respective group and aimed to achieve a consensual solution. The redistribution of material goods played a central role and weakened the potential for conflict due to unequal property conditions between the groups.

After the conquest of the central valley of the Andes, the Spanish conquerors ventured into the territory of the Mapuche and tried to compel the individual groups of the population to swear allegiance to the king, as they had done throughout their colonial empire. The Mapuche society, however, which has been described as multicephal or heterarchical, did not represent a centralized political unity. In spite of a cultural and especially a linguistic kinship, the respective groups and their *lonkos* were politically independent and, in this autonomy, similar to the egalitarian hunter and gatherer groups such as the Comcáac. Contrary to a war leader of the Comcáac, however, a single *lonko* could enter into binding agreements in his group's name. The Spaniards' campaigns of conquest ended in Araucania, not least because no elite group had established itself within the Mapuche whose instrumentalization would have given the Spaniards power over the remaining population. The civil servants of the colonial power, who were accustomed to dealing with clear hierarchical structures, had to try to win over each *lonko* individually, as total military subjugation proved impossible. Instead of conquering the territory, the Spanish military and missionary machinery were forced by the dispersed Mapuche farmers to apply strategies for "conquering their friendship" (Contreras Saíz 2011: 113-140).

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8 Among the Maya, whose history at the other end of Mexico resembles the Yaqui experience in a striking number of ways, Christian symbols became important banners for rebellion against foreign rule as well. See Reifler-Bricker (1993).

9 The following case study is based on research by Mónika Contreras Saiz that will be presented in her doctoral thesis.

10 The Mapuche underwent a process of ethnogenesis, consolidating in the late nineteenth century. Earlier in this region, several semi-sedentary and nomadic groups shared a common language and culture but were politically organized into autonomous and independent lineages, differing from each other according to their place of residence.

One possibility to do this was a pre-Spanish ritual employed to reach agreements between the Mapuche groups into which the foreign intruders had been integrated. Just as the individual *lonkos* did, the Spanish colonial state and, later on, the Republic of Chile had to reserve substantial sums of goods and/or money in order to appear as generous gift-givers in these meetings, which the Spaniards dubbed *parlamentos*. Ambassadors of the colonial power or the Republic were obliged to listen to the tiring speeches of all *lonkos* present in the *parlamento*. Each of the sometimes more than hundred Mapuche leaders repeated in his own words the agreements that had been reached, thereby expressing his own consent and that of his group. This proceeding could last for days, during which gifts and food needed to be constantly distributed and the impatient Spanish soldiers kept pacified. In order to keep the Mapuche from their feared *malones* – horseback raids on the *criollo* settlements – the colonial power and the Republic had to appropriate indigenous forms of negotiation. The familiar form of meetings, speeches, and mass meals made it possible for the participating Mapuche groups to trust that the agreements with the Spaniards or Chileans would be upheld. While the Spanish/Chilean need for legitimacy was met by a written contract formed out of the agreements, the interethnic meeting itself had to satisfy the demands of an oral tradition and proceed in a correspondingly ritualized manner.

For Spaniards and Chileans, the crux of these negotiations concerned agreements that, from today's perspective, would be located within the political sphere of security. Similar to the Comanches, the Mapuche did not draw a fundamental line between raid and trade, diplomacy and violence, or slavery and adoption, which resulted in their actions seeming spontaneous and unpredictable. For the centralized European administrative state, however, government was supposed to be based on the unity of principle and action. Consequently, external relationships were divided into different categories. In some cases, these categories were mutually exclusive, resulting in the paralysis of government processes (Hämäläinen 2008: 16).

For the Chilean state, a governance service in the security sector principally meant the avoidance of violent attacks by indigenous groups against white settlers living in the border towns (*pueblos fronterizos*) and their goods. There were several mechanisms through which this governance service was to be rendered. One mechanism consisted in the state appointment of a missionary, whose task in the first instance was to establish contact with the indigenous society and to spread Christian ideals. As soon as a missionary had won the trust of the indigenous population, it was easier to construct a military fort, whose garrison could fend off the indigenous attacks on the white settlers. To this end, the missionaries had to appropriate Mapuche law (the so-called *ad mapu*, "customs of the land").

The *ad mapu* is a collection of rules and norms for Mapuche social, religious, and cultural patterns of behavior, and provided autochthonous mechanisms of conflict resolution. Knowledge about the traditionally handed-down conflict solution mechanisms was bestowed upon individuals called *weupife*. In addition to the *lonkos* and shamans (*machi*), the *weupife* formed a third specialized group within Mapuche society. The *ad mapu* included penalties for murder and raids, as well as for adultery and other behaviors that the Mapuche perceived as anti-social. If a Mapuche murdered someone, for instance, a determined material restitution had to be made

to the family of the victim. A *confesionario* from 1843 (a small booklet that provides guidelines for confession) features the following question to be posed by the missionary to the indigenous sinner: "If you killed another, did you not pay the owner of the deceased?" (*Si mataste tu a otro, no pagaste al dueño del difunto?*).[11] Here, values that would normally have been rejected by Christian doctrine found their way into the words used by priests. Violent acts inside indigenous society could not be persecuted as criminal acts according to republican law.

But these strategic adoptions of indigenous ideas, laws, and values were used against the culture of the native Chilean population itself. Around 1860, when the systematic occupation of Araucania began, the state actors tried to instrumentalize their knowledge of Mapuche values towards their own ends. A military captain of the republican government justified the occupation of part of the indigenous territory to the *lonkos* in terms of indigenous values. Since individual Mapuche groups had fought on the side of the royalists against the rebels after 1810, the captain claimed that the aggressive taking of lands constituted compensation for the Chileans who had been killed by the Mapuches during the Wars of Independence (Leiva 1984: 68, 106-107). This argument was based on the logic of the Mapuche oral law, *ad mapu*. The occupation of the indigenous lands between the Bio-Bio and Malleco Rivers, however, was in reality part of the security plan for state expansion endeavors aimed at opening this territory for the settlement of *criollo* citizens by killing and displacing the indigenous population. This cynical use of indigenous moral concepts overlooked the fact that according to the *ad mapu*, murder could be compensated for through a payment of cattle or women, but not through signing over land. The appropriation of indigenous values by missionaries and military in the Chilean South was meant to resolve the security issues of the white population.

6. Summary and Prospects for Future Investigation

A comparison between the case studies presented here and those that have been left out shows that colonial and postcolonial states fundamentally lacked legitimacy in regard to indigenous groups on the frontier. The successful regulation of collective matters on a local level could only be achieved through measures that were familiar to both parties and, consequently, aimed at building up a trust relationship. This necessity was often overlooked until the state's monopoly on power had proven non-existent. The unquestioned claim to sovereignty of the Crown or, after independence, of the "legitimately constituted authorities," blinded most government representatives to the necessity of translating sovereign actions of the state into processes for establishing agreements on a local level. State actors had to incorporate the expectations of their negotiation counterparts into their own communicative self-presentation in order to build up a relationship of trust with them (Luhmann 2000: 80-81). The first step – finding out the expectations of the autochthonous groups for the social coexistence with the Europeans and

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11 "Confesionario por preguntas y pláticas doctrinales en castellano y araucano (según el manuscrito inédito del misionero Fray Antonio Hernández Calzada (1843) con notas biográficas por el R.P. Fray Antonio Hernández Calzada O.F. M.," quoted in Menard/Milos/Foerster (2006: 16).

criollos – was rarely taken. When it was, the individual civil servants and missionaries involved mostly died away without being heard, even on a local level, or were removed by the transfer of personnel in the hierarchical government regimes and missionary orders. After independence, the necessity of recruiting government personnel from the local population brought a wave of intimate knowledge about the regional indigenous populations to the state administrative levels. The lessons regional officials learned from their experiences (in colonial times) with indigenous groups were well suited to avoiding cyclical conflicts, but did not endure very long, either. The results of micro-historical investigation show that smaller groups had a distinctly higher potential of successful appropriation and were able to adapt quickly and creatively to changing circumstances. States, on the other hand, appear particularly lethargic from a historical perspective. Similarly, the independent separation of smaller collectives from the state-conceived society also enabled parts of the immigrant population to avail themselves of new and emerging opportunities.[12] The surprising resilience of non-state societies can be explained by their capacity to move into spheres of state domination, where they could gain access to valuable goods, technologies, and knowledge while maintaining the option of moving away to defend their freedom and autonomy. Navarrete Linares has in fact proposed a similar social dynamic of oscillation between periods of state-driven concentration and periods of stateless dispersion that existed since pre-Columbian times in the Amazon, the Maya region, and northern Mesoamerica (Navarrete Linares 2011).

The micro-historical results further suggest that different forms of violence that would have been defined as security problems from the perspective of the state had a mediating or communicative function from the indigenous point of view. Raids, for instance, served as a mechanism for leveling unequal property ownership between neighboring societies that were considered to have equal rights (egalitarian). Even the abduction of "white" settlers or their children and their integration into indigenous society can be viewed as a way of creating artificial kinships between enemy collectives, which were designed to bring about greater mutual affinity in the long term.

As shown by the example of Araucania, the acceptance of indigenous legal logic was used against the indigenous society and served as a justification for the use of drastic force. A discrepancy emerges between rhetorical appropriation and the practical deterrence of the indigenous population's drive for autonomy. Parallel to this, the example of the Yaqui captain general Jusacamea shows that the indigenous collective also appropriated elements of *mestizo* society, which stemmed from the colonial governance tradition, and used them to recruit armed forces against the *criollos.*

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12 In their attempt to create a homogenous national society, the elites in Latin America recruited European settlers, who acquired "unpopulated land" and in return were to ensure the "whitening" of the rural population. In Mexico, French immigrants were particularly favored because of their presumed closeness to the "Latin culture" with which the criollo elites identified. After a French colony was founded in 1852 in Cocóspera (Sonora), however, the government of the province soon received complaints that the European settlers were hunting free-roaming horses and occasionally organized raids on the Mexican citizens. They had largely adapted to the given circumstances and asserted themselves almost as "French Apaches" into the culturally heterogeneous population of the Mexican Northwest (González de Reufels 2003: 90,110-113).

Our case studies seem to show that the appropriations taking place during the colonial period mainly served to surmount communication problems and ease cohabitation, while appropriations in the culturally heterogeneous context after the system collapse through independence were intended to end violent resistance. Yet the initial finding remains crucial that mechanisms of appropriation and resistance are empirically almost inseparable. In the culturally heterogeneous context of the Latin American frontiers, appropriation is generally eclectic and, as a mechanism, usually counteracts intentional control by state actors.

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