

THE EMERGENCE OF AN INDIGENOUS SOCIAL ACTOR IN SOUTHERN CHILE:

MAPUCHE SOCIAL CAPITAL AND A CONTENTIOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN LA ARAUCANÍA

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This paper consists of two parts. In Part One, the concept of social capital is defined and the debate surrounding it is summarized. In Part Two, a particular type of social capital, a 'contentious social movement' is analyzed by means of a case study of the Mapuche indian *Consejo de Todas las Tierras* of southern Chile.

PART ONE. A KEY CONCEPT: 'SOCIAL CAPITAL.'

Social capital is defined in this paper as the substance of certain social relations in which attitudes of trust combine with behaviours of reciprocity and cooperation, such that those who possess this capital have access to greater benefits than they could enjoy in its absence.

Today a somewhat chaotic debate surrounds the concept of social capital. The discussions have proven their usefulness by bringing together a variety of conceptual fields applicable to strategies for overcoming poverty. The resulting strategic alternatives can be found in recent studies of causes for the persistence of poverty, and in new policy options currently under consideration.

The use of market mechanisms in social policy has already revealed shortcomings (Cohen, 2001), certainly on a par with those found in earlier attempts to establish welfare State systems in the region. However, many new experiences now being reported involve social policy approaches that favour a new view of the collective: regulations that govern services and transfers hold out incentives for association, and these elements of cooperation and social incentives for performance correspond generally to the conceptual framework of social capital.

Strong central Governments are a centrepiece of this new strategy, along with the intentional production of beneficial shocks for local systems that traditionally perpetuated inequality and exclusion. Poor communities do not lay sole claim to social capital; indeed, many privileged sectors wield their own, to exclude and even to limit or weaken the social capital of other groups.

Whether explicitly or implicitly, Government programmes tend to treat social capital as part of the problem because asset formation among poor groups becomes very difficult when this capital is concentrated in few hands. Incidentally, these programmes reveal that the conceptual framework of social capital is not essentially conservative, but a neutral analytical tool useful for the design and application of highly diverse strategies for overcoming poverty.

Because results have been so discouraging, and because poverty-fighting policies in the region have clearly reached their limits, it is time to take a new look at the traditional analytical approach to reproduction of poverty and capacity building. This, combined with early evidence coming from concrete experiences with social capital formation and developing synergy between the State and civil society, can lead to greatly improved poverty policies in these and other areas, both locally and nationally.

I. Social capital in a complex system

A. The war of definitions

1. Is there such a thing as social capital?

Some economists, both neoclassical (Arrow, 2000) and neo-Marxist (Fine, 2001), have argued that social capital is not capital at all, in the strict, full sense of the word. However, they make these claims based on widely diverse definitions of capital. Other authors, refuting these arguments, have put together detailed disquisitions pointing to a whole body of commonalities that liken the conceptual framework of social capital to that of economic capital, particularly physical capital: delayed consumption in favour of investment, disinvestment, the capacity for transformation, convertibility, deterioration, the capacity to create other forms of capital, and the like (Robison, Schmid and Siles, 2001). In any case, the term now figures in a vast bibliography produced by the academic world as well as the international development agencies, accumulated over more than a decade, and it is unlikely that any alternative name will be take hold to cover the wide range of issues examined in this paper.

No one questions the pressing need to emphasize these social, cultural and contextual considerations in an analysis of problems and policies for development, equity and fighting poverty. There is widespread recognition that individuals and collectives manage intangible resources that can be labelled “capital” in the general sense of assets mobilized to bring about results in undertakings and strategies; and in the absence of these assets, comparable outcomes could not have been accomplished (Coleman, 1990).

The concept continues to arouse a wide range of intellectual positions concerning its public policy implications. The many authors reveal considerable differences regarding social capital, lying along an ideological continuum from the conservative to the progressive: “At the progressive end there is concern with citizenship, empowerment, pluralism and democratization, whereas at the conservative end social capital is found in a commitment to traditional family structures and a collective moral order of traditional values” (Gamarnikow and Green, 1999, as cited in Fine, 2001).

The conservative on the ideological spectrum is content with existing national socio-economic structures, while others see the need to transform current systems utterly, claiming that they are profoundly and essentially unjust and inequitable. An empirical study of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean reveals, from the optimistic, reformist viewpoint, a need to change relationships between the State and poor groups as a prerequisite for changing the dynamics of reproduction of poverty, exclusion, and concentration of assets, including social capital.

2. Three different views

The ideological positions expounded in recent writings on social capital tend to cluster around three views of the human being in society:

- i) individual maximization by rational choice, mixed with culturalistic determinism;
- ii) class relations as determinants of ideological superstructures and distribution of goods; and
- iii) complex social systems based on multiple agents.

The first group of authors regards social capital as a set of cooperative behaviours and norms for peaceful coexistence that arise from the individual exercise of self-interest. Even self-interested choices of “rational devils” would produce social capital because cooperation opens the door to greater levels of individual profit (Fukuyama, 2000). Some authors extend this logic of rational choice into the non-economic realm, such as the satisfaction of socio-emotional needs (Robison and Siles, 2001). More conservative thinkers tend to see culture, defined in terms of beliefs and norms, as the original “uncaused cause” (Fukuyama, 2000) of social capital formation. The difference between these authors and the ‘progressive’ group, at the other end of the continuum, reflects a long-standing discrepancy concerning the direction of causality between norms and behaviours.

The third group reflects a growing tendency to see society as a complex ecological system with feedback mechanisms and diverse degrees of intelligent guidance. It is a view that brings together diverse elements of earlier conceptual frameworks (the rational individual, the culturalistic approach and the sociologizing stance). This model sees social capital as one of the intangible assets that multiple individual and collective agents mobilize in their strategies and undertakings. As in any complex system, causality is not unidirectional, and the system does not tend to equilibrium (Cowan et al., 1994). A single change, whether in norms, in social relations or in material conditions, can trigger a shock in the system that unleashes a transition phase of unpredictable outcome (Durlauf, 1997; Boisier, 2000; Bebbington, 2000). Instead of seeing abstract culture as a rigid programme, this group views it as an accumulation of alternative and even contradictory repertoires that are, moreover, being constantly redefined.

Another way to classify and analyze the writings of dozens of authors on social capital is by looking at their own attitudes toward the concept. Edwards (1999) places them into one of three groups: “enthusiasts, tacticians and sceptics.” The label “tactician” may need further explanation: they believe that social capital holds out the potential for doing things better, and they extend a unifying interdisciplinary discourse able to embrace a broad range of concerns (Edwards, cited in Fine, 2001). The “enthusiasts” greatly outnumber the others, which probably reflects the markedly general nature of the term, making it easily appropriated by different theoretical and political schools (Fine, 2001). “Sceptics” are also numerous, apparently because the category includes a lively mix of people who feel put off by the very term “social capital,” who have read some paper with which they disagree, or who nurture a healthy suspicion of all excess

of intellectual enthusiasm and shy away from bandwagons.

3. Two types of “owners”

Definitions of social capital can be further divided between those authors who consider it a personal attribute expressed in reciprocity networks available to individuals (Portes, 1998; Espinoza, 1999); and those who believe that social capital is rather an attribute of social structures. The latter claim that social capital goes beyond the individual, extending to collective forms “owned” by communities, classes and entire societies (Coleman, 2000; Putnam, 1993b and Bourdieu, 1999). This discrepancy concerning ownership of social capital holds implications for determining who controls the use of this asset and who benefits from its outcomes. The divergent definitions reflect clear opinions on the viability of associative approaches to overcoming poverty. For example, Putzel asserts that trust among individuals in a network does not constitute a resource for society as a whole, but only for each individual or group at the centre of a network (Putzel, 1997).

Both Bourdieu and Coleman refer extensively to social capital as an attribute of social groups, collectivities and communities, and they examine the role of social institutions in creating this capital. Bourdieu emphasizes the need to conduct “investment oriented to the institutionalization of group relations” (Bourdieu, 1987). Coleman is particularly explicit on the issue raised by Portes. He describes social capital as a generator of public goods but distinguishes it from private, divisible, alienable goods; instead, social capital is an attribute of the social structure in which a person is embedded. Social capital, according to Coleman, benefits everyone, not primarily individual persons (Coleman, 1990).

North developed, in large part, the conceptual framework of economic neoinstitutionalism, which became a foundation of social capital. He explicitly centres his analysis on institutions at the community and supra-community levels (North, 1990). In general, both sociology and anthropology hold “institutions” as attributes of the collectivity rather than the individual. At this level of analysis, the nature of relations is not dictated by an immutable ‘culture’ nor is it an outgrowth of the sum total of interactions among individuals, reflecting decisions of personal interest; instead, it arises from complex systems produced by the co-evolution of these decisions and interactions. One of the challenges facing the conceptual framework of social capital is to detect the principles by which these systems operate; another is to understand the cycle of feedback among individual actions, systems that emerge from these actions, and the ways in which changes at one level of abstraction lead to changes at another.

These positions pit the individual against the collective, as Portes notes, revisiting a long-standing sociological and anthropological dichotomy. One group, upholding the “oversocialised” view, emphasizes internalization of collective norms and the impact of social relations and institutions on economic processes. Defenders of the “undersocialised” stance pose the calculated self-interest of individuals as the driving force of all economic and social exchange (Fukuyama, 2000; Fine, 2001). Here too, Coleman is clear and balanced in stating that in reality, people are not wholly selfish and, when making rational decisions, do not act in total independence from one another (Coleman, 1990).

Portes also recognizes the collective nature of social capital. He describes benefits of group membership and portrays social capital as a feature of social structure that facilitates the actions of persons and corporate actors. He shows how institutions of social capital and their “mechanisms appropriable by individuals and groups” exercise social control (Portes, 1998). According to Portes, the three basic functions of social capital are: as a source of social control, as a source of family support, and as a source of benefits through extra familial networks.

Communities are composed of individuals who benefit from community social capital. The established ideology of social capital owes much of its wealth to its attempt to clarify the ways in which individual social capital interacts with the institutions of community social capital, whether by resisting them or, more commonly, reinforcing them.

These two types of social capital -individual and collective- can be distinguished in part by their *expected* effects (even though their functions are not necessarily taken to completion in all real cases; social capital is only one of several factors necessary for the desired results to occur). The two concepts are equally valid and complementary, but heuristically distinct. As Portes warns, it is important not to “confuse ... dyadic exchanges [between two individuals] with those embedded in larger social structures that guarantee their predictability and course” (Portes, 1998).

There are other fundamental differences between personal and impersonal forms of social capital. Personal social capital, expressed in networks, can vanish if certain individuals disappear, while “institutionalized” forms of social capital endure despite shifting membership. New manifestations of social capital can emerge very quickly, based primarily on existing personal ties or on ties that arise through initial interactions by people when they begin to cooperate. Such relationships, however, evaporate with equal alacrity in the face of adverse conditions. Institutionalization is the best means to overcome the precarious nature of this social condition: establishing norms and details for interrelationship, and procedures that perform effectively for attaining shared objectives.

4. Closed systems, open minds

A new ‘unified theory’ appears to be taking shape. Transcending the separate disciplines, it incorporates the latest relevant ideas of each one. Cross-disciplinary criticism has fostered a more in-depth debate, and the resulting dialectic has yielded new hypotheses and views of the role of social capital in development. Emerging from the social capital debate is a supra-disciplinary paradigm; not limited to social capital, it involves models of the complex system of human society that incorporate social capital as one of many elements to explain social dynamics.

Nevertheless, it appears likely that broad discrepancies will continue to separate the three theoretical views of social capital. One likely outcome should be a convergence of the myriad definitions of the basic concept to ‘only’ two or three, each with its own ideological charge. With fewer definitions to juggle, it will become possible to select or assemble a conceptual framework appropriate to each analytical problem or specific application (the usual practice in applied social sciences), until such time as the debate works itself out and a more manageable array of conceptual positions on social capital

takes shape. This paper offers just such an effort, guided by the “tactical” objective of analyzing real or potential contributions that the concept could make to public policy for overcoming poverty in Latin America.

5. Conceptual choices in this paper

Some conservative thinkers and institutions have seized on social capital to justify pulling out State intervention from those communities where such capital allegedly exists. Social capital, like any intellectual construct, can serve the political interests of anyone who wields it.

Following on the above discussion and summary of diverse positions upheld by authors on social capital, this chapter explicitly stands on the side of complexity, seeking to develop systemic models with a focus on the shifting patterns of feedback between the cultural and the structural. We side with the tacticians who are looking for relevant fields of action in the theoretical debate and in the observation of experiences. We also stand with progressives who believe that building social capital among excluded sectors may trigger transitions and drive reforms able to narrow social inequities.

From the theoretical and ethical perspective, this paper draws instrumental value from the ongoing debate and from empirical experience. The chief contribution of this conceptual backdrop is that it gives the lie to the “technocratic myth” that the poor stay poor because they are merely a bundle of needs and pathologies and that they need technocrats to do things for them. The author distances himself from the conservative position because of his belief in the need to facilitate empowerment of the poor, supporting and nurturing their own capacities to form social capital. This point is particularly important in countries where public agencies are governed by the practice of paternalism and patronage sustained by a charitable, welfare-dominated view of poor sectors as essentially deficient. The proposals offered at the end of this article are based on the conceptual approaches to social capital detailed below.

B. The dynamics of social and cultural capital in sociocultural systems

1. Three levels of the system

The following analysis is built on a behaviouralist working definition of social capital that targets social relations above and beyond normative discourse; it examines poverty from a holistic perspective that systematically associates social capital with other forms of capital.

Social capital is defined here as the attitudes of trust and behaviours of reciprocity and cooperation contained within certain social relations; and the unstated content of such a definition is at least as important as what is said. This definition, unlike others currently in use, does not centre on norms or on culture. It is a definition that follows in the footsteps of Coleman and Bourdieu, who see social capital as a resource to which persons, groups and collectivities have access through their social relations. Other authors, including North, Putnam and Fukuyama, prefer to place the emphasis on factors of culture, values, or symbolic and abstract elements. By ascribing causality to cultures, understood as normative systems and cosmovisions, these authors move perilously close to a simplistic “culturalist determinism.” They neglect the variability

and volatility of normative systems, especially the ease with which they mutate in reaction to shifting social structures or in response to other changes in the environment.

By defining social capital in this way, we distinguish it analytically from cultural capital. Bourdieu, Bebbington, Boisier and others have contributed much in this field by positing different kinds of intangible capital. One inevitable conclusion that arises from the debate between “culturalists” and “sociologists” is that the cultural and social subsystems of any given human population are in constant interaction. One does not determine the other, nor do they endlessly reproduce as identical iterations. We can make this easier to understand by conceiving the overall sociocultural system on three distinct planes. Social capital then lies on the behavioural plane of social relations and systems, while cultural capital and human capital or cognitive capital occupy the abstract plane. Cognitive capital should be understood as knowledge (Boisier, 2000). Cultural capital is the symbolic system of world views and views of the human being, and the norms and values associated with socially valued behaviours.

2. Trust, reciprocity and cooperation: three components of the relations and social institutions of social capital

a) Trust

In the sense used here, individual trust is an attitude (not an emotion) based on expectations of behaviour by the other person in a relationship, and on the affection existing between the two. The cultural underpinning of trust lies in the principle of reciprocity, and its emotional foundation is found in the affection felt toward people who prove to be reliable and seem to trust us. Trust is communicated through reiterated, reinforced behaviours in the form of discourses and actions realized that cede control over goods to an ‘other’.

Whether trust is present or absent depends, not on rigid programming of an “ancestral” culture, but on repeated interactions with other people and an accumulation of experience demonstrating that they will respond with a *quid pro quo*¹ to an act of generosity. Their response, in turn, nourishes a bond that combines acceptance of risk with a feeling of affection or expanded identity. Trust implies a willingness to relinquish control over one’s own goods to a trusted person (or, in the case of an institution, to its authorities). It entails overcoming risk aversion, at least with that person or group.

Nevertheless, when the goods whose control is yielded or shared are of high value, the temptation for betrayal by the ‘trustee’ is proportionally greater as well, meaning that continued trustworthiness brings a high opportunity cost. The human need to have someone to trust comes up against a world fraught with risks and threats, creating a fertile environment for relations of both social capital and fraud. All social groups nurture feelings of family obligation and internalization of the rules of community identity to protect themselves against betrayal. Nevertheless, betrayal occurs, serving as

¹“Tit for tat,” the essential principle of reciprocity and thus, cooperation.

a traumatic lesson learned and a negative reinforcement against trust.²

b) Reciprocity

The social sciences, especially anthropology, developed the concept of reciprocity on the basis of the classic Marcel Mauss *Essay on the Gift*.

In his essay, written at the beginning of the century and published in the 1950s, Mauss identifies reciprocity as the governing principle of formal and informal institutional relations at the community level. From pre-market times until today, societies have practised a form of exchange quite foreign to market principles (although it also operates within the sphere of the market), involving the exchange of gifts (objects, assistance, favours). A gift signals willingness to enter into a social relationship and a culturally sanctioned obligation to return the favour. This “diffuse reciprocity,” or the eventual return in some way or another of a favour, loan or “gift,” is obligatory, but in contrast to market transactions, payback cannot be immediate or precisely equivalent (Mauss, 1966).

Social relations in any socially delimited setting (such as a traditional society or most modern communities) take shape through numerous past interactions and as long-term potentials glimpsed in the future. Relationships in communities with stable membership tend to form simultaneously among the same people and families in all spheres and institutions of human life: religious, legal, political, family and economic. According to Mauss (1966), these relationships are “total phenomena,” and communities themselves are “total systems” blending economic, religious and legal features. This is why reciprocity, which at first glance appears to be one of the least of a broad range of social phenomenon, is in fact the very foundation of the relationships and institutions of social capital.

Several other anthropologists were quick to understand this conceptual framework and enrich it. Raymond Firth developed a concept of “social organization” to describe regular relationships derived from institutions and social structures (Firth, 1961). George Foster wrote on “dyadic contracts” as the basis of interaction between peers and of networks, describing both as expressions of reciprocity (Foster, 1961). Dyadic contracts, defined as informal and generally implicit understandings between two people who maintain exchange over time, are the first link in ego-centred networks and, at the same time, the basis of more complex organizations that serve as collective assets.

c) Cooperation

Cooperation is complementary action to achieve shared objectives in a common undertaking. It is different from collaboration, in which allied actors exchange contributions in pursuit of separate (although compatible) undertakings and objectives. Cooperation emerges alongside trust and bonds of reciprocity as an outcome of frequent interaction among individual strategies. Its intellectual foundations lie in game theory

²In this case, it is not a question of a permanent cultural balance contrary to social capital, in the style of Putnam (1993a); where betrayal has occurred repeatedly or at a very high cost, the disillusionment is overcome only by the passage of time and many positive experiences with trust reciprocated.

and cooperation theory (Axelrod, 1984), meaning that it can be fostered through iterative opportunities to trust or betray. Alternatively, it could emerge as an unintended consequence of the co-evolution of strategies practised by multiple agents (“complexity”) (Cowan et al., 1994; Axelrod, 1997).

3. Networks, teams, communities, bridges and links: types of social capital

All human groups possess the potential for social capital. This is because values and norms that reinforce cooperative behaviours as well as other “precursors” of social capital, such as friendship, are almost universally present in human groups. Nevertheless, the magnitude of social capital can vary tremendously from one human grouping to another because these precursors do not automatically comprise capital in and of themselves.

All people regularly maintain an array of friends and relatives who share values and norms similar to their own. Only occasionally, however, do they undertake some personal project, whether for a major life change or some other objective. This is when they reach into their pool of potential allies to recruit certain individuals. Friendship may exist as a value *per se*, or it may be more instrumental; but at times of opportunity or need, or when some risk arises, people recruit certain friends or relatives to lend a hand.

We obtain “socio-emotional satisfiers”³ through interpersonal interaction and through group membership, which may or may not be instrumental initially. These satisfiers meet our human need for sociability, a need no less fundamental than material needs (Durlauf, 1999). They give us the incentive to invest our time, effort and reciprocity in groups and organizations, and this behaviour produces an immediate reward regardless of the success or failure of any shared undertaking.⁴

The dialectic between theoretical debate and empirical research has produced a hypothesis of six different kinds of social capital, each with its own characteristics and dynamics:

a) Individual social capital: dyadic contracts and ego-centred networks

Individual social capital is manifested primarily through social relations expressed as an informal dyadic contract (between two parties), containing an element of trust and reciprocity. It is extended through ego-centred networks.

This resource lies, not in individuals as in the case of human or ‘cognitive’ capital, but in relationships among individuals. Anthropologists speak of ego-centred networks in which each member has a distinct, unique network friends and contacts, comprising ‘personally-owned’ capital, and each individual is free to manage this capital and reap

³For an analysis of the centrality of these “socio-emotional goods” in the emergence and feedback of social capital behaviours, see Robison and Siles, 2001.

⁴Other forms of capital whose possession is able to produce emotional satisfaction are associated with some of the same psychosocial variables attached to the context of social capital.

its benefits.

b) Group social capital

Group social capital, an extension of ego-centred networks, appears when many bonds are interwoven in a face-to-face group. All members know each other, all are friends, and there is a high degree of closure, meaning that relationships become interwoven and denser. The order of magnitude found in empirical studies in Latin America runs from 4 to 12 people from different households. The end result is a group capable of functioning as a team, or in other words, as an 'enterprise'. The people all trust one another greatly as a result of multiple past experiences of diffuse reciprocity.

c) Community social capital

At the community level social capital becomes fully collective. It is unlike individual and group social capital, because communities acquire members, not through recruitment by a single person, but as a right of all residents. The community may be territorial or functional; in other words, membership may be associated with a stable neighbourhood or could be a community of interests defined by a common objective.

Communities are more than simple networks or even "circumscribed" networks. The classic definition of community focuses on coordinated activity in pursuit of a common purpose, self-government, cultural superstructure, and a sense of identity. Community social capital is comprised of structures that form the institutional bedrock of community cooperation. It resides not only in the array of networked dyadic interpersonal relationships, but also in the sociocultural system proper to each community and the structures by which it sets its norms, governs and manages itself and applies sanctions.

d) Bridging social capital: horizontal alliances in a given territory

A major extension of individual social capital as well as group and community social capital is the formation of ties that provide symmetrical, horizontal access to remote persons and institutions. Extensive horizontal bonds can be found in second-level associative organizations in a territory and usually take the form of alliances and coalitions.

e) Linking, 'ladder' social capital: reciprocity with asymmetrical control

All societies display power differences among individuals. In certain relationships of trust, reciprocity and cooperation, one party possesses more control and social capital than the others. When such bonds cut across social strata, they often assume the characteristics of a patron/client relationship. In a democratic context, a bridge of this kind may lead to empowerment and the formation of synergies. It can be visualized as a ladder more than a bridge, as it connects a low-power actor to a high-power actor, such as the State.

f) Societal social capital

In all nations or societies, certain practices, widespread throughout the territory,

constitute intangible assets belonging to all individuals. The challenge of studying and measuring these assets poses considerably more difficulty than at the local scale. Of particular interest here is the progressive dissemination of the social institutions and practices of democratic participation. This includes the learning of electoral processes and the mechanisms by which new actors emerge and eventually become accepted or tolerated in a local or regional socio-political system.

In combination, these diverse forms of social capital can contribute to overcoming poverty and improving the quality of life in the broadest sense.⁵ This will happen, however, only if social capital is combined with other assets of the poor and their allies in a complementary and synergistic process, through a consistent, shared strategy, and only when opportunities exist to change relations of control in society. As marginalized communities and neighbourhoods become social actors and mobilize their internal and external social capital, they will need to compete with other more powerful actors that use their own social capital to maintain control over their environment, which includes social groups that hold less power (Bourdieu, 2001).

C. How the forms of social capital interact

Applying the concept of social capital to overcoming poverty poses a challenge. It brings up issues of inequality among groups and requires examining how the different types and sub-national levels of social capital interact.

1. Reciprocity, kinship and the formation of social capital

Households rely on a set of material and human resources. However, they also have an important reserve of social resources: the bonds that strengthen cooperation with individuals and with other households. This cooperation is based, not on impersonal solidarity, but on interpersonal ties among specific and concrete individuals, that is, the social capital of the people who make up the household, an asset that they bring to the home itself as a group or team.

Although reciprocity is a form of exchange, it does not resemble an economic transaction so much as an oft-repeated give-and-take of gifts and favours. Compensation for these gifts is diffuse, neither immediate nor exact, and each expression of aid reaffirms and strengthens trust between the two parties (Mauss, 1966). This sheds light on another important characteristic of reciprocity: it is not a group relationship, except in a limited sense as a collection of individual relationships. Instead, it is a relationship derived from a stable, implicit agreement between two people, the above-mentioned dyadic contract. These non-explicit contracts exist between two people who agree to help one another at times of need or in risky economic endeavors. They operate in settings where legal sanctions are weak (Fukuyama, 2000), and they require some degree of personal certainty, or faith and trust in the solidarity of the other person, as in

⁵The typology used here is an adaptation of the one developed by Woolcock (1998). Individual, group and the community social capital all form what has been called bonding social capital, bridging social capital (among groups) and linking social capital (relationships among unequal groups, with a more explicit emphasis on verticality and inequalities of power).

many situations of modern life.

2. The kinship network: pool of social resources

While an individual's strongest, most stable and most reliable relations of reciprocity are with family, not all relatives are active participants in "dyadic" relationships with a given individual (or in anthropological terms, an "ego"). Indeed, an ego's known and recognized kin are nothing more than a potential pool of possible relationships of reciprocity. With many relatives, interaction is occasional and casual, and relationships with others are so fraught with conflict that stable reciprocity, with its positive affective load, is rendered almost impossible under normal conditions. Because the set of people holding positions of kinship (siblings, uncles, aunts, brothers- and sisters-in-law, etc.) differs objectively for each individual, this network of potential social relations is "ego-centred." Each ego lies at the hub of a web of relatives in concentric circles, overlapping and intertwining with the kinship networks of other egos in a single community.

The senses of belonging, identity and duty associated with kinship, critical for the objective of ensuring trust and reciprocal aid, are so strong that in many parts of this region, that the principle even extends to friends ("ritual" or "fictive" kin). Such relationships are formalized and ritualized through the institution of godfathers and godmothers (*padrinazgo*) in baptism, marriage and the like, producing as well bonds of 'co-parenthood' (*compadrazgo*).

3. Kinship groups, support groups and the "Big Man"

Out of this abstract web of potential relationships, compounded with the addition of neighbours, friends and members of the same generational cohort, each head of household maintains active relationships of diffuse reciprocity with a much smaller ego-centred network. Naturally, he is also engaged in the ego-centred networks of his relatives. These networks of real relations of exchange among family members are known as kinship groups. The fact that they overlap in a dense mesh of relations of reciprocity, with continuous exchanges of aid, is what lends the community a form of solidarity, much stronger than any abstract sense of shared social interest of a category or class, in its relations with the rest of the world.

Kin, as has been shown, do not automatically constitute a "social group." In the strict sense used by anthropological and sociological theory, the social group alludes to something more than a disperse network or a simple category of similar people. It is a grouping of people with stable relationships of interaction, whose perceptible boundaries distinguish its members from others. This is why ego-centred kinship groups have been called "quasi-groups" (Mayer, 1966).

Nevertheless, kinship groups often serve as the basis for authentic social groups whose presence is critical in any attempt to intervene in a community or neighbourhood. In some cultures, such as indigenous communities in the Andean region, these "real" social groups, while informal, serve as the base of support for a specific outstanding individual called the "Big Man" or some similar term. They are quasi-groups that, belying the academic myth of social pressure to distribute savings in such communities, actually enable peasant households in rural communities to accumulate capital and grow as businesses based on labour contributions acquired through the reciprocity network. In exchange, younger or less entrepreneurial relatives enjoy the security of knowing that

help will be available from the “Big Man” at times of need.

There is a prevailing trend for older heads of household to have more resources and greater status than younger people in general, leading to internal patron-client or “vertical” reciprocity relationships. In western Guatemala, reciprocity between people of unequal standing is also based on sometimes severe social stratification within the indigenous community, and some parents are able to leave their children a generous inheritance of goods and status. As a result, many “Big Men” head relatively stable and delimited support groups based on their own kinship group enhanced through relationships of *padrinazgo* and *compadrazgo* with nonrelatives. These groups function as expanded economic enterprises and as factions to support a particular man competing for prestige within the community. Because members cannot simultaneously belong to the kinship group of a rival man of prestige, these cases can legitimately be considered authentic social groups. Some communities have a single “Big Man” who has risen above the rest. Others have two or more, each with his particular support group based on horizontal and vertical reciprocity. The result is conflict, with factions vying for economic, political and organizational advantage. It is even common to observe the paradoxical practice of reinforcing commercial ties by establishing relationships of *compadrazgo* with outsiders from non-peasant social strata, often the very people who have despoiled the communities of land or proceeds from the sale of products.

4. Mutual reinforcement of the individual and the collective in communities and neighbourhoods

The yet-undefined processes by which community or “meso” institutional social capital arises from “micro” or individual social capital, and possibly from other origins, are highly complex and varied. Only by gaining an understanding of such processes will it be possible to develop a clear picture of the interaction between these levels of social capital. The two are not antithetical: individual social capital is a precursor of community social capital, which in turn is one of the resources by which people expand their individual social capital.

Stable social relations follow a clear progression. They begin as a dyadic contract between two individuals and advance to ego-centred networks (individual or “micro” social capital) that sometimes give rise to community social capital institutions (“meso” level). This is why Coleman (1990) believes that the existence of dense networks is a necessary precondition for structural social capital to emerge.

Social capital takes a distinct specific form at each of the three tiers (micro, meso and macro) in response to the particular problems existing at each level (Ostrom, 1999). From the individual to the community level, these types and rationales cross-fertilize one another in general terms, although conflict also frequently arises between the motivations of the individual, the closed group, and the community. Consequently, the presence of individual social capital at the micro level does not guarantee that meso or macro social capital will emerge. Similarly, the existence of social capital of any kind is no guarantee that benefits will accrue in all situations.

For example, as Portes notes, “...social capital in the form of [institutional] social control may clash with social capital in the form of network-mediated benefits...” (Portes, 1998). This is due partly, according to Portes, to the fact that the “function [of tight networks] is precisely to facilitate violation of those rules for private benefit.”

Indeed, in a certain sense, formal institutions exist largely to counteract individual social capital (Sen, 1987). Nevertheless, the basic norms of collective institutions do tolerate the workings of interpersonal networks, and individuals abide by institutional norms because they have internalized the values of these norms and because any infringement of them brings negative sanctions by the group. Individual social capital in networks and community social capital in institutions can be symbiotic and synergistic, reinforcing and complementing one another. This occurs when an informal institutional structure exists, providing collective norms for prohibitions, punishments, and “rewards” for individuals, and serving as a potential source of personal benefit. The norms and mechanisms of reward may include heightened prestige, public goods, and rules that encourage reciprocity. Personal strategies operating within this framework reinforce the institutional structure.

Another way in which individual social capital enhances community social capital is associated with stability – both are long-term propositions. Coleman claims that social capital is stable to the degree that individual strategies and relationships are stable; thus, “[d]isruptions of social organization or of social relations can be highly destructive to social capital” (Coleman, 1990).

Arrow (2000) also reminds us that formal social institutions – those whose legal structure is based on explicitly defined positions – are at least as important as the informal structures that comprise social capital. Indeed, Coleman argues that formal institutions can remain stable even at times when individual relationships and strategies experience great instability. At other times, of course, formal institutions become void of social capital, surviving as empty shells with little more than legal status, or derailed into functions of “amoral familism” (Banfield, 1951). Meanwhile, informal institutions with no legal basis or written rules may be highly stable and become so deeply embedded in formal institutions as to actually ensure their stability and effectiveness, albeit by altering their vision.

5. Community prestige as a strategic household objective

Much of the theoretical debate swirling around social capital has taken place in the abstract, with no reference to concrete local situations. In the best of cases, it has explicitly or implicitly targeted urban settings. Many of the issues examined above call for specific, tailor-made approaches when applied in rural communities, especially in the peasant regions of Latin America. In the words of Woolcock, “while poverty in strictly economic terms can be just as intense in the rural as is in urban areas,⁶ the presence in the former setting of tighter and more enduring community networks prevents many of the more visible manifestations of poverty associated with large cities” (Woolcock, 1998). In short, matters involving the existence, strength and utility of community social capital are simply different in rural settings, and an examination of them may in fact shed new light in the conceptual debate on social capital in general.

⁶In all the countries of the region, however, the percentages of poverty and indigence are much greater in the countryside than in the city. That is, in rural communities the presence of social capital is apparently associated with extreme shortages of other, complementary, forms of capital.

This chapter suggests that observation of rural communities could clear up issues of community social capital that are less evident in informal urban networks from which much of the theoretical work has drawn its models. The particular contribution of the rural vantage point is the central role that the territorial dimension plays in social capital.

It is a reasonable assumption that the rural community provides an ideal environment for social capital to emerge or be created.⁷ The relative stability of interpersonal relationships crisscrossed by kinship and located in a single local area throughout a lifetime very likely fosters a precursor of social capital. It is important not to succumb to bucolic romanticism about rural life, and to avoid idealized visions of “communitarianism” and “peasantry.” Nevertheless, peasant communities tend to possess abundant “precursors” for the formation of social capital – shared identity and historical memory, a local group descended from common ancestors, permanence among residents, strong ties of kinship, and fully constructed sociocultural institutions. In these places it is far easier to understand the dynamics by which individual and collective social capital interact.

Peasant households juggle a number of economic and family objectives, and their production decisions reveal priorities. An understanding of the stages in the household development cycle shows how non-economic “family” objectives shift over time. The head of household sets priorities along the following continuum: subsistence/consumption tends to prevail among young households, accumulation/capitalization takes precedence in middle age, and finally, older heads of household seek to maximize prestige by combining *wealth*, *generosity* and *service*.

Rural development projects often underestimate the importance of prestige in peasant communities. This is partly because prestige is to a degree a non-economic factor, and partly because of a generally accepted stereotype that peasants are essentially egalitarian, meaning to say, all equally poor. The technical specialist or professional, gazing earthward from a more lofty social position, likely underestimates the degree of respect and admiration that peasants may enjoy from their peers. Finally, the scale of values that define individual prestige varies from one cultural context to another, although the three factors listed at the end of the above paragraph tend to be basically universal.

In poor peasant regions of the Andes, Mexico and Mesoamerica, prestige and status (social ranking derived from a person’s personal prestige) are traditionally associated with the holding of an assortment of civic or religious *cargos* (“positions” or “offices”) that require great dedication of material resources and time by the head of household.

One hypothesis from early anthropological studies, currently undergoing reassessment, was that expenditures on religious festivals were a useful means to even out personal wealth because men who had begun to accumulate enough assets to achieve social differentiation were expected to make greater outlays (leveling mechanisms).⁸ Today it

⁷Empirical (and quantitative) evidence already exists to support the hypothesis that more social capital exists in rural communities. See UNDP, 2000.

⁸Although it is being rethought, the “leveling mechanism” has entered the trans-

has become clear that both the expenditure and the dedication of time constitute investments in prestige and diffuse reciprocity (see below), yielding future economic benefit. Studies have shown that expenditures associated with these positions did not reduce holders to a common level of poverty (positions include that of *cófrade* or member of a religious brotherhood, *alcalde rezador* or public leader of prayers, town councilman, and the like). By shouldering civic or religious expenditures, a household did cut into its capital and consumption levels during the current year. But in the long run, the head of that household gained greater prestige, enabling him to mobilize labour and products for his personal enterprises, and his material fortune was enhanced.

These traditional ceremonial positions, the performance of which was the most visible sign of prestige for heads of household, have changed profoundly in recent decades, as is most evident in western Guatemala. Although several formal political positions survive and are even expanding, two new formal institutions have gained greater presence in this region: evangelical churches and development or international aid projects. Half a century ago, the old syncretistic civic and religious system provided a means for older heads of household (who had several grown children and sufficient land and savings) to display their spending power and their dedication to others. Today this role has been taken over by the opportunity to occupy positions in evangelical congregations, new Catholic lay organizations and, to an ever greater degree, in international aid or development projects where community members serve as presidents of committees, promoters, and the like. According to some analysts (Stoll, 1990), these positions, which also bring expectations of patronage benefits, are emerging as new “positions” of community prestige for peasant heads of household.

6. Cities and peasants

Should the shape and dynamics of social capital in poor urban neighbourhoods be placed alongside those of the peasant or indigenous community and examined through the same lens? Can urban society be placed under the same microscope for a deeper look into the psychosocial relationship between social capital and the formation of personality and individual social identity? Powerful arguments can be made against it, including the particular cultural traits associated with possession and cultivation of land in small holdings. Indeed, Jane Jacobs, the great urbanist and one of the early proponents of the concept of social capital, emphasizes that her studies of social systems in large cities cannot be extended to rural communities or even to small cities (Jacobs, 1961).

Nonetheless, many working-class or marginalized urban neighbourhoods possess the essential characteristics of a community and display relationships and institutions of social capital which closely resemble those of the peasant world. Some time ago, Roberts described immigrant neighbourhoods and squatter camps in the mega-cities of Latin America as “cities of peasants,” places that reproduce both the normative systems and the bonds and concrete institutions of the rural places of origin of early migrants, especially in the poorest urban neighbourhoods (Richards and Roberts, 1999). Jacobs herself uses the following language to define the key principles of social capital in neighbourhoods of large cities: ““people invest years of their lives in significant relationships ... Once established, these networks can expand relatively fast, weaving

disciplinary literature on capital as an unquestioned concept.

new and resilient forms and new organizations ... These networks are the irreplaceable social capital of the city” (Jacobs, 1961). This closely resembles the language commonly used to describe rural communities. She also underscores the most important factor determining the development of social capital in urban neighbourhoods, a factor that also plays a critical role in collective social capital in nearly all rural communities: “... wherever ethnic neighbourhoods develop and are stable, they possess another quality apart from ethnic identity: they contain many individuals who stay put. This factor, more than mere ethnic identity, seems to me the most significant” (Jacobs, 1961).

What emerges most clearly from these references is that rural communities and lower-class urban neighbourhoods frequently possess certain basic elements in common. Each individual case, however, reveals unique dynamics that distinguish it to a greater or lesser degree from the common model. This applies equally to cases of rural and urban poverty.

D. Social exclusion: social capital as part of the problem

Is social capital by definition a good thing? It can legitimately be defined in reference to undertakings whose goal is to achieve the common good. Despite charges of tautology (Portes, 1998), any form of capital can be defined accurately in terms of the outcome it is expected to produce (Fine, 2001), so long as the presence of this outcome is not taken as evidence of a causal relationship. However, it would be a mistake to overlook the informal institutional phenomena that militate against social capital per se: exclusion, corruption, mafias, and the like.

For analytical purposes, social capital would be better defined in more neutral terms as a resource that can be applied in undertakings that produce benefit for some, while excluding or even injuring the rest. Social capital is ultimately an asset, like money: having it is a good thing. Almost all people have some social capital and use it as part of their strategies, both for economic purposes and for meeting social and emotional needs. However, social capital is not equally distributed in society, nor is it markedly more abundant in settings of severe poverty.

Cooperation in small, organized groups is clearly a universal human trait. An equally universal tendency in complex societies is for some such groups to be excluded. Durlauf (1997) has shown the dynamic process by which this tendency leads to growing, permanent inequality. Social capital is essentially associated with social *exclusion*, “... the societal and institutional processes that exclude certain groups from full participation in the social, economic, cultural and political life of societies” (Narayan, 1999).

1. Back to basics

Bourdieu, Fukuyama, Edwards and Foley are a few of the many authors who claim that social capital, like other forms of capital, is distributed unequally in society. When Putnam’s book on Italy was published in 1993 ((Putnam, 1993a; Narayan, 1999), it triggered an intense debate from which the issue of power was at first curiously absent. Fine has given extensive thought to the implications of this omission. In actual fact, Bourdieu wrote years earlier that social capital and cultural capital (for example, human

or cognitive capital) are the “property” of clearly defined and delimited groups or socio-economic strata (Bourdieu, 1987 as cited in Fine, 2001). Putzel (1997) remarked that even if a group or stratum possesses considerable social capital, it will not obtain the potential fruits of this capital unless it has access to other resources, especially material resources.

Today the issues of power and unequal possession of social capital are once again on the agenda (even in the World Bank): “...the same ties that bind also exclude ... Groups and networks only work by including some and excluding others ... In socially differentiated societies ... social capital can help preserve the status quo of exclusion” (Narayan, 1999). The World Bank already subscribes to this idea that social capital is part of the problem, saying, “Social institutions ... form the framework ... and shape many of the dynamics that *create and sustain poverty...*” (World Bank, 2001, italics added).

2. Inter-generational transmission of life opportunities and group influence

Because development analysis often overlooks power struggles in society, “culturalist reductionism” becomes a convenient way to explain why poverty is so persistent. The social capital paradigm accounts for conflicts between groups and strata struggling to preserve or expand their control over scarce resources. It also gives insight into the balance between historical events and traditional cultural norms. The concept of social capital is useful for examining inequality and for analyzing assets or resources that the poor have available but have been unable to activate fully. Those who lay claim to large reserves of social capital are better equipped to accumulate human capital and educational credentials, as well as the symbolic asset of social prestige (Bourdieu, 1987). In fact it is the elites who most often tap into kinship and friendship networks acquired in exclusive educational establishments. The business world reports larger amounts of associative institutionalism (collective social capital) than any other socio-economic group (UNDP, 2000; Güell and Márquez in ECLAC, 2001). All those who belong to this institutional web cooperate, partake of reciprocity, enjoy important contacts as social actors, and exert influence over public policy. In general, the stratification of educational circuits is a critical factor in the unequal transmission of life opportunities, and it operates through the very cultural and social mechanisms that are typical of social capital, activated primarily and to greatest effect by groups and strata of privilege (Bourdieu, 1987; ECLAC, *Social panorama*, 2000).

3. Why the poor do not accumulate: exclusion, domination and political patronage (‘clientelism’)

Thus, the “haves” find social capital to be a useful mechanism for influencing their environment and for accumulating more social capital. At the same time, the poor display a very low tendency to accumulate capital in general, both social and otherwise, which can be explained largely by effective moves to limit their intangible assets, destroy them,⁹ cover them up or divert them through relationships from which others

⁹Social capital “is the asset that we least know how to build - certainly we know much more about

are able to extract much of the benefit. These last relations, of clientelism, involve two parties; the “patron,” who develops the discourse and practice of patronage, stands to gain greater social capital than the “client.”

4. Clientelism: the State as part of the problem

Some of the most appealing proposals for using social capital to improve anti-poverty programmes start with the assumption that there is a gap between State and civil society (Evans, 1996; Ostrom, 1996). In actual fact, the interface¹⁰ between government institutions and civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean (as in other regions) would appear to be crisscrossed by sociocultural links of many kinds, especially in parliamentary democracies based on political parties.

Well-established social groups use these sociocultural ties to exert pressure, in the form of organized, well-paid lobbying efforts to influence the decisions of administrators and legislators, and to practise patronage. Latin American practices of clientelism take shape primarily as chains of political brokers who manage unequal, paternalistic relationships with their clients by monopolizing information and controlling the dispensation of benefits (Auyero, 2000). These relationships can be analyzed in the conceptual framework of social capital, even without an empirical study to show whether or not they are ‘real’ forms of social capital. Theoretical efforts in this direction argue, for example, that the negative impacts of social capital are manifested in powerful social groups that are not accountable to the citizenry and practise corruption and cronyism (Narayan, 1999). It seems obvious that lobbying and clientelism serve as important resources for meeting the objectives of persons and social groups as well as political parties and governments.

Like many other forms of social capital, lobbying and patronage are part of the problem with perpetuation of poverty and inequality, not because they are bad in and of themselves, but because they are poorly distributed in most societies. Indeed, serious problems of corruption often ensue when these practices are highly concentrated, meaning that very few individuals and groups enjoy personal relationships of high trust with public officials, reinforced by friendship and ties of *compadrazgo*. Authoritarian clientelism, in particular, reproduces an extremely unequal balance of power between political actors and the poor, especially when exercised locally by dominant “brokers” and “godfathers.” When considering whether to apply the conceptual framework of social capital for improving poverty programmes, it is important to remember that patronage in its most exclusive and dominant forms is the clearest example of social capital as part of the problem, a part in which the State itself is deeply involved.

The situation is most critical at the national level in countries that have highly

how to destroy it” (Bebbington, 1999).

¹⁰According to Long, a social interface is the arena of interactions involving opportunities and challenges to build bridges, accommodate, segregate or respond to the social, cognitive and evaluative stances of multiple actors coming from different social and cultural worlds. Interfaces are not face-to-face confrontations, but multiple complex inter-system communications that encompass many interests, relationships and unequal forms of rationality and power. Any study of interfaces needs to address the many voices, experiences, practices and learning processes of all relevant actors (Long, 2001).

centralized administrative and business structures. Here the concentration of social capital (associated with other assets) feeds a regular practice of cronyism, lobbying and patronage in the executive and legislative branches. The dynamics of social capital perform in ways very similar to factionalism in a small community, as all major actors know one another personally.

PART TWO. A CONTENTIOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Contentious social movements are those that seek conflict with government to gain media coverage and public support for their causes and to pressure governments into accepting their demands (Tarrow 1998). In this paper, contentious social movements, in particular the Mapuche indigenous movement of southern Chile, are seen as a particular form of bridging social capital. In this case, the emergence of such a movement also has its roots in kinship-based rural networks, and it can be argued that, despite its rejection of existing democratic institutions, it contributes to societal social capital as well.

Table 1-1. Examples of Tolerated and Less Tolerated Direct Action Tactics of CSOs and Social Movements*

More tolerated		Less tolerated			
Marches and demonstrations with permission of authorities	Civil disobedience	Street barricades	Violence against private property	Violence against persons	Terrorism with intent to murder officials and the public
Press conferences	Marches and demonstrations without permission	Occupation of public buildings	Street battles with police and military		
Mobilization of voters	Hunger strikes		Occupation of private property		
Petitions and referenda					

Many leaders of the Mapuche movement explicitly rejects playing by the rules, justifying ‘direct action’:

‘I could have comfortably continued participating in seminars, criticizing the system, without criticizing through action. This is the only way to reach people who are constantly bombarded with media messages—to make an example of oneself. (Aucán Huilcamán, Mapuche leader)

The Mapuche people came to occupy a large portion of present-day Chile, by first resisting the Incas, then the Spanish and later, the Chilean military. They finally lost their territorial autonomy in 1883. Currently, there are close to a million Mapuche in Chile, with the majority living in urban areas. However, there are also more than 2,000

small rural communities in reservations, primarily in the South between Concepción and Osorno. The Mapuche are the poorest in the most impoverished region of the country.

During the entire 20th century, the Mapuche formed important organizations and participated in the political system. See Bengoa (1999). The origins of the present-day Mapuche movement can be traced to the founding of Mapuche Cultural Centers in September 1978. These centers, operating under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Temuco, were a reaction to the policies of the military dictatorship that deprived the Mapuche of their integrity as a distinct people (due to the division and sale of communal land). This group organized more than a thousand communities and offered training on Mapuche culture and language and also on organizing and leadership.

The Cultural Centers later became independent from the Catholic Church, reestablishing themselves as Ad Mapu associated with the prohibited Communist and Socialist parties, but also incorporating Mapuche identity and traditional communal authorities. In 1990, a division among the leaders of Ad Mapu led to the founding of the Mapuche organization, All Lands Council (in Mapudungún, Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam). The All Lands Council is the first Mapuche organization to work to recover their land: Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngulam or Consejo de Todas las Tierras [All Lands Council] is among the most polemic Mapuche organizations in recent years. Its land “recoveries” (1991) and “symbolic” occupations (1992) have awakened all manner of reactions from Chilean and Mapuche societies. (Marimán 1995). This breakaway group came to greatly influence public opinion and also the Chilean government, which presented a bill to Congress establishing special programs for indigenous peoples (approved by Congress in 1993). Over the years, the Council has used methods like civil disobedience and the arrest of its leaders, as well as dialogue with the authorities and purely symbolic participation in the electoral system. It has also succeeded in gradually participating in the international indigenous movement, which has resulted in new links to forums that discuss and develop positions on indigenous rights, notably the United Nation’s Commission on Human Rights.

Its contentious mobilizations, alternating with dialogues with government representatives and international groups, have made the Council and its leader the most widely recognized representatives of the Mapuche movement (both within Chile and internationally). The Council was the first supporter of the “ethno-territorial” self-governance proposal in 1992 and continues to disseminate the idea, based on the Wallmapu concept—a large territory that was the Mapuche people’s ancestral domain (Lavanchy 2005). The Council is one of many Mapuche CSOs: some are communities that occupy ancestral land currently on the properties of large farms or large forestry companies; others are regional and national grassroots or intellectual groups that frequently disagree, particularly over the issue of the use of violence. These groups only occasionally succeed in coordinating their positions and actions to create a “movement” with a common meaning.

In Chile, Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez valiantly confronted the dictatorship following the 1973 coup. “The Catholic Church was the first to publicly draw attention to the new indigenous policy and its profound implications on Mapuche culture. At the same time, it lent its support and protection to Mapuche leaders so they could organize and have

their voice heard” (Toledo Llancaqueo 2005). The bishop of the Mapuche zone, Sergio Contreras, founded the Indigenous Institute Foundation and in 1978, he pushed for the formation of Mapuche Cultural Centers so the communities could defend their identity and cultivate organizational and leadership capacities¹⁰ (Reuque 2002). It was from that context that many of the current Mapuche leaders emerged. That process bore much fruit: today we participate, are members of the organizations, sometimes without sharing strategies, but we all have the same final objectives. (Isolde Reuque available at <http://www.conadi.cl/noticia147.htm>).

In Chile, the occupations of large farms led by the All Lands Council and other Mapuche organizations have elicited changing responses. Until recently, the government routinely accused Mapuche groups of “terrorist action” (using an antiterrorism law enacted during the military dictatorship) when they set forestry plantations and machinery on fire. In 2005, however, judges began to accept the arguments of terrorism experts and international legal organizations (Observatorio 2005) that crimes against property were not terrorism but subject to other existing laws. They stopped interpreting these crimes as terrorism and exonerated some of the accused. In 2006, leaders convicted earlier in southern Chile under the antiterrorism law began a hunger strike, which Mapuche CSOs unanimously supported. The recently elected Bachelet government reacted with a series of strategic changes: first, it ignored the case, then it vowed not to apply the antiterrorism law to the Mapuche, then supported a proposed law to release those imprisoned. Finally, it proposed amending the antiterrorism law to correct the most unjust sections. The Mapuche movement supported this last effort. In 2008, however, landowners and rightist media are pressuring for the application of anti-terrorist laws to the more violent organization, the Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco.

The 1993 Indigenous Law in Chile foresaw that the state would buy land, but in contrast with the other basic principle of the market-based agrarian reform that called for the beneficiaries to pay for the land, lands were given to indigenous communities at no cost. In recent practice, much of this land has been given to “communities in conflict” small movements of Mapuche that have broken the law by invading or attacking large farms to reclaim ancestral land.

Despite the broad scope of the proposals made by the All Lands Council their central demand continues to be land. In order to succeed in this objective, the movement must first formulate coherent discourse that can mobilize the grass roots as well as have an impact on public opinion and governments. The carrying out of direct actions converts land demands into an effective tool to pressure governments.

In Chile the sensitivity of governments to international public opinion (especially that of private enterprise) led them to hold discreet negotiations with Mapuche leaders. The first large farm occupations by the All Lands Council in the early 1990s, together with the demands of other organizations and communities, contributed to the passing by Chile’s Congress of the Indigenous Law and the creation of CONADI (Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena, a mixed government body with elected indigenous members) in 1993, with a “Land and Water Fund.” This marked a brief period of understanding and collaboration between Mapuche organizations and the government. It was followed by a series of conflicts over indigenous rights, environmental principles and large infrastructure projects. These conflicts led the majority of Mapuche organizations to curtail relations with the government around 1997.

The demands for autonomy by some organizations of the Mapuche movement were accompanied by the destruction of forestry plantations, houses and machinery by small groups of activists. The government, as we have seen, responded with repression and criminalization of these organizations. But at the turn of the 21st century, the government also increased monetary resources for indigenous communities, principally the *Orígenes* program cofinanced with a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

At first, the increase in resources through the *Orígenes* program was largely channeled through patronage networks controlled by local politicians. Communities began to compete among themselves to access resources; however, at the same time, intercommunity organizations emerged that demanded the completion of the programs and of government promises. These new collective actors began to be taken into account in the negotiations about the evolution of the Program and the future of CONADI. A critical evaluation of the former government summarizes the complex challenge that the Mapuche movement currently faces (Yáñez and Aylwin 2007): The Lagos administration, whether or not premeditatedly, assumed a dual strategy towards the indigenous community. This included a policy of rewarding those who did not question the model of development with land and resources for material and cultural development ... and another policy, of a repressive nature ... in the criminal treatment of indigenous protests by using special legislation, including the anti-terrorism law, to confront protestors by using police violence against the communities and efforts to destroy the more “radical” organizations.

The growing complexity of the strategies employed by the different parties in the Mapuche case is illustrated by the government’s decision to detain leaders of disruptive street demonstrations and the Mapuche response to this. The arrests allow the movement to denounce the criminalization of a just cause; moreover, the Mapuche have integrated the arrest of its leaders into their own strategy:

“A leader should be in jail, not when the State decides he should, but when he does” (Aucán Huilcamán, interview June 2006).

In this particular case, the co-evolution of strategies took an additional turn in September 2006, when the Chilean judiciary ordered the arrest of Huilcamán upon his return from a meeting on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and other organizations intervened on his behalf and the arrest order was lifted (interview, October 2006). Jail sentences and appeals, however, continued for months.

The success of this social movement in democratizing rural life and opening spaces for participation in civil society for the poor now presents them with a new context and a difficult decision. While Chilean political parties are formally democratic, they still operate based on favors and backroom negotiations. CSOs must decide how to maintain their own legitimacy given this environment. As Brett (2006) describes the case of Guatemala, social movements must choose between “negotiated settlements that preserve their autonomy ... or participation in the state-managed mechanisms for inclusion.” In practice, however, rural CSOs can alternate between these two strategies.

For the Consejo de Todas las Tierras, the institutions of participatory management also serve as spaces to denounce the persistent injustices of governments and socioeconomic systems they reject. The evolution of strategies by the three types of actors (movements, political parties and governments) has led to a systemic transition in which the *game of rules* (Abramovay et al. 2006) generated new perceptions about the “rules of the game.” In this new phase, contentious rural organizations exercise their strategies both within and outside established institutional mechanisms.

And, in the Mapuche case, “[Mapuche organizations] are always threatening stronger action, making use of the imaginary Chilean fear of an ‘Indian attack.’ The small land takeovers are symbolic, to show what they can do. The state reacts quickly with an offer, to stop the threat. The leaders are personally strengthened because they obtain benefits from the government and with these resources they gain the loyalty of the grass roots. In this way, they emerge as social actors” (Francisca de la Maza, interview 2006).

There are various examples of Mapuche organizations that occupy farms and offices, block highways and confront police with the purpose of negotiating with the government. The occupiers negotiate the return of the land and in many cases they become clients of the political party leaders that negotiate the conflict settlement.

In the case of the Mapuche, movement leaders criticize collaboration with parties: Mapuche [municipal] councilmen and mayors do not owe their [office to] communities, but to their parties. Without the party, they are nothing. The parties are machines and have ways of influencing. (Aucán Huilcamán)

[The Mapuche mayor] had a powerful benefactor—[the congressman who] supports him ... he gave him resources and vehicles. He also provided easy access to national government. (Mapuche anthropologist)

The main organizations in the Mapuche movement of Chile differ in two important respects from the European and North American movements (labor unions, students, and women) that have inspired much of current theory on social movements. Various authors (Foweraker 1995; Brett 2006; Rosa 2006) believe that these conceptual frameworks do not completely satisfy the demands of Latin American reality.

One important difference is that in the northern hemisphere, the existence of a democratic culture, a developed civil society and a democratic political system have favored the emergence of social movements, while in the Mapuche movement it has been the *movement* that has contributed to the return of democracy and to the expansion of human and social rights.

A second difference is that Consejo de Todas las Tierras has already lasted nearly two decades without showing signs of ending the “contentious cycle” that Tarrow (1998) proposes. They have given a democratizing shock to the country and contributed to the deepening of national, regional and local democratic systems. The movement has not weakened and government has not implemented the profound, democratizing reforms for indigenous peoples that would make the movement irrelevant.

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