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# **‘Useful citizens for the working nation’: Mapuche Children, Catholic Mission Schools, and Methods of Assimilation in Rural Araucanía, Chile (1896-1915)**

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**Abstract**

In the aftermath of the 1883 Chilean military defeat of Mapuche forces, government officials did not prepare a socioeconomic plan to incorporate the native population into the nation. The Bavarian-run Capuchin Mission Schools emerged as an unofficial state assimilationist program, leaving a lasting legacy as the prime educator of the first generation of native children under Chilean rule. This article examines the vocational courses developed by the Bavarian-run Capuchin native mission schools between 1896 and 1915. It demonstrates how the Catholic mission schools' curriculum aimed to Westernize indigenous students, transforming them into useful citizens by teaching them vocations that would fit their class and racial standing as rural and indigenous youths to benefit the region's agrarian economy. By identifying the Mapuche's placement in the emerging labor regimes, scholars can better understand the racialization of agrarian society in the Araucanía during these years of economic transition.

**Keywords:** *Araucanía, Mapuche children, Capuchin missions, rural schools, agricultural education.*

## **‘Ciudadanos útiles para la nación trabajadora’: niños mapuches, escuelas misioneras católicas y métodos de asimilación en la Araucanía rural, Chile (1896-1915)**

**Resumen**

Después de la derrota militar de las fuerzas mapuches por el ejército chileno en 1883, los funcionarios del gobierno no prepararon un plan socioeconómico para incorporar a la población indígena a la nación. Las escuelas misioneras capuchinas de Baviera surgieron como una de las muchas políticas no oficiales de asimilación del Estado, dejando un legado duradero como el principal educador de la primera generación de niños mapuche bajo el dominio chileno. Este artículo examina los cursos vocacionales desarrollados por las escuelas indígenas misionales dirigidas por los padres capuchinas bávaros entre 1896 y 1915. Demuestra cómo el plan de estudios de las escuelas misionales católicas apuntaba a occidentalizar a los estudiantes indígenas, transformándolos en ciudadanos útiles al enseñarles vocaciones que se adaptarían a su clase y posición racial como jóvenes rurales e indígenas para beneficiar la economía agraria de la región. Al identificar la ubicación de los Mapuche en los regímenes laborales emergentes, podemos comprender mejor la racialización de la sociedad agraria en la Araucanía durante el periodo reduccional.

**Palabras clave:** *Araucanía, niños mapuches, misiones capuchinas, escuelas rurales, educación agrícola.*

## Introduction

In early 1896, the first group of Bavarian Capuchin friars set foot in the Araucanía region of southern Chile. They traveled halfway across the world to fulfil the agreement made between the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin and the Chilean state in 1848 that committed the Order to sending missionaries to the frontier region of the Araucanía to Christianize the indigenous Mapuche people who were located beyond the boundaries of the Chilean state (Pamplona, 1911:76; Röttingen, I, 1921: 79-80).<sup>1</sup> From 1850 to 1884 the Capuchin Bologna Order oversaw the evangelization project until it fell into disarray in the 1870s due to political developments in Europe and its inability to send new missionaries.<sup>2</sup> The Order's mission work was further affected by the Pacification War (1881-1883), which was the Chilean military's final push to colonize Mapuche lands, defeating the last Mapuche holdout on January 1, 1883 (Klubock, 2014; Bengoa, 2000; Pinto, 2015). For the following decade, the Chilean government and military officials oversaw the colonization of the territory, concentrating their efforts on selling and redistributing land to European and Chilean settlers, prioritizing the former. The Paris-based Chilean Agency of Colonization under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Colonization recruited German, Austro-Swiss, Basque, and French farmers to settle and civilize, meaning to economically exploit, the Araucanía region (Errázuriz, 2014 [1887]; Santos M., 1987).<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the underfunded and understaffed agency found recruitment difficult, especially when competing against the better geographically positioned countries of the United States, Brazil, and Argentina, ending its efforts in 1896 (Vega, 1895; Vega, 1896).<sup>4</sup> As Chile's settler-colonial scheme came to a close and entered a period of land consolidation, focus shifted to the territory's native people and their place in the nation.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the "Mapuche Question," an elite debate that took place in the printed press and on the congressional floor, disputed the Mapuche's fate in relation to Chilean economic interests and the territorial rights of the Chilean state (Bengoa, 2008). In the early nineteenth century, indigenous figures, including the Mapuche, functioned as allegorical inspirations for Latin American independence leaders (Earle, 2007). In the late 1850s, as the landowning class set their sights on the Mapuche-controlled southern frontier lands, newspapers and politicians altered the Mapuche's image in the nation's origin story from natural warriors against the Spanish conquerors to barbarians who impeded the expansion of Chilean Christian civilization (Vicuña Mackenna, 1868; Earle, 2007; Bengoa, 2009). The Catholic Church, with its history as both civilizer and protector of Amerindian communities, engaged publicly in

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<sup>1</sup> The Order of Friars Minor Capuchin is a sixteenth-century offshoot of the Franciscan Order.

<sup>2</sup> The Bologna Order was affected by the Italian unification wars that made financial support and sending new missionaries difficult. The Araucanía mission was directed for a short period of time between 1884 and 1894 by Spanish Capuchin friars.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Inspector General of Colonization, 6,873 settlers arrived in Chile between 1883 and 1890 for the purpose of being farmers (Vega, 1895; Vega, 1896).

<sup>4</sup> While Chile's settler-colonial scheme was a failure exemplified in the agency's inability to recruit the number of European farmers it projected, the settler project ultimately proved successful in its ability to consolidate landholdings away from Mapuche communal lands and expand economically.

the “Mapuche Question” debate, affirming its role as the *protector of Indians*.<sup>5</sup> In response to an 1859 article published in *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* that called for the colonization of Mapuche lands, the *Revista Católica*—the main organ of the Catholic Church in Chile—criticized its proposal “to exterminate the Araucanians because they are barbaric and control fertile lands, in turn proclaiming a cruel civilization built on plunder” (Andreucci, 1998, p. 77; Boccara, 2002, p. 307). The tension between the Church and sectors of the Chilean elite went beyond the “Mapuche Question” and was grounded in the Church’s loss of state institutional influence due to the liberal and secular policies implemented by the newly formed Latin American republics. Although the Catholic Church and the Chilean state shared civilizing goals for the indigenous populace, their views about how to make the Mapuche *useful citizens* underline their differences.

The state engineer Nicanor Gana arrived in the Araucanía on the heels of Chile’s 1883 military victory and alongside an army of government engineers and surveyors ready to map and study native Mapuche lands for auction and distribution.<sup>6</sup> In a letter to government officials, Gana (1883) described the local populace’s social hardships and inadequate conditions, arguing for the need for a school to serve the children of foreign settlers and to benefit “the disgraceful indigenous race.” He emphasized that formal schooling “would form, sooner rather than later, useful citizens for the working nation, as well as their future happiness” (Gana, 1883). Between 1883 and 1896 Gana’s suggestion and other proposals to expand rural public education were ignored.<sup>7</sup> The Chilean government’s position, as described by the historian Sol Serrano, was characterized by a *politics of omission*, that is, an absence of concern for the integration of the native population into Chilean society (Serrano, 1995-1996). Not until the Bavarian Capuchin friars’ arrival in 1896 did Gana’s vision of transforming the Mapuche into “useful citizens for the working nation” emerge as a reality, making the Capuchin native mission schools the government’s *de facto* assimilation policy.

This article examines the vocational courses developed by the Bavarian-run native mission schools between 1896 and 1915. It demonstrates how the Catholic mission schools’ curriculum aimed to Westernize indigenous students, transforming them into useful citizens by teaching them vocations that would fit their class and racial standing as rural and indigenous youths to benefit the region’s agrarian economy. The mission schools were the main source of education for the first generation of Mapuche children born under Chilean rule and functioned as their introduction to Chilean society.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century there were

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<sup>5</sup> The Protector of Indians was an official post under Spanish colonial Latin American rule that dated back to Bartolome de las Casas.

<sup>6</sup> There is limited scholarship about surveyors and engineers. Bengoa (2008) describes their work in passing. The writings by the German engineer, Teodoro Schmidt (1881-1893), offer the best insight on their role.

<sup>7</sup> Besides Gana, several government or Church officials urged the Chilean government to develop a plan. Years after the 1859 “Mapuche Question” debate, educators resurfaced the need for rural education during the 1889 First Pedagogical Congress and again in a 1904 proposal by the famed anthropologist and school director, Tomás Guevara, urging the creation of indigenous schools akin to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, United States.

<sup>8</sup> Between 1896 and 1915, the Bavarian fathers were in the process of understanding Chilean society and history and often taught children elements of Bavarian patriotism and culture to supplement their lack of knowledge.

numerous Catholic mission schools in Chile that enrolled native children. This article focuses, however, on three missions—Villarrica, Padre Las Casas, and Panguipulli—established in the Araucanía region after the Chilean conquest and located in an area where the majority of the native population had minimal contact with Chileans and Catholic priests prior to their arrival (Eibach, 1907).<sup>9</sup>

The years 1896 to 1915, explored in this study, capture the moment when the Capuchin friars defined and expanded their work while negotiating openly with Mapuche parents and heads of communities on the terms of their children's education (Cano, 2010; Green, 2018). Between 1915 and 1920 another period opened, beyond the purview of this article, in which the collaborative relationship between the priests and Mapuche *longkos* diminished.<sup>10</sup> Mapuche communities became frustrated with the continual loss of their land and the priests decided to concentrate on running their mission school network. This shift can also be described as a political turn by the Bavarian fathers in aligning further with the Chilean state's goals in the region.<sup>11</sup> My interest in the 1896 to 1915 period, then, is to draw attention to the divergences between state and mission approaches to the Mapuche question that occurred at this time.

This article draws on late nineteenth and early twentieth century histories on native mission schools in Latin America, the United States, and Australia that examine the relationship between the mission school's vocational courses and the state's internal colonization plan (Ellis, 1994; Clark, 2008; Flores, 2010; Fear-Segal, 2016). Some clear differences emerge, such as Chilean officials' refusal to develop an assimilation plan in contrast to the United States and Australia, even though similarities can be seen in the use of Catholic and Protestant missionaries to Christianize the native population. Clyde Ellis's research on the experiences of Kiowa children at an Indian reservation school in the U.S. Southwest and Jennifer Clark's work on the social impact of Australian education on aborigine communities are useful in describing daily school activities and the negative impact of western education on native children's identity and sense of self-worth. Similarly, the anthropological and historical studies by Rolf Foerster, Jaime Flores, Alonso Azócar, and Carmen Arellano, offer valuable local histories about the Mapuche experience and their treatment by the Capuchin friars.<sup>12</sup> While the long-term social and political effects of Mapuche children's Western Christian education is an important and understudied topic, this article aims to understand how and why the vocations that Bavarian priests taught their Mapuche pupils were meant to integrate them into the region's labor regimes, which in

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<sup>9</sup> The Bavarian friars described the cultural differences between the Mapuche communities that lived in the heart of the recently occupied territory, who maintained their traditional dress and housing structures and spoke minimal Spanish in contrast to the Mapuche communities that lived in proximity to Chilean towns and Catholic missions and spoke Spanish and adopted Chilean styles and architectural designs for their homes.

<sup>10</sup> In Mapudungun, *longko* refers to the head of a community.

<sup>11</sup> The friars continued to pen newspaper articles about the injustices committed against the Mapuche but became less active in Mapuche political life. Between 1900 and 1920, Mapuche communities became better organized while land conflicts increased throughout the 1920s, culminating in the 1934 Ranquil Massacre. The Bavarian fathers urged Mapuche *longkos* against direct action which was viewed by the more militant sectors of the Mapuche as siding with Chilean interests.

<sup>12</sup> Flores (2010) analyzes the Bavarian friars' photographs and postcards taken in Chile and sent to Germany to raise funds for their missions.

turn determined their *usefulness* and *worth* to the nation. Ultimately, by identifying the Mapuche's placement in the emerging labor regimes, scholars can better understand the racialization of agrarian society in the Araucanía during these years of economic transition.

Divided into three parts; the first section of this article describes the Capuchin mission school system and the Bavarian friars' vision for their pupils. The second section explains the types of vocational courses that the mission schools offered and how those skills were intended to integrate native children into the emerging agrarian capitalist social order as potential farmhands, domestic workers, farmers, or artisans in their own right. The final section addresses the rising agrarian economy to examine how the Mapuche adjusted to the new system and to analyze what being a useful citizen meant in material terms. Using primarily mission chronicles written by the Bavarian friars, this article takes a critical approach to analyzing the friar's personal writings meant for their Apostolic Prefect and the Apostolic Prefect's history of the mission written for the approval of Chilean government officials.

## **Bavarian Capuchin Mission Schools**

When the first group of Bavarian Capuchin friars arrived in 1896 at the Valdivia Mission in southern Chile, the Apostolic Prefect Reverend Father Alejo de Barletta welcomed them with open arms (Röttingen, I, 1921: 45-48). The Araucanía mission was in dire need of manpower, and the young Bavarian fathers gave the Capuchins' Christianizing mission new life. Nevertheless, the ageing Italian reverend father clashed with the newcomers as it became apparent that their evangelization and pedagogical methods were notably different from their Italian predecessors. This difference was due to a combination of historical and cultural differences. First, the Bavarian fathers demonstrated a willingness to negotiate with Mapuche communities to establish missions in their vicinity. The Italian Capuchins had traveled and visited native communities but merely urged the Mapuche to visit their missions twice a year to harvest the mission farms and to be baptized (Röttingen, I, 1921; Pinto & Uribe, 1986: 326). Second, the Bavarian priests took an interest in learning the Mapuche language, Mapudungun, using old Jesuit texts while simultaneously studying Spanish (Röttingen, I, 1921: 87). Third, influenced by the modernization of Bavarian schools that followed Prussia's mid-century education reforms, the Bavarian friars held education in high regard and viewed its accessibility as a social right (Semrad, 2015).<sup>13</sup> Last, hailing from an agrarian region like Bavaria and as the recipients of higher education, the fathers were most likely familiar with the modernization efforts by the Bavarian Moor Society and the Prussian Ministry of Agriculture, resulting in the friars' inclination to incorporate teaching new

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<sup>13</sup> The friars came from economically comfortable families and some received degrees from Munich University. The modern school was a nineteenth-century institution that viewed education as a tool to mold students into loyal citizens, instilling good morals, ethics, and scientific thinking. Key modern school figures in Western Europe were Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Wilhelm Fröbel, Johann Friedrich Herbart, and Herbert Spencer.

farming methods into their missions' vocational workshops (Jones, 2014; Jones, 2019).<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the Bolognese fathers were urban-based and knew little about agrarian life and farming. Furthermore, the Italian Capuchin friars had not studied under a modern education system since those reforms did not transpire in Italy until the twentieth century (Scarangelo, 1964).<sup>15</sup>

The Bavarian Reverend Father Burcardo María de Röttingen took over as Apostolic Prefect in 1900 and directed the Bavarian Capuchin mission until his retirement in 1924. His first commission as prefect stipulated five targets for missionary work in the Araucanía: 1) to recruit more Bavarian Capuchin missionaries; 2) to establish new churches and missions; 3) to build mission schools and vocational workshops; 4) to increase their pastoral community; 5) to develop self-sufficient missions that generated income. He formulated a training plan for the Bavarian friars that included intensive language learning of Spanish and Mapudungun, as well as the Chilean and Mapuche political structures.<sup>16</sup>

Once in full control of the Araucanía mission, the Bavarian friars established five more missions following Villarrica in 1900: Padre Las Casas in 1902, Panguipulli in 1903, Lonquimay and Llaima-Cunco in 1910, and Coñaripe in 1911 (Frauenhäusl, 1898-1906; Röttingen, I, 1921: 136-150).<sup>17</sup> In the case of the Panguipulli and Coñaripe missions, the friars negotiated with Mapuche communities even though they were not legally bound to seek approval from locals. In Panguipulli, Father Sigifredo de Frauenhäusl convinced community leaders to support the mission by promising to teach their children Spanish (Arellano, 2006: 306).<sup>18</sup> Still unaware of the importance that Mapuche parents placed on their children learning Spanish, the priests initially taught native pupils in Mapudungun until parents threatened to remove their children from the mission schools (Cano, 2010).

All the mission schools opened boarding facilities and additional satellite day schools that the fathers visited on a rotating basis. Boarding was an essential component of the conversion and assimilation processes that removed children from their communal and familial environment, teaching them through body discipline how to eat, dress, clean, and cook in a Western household (Foucault, 1991; Ellis, 1994; Green, 2018). The Villarrica, Padre Las Casas, and Panguipulli missions, located near sizeable Mapuche communities, housed the largest number of

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<sup>14</sup> Jones (2014) describes the Bremen Moor Research Station (MVS) and the Prussian Agricultural Ministry's the agricultural modernization efforts as part of the Prussian government's internal colonization plan. She notes how MVS agronomists influenced the Bavarian Moor Society to implement similar programs known as *Landesmoorkulturanst* in Bavaria. She highlights the tactic of organizing exhibits in cities and towns to expose farmers to new agrarian technologies and methods.

<sup>15</sup> Italy did not develop a uniform national curriculum until the 1923 Gentile Reform.

<sup>16</sup> Father Félix de Augusta prepared a Mapudungun study manual for the Bavarian fathers. He worked with Rodolfo Lenz, the German linguist and member of the Pedagogical Institute, on journal articles about the Mapudungun language. These preparations primed the Capuchin fathers for their task ahead.

<sup>17</sup> I am using the dates used in the mission chronicles when the missions were established, meaning they were still in the process of building a church and mission school facilities. Furthermore, official recognition by the state and land title documents took time to process. Prior to Chile's colonization of the Araucanía, the Capuchin missions in Chile were Santiago (f. 1853), Concepción (f. 1855), Quillota (f. 1856), La Serena (f. 1857) and Valparaíso (f. 1860).

<sup>18</sup> Father Sigifredo convinced Longko Francisco Ayllapan to accept the construction of the Panguipulli mission by offering to teach him how to read and write.

Mapuche students and ran elaborate vocational workshops for their male and female pupils. The three aforementioned schools offered better academic preparation, including more hours devoted to reading, grammar, and composition (Cano, 2011, p. 133).

The Bavarian fathers described their mission schools as a “professional school” (Röttingen, I, 1921: 134). For the Catholic missionaries, education was a means to spread their religious doctrine, but for the Bavarian Order, in particular, providing their pastoral community education was understood as a social duty. In 1885, Prussia had the highest literacy rates in Europe, including Bavaria, which implemented aspects of Prussia’s education reforms (Maynes, 1985; Keatle, 1991; Austin, 2003; Twarog, 2005; Arellano, 2006; Semrad, 2015; Jones, 2019).<sup>19</sup> Prior to their university and seminary education, the friars were educated in either public or Catholic schools that used modern school curriculums. But they also represented a privileged class that had access to high literacy education that was associated with “Protestant areas” (Keatle, 1991, p. 13). Influenced by the development of the modern school, the missionaries prioritized formal education and instituted a school curriculum similar to the national public-school curriculum. Nevertheless, in contrast to Chilean public schools, the mission schools devoted fewer weekly hours per course, allotted more time for rosary prayers, and had fewer teaching personnel due to their limited financial resources.<sup>20</sup> Yet the overall list of academic courses between public schools and the Capuchin mission schools were comparable.

Several years before the Bavarian fathers arrived, the 1889 Pedagogical Congress determined the role of Capuchin mission schools in rural Araucanía. The gathering brought together educators from across the country for the first time to discuss and propose a national curriculum. Southern representatives argued against developing a rural education program, assuring that the education of rural children remained the prerogative of *hacendados*, or estate owners (Congreso Nacional Pedagógico, 1890, p. 109). The pronouncement underscored political tensions between landowners and the recently restructured Ministry of Education that took on the task of generating a national education curriculum to create uniformity in materials taught at specific grade levels (Green, 2018).<sup>21</sup> Underpinning the tension was the landowners’ concern about how education might alter social relations, becoming ultimately a matter of jurisdiction and the extent of the state’s reach in rural Chile. In the end, the decision created an educational vacuum in rural areas since the state did not prioritize the rural education curriculum (Schneider, 1904).<sup>22</sup> While the Bavarian friars’ target group was the education and Christianization of

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<sup>19</sup> Jones states that 88 per cent of the Prussian population was literate by 1871 and Twarog notes that German illiteracy in 1885 was 1.08%. Maynes shows that in 1870 84% of male Bavarian children were enrolled in primary school and 96% by 1900.

<sup>20</sup> The nineteenth-century modern school implemented educational standards for specific grade levels, creating national uniformity. After the 1889 education reform, Chilean public schools hired teachers who specialized in specific areas, while the Capuchin mission schools afforded one or two general instructors.

<sup>21</sup> The 1880s *German turn* in Chilean education developed a uniform national curriculum inspired by German concentric learning.

<sup>22</sup> The Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura developed agrarian education programs centered in Central Chile. A similar Temuco area organization was formed in 1918.



indigenous children, they quickly realized that there was an equal need by rurally-based Chileans, Mapuche, and European settlers for schools to educate their children.

From 1896 to 1921 the Capuchin friars educated 32,882 children, the majority indigenous, with an average two-year attendance, meaning approximately 16,441 children completed their schooling (Röttingen, I, 1921, pp. 170-1). The father assigned to oversee a mission was typically assisted by one or two brothers.<sup>23</sup> School personnel, either cooks, servants, or teachers, were challenging to find due to low pay and the sheer isolation of the missions. The friars often hired graduates from other mission schools as teachers and assistants. The schools initially prioritized Mapuche boys' education, but the friars eventually worked with the Daughters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception and the Marianites of Holy Cross to open girls' boarding facilities.<sup>24</sup> Female education became more relevant as the priests confronted the difficulty in breaking the Mapuche's polygamy custom that was viewed as an obstacle to constructing Christian families. Furthermore, teaching native girls homemaking skills was regarded as central to running a modern Christian household and as a means for future employment as a servant.

**Table 1:** Students in Mission Schools, 1896-1920

		Villarrica (f. 1900)	Padre Las Casas (f. 1902)	Panguipulli (f. 1903)
No. of Students (Year)		18 (1900); 56 (1902); 147 (1915); 276 (1922)	80 (1902); 190 (1906); 125 (1915); 114 (1920)	7 (1905); 115 (1911); 184 (1916); 180 (1919)
Total students (1896-1920)	Boarders	2,153	2,667	1,821
	Day students	3,008	884	350

**Source:** Own elaboration from the Villarrica, Padre Las Casa, and Panguipulli chronicles include female pupils. The 1922 Villarrica figure is from "Status de las escuelas da 1o de julio de 1922". Reverend Father Burcardo in Part IV of 25 años calculated the total number of students attending each mission.

In 1900, the Bavarian fathers viewed the missions' trade workshops as one project in a list of others. But by 1910, vocational courses took the centerstage seen in the increase in hours devoted to training, especially in the Villarrica, Padre Las Casas, and Panguipulli missions, as a vehicle

<sup>23</sup> Fathers are ordained priests while brothers, who took their vows and lived by Saint Francis of Assis's Rule, were not yet ordained into the priesthood. Both fathers and brothers are referred to as friars.

<sup>24</sup> Mapuche girls were only allowed as day students until girls' boarding opened. The Sisters of Christian Charity arrived in Chile in 1874. The Sister Teachers of the Holy Cross from Menzingen, Switzerland founded their congregation in Chile in 1844.

for conversion and assimilation. In describing the main areas of work that emerged over the first twenty-five years of the Bavarian mission, Reverend Father Burcardo highlighted in *25 Years of Missionary Activities* that the first priority was given to religious conversion and second to protecting their indigenous flock from evildoers, mainly settlers and government officials. He emphasized, lastly, the aim to transform the Mapuche into useful citizens, as laborers and farmers (Röttingen, I, p. 1921). Underscoring their role as protector of Indians, Reverend Father Burcardo framed the mission's work in the paternalistic language of improving the lives of their poor and defenseless followers. Teaching Mapuche children Spanish was one avenue towards improvement and inclusion and labor was another. Yet neither the priests nor government officials described learning Spanish as useful to the nation, demonstrating the centrality of labor, production, and economic growth in defining a strong nation at the turn of the last century. In the minds of the Bavarian fathers, the Mapuche had to prove their usefulness to Chilean government officials by becoming employable or running a successful farm and in order to become useful they would have to be taught useful skills.

### **Mapuche Children and Mission Vocational Workshops**

There was a practical side to the vocational workshops for they produced the furniture and food needed to operate self-sufficient missions. The workshops manufactured furniture and other items for the chapel, mission school, and boarding facilities, while the farm's crops and animals provided the meals for its clergy, staff, and students. The father overseeing the mission decided on the school curriculum, including the daily hours allotted to its workshops and maintaining its farm. However, the type of workshop, as well as the quality of teaching, was dependent on the talents of the brother or nun assigned to the mission and the gender composition of the school, meaning that the Capuchin Apostolic Prefecture in Valdivia gave their priests autonomy on such matters.<sup>25</sup> The Villarrica, Padre Las Casas, and Panguipulli missions had the largest student body and boarding facilities. As the mission schools' student body grew between 1900 and 1910, so did their workshops and farms. The mission workshops initially focused on woodworking trades and in 1905 the Capuchin Apostolic Prefecture added agrarian education to their curriculum to teach the "theoretical and practical" methods to cultivate various crops (Crónica Villarrica, 1905, p. 131).

The friars walked a fine line between teaching their pupils skills and using their labor to run the mission. On one recorded occasion, Mapuche parents complained that their children were being used as laborers when they were sent to the mission school to learn Spanish (Röttingen, I, 1921, p. 136). This incident underscored what Mapuche parents deemed useful and the purpose of their children's education. The friars, in contrast, discerned in their chronicle writings that beyond running self-sufficient missions, the workshops and farms were created to teach native children useful skills to function in the new economy. Farming, herding, and

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<sup>25</sup> In 1911, the Pedagogical Institute required all non-public school teachers to take qualifying exams and demonstrate acceptable school curriculums to receive government funds.

carpentry were not new or unknown skills to the Mapuche, but the missions' vocational courses expanded their knowledge on those subjects. While vocational workshops were not akin to a proletarianization process, the Mapuche children's ability to learn a vocation that complemented the expanding agricultural economy would determine their socioeconomic ability to survive and assimilate.

Villarrica, established in 1898, was the first Bavarian-run mission and opened its mission school with boarding facilities for fifteen students in 1900 (Frauenhäusl, 1898-1906; Röttingen, I, 1921, pp. 136-7; Röttingen, IV, 1921, p. 256). Father Sigifredo de Frauenhäusl, who spoke publicly about the injustices committed against the Mapuche, managed the mission until his move in 1904 to found the Panguipulli Mission.<sup>26</sup> From its construction to daily functions, the friars relied on neighbors to support the mission effort in its early period. For example, the parishioner Safanor Contreras offered to teach mission children shoemaking and repair; a development Father Sigifredo gladly accepted (Crónica Villarrica, 1903, pp. 96-7). However, a few months later Contreras had a mental breakdown—a possible manic episode—in which Father Sigifredo reluctantly took care of him. Without guidance or supervision, the children eventually broke the tools and ruined the materials, demonstrating the precariousness of volunteer teaching, especially when attempting to instruct children in a specific trade.

In early 1904, Father Atanasio de Eglsee acquired the Villarrica Mission while Father Sigifredo set off to establish the Panguipulli Mission. The Villarrica student body grew substantially in 1905 to seventy-five, mostly male pupils. School records document that approximately twelve students attended shoemaking classes with Tertiary Brother José Lindor and nine learned carpentry skills under Carmen Catrilef.<sup>27</sup> Catrilef was known as Brother Wunibaldo's disciple and took over the carpentry workshop following Brother Wunibaldo's departure to another mission.

In accordance with the 1905 decision to include agrarian education in the school curriculum, the Villarrica Mission focused its pupils' attention on pomology.<sup>28</sup> In August of 1905, Father Atanasio invited Dr. Julio León from Los Angeles, an expert in the field of pomology, to teach children how to safely graft fruit trees (Crónica Villarrica, 1905, p. 131). Dr. León gifted the mission with fruit trees and instructed the children on how to plant them. The father's initiative to invite an academic to instruct native children on pomology shows an interest to advance the children's knowledge, giving them a competitive edge in the labor market. Yet the friar found following up on the children's newly acquired pomology skills difficult. Some years later, in 1910, Father Atanasio complained about empty summertime church services, noting that they were unable to properly teach Mapuche children how to pick and collect fruits and other foodstuffs they planted during the school year (Crónica Villarrica, 1910).

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<sup>26</sup> Father Sigifredo penned numerous articles about the injustices committed against the Mapuche people. He supported the 1907 Coz Coz parliament was the first transnational Mapuche gathering since the Argentinian and Chilean occupations.

<sup>27</sup> Tertiary refers to the Franciscan Order's lay members who were entrusted to perform St. Francis's work.

<sup>28</sup> While many Mapuche communities grew crops (wheat, potatoes, etc.), they were not known as fruit growers.

The composition of the Villarrica Mission changed between 1910 and 1920 due to the influx of foreign and national settlers to the area. Student registration increased between 1909 and 1910 from 83 to 125 students. At its start, the majority of its student body was native, but as the number of indigenous students decreased proportionately, the mission began in 1915 to document its pupils' ethnicity. In 1915 the Villarrica Mission School accounted for 100 boarders (48 Mapuche) and 47 day-students, meaning that 48 indigenous children attended out of 147 students. Reasons for these shifts and their effects on Mapuche communities are understudied; nevertheless, these demographic changes altered the mission's pastoral work. As the Capuchin friars began to serve mostly Chilean and foreign-born parishioners, the friars eventually lost their use of Mapudungun.<sup>29</sup>

In the case of Padre Las Casas, located in the Department of Temuco, the Capuchin friars founded the mission church in 1899 and opened the mission school to "help the many indigenous Moors" in 1902 (*Crónica Padre Las Casas*, 1902, p. 5).<sup>30</sup> Similarly to Villarrica, the mission experienced the demographic shift from a majority indigenous area to a mostly foreign and national settler enclave. The political and social effects of these changes discouraged Mapuche families from participating in mission activities and they withdrew their children from the mission school. In reflecting on the matter, Reverend Father Burcardo explained, "The Indians themselves rarely visited missions that primarily served Chileans, even when they were close, because they did not understand the sermons and catechisms given in Spanish and felt ashamed being side-by-side with Chileans due to their poor clothing and believed that Chileans despised them" (Röttingen, I, 1921, p. 86)

The Padre Las Casas Mission, like Villarrica, focused their initial efforts on including vocational workshops in their curriculum (*Crónica Padre Las Casas*, 1902-1930, p. 50). The mission school ran four types of trade courses: furniture making, tailoring, horticulture, and cooking. Brother José and Brother Wunibaldo, who worked at the Villarrica Mission, eventually transferred to Padre Las Casas, taking with them their experience in running the tailoring and carpentry workshops, respectively. In horticulture class, pupils learned how to cultivate vegetables, plant and prune trees, and protect crops from disease. Beekeeping was incorporated on the basis that it was a relevant industry for Mapuche communities located near the Andes summit, and the indigenous students were enthusiastic to learn the skill. Tailoring was unpopular among students because, according to the chronicling father, "the Mapuche are not fans of sedentary work, even though they do learn how to wash, clean, remove stains, and iron their clothing" (*Crónica Padre Las Casas*, 1902-1930, p. 49). From the course description, tailoring was a general introduction to how to tend to the Western-style uniforms worn by the pupils. The cooking class taught native children typical Chilean cuisines "intended for rural people"

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<sup>29</sup> The document "Status de las escuelas da 1o de julio de 1922" recategorized the mission schools as either mission, rural, parochial, or indigenous boarding schools with only the Panguipulli (which included Coñaripe) and the Boroa missions classified as indigenous.

<sup>30</sup> While the term originally referred to blacks, in the seventeenth century the word became associated with Muslim (Forbes, 1993:67, 81). The Bavarian fathers did not usually use the word 'moor' in their writings, but one can interpret its usage in this citation as a conflation of heathen and racial alterity.

(Crónica Padre Las Casas, 1902-1930, p. 50). The most popular course among the native pupils was carpentry and furniture making, while shoemaking was canceled around 1918 due to lack of personnel. Reverend Father Burcardo, employing an anthropometric argument, noted that Mapuche children disliked shoemaking due to “the underdevelopment of their behinds” (1921, IV, p. 93).

The Padres Las Casas Mission school aimed to balance teaching children basic everyday skills and preparing them to master a trade. The ablest carpentry students were chosen to train full-time and were no longer required to attend general education courses. After two years of training, the pupil received \$200 Chilean pesos to put together a toolkit and a letter of recommendation. In describing the mission schools’ trade workshops, Reverend Father Ignacio de Pamplona (1911, p. 363) noted in his history of the Capuchin missions in Chile that after two years of training, the student was gifted “all the tools and instruments of the craft they have learned.”<sup>31</sup> He further stated, “In a few years, they will be able to offer [themselves] to society as useful and industrious men.” (Pamplona, 1911, p. 363) Pamplona repeats what can be described as the mission schools’ motto that a trade gave Mapuche boys the ability to transition from boyhood to manhood making them useful and industrious citizens laboring for the good of Chilean society.

The Panguipulli Mission was established in 1903 and its school in 1907. Father Sigifredo administered the mission with a rotating staff of fathers and brothers. In comparing mission chronicles and reports sent to the Valdivia-based Apostolic Prefecture, Father Sigifredo documented the most but his entries concentrated on the political developments surrounding the mission and his efforts to support the Mapuche. He wrote minimally about the mission school’s daily activities and events. Yet records show that the Panguipulli mission school devoted the most hours to its workshops, as well as academic preparation. Therefore, the lack of information does not match the mission school’s level of activities

In 1903, Brother Inocencio was recorded clearing and cultivating the land around the mission for a garden and farm (Röttingen, III, 1921, p. 99). Three years later, in 1906, Father Sigifredo noted that Brother Inocencio’s farm grew apples, pears, cherries, plums, pines, and hazel trees, as well as raspberries, blackberries, and redcurrant, which reminded him of his motherland (Röttingen, III, 1921, p. 110). He further explained that an orchard located north of the church was covered in vegetation and tended in a “European fashion.” The Panguipulli Mission did not document wheat production, meaning the friars probably purchased wheat. They did report storing “wheat and legumes” and the children laboring in toasting wheat (Röttingen, III, 1921, pp. 119, 128). The Panguipulli mission school’s daily schedule recorded in 1907 described its students’ chores and labor. In the morning, following mass and breakfast, the children swept, washed dishes, milked the cows, tended to the farm animals, and brought in firewood. After class and lunch, the afternoon workshops included tailoring, carpentry, cutting wood, care for livestock, and tending the farm. The descriptions about the carpentry workshop discuss producing items for the mission and later the construction of the Santa Cruz girls’ school.

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<sup>31</sup> Only the Padre Las Casas Mission chronicles mentioned gifting students after graduation.

A 1914 entry noted, “The children diligently helped in the carpentry work, which made it possible to make the windows, school benches, and other furnishings for the girls’ school” (Röttingen, III, 1921, p. 127). Other entries by Father Sigifredo about the carpentry shop restate the opinion that the children gladly helped and worked hard in making pieces for the church.

As noted, Father Sigifredo offered minimal information about Panguipulli’s vocational courses but, in the little that is known, it was similar to the Villarrica and Padre Las Casas mission school workshops. In the Panguipulli case, the mission housed the greatest number of students which accounts for its elaborate farm. Running a self-sustaining mission school for over 100 boarders plus staff required a lot of labor and resources. Native students attended for free while Chilean and foreign students paid matriculation fees. The church fed and clothed its pupils; their breakfast and lunch only consisted of toasted flour with water (hot in the morning and cold at lunch) but they received a heartier dinner. Father Sigifredo rationalized the poor quality of the meals, explaining that the children were satisfied with everything because they came from poverty-stricken homes (Röttingen, III, p. 114). Native children who attended the mission schools came face-to-face with the stark reality that school meant work, devoting hours to studying, tending the farm, running the workshops, and prayer. Whether they found the hard life of the mission schools more comforting than their “poverty-stricken homes” is up for debate but taking into account the considerable numbers of students that ran away from the mission schools every year underlines how some students made their discontent known through action.

The Villarrica, Padre Las Casas, and Panguipulli Mission workshops were an essential part of Mapuche children’s educational experience. Through a controlled daily schedule of activities, chores, and prayers, the Bavarian fathers sought to internalize Western Christian norms in their native pupils. Whether the skills they learned in their trade workshops assured them a job or accelerated their assimilation into the capitalist economy is a question the next section will explore.

## **Vocational Skills in the Agrarian-Capitalist Society**

This final section discusses the limits and possibilities for Mapuche children to integrate into the new agrarian economy, and what being a useful citizen ultimately meant in practice. The Capuchin friars understood the social and economic limits for their Mapuche pupils under Chilean rural society. Nevertheless, the priests prepared their pupils with a realistic undertaking about what was available and what they could accomplish in terms of labor and land cultivation. From 1896 to 1920, the Capuchin mission schools—and their workshops—grew in size and popularity, with the size of the student body reaching its peak around 1910. As the new capitalist agricultural system took root in the Araucanía region (Robles-Ortiz, 2020), Mapuche social standing, either as individuals or as communities, took shape.

The changes in Araucanía’s political landscape between 1900 and 1920 can be summarized as the further displacement of Mapuche communities from their lands to make way for the consolidation of large landholdings. For example, in the Temuco area, state engineers measured 23,901 hectares and designated only 5,159 to Mapuche communities and that number

would decrease in the proceeding decade (Bengoa, 2008: 355).<sup>32</sup> Before the Chilean occupation, Mapuche labor consisted of ranching, fishing, horticulture, the gathering of berries, herbs, and pine nuts (*piñones*), as well as slash-and-burn agriculture producing mostly beans, potatoes, squash, maize, and vegetables; all depending on their geographic location (Klubock, 2014: 11).<sup>33</sup> By 1920 the Araucanía's economic landscape was dominated by wheat production, the forestry industry, and other minor enterprises (Bengoa, 2008; Klubock, 2014; Robles-Ortiz, 2020). The Mapuche's potential to generate money or produce profit depended on their ability to integrate into the economic networks governing their region. Ability, in this case, does not refer to skill or talent but access to land, loans, and the market. The reduction of Mapuche landholdings made animal grazing almost impossible, and the rotation of plots for slash-and-burn agriculture difficult. The government placed Mapuche *reducciones* (reservations) between settler lands, enclosing their livestock and producing inevitable clashes with their neighbors (Bengoa, 2008; Klubock, 2014).<sup>34</sup> The process of *radicación*—placing communities in reservations—recast the Mapuche into a “society of poor campesinos” that dismantled Mapuche production units and trade, transforming them, according to the anthropologist José Bengoa, into a pauper class (2008: 362). While not all Mapuche became paupers, their social and economic standing fell significantly following the occupation. The transition from subsistence farming to producing for the market economy created another radical shift in norms and social relations.

Three groups of Mapuche subjects emerged after the Chilean occupation. The first group were the Mapuche communities that received a *reducción* but had to struggle to maintain their land. Those communities or familial groups were in the best position to integrate into the agrarian economy, depending on the quality of their land. The second group were those displaced altogether due to the war which broke up families and orphaned children, and land usurpation that forced migration (Pinto, 2015; Milanich, 2009).<sup>35</sup> Other studies on the impact of displacement by colonial policies on native communities have shown that an indigenous person's removal from their familial units accelerated cultural loss, and in the modern Chilean context, this process transmuted individuals into the category of mestizo (Cadena, 2000; Ellis, 2000; Clark, 2008; Fear-Segal, 2016). The third group were those who relocated as family units. The friars mention in their chronicles families relocating to either Argentina or other cities for economic reasons. The majority of native pupils that attended the Capuchin mission schools discussed in this article were from the first group that remained on their land.

Mapuche farms did not vanish after the Chilean occupation of the Araucanía. In Iván Inostroza's study about Mapuche family farmers and commercial traders in the Nueva Imperial area, he demonstrates the adjustments made by native families between 1870 and 1930 to

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<sup>32</sup> There were no limits to the number of properties that a single person could purchase at auctions until 1895.

<sup>33</sup> Mapuche communities produced silver jewelry, wool goods such as ponchos, honey production, and more.

<sup>34</sup> The friars chronicled Mapuche complaints about animal land theft, demonstrating the frequency of the conflict.

<sup>35</sup> There lacks a comprehensive study about the displacement of Mapuche communities following the Chilean occupation of Malleco and Cautín provinces. Milanich (2009) demonstrates that Chilean colonialism caused a large number of Mapuche children to be placed into orphanages. She uses Orlando Patterson's concept of *natal alienation* to underscore the children's familial, cultural, and religious loss.

compete in the capitalist economy (2016). Tomás Guevara, the director of Temuco High School and the famed anthropologist on Mapuche culture and familial structures, noted in a footnote that Mapuche farmers sold approximately 50,000 Chilean pesos worth of wheat in the outskirts of Temuco while those who conducted trade in Argentina brought back the value of a million pesos in livestock (Guevara, 1903, p. 186). In another source, Father Félix de Augusta, who studied and taught Mapundugun to his colleagues, stated in a 1911 letter to Reverend Father Burcardo that the Mapuche did not erect Mapuche towns because they primarily labored in rural vocations such as agriculture and ranching. The father explained that some Mapuche were forced to seek work on a temporary basis or relocate altogether to cities and towns because the government left their community with only “3 or 4 hectares per head,” working as “servants, store clerks, or artisans” (Röttingen, I, 1921, p. 31).<sup>36</sup> Father Felix described how the Mapuche once lived comfortably with an abundance of sheep, cattle, and horses that were lost when the Chilean military took their livestock. Father Felix ended his letter underscoring that besides all these hardships, the Mapuche “have quickly transformed into small farmers” (Röttingen, I, 1921, p. 31).

Mapuche parents donated sacks of cereals and legumes to the mission schools, which were probably from their own crops. The friars chronicled a drought in 1914 that caused “great hunger” among the Mapuche that was followed by a smallpox outbreak in 1915 that hit the Panguipulli mission school and killed two entire families in nearby Coz Coz (Frauenhäusl, 1914, pp. 359-60; Post, 1976; Arnold, 1993).<sup>37</sup> During the periods of drought, the friars reported not receiving donations of foodstuffs from Mapuche parents, and instead, gave needy children wheat to take home.

These examples corroborate the existence of Mapuche small farmers, including wheat producers, in the Temuco area in the early twentieth century. Rather than a “pauper class” destroyed by Chilean colonialism, sectors of Mapuche-landed communities were farmers and producers. Placing the impact that the vocational courses had on native children within the historical reality of that time underlines that the courses were not a form of agricultural proletarianization but instead benefited the Mapuche since the skills connected with their economic reality. Yet a noted limit to that education was that the Capuchin missions’ farms were subsistence farms, meaning that the Bavarian friars did not teach their pupils farm production or planning in relation to the agrarian market economy.

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<sup>36</sup> Foreign settlers received eighty to one-hundred hectares plus forty hectares for each son over the age of twelve.

<sup>37</sup> The drought was first recorded in 1912, but its effects became hard hitting by 1914. During the drought, the fathers gifted pupils with food to take to their families. At the Panguipulli Mission, Father Sigifredo gave needy children 30 almudes (1 almud in Chile equaled 8.08 liters) of wheat, amounting to 6.8 US bushels of wheat approximating 60 lbs. or 27.2 kg. He mentions another bad harvest year in 1922 that was followed by a smallpox outbreak in 1923. Although historians and economists disagree, famine and malnutrition accelerate the spread of infectious diseases. Post (1976) highlights the relationship between higher grain prices and death rates in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. Arnold (1976) underscores how the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Great Famine in India facilitated the contagion of smallpox, dysentery, cholera, and malaria.



The definition of the *politics of omission*, evident in the Chilean government's decision to not develop a state assimilation policy for the native populations, can be expanded analytically to include the state's refusal to give the Mapuche a place in the agrarian economy (Serrano, 1995-1996). The Chilean state prioritized financial support for European settlers by giving them land, loans, materials, livestock, and healthcare.<sup>38</sup> The artisan and agricultural skills that Mapuche children learned at the Capuchin mission schools could not replace the structural impact of losing land. Yet those who remained on their lands could benefit from learning new agricultural methods. Government officials stated that they wanted useful citizens and the Bavarian fathers delivered in their promise, but it became apparent through a state policy the favored settlers ultimately excluded the Mapuche from economic integration.

Data collection on former mission students' employment history is limited because the Capuchin friars only mention in their chronicles former students who maintained an association with the Church either as mission school instructors and teachers' aides or who entered the priesthood. Due to the array of skills that the children learned, former pupils who migrated to urban centers, either willingly or unwillingly, could use their tailoring or carpentry skills, as mentioned by Father Felix. Mapuche women working as domestic servants could find employment in nearby rural estates.<sup>39</sup> And, lastly, those who moved north to Central Chile could work tending and picking fruit trees.

The Mapuche's entry into the Chilean economy—urban and rural—was also their entry into a racialized and gendered workforce. The *useful citizen* emerged from government and church documents as a self-fulfilling dictum without a clear or agreed upon policy that would complement each other's goals. The Mapuche who ultimately became useful citizens were individuals violently displaced from their land or left their communities due to economic necessity, which exemplifies what E. Bradford Burns describes as the *poverty of progress* imposed by Latin American republican elites on the popular masses (Burns, 1983). Transforming the displaced Mapuche—who carried their racial status on their skin color and in their surnames—into cheap laborers in the eyes of the industrial and *hacendado* class, highlights the racism rooted in Chile's colonization of the Araucanía and the racialized reality of the useful citizen. Their placement in that structure was negotiated in this period of transition from 1883 to 1915. While the Bavarian friars agreed with the Chilean state's aim to Christianize and assimilate, the Bavarian friars ultimately developed their own plan for their Mapuche pupils that envisioned them as successful farmers and artisans.

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<sup>38</sup> Chilean settlers did not receive these benefits.

<sup>39</sup> The chronicles document the sister of a pupil who learned to speak German.

## Conclusion

This article demonstrates that the Bavarian Capuchin native mission schools educated the first generation of Mapuche children under Chilean rule, teaching them the necessary skills to assimilate into Chilean society and in turn offered Mapuche parents and communities the knowledge and skills that could benefit their transition into the region's rising agricultural economy. The Capuchin mission network became the Chilean government's informal assimilation policy, whose primary role was to Christianize native children and their communities. Yet the Bavarian fathers went beyond their mandate and developed a modern school curriculum that included academic courses and a vocational program that taught artisan, domestic, and agricultural skills. The Capuchin fathers gave their native pupils a useful trade in the new economic and political structure. Father Sigifredo and Father Felix, who remained close to Mapuche communities over the years, understood their life's work as a divine path to support the Mapuche. They complained about the never-ending injustices committed against their native parishioners, functioning as the protectors of their native congregation. A modern education and a vocation gave the mission schools' graduates a competitive edge and opportunity to prove their abilities in the labor market. Nevertheless, without structural changes that would grant the Mapuche larger landholdings, the native population remained strangled in their ability to expand and develop their agricultural land units.

The first section of this article described the Capuchin Order's 1848 agreement with the Chilean government, the institutional history of the Bolognese Capuchin Order mission in Chile, and the dispute between the Italian and Bavarian friars on education. The second section described the farms and trade workshops at the Villarrica, Padre Las Casa, and Panguipulli missions. It detailed the type of vocations taught, the crops and farm animals the children tended to, and the students' daily routines, illustrating how the children were being trained to live and work in a Christian and Western lifestyle and ethos. The final section described the region's economic and agricultural economy, and the perseverance of Mapuche farmers in the early twentieth century. It repositioned the Chilean state's and Capuchin fathers' understanding of the *useful citizen* and their expectations of able-bodied Mapuche as workers, farmers, and *inquilinos*. Since many Mapuche communities partook in small-scale farming, the mission's vocation workshops did not teach entirely new skills but fulfilled a need for the community in teaching new methods. Other skills such as shoemaking and housewifery skills did represent the friars' intent to assimilate native children into Western styles and customs that, in the priests' point of view, complemented their goal to Christianize the native Mapuche. While the Bavarian friars did support the Chilean government's goal of transforming native communities into useful citizens, methodological difference between the two became apparent. Mapuche communities that stayed on their lands or remained close to their native communities were in a better position to resist full assimilation, meaning the total loss of their culture. Those who remained on their properties were also able to straddle both worlds of maintaining cultural continuity while engaging with the agrarian market economy. Nonetheless, a large sector of the native population

was forced to assimilate to survive and become—in the eyes of friars, educators, and government officials—*useful citizen*

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