

Grace Under Fire: The Rise of the Mapuche Movement in Chile under the Pinochet Regime, 1978-1983

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The period 1973 to 1990, when Chile was governed by a military dictatorship led by General Augusto Pinochet, has been described as a time ‘when the hearths went out’ for many people in the country and for the Mapuche people in particular.⁸⁴ Indigenous communities that had been struggling for centuries to retain enough land for subsistence in the face of colonization and political and economic marginalization now faced brutal repression by the military government and renewed attempts to divest them of their lands. The parcelling of indigenous community lands was decreed in Pinochet’s Land Law 2568 of March 1979, which provided for the subdivision and privatization of community lands and was based on occupant’s rights, without regard for equal distribution of land or those community members who had migrated to urban areas.⁸⁵ The experience of military repression, gruelling poverty and the privatization of community lands “created a climate of aggression toward the Mapuche to which people could not easily adapt.”⁸⁶ The repression carried out against the Mapuche in the wake of the *golpe de estado* was especially brutal because its ‘justifications’ were so deeply rooted in Chilean elites’ racist views of the Mapuche.⁸⁷ In spite of this aggressive climate, and in

⁸⁴ Florencia Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood: The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Ailío and the Chilean State 1906 - 2001* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 140.

⁸⁵ Rosa Isolde Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn: The Life and Times of a Mapuche Feminist* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 194-95.

⁸⁶ Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*, 140.

⁸⁷ Roberto Morales Urra, “Cultura mapuche y represión en dictadura” *Revista austral de ciencias sociales*,

<<http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/redalyc/src/inicio/ArtPdfRed.jsp?iCve=45900306>>, 2005.

part because of the restrictions placed on political organizations imposed by the military government, the Mapuche organized a 'cultural resurgence' beginning in 1978 with the foundation of the Centros Culturales Mapuches.

The rumours of new legislation concerning land tenure in indigenous communities in the late 1970s galvanized Mapuche activists and motivated the cultural resurgence that, at its peak, involved over 1500 indigenous communities in Chile. The Mapuche Cultural Centres (which later became Ad-Mapu) were successful in reviving Mapuche cultural identity in the rural and urban spheres through the organization of events such as the *gillatun* and in organizing a network of activists and communities that enabled the Mapuche to make "tangible demands" of the state and to assert their rights as an indigenous group.⁸⁸ Ironically, this success was facilitated by restrictions implemented by the Pinochet regime on political organization, and by 1983 when political parties and other actors in the counter-official movement were gaining strength, the Mapuche movement began to fracture as non-indigenous political activists attempted to co-opt and control the indigenous movement. This paper will examine the motivations behind the foundation of the Mapuche Cultural Centres and the change from a class-based to an ethnicity-based approach to political mobilization. Through an analysis of the success of the Mapuche cultural revival in the period 1978 to 1983 and its legacy, this paper will ultimately argue that what Stern refers to as the "renewal" of counter-official Chile" in the early 1980s exacerbated divisions within and contributed to the fracturing of the Mapuche movement.⁸⁹

The Mapuche have been a marginalized group within Chilean society since they made 'peace' with the Chilean government in the late nineteenth century. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, indigenous communities employed a variety of strategies in their attempts to recover land that had been taken from them, but they were never able to exercise any significant influence on a national level.⁹⁰ Some Mapuche leaders began to consider working with Chile's left-wing political parties as a more efficient and

⁸⁸ Steve J. Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973 – 1988* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 216.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁹⁰ Jim Guy, "The Case of the Mapuche and Chile's 'Bad' Law 2568," *International Perspectives* (1981): 15.

effective way to achieve their goals of land restitution and community survival. Leaders in communities such as Nicolás Ailío began to understand that “neither the legal division of Mapuche communities nor the revindication of Mapuche territory within the limits established by the Chilean state during the process of resettlement ... represented a viable solution to the increasing rural poverty the Mapuche people faced in the twentieth century.”⁹¹ From the 1920s through the Allende years, indigenous communities increasingly identified themselves in terms of class as rural peasant communities, and became associated with left-wing activist groups such as the *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR) and its rural branch the *Movimiento de Campesinos Revolucionarios* (MCR). Although this class alliance prevented the Mapuche from seeking restitution of their lands on the basis of ethnicity and indigenous rights, the agrarian reforms carried out by the Popular Unity government in the early 1970s represented the first real opportunity when poor Mapuche peasants could envision the possibility of gaining access to land.⁹²

The *golpe de estado* on 11 September 1973 and the subsequent repression of Allendistas and other left-wing supporters meant that this class-based mobilization was no longer viable by the mid-1970s. The brutal repression of dissidents inside Chile by the military government included the use of torture, execution, exile and permanent disappearance, and was practiced against Mapuche and non-indigenous Chileans in both the urban and rural spheres. This repression created a climate of fear within Chilean society. Rosa Isolde Reuque remembered how this fear made community organizing in the South of Chile extremely difficult in 1978:

Yes, people were scared, very scared. The fear was alive, you could almost touch it. “My dear,” they’d say, “don’t talk to that one, because look, that one was a Communist, he had a red identification card.” Or they’d say, “Look, that one’s a snitch for the cops, this policeman always visits and he tells him everything....” Those who’d been leftists were especially scared.⁹³

⁹¹ Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*, 4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹³ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 109.

Florencia Mallon notes that in this period people's fear was such that "even something as simple as an attempt to revive agriculture by cultivating vegetables and lentils required that one go house to house, drinking *mate* and explaining the project carefully."⁹⁴ By 1977 and 1978, the Pinochet regime had become institutionalized and Chilean civil society had been effectively silenced as a result of brutal repression and fear. The military government had managed to dismantle a once vibrant and diverse civil society and replace it with dictatorial hegemony.

In addition to the silencing of civil society and the prevention of political mobilization on the basis of class struggle, the Pinochet regime also attacked the potential for ethnically based political mobilization through the promulgation of Law 2658 in 1979. Rumours that legislation regarding indigenous land issues would be enacted in 1979 spurred Mapuche activists, with the encouragement of the Church, to organize against the coming land divisions beginning in 1978. The law was written without consulting the Mapuche people and, in addition to providing for the privatization of indigenous community lands, essentially stripped the Mapuche of their indigenous status by legally abolishing indigenous communities. Thirty Mapuche leaders and the Bishop of Temuco publicly protested the decree and the lack of information about it in indigenous communities.⁹⁵ Essentially, Law 2658 represented "the official incorporation and assimilation of the Mapuche into the Chilean state."⁹⁶ Church and Mapuche leaders labelled the law "institutionalized ethnocide."⁹⁷ Under this law, community members who were opposed to the division and privatization of community lands had no legal recourse available to them to prevent the privatization of their lands from going forward.

In spite of the regime's institutionalization and its attempt to undermine political and cultural mobilization, the years 1977 and 1978 marked a turning point in the 'reactivation' of Chilean civil society, a period "*cuando las primeras*

⁹⁴ Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*, 175.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁹⁶ Guy, "The Case of the Mapuche," 15.

⁹⁷ Anne Marie Mergier, "Expide Pinochet, como ley, la pena de muerte de la raza mapuche" (1980), <http://archivochile.com/Dictadura_militar/pinochet/sobre/DMsobrepino80028.pdf>

tímidas voces empezaron recién a levantarse, asediadas por la violencia y el silencio.”⁹⁸ It was in this socio-political climate that the Mapuche Cultural Centres of Chile were founded on 12 September 1978. While the promulgation of Pinochet’s land law acted as a catalyst for the resurgence of Mapuche organization on a cultural basis, this ethnic-based resurgence can, to a certain extent, also be attributed to the lack of opportunities for class-based mobilization resulting from a fear of military repression.

From the beginning, the Mapuche Cultural Centres sought to inspire a cultural revival that could transcend political or religious affiliation, with the notion that “ideological divisions do more harm than good . . . , especially to the Mapuche people” at the heart of the organization.⁹⁹ The Cultural Centres in the words of Isolde Reuque, one of the founders of the organization, created a discourse that “from the beginning . . . was about struggle, rediscovering our roots, and making up for lost time. We had a vision toward the future based on our continual, historic struggle for the land.”¹⁰⁰ The purpose of the Cultural Centres was therefore neither to resist attempts to undermine indigenous communities by parcelling and privatizing their land, nor to create a civil society organization that could effectively work for the restitution of democracy. Rather, the Centres were founded with the express purpose of reviving Mapuche cultural identity and a commitment to indigenous rights in Chile. The probability that a person will self-identify as Mapuche was 4.8 times higher if he or she lived in a rural area or spoke Mapunzungun, the Mapuche language.¹⁰¹ The Mapuche Cultural Centres sought to protect indigenous land rights and to promote the preservation of the Mapuche language, and studies such as the one carried out by the Chilean Centro de Estudios Públicos in 2006 have shown these to be the two most important factors in determining whether or not a person will self-identify as Mapuche.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Ascanio Cavallo, Manuel Salazar, y Oscar Sepúlveda, *La historia oculta del régimen militar: Memoria de una época, 1973 – 1988* (Santiago de Chile: Random House Mondadori S.A., 2004), 228.

⁹⁹ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 106.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁰¹ Eduardo Valenzuela, “Tierra, comunidad e identidad mapuche,” *Estudios Públicos* 105 (2007): 26.

¹⁰² Ignacio Irrarázaval y María de los Angeles Morandé, “Cultura mapuche: Entre la pertenencia étnica y la integración nacional,” *Estudios Públicos* 105 (2007), 40.

From 1978 to 1982, this cultural revival was extremely successful. By 1982 there were centres linking fifteen hundred communities in the VIII, IX, and X regions and people were beginning to feel some relief.¹⁰³ Each participating community had its own steering committee and funded its own local projects, using its own specific cultural practices and rites to “rebuild solidarity and pride.”¹⁰⁴

The Cultural Centres helped to revive cultural events and encouraged NGO participation in various development projects in indigenous communities in the region. For example, between 1979 and 1981 community organizers from the Mapuche Cultural Centres began to work on a celebration of Temuco’s centennial, and each community was asked to help organize “a chain of local ceremonies that would culminate on Conun Hueno hill in December 1981” with a *gillatun*, a Mapuche ritual of intercommunity prayer and a celebration of reciprocity.¹⁰⁵ These events, which included *gillatun*, *palin* (a sport reminiscent of hockey, but without skates), and traditional storytelling sessions, as well as many small-scale agricultural development projects, were extremely successful. The *gillatun* at Conun Hueno was significant because it was an example of using Mapuche culture, and the *gillatun* specifically “as a medium for political action.”¹⁰⁶ This ceremony at the celebration of Temuco’s centennial was “a strong show of Mapuche solidarity at the precise moment when the city was remembering the destruction of the border between the Mapuche people and Chilean national society.”¹⁰⁷

Ironically, the Pinochet regime itself facilitated this success by taking a “folkloric, tourist-oriented approach when dealing with the Mapuche.”¹⁰⁸ The dictatorship, by not considering the Mapuche as a politically effective group and therefore not an adversary, was at first ignorant of the reach and influence of the Cultural Centres. *Palin* tournaments, which could involve more than forty

¹⁰³ Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*, 174.

¹⁰⁴ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 115.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁰⁶ Sara McFall and Roberto Morales, “The Ins and Outs of Mapuche Culture in Chile,” in *Cultural Politics in Latin America*, ed. A. Brooksbank Jones and R. Munck (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), 134.

¹⁰⁷ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 115.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

Mapuche communities, provided platforms for Mapuche leaders and organizers to speak about issues related to indigenous rights, land tenure, and culture. Because many of these leaders gave their speeches in the Mapuche language, Mapuzungun, their subversive content went unnoticed by the police assigned to watch over such public gatherings. Isolde Reuque recalled *palin* matches where Mapuche women hosted police officers at their wagons and fed them so as to prevent them from interfering in community organizing. Mapuche who taught Mapuzungun to the police were ostracized because, in the words of one Mapuche leader, “it was like working against your own people.”¹⁰⁹

The dictatorship created a space in which organizations like the Mapuche Cultural Centres or the Vicariate of Solidarity could grow and be protected from repression because they fell outside the usual manifestations of political action. Isolde Reuque has said that “If the dictatorship had any positive effect, it was to reawaken our culture When the repression was greatest, the Mapuche movement was strongest: with militant revivals of our language, our traditions, [and] our traditional organizations.”¹¹⁰ Eventually however, like the Vicariate of Solidarity, the Mapuche Cultural Centres were seen as a political adversary of the state.

Nevertheless, the organization had grown so much by March 1980 that the military government was forced to recognize it formally under the name Asociación Ad-Mapu, meaning Association of People ‘of the Land’, even though it considered the organization a threat.¹¹¹ The only legal category that would allow the organization to stay as large as it was in 1980 was that of trade association (*gremio*), so the name Cultural Centres was dropped. In addition to the local activities and events it organized, after it received legal recognition Ad-Mapu became more involved in the international indigenous rights movement and began to look for international sources of funding to finance its scholarship and vocational training programs. It also directly challenged the Pinochet regime in a way that the Cultural Centres had never done; Ad-Mapu issued a statement

¹⁰⁹ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 113.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹¹¹ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 216.

in *El Diario Austral* opposing the plebiscite that the military government had called to approve a new constitution.¹¹²

In 1980, the military regime began to see Ad-Mapu as a threat, and launched a campaign to discredit the organization by characterizing its own official indigenous organization, the Regional Indigenous Council, as more effective and more attentive to the needs of indigenous peoples in Chile. The Regional Indigenous Council praised Pinochet's land law, and newspapers wrote about new subsidies, scholarships, and health programs the regime was providing in indigenous communities.¹¹³ Ad-Mapu's success and increased profile on the national and international level from 1980 to 1983 made it more susceptible to attacks from the military government and to infiltration and cooption by opposition political parties.

The late 1970s and early 1980s presented an opportunity for the growth not only of a grassroots indigenous rights movement and cultural revival, but also of a more general reawakening and rebuilding of Chilean civil society, including opposition political parties, trade unions, and student federations.¹¹⁴ Chilean civil society was becoming stronger and more assertive, as evidenced by Ad-Mapu's direct challenge of the military regime in *El Diario Austral*, and as civil society began to rebuild itself, the Mapuche movement began to fracture.

The shift in the mid-1970s from a class-based political mobilization to one that was ethnically-based was a necessity for the Mapuche. Given the political situation after the fall of Allende, an alliance with the Left was no longer a viable option, and since the military regime sought to undermine the basis of indigenous communities (namely, their lands) it was necessary to resist these attacks as an indigenous group in order to highlight the need to preserve and promote indigenous lands and identity. By the early 1980s, however, civil society had begun to renew itself and diversify again, and the Mapuche movement started "to talk about broader participation, about making alliances with universities or labour unions, making common cause with other organizations that were struggling and suffering, [and] began to search for a common

¹¹² Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 119-20.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹¹⁴ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 205.

denominator, which turned out to be the return to democracy.”¹¹⁵ By broadening its focus and seeking alliances with other actors in civil society, Ad-Mapu began to fracture. Internal political divisions that had existed for years became more pronounced as revitalized political parties attempted to co-opt the movement.¹¹⁶

Some Mapuche leaders such as Isolde Reuque, who was instrumental in founding the original Mapuche Cultural Centres in the late 1970s, believed that it would be possible for Ad-Mapu to remain independent of any one particular political party. This would allow the movement “to respect differences and to maintain a more diverse membership” and to demand that Mapuche issues be considered by all political parties.¹¹⁷ Manuel Antonio Garretón M. evoked this sentiment in his discussion of the development of ethnic identities:

[En] los últimos tiempos se ha expandido la identidad de tipo étnico, que ... parece ser portadora de un proyecto general que supera ámbitos parciales de la vida social Frente a la transformación de las identidades, se trata de desarrollarlas y protegerlas, pero, al mismo tiempo, de reforzar los elementos comunes Esto supone determinados intercambios, movi­lidades, y experiencias orientados al desarrollo de vínculos entre los diversos grupos.¹¹⁸

The Mapuche movement was never a homogenous social movement. Religious, political, and cultural differences existed and continue to exist within it, but prior to the early 1980s the movement was able to overcome these differences by organizing on the basis of ethnic unity and a commitment to Mapuche rights, in part because grassroots organization on an ideological basis was not a safe or viable option. However, by the 1983 Indigenous Congress, as civil society and Chile’s political parties had began to recover from the repression of the early years of the Pinochet regime, it was clear that the non-party stance had lost

¹¹⁵ Reuque, P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 127.

¹¹⁶ Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*, 174.

¹¹⁷ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 127.

¹¹⁸ Manuel Antonio Garretón M., *Del Post-Pinobchismo a la sociedad democrática: Globalización y política en el Bicentenario* (Santiago de Chile: Random House Mondadori S.A., 2007), 36-37.

support within Ad-Mapu and that the Communist party in particular had begun to influence and co-opt the Mapuche movement.

At the time, every opposition political party in Chile was looking to expand its base of support. The Mapuche movement in the early 1980s was a large, dynamic, and successful social movement that, if integrated into a party's agenda and social base, would substantially raise that party's profile and increase support for its agenda. The Christian Democrat and Socialist parties, in addition to the Communist party, were also involved in recruiting Mapuche leaders and attempts to co-opt the Mapuche movement.¹¹⁹

Isolde Reuque experienced this change in Ad-Mapu's priorities and orientation as a change in discourse:

[By] the end of 1981, after the *gillatum* at Conun Hueno hill, the movement began to falter ... and a different kind of politics began to emerge.... The language of the left, people calling each other *compañero*, which had been hidden for a long time, came out into the open. It was a political opening, and groups that had been afraid to be seen began to come out in public.¹²⁰

In her book *When a Flower is Reborn*, Reuque describes the election of a new steering committee for Ad-Mapu at the 1983 Indigenous Congress and a 'new style' of leadership that shifted the focus of the organization from the demands of the Mapuche as an oppressed nation to a focus on class struggle. Even forms of address between members of the Ad-Mapu leadership became de-indianized: "Before, people addressed each other using the Mapuche terms for brother and sister, *peñi* or *lamñen*" but at the 1983 Indigenous Congress these terms were replaced by "compañero."¹²¹

The Communist party's influence over Ad-Mapu and the pressure put upon it by other political parties caused the organization to "splinter into distinct indigenous organizations along distinct party lines" after 1983.¹²² Ad-Mapu's new policies and projects, which emphasized street demonstrations and marches and a focus on confrontation and class struggle over cultural strategies for promoting

¹¹⁹ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 144.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹²² Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 217.

autonomy within Mapuche communities, alienated much of the former leadership of Ad-Mapu and several of its member communities.¹²³ From 1983 to 1986, the Mapuche movement suffered a great deal of fragmentation with more and more communities joining new Mapuche groups, such as Nehuen-Mapu or the Consejo de Todas las Tierras, organized around specific ideological positions.¹²⁴

While the reawakening and reactivation of Chilean civil society was instrumental in bringing about a return to democracy, the revitalization of opposition political parties contributed to the fracturing of the Mapuche movement, as each party in its own way attempted to penetrate and co-opt Ad-Mapu in order to further its own agenda. The Communist party's influence on Ad-Mapu from 1983 onwards exacerbated pre-existing political and ideological differences within the organization and alienated much of its former leadership, many of whom left Ad-Mapu and went on to found splinter Mapuche activist groups. In addition, many of Ad-Mapu's member communities were uncomfortable with the organization's new strategy after the 1983 Indigenous Congress and with their communities' new roles as "support players in a political and class struggle whose terms were set elsewhere."¹²⁵ As a result, many member communities who resented the subordination of the indigenous movement's agenda to a national political party's agenda left Ad-Mapu between 1983 and 1986, greatly weakening the unity and effectiveness of the Mapuche movement.

This is not to say that had the reawakening of Chilean civil society and the revitalization of the country's opposition political parties not occurred, the Mapuche movement would have continued to be as unified as it was in the early 1980s or that it would have been more successful in achieving land restitution for indigenous communities or renewing and revitalizing the Mapuche culture, language, or religion. Certainly other factors, such as the military government's identification of Ad-Mapu beginning in 1980 as a threat to its social hegemony and the fact that under an authoritarian regime very little could have been accomplished to improve the legal status of the Mapuche people, contributed to a weakening of the movement and limited its potential. Rather, it was the

¹²³ Reuque P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 148.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹²⁵ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 217.

manipulation of Ad-Mapu by Chile's revitalized opposition parties when the leadership of Ad-Mapu opened the door for the possibility of collaboration with other counter-official actors within civil society that weakened the effectiveness of the organization and contributed to its fragmentation.

In spite of this fragmentation, during the transition to democracy, several Mapuche rights groups including Ad-Mapu and Nehuen-Mapu worked together with the Human Rights Commission to create a document that was to serve as the basis for a new indigenous law if Patricio Aylwin were to win the presidential election. The document contained four major objectives: first, the President would create and submit to Congress a law that was favourable to indigenous peoples; second, create an institution that would listen to and respect the rights and values of indigenous peoples; third, constitutionally recognize indigenous peoples; and fourth, submit the ILO's Convention 169 on indigenous rights to Congress for approval.¹²⁶ Isolde Reuque describes the document as "the first commitment to the indigenous peoples of Chile, made with a presidential candidate who later became President, that was actually fulfilled."¹²⁷ When the law was submitted to Congress parts of it were cut, but the fact that Mapuche rights groups were involved in drafting the initial legislation is an important step towards improving the legal status and rights of the Mapuche.

Today, the Mapuche movement continues to be somewhat fragmented, but the Mapuche continue to struggle for the right to control ancestral lands and natural resources, and to preserve their culture in the face of urbanization and assimilation through the advocacy of, among other things, bilingual schools and official recognition of the Mapuche language. A study conducted by the Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP) in Chile in 2006 of the degree to which indigenous Chileans feel connected to the Mapuche culture and the Chilean culture found that the majority of Mapuches, 63 percent, reside in urban areas.¹²⁸ The study also noted that connection to the land and the Mapuche language are seen as the fundamental basis of Mapuche culture. More than three quarters of Mapuches surveyed viewed urbanization as a primary threat to the Mapuches' capacity to maintain their culture because of the impact rural to urban migration has had on

¹²⁶ Reuque, P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 183.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹²⁸ Morandé, "Cultura mapuche," 39.

the deterioration of Mapunzungun and the loss of contact with indigenous land and traditional cultural practices.¹²⁹ Less than 30 percent of Mapuche in rural areas and only 6 percent of Mapuche in urban areas report that they speak Mapunzungun as well or better than Spanish, with even lower rates when youth between eighteen to thirty-four are surveyed.¹³⁰ Increasingly in urban areas, Mapunzungun is not learned in the home as a native tongue, but in group classes in urban centres.¹³¹

One of the greatest strengths of the Mapuche Cultural Centres and Ad-Mapu was their capacity to inspire cultural revival and renewal, especially among the younger generation. Youth in indigenous communities in the South of Chile became involved in practicing the *gillatun*, playing *palin*, and in promoting respect for the institution of the *machi*, the traditional healer of a Mapuche community, among other activities.¹³² This success of the Mapuche Cultural Centres and Ad-Mapu has not continued at the same level in the past two decades. Although approximately 60 percent of Mapuche in urban and rural areas know of the *gillatun* and *machitun*, a healing ceremony, the CEP study found that participation in these rituals was declining.¹³³

The Mapuche movement that began in the late 1970s with the founding of the first Mapuche Cultural Centres as a response to the promulgation of Pinochet's Land Law 2568 and a lack of opportunities to mobilize politically on a non-ethnic basis was extremely successful from 1978 to 1983. As part of a more general reactivation and renewal of civil society in Chile it inspired a true revival and renewal of Mapuche culture, through ceremonies like the *gillatun* and community events like *palin* tournaments, and produced a network of approximately one thousand five hundred indigenous communities in the South of Chile that worked to improve quality of life for indigenous people and increase solidarity through small community development projects and scholarships. The Centres also fought for indigenous rights to land and, as Ad-Mapu, directly challenged the dictatorship.

¹²⁹ Valenzuela, "Tierra, comunidad, e identidad mapuche," 32.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 27-28.

¹³¹ Jorge Martínez Ulloa, "La música indígena y la identidad: los espacios musicales de las comunidades mapuches urbanas," *Revista musical chilena* 198 (2002), 23.

¹³² Reuque, P., *When a Flower is Reborn*, 114-15.

¹³³ Valenzuela, "Tierra, comunidad, e identidad mapuche," 28-29.

Ironically, this success was facilitated by the Pinochet regime's initial racist disregard of the influence of the growing Mapuche movement, but by the early 1980s neither the military government nor a renewed Chilean civil society could ignore the reach of the organization. The Mapuche Cultural Centres/Ad-Mapu unexpectedly thrived under the repressive early years of the Pinochet regime because its work fell outside of the usual category of politics. However, by 1983 Ad-Mapu weakened and succumbed to internal divisions exacerbated by the attempts of revitalized opposition parties like the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats to co-opt the Mapuche movement and subordinate it to a party agenda. Although the group splintered, it is still influential, with approximately 55 percent of Mapuches stating that they still have confidence in Ad-Mapu.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Irrarázaval y de los Angeles Morandé, "Cultura mapuche," 53.