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Universidad del Zulia
Facultad Experimental de Ciencias
Departamento de Ciencias Humanas
Maracaibo - Venezuela

Identity as a means of subordination: political- anthropological research into the history of haciendas in Chile's central valley

Daniel Flores Cáceres

Universidad de Los Lagos, Chile
danielflorescaceres@gmail.com

Daniel González Hernández

Museo Campesino en Movimiento, Chile
daniel.gdaniel@gmail.com

Danilo Petrovich Jorquera

Museo Campesino en Movimiento, Chile
petrodanilovich@gmail.com

Andrés Rojas-Bottner

Universidad Autónoma de Chile, Chile
arojas@ichem.cl

Olga Carrillo Mardones

Universidad Católica de Temuco, Chile
ocarrillo@uct.cl

Abstract

This article provides a political and anthropological interpretation of the pre-modern tributes and gifts used by Chile's haciendas to hire workers. It then goes on to explain how this system was transformed into an ideology and world view for the landholding class and was subsequently adopted nationwide. As well as being a means of exploitation, it is suggested that haciendas also introduced the idea (and created the identity) of a population made up of their subjects. It is claimed that the latter were both unproductive and lacking identity and could only become productive and cultural beings through subordination to landowners.

Key words: Hacienda, identity, tributes, gift, ideology.

La identidad como medio de subordinación: investigación político-antropológica sobre la historia de las haciendas en el valle central de Chile

Resumen

Este artículo da una interpretación política y antropológica de los tributos y beneficios premodernos utilizados por las haciendas de Chile para contratar trabajadores. Luego explica cómo este sistema se transformó en ideología y visión del mundo para la clase terrateniente y posteriormente se adoptó en todo el país. Además de ser un medio de explotación, se indica que las haciendas también introdujeron la idea (y crearon la identidad) de una población compuesta por sus súbditos. Se afirma que estos últimos eran a la vez improductivos y carecían de identidad y solo podían convertirse en seres productivos y culturales a través de la subordinación a los terratenientes.

Palabras clave: Hacienda, identidad, tributos, beneficios, ideología.

INTRODUCTION

Haciendas have been a determining factor in Chile's social and economic history for centuries. They existed before independence and were almost untouchable until the second half of the twentieth century, when agricultural reform changed how land was held in Chile once and for all.

The hacienda, however, was more than just an agricultural entity. This paper's main argument is that the landowning elite managed to establish both social and working relationships with their

workers by using hiring methods dating from before modern times. In this way, they were able to create their own unique modernization ideology. This type of modernization was initially a result of the sacrifice and syncretism between the owner and his (hacienda) workers. The symbolic role of the owner provided a financial and social foundation that preceded external hacienda workers' move away from a substantivist model towards debt peonage.

Both of these anthropological relationships imply that tenant farmers or workers only earned a positive (productive, social or cultural) identity through a subordinate relationship with landholders. Based on this, this paper maintains that the hacienda elite constructed an image of the Chilean people as the 'other' – ahistorical, unnamed, fundamentally irrational and lacking a political, productive and exclusive culture of their own. This concept spread until it reached the highest echelons of state as a result of the political triumphs of the hacienda elite.

This anthropological interpretation of Chilean hacienda history basically analyzes the period during which “traditional, large Chilean estates” (Mellafe 1981) existed, from the second half of the eighteenth century, through the nineteenth and up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Territorially, they were located throughout the Chilean central valley, specifically in the provinces of Aconcagua, Santiago, Valparaiso, Colchagua, Talca and Ñuble (Atropos 1966, 196-218; Tornero 1872). The running of country estates during this period was defined by the relationship between rationalization versus

technology and production, the creation of internal and external markets, the rural population's steady growth and their access to credit and the fact that more currency was in circulation. It was also a period that consolidated the existence of the small-scale producers that had sprung up around the haciendas, as well as indigenous and mestizo communities, the struggle against monopolies and Church and State bureaucracy. All of these were obstacles that framed the creation and consolidation of hacienda ideology nationwide (Mellafe 1981)ⁱ ⁱⁱ. However, this paper will also briefly consider other periods in Chile's history – mainly the time of the encomiendas at the beginning of the colonial period – in order to substantiate its arguments.

This article uses primary and secondary sources of information analyzed using three theoretical paradigms. In the first, the symbolic (as well as productive) relationship between the owner and the tenant who pays the tribute is interpreted using Chilean sociology's conservative theories (Morandé 1984, 2010). In the second, the relationship between employer and workers and external hacienda workers is explained using anthropological paradigms (Mauss 2009) and different ways of interpreting colonialism and subordination (Taussig 1980, 2002; Ferraro 2004)ⁱⁱⁱ. In the third, these mechanisms are analyzed as part of the hacienda elite's discourse and as part of one on how ideologies are constructed, something also done by Laclau using the concepts of opposition, dislocation and ideology (Laclau and Mouffe 2004; Laclau 2002).

1. HACIENDAS AND WORKER INTEGRATION: THE CULTURAL, WORKING AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO

Haciendas in Chile were units whose aim was to trade agricultural resources both internally and externally. They occupied relatively large pieces of land, with their main buildings at the center: the owner's house, warehouses, windmills and a church. Adjacent to the haciendas, ranches (Chonchol 1994)^{iv} were built for hacienda workers to live in.

At the cusp of the social hierarchy was the landowner^v, owner of the unit. He was raised from an early age by servants and trained from childhood to run the estate^{vi}. A trusted administrator usually worked for him, helped by sub-administrators and foremen, who directed and watched over the crews in the fields and who lived outside the hacienda with their families. A contract was drawn up between owner and worker, with the former offering bonuses and a portion of land to the latter, paid for by a levy and by working on the hacienda (Góngora, 1960)^{vii}.

In classic Chilean historiography (Mellafe 1981)^{viii}, the estate owner's rural power was legitimized not only by possessing land but also - and above all - because of a relationship in which the owner had, "under his direction, something to selectively manage, manipulate and dominate compared to other groups or people. This brings with it a certain amount of opposition and ultimately rationality

and economy in land management, leading to either more or less social, political and economic efficiency” (Mellafe 1981, 81)^{ix}.

This paper’s main argument is that having people to manage laid the foundation for the hacienda elite’s rural power and is fundamentally symbolic, emerging from early encomiendas (a labor system) and encomenderos (those in charge of the encomiendas) involving Indians during the Conquest and from when colonization (the period just before the haciendas) began. During this time, the distance between Spanish colonists and the Crown led to a cynical relationship of obedience that was “respected but not complied with” and that ended up creating an *ad hoc* autonomy (Jocelyn-Holt 1999). On one hand, private encomiendas with permits issued by the Crown forced subjects not only to respect this ruler’s sovereignty but also Catholicism^x, the tax on precious metals and the supremacy of the Spanish state. On the other hand, being a private encomienda gave those in charge a leading role, basically as local holder of the tribute and the royal representative the indigenous - considered the monarch’s (relatively inept) subjects – had to pay. In Chile, this sovereign tribute was collected by the encomendero (Chonchol 1994; Morandé 1984)^{xi}.

The existence of this tribute was significant for Crown-Indian relations because it provided a symbolic, deep-rooted link between the pre-Conquest economy and the contracts between the indigenous and the Spanish (Morandé 1984). In relations between indigenous societies before modern times and prior to the Spanish Conquest, the symbolic equivalent was a ritual that involved handing over produce

as a form of tax, which was then used to fund celebrations or squandered according to the particular world view. Therefore, the relationship that emerged between the indigenous and the Spanish monarch through *encomiendas* was not based on paying for work carried out but on the exact opposite. The Indians handed over produce as a tribute to the king, in a similar way to what existed before modern times, with no ritual valuation of their work or sacrifice, which would have involved destroying the item's value and reconstructing its symbolic one (Morandé 2010). In summary, the *encomendero* accumulated produce and sent it abroad in the name of the Crown, which meant that the *encomenderos* (Indians) were never able to see, either through rituals or consumption, the value of their work (Morandé 2010)^{xiii}. In Marxism, this is known as alienation.

However, *encomiendas* in Chile vanished in the seventeenth century, given the depletion of the gold mines, the important demographic decline of the indigenous population and constant attacks from bands of horse thieves. Thus, the Kingdom of Chile was forced to exchange mining for agriculture early on and to offer work to the indigenous and their families within landowners' properties. This transformation, however, was once again carried out using tributes as the basis for the contract between the owner and those who were now farm workers (tenant farmers). However, an important change was made, with symbolism being incorporated. Rituals (celebrations) associated with agricultural production were established, so workers at the hacienda itself had the chance to understand the value of their work (Kay 1986; Morandé 2010), both in

this way as well as through the owner's personal sumptuary use (Morandé 2010).

The owner therefore was the person who not only accumulated produce but also the person in charge of symbolically rewarding work within the hacienda. He therefore occupied the role of both tribute collector and user and, at the same time, of organizer of the celebration in which some of the excess produce subject to tribute was communally consumed. Therefore, in the Marxist sense, the landowner was a reflection of the tenant farmers' work. "As far as tenant farmers are concerned, the landowner takes on a role equivalent to general. He compares one job with another and decides on the value of each. Without him, there is no access to the job market. He is the mediator" (Morandé 2010, 64)^{xiii}. Therefore, outside the hacienda – when dealing with the Crown and then the market itself - the owner is the only worker, while within it he is a general or its equivalent, responsible for putting a value on the tenant farmers' work.

2. INTEGRATION BEYOND THE HACIENDAS: THE CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORKING CLASS

Although the landowner's relationship with the tenant farmers within the hacienda involved symbolism and redistribution, he had no symbolic means of domination over the group of temporary workers living outside the hacienda. This was problematic when the

landowners, aiming to export produce due, to a certain extent, to demand caused by the gold rush in Australia and California, had to substantially increase their production of wheat (Sunkel 2011; Robles 2003). Since production was increased by intensifying the use of manual labor and not by introducing technology (Salazar 2000; Bauer 1994), landowners had to find a way of incorporating this group of workers into the farm work carried out on the haciendas.

Doing this was not easy, since this group of external workers responded to different economic incentives. Landowners and conservatives at the time argued that this group was not interested in progress and that their main incentive was subsistence or immediate gratification, not gain. “The fields are unpopulated, the land of little value and, inland, provisions cheap. In truth, it is likely that, apart from those living near big cities, Chilean cultivators continue to live day-to-day, without worrying about tomorrow and even less about the future” (SIC), explained Claudio Gay (1862, 151) at the time.

The contracts drawn up and incentives used by landowners were unsuccessful. A report drawn up for the President of the Republic by Menadier at the time of the National Exhibition of Agriculture indicated that “just one example is that the daily wage of the seasonal workers at the El Pirque hacienda was raised by 40 or 50 cents in the middle of the wheat harvest. However, instead of working more, the workers took Monday and Tuesday off. The increase in the daily wage had no effect other than to turn the permanent workers into lazy drunks. In another example from 1862, a landowner wrote that

when studying the working class, their laziness or lack of interest in improving themselves stood out. Increasing their daily wage only increases their usual idleness” (Covarrubias 1869, 174-175).

The complexity of this relationship is explained by Taussig (1980), an ethnographer who studied and explained this (il)logical economy through his field work in Colombia. He described a group of workers who, to fulfill their basic needs, needed a salary worth Z , which meant they had to work five days a week, six hours a day. When their employer needed to double production, he decided to pay double ($Z \times 2$) what he paid before, hoping that the workers would now work five days a week, twelve hours a day. However, what happened was ridiculous: the workers ended up working only two and a half days, earning enough money with this new deal to carry on living in the same conditions as before. Menadier’s previously mentioned example is as irrational as the one provided by Claudio Gay, who observed and described Chile in the nineteenth century. He said that “in Valdivia and Chiloe, double the amount of potatoes needed for survival were grown but workers only worked two or three days a week, since that earned them enough to buy cider and potatoes for four or five days off” (1862, 152).

Therefore, how should a group of people with no ambition or plans for the future be dealt with, when they seem to respond irrationally to monetary incentives but have accumulated capital? In his contemporary ethnographical study on Latin American rural and indigenous societies, Taussig (1980) explains that symbolic payments

are the solution to this clash between modernity and pre-modernity. “When the system of merchandise is interfered with in a socialist, pre-capitalist way, the two forms of fetishism - the magic of reciprocal exchange and the system of merchandise - clash and take on a new form” (Taussig 1980, 170)^{xiv}. Therefore, landowners gave a sense of purpose to tenant farmers’ work at their haciendas through tributes. Beyond the haciendas, workers discovered reciprocity, which gave them an incentive to work.

Taussig^{xv} provides a crucial ethnographic clue to help us with this interpretation. He indicates that gifts or bonuses – the reciprocal items given in exchange for work in pre-modern societies – created a unique situation and made it possible for modernization and adopting capitalism to occur in Latin America. More than gifts, their less romantic opposite of debt was used. As Mauss (1979) explains, this was due to the fact that in pre-modern societies, gifts - including free gifts exchanged between people or tribes - were also obligatory and related to “self-interest” (Mauss 1979, 157). Ferraro (2004) refers to these so-called free gifts, maintaining that they were neither free nor generous, nor merely loans (Firth, 1972). Rather - and specifically in the case of Latin America - they were “selfish gifts” that created a “bond of debt” (Ferraro 2004, 22), with gifts and reciprocity becoming debt, domination and exploitation in the social and productive relationship between workers and landowners.

During the period of the traditional Chilean hacienda, debt was based on obligations and responsibilities that aimed to make workers

increasingly dependent on owners in order to turn this group of individuals into pseudo-tenant farmers. This new group was a synthesis of the worst aspects of two worlds: like tenant farmers, they were dependent on the owner because of their debts and responsibilities, but they had fewer privileges. This policy successfully managed to turn large groups of workers – who were seasonal or temporary up until then - into permanent ones at the larger haciendas (Santana 2006, 126-128). Even their debts were formalized in their contracts. For example, in Melipilla in 1875, the responsibilities inherent to this relationship were described in the following way:

“1° The owner will relinquish a fenced-off area or small plot to the tenant farmer for him to build his ranch on; this is what is called ‘possession’ (these days, it is usually the owner’s responsibility to build the house for the tenant farmer).

2° The tenant farmer must provide the hacienda with a worker on a modest salary: in 1875, 10 or 20 cents a day plus grits in the morning and evening and a portion of beans for lunch. This mandatory worker’s salary is far lower than that of an agricultural worker.

3° The landowner will give the tenant farmer a certain expanse of arable land: one or two fields if it is irrigated, more if it is a plantation. He will also give him the right to graze a certain number of animals at the hacienda: horses, sheep or cattle (nowadays said right is

limited to five or six animals). These are what are termed as gifts” (Borde and Góngora 1956, 162-163).

Several forced forms of reciprocity - or debt peonage to use Taussig's description - also existed. One of these was the system of salary tokens that could be exchanged at warehouses^{xvi}, with the worker being paid for his work with said tokens (made of leather, metal or another kind of material), either for a certain amount or for a specific product such as mate or sugar. These could only be traded for products at the hacienda's warehouses or in its store, at higher-than-normal prices and for products of dubious quality. According to Segal (1964, 5), when wheat exports increased during the gold rush in California and Australia, every medium-sized and large estate used salary tokens. Jorge McBride indicated that, “since many of the haciendas are so big, workers cannot spend their earnings anywhere but the warehouses, which are almost always on the same farm. Here, they can purchase goods and clothes, foodstuffs not produced on their own plots, needles and thread, nails, soap, canned goods and other supplies. Alcohol and tobacco are almost always bought under the counter or somewhere close by. It is more practical for landowners to give credit to their subordinates or to pay them with tokens that can only be exchanged at the store itself. On some large estates, the tokens or coins that are accepted at these stores can even be used in other places. Prices are normally exorbitant and take a large chunk out of the salary earned, irrespective of whether the shop belongs to the landowner or to another person to whom this privilege has been conferred as part of a real commercial monopoly” (1970, 121-122).

Therefore, since the workers did not respond to modern financial incentives, the hacienda had to find a way to tie them to the land and force them to do their job, offering them both small loans and alcohol. Stores were set up to provide loans, as a way of creating an unbreakable bond between workers and landowners, ensuring, for the latter, both an available workforce and the subordination of their tenant farmers and workers.

In short, debt peonage took on different forms, through gifts, bonuses and the token system. In the long term, this helped incorporate external workers into the hacienda, with the owner productively and symbolically controlling both.

3. WORKING CLASS IDEOLOGY ACCORDING TO THE HACIENDA ELITE

As seen in the previous sections, the elite believed tenant farmers and workers, despite their eccentric way of thinking, did actually respond to incentives and act decently when they were indebted to their owner. If not, they were the exact opposite - lazy, incompetent and indifferent. Claudio Gay describe the Chilean worker by saying “he is good, honorable, intelligent, very hospitable, gifted with a certain intuition and respectful of his owner, never daring to enter his house with his spurs on and maintaining a respectful distance when talking to him. Although a heavy smoker, he would never dare to smoke in his presence if he does not have permission, even at a

distance and even if made to wait [...]. He is extremely reserved towards his owner or superior, despite being addicted to smoking; [although] he never looks out for his own interests or defends himself and stays quiet when asked about a workmate's misdemeanors, even if this person is his enemy. This kind of behavior is very common in this class and seems to emerge naturally in order to compensate for the worker's inferiority before his sires" (1862, 153).

Therefore, it can be said that these pre-capitalist or pre-modern tribute and debt methods created more than just a social, economic and cultural relationship between workers, tenant farmers and owners, with the landowning group soon assimilating their subordinates into their ideology^{xvii} and mission. This initially consisted of a discourse that stripped tenant farmers and workers of both identity and reason, later giving them back both while making them subordinate, first to their owner (the elite) and later to the State.

For the hacienda elite, tenant farmers and workers were part of an amoral, unproductive and seditious working class. At the contest on Chilean ways of country life at the National Exhibition of Agriculture in 1876, the judges described them as living in "ignorance and misery, with a lack of foresight. They are lazy and drunk to such an extent that they turn into thieves and squander their money; both their personal and family lives are disorganized. They are dishonest in their dealings and have no respect for agreements or keeping one's word [...] These defects are the common heritage of our employees and day workers, miners and craftsmen, retailers and warehouse

workers, temporary workers and traveling salesmen, who contribute in different ways to production and who encourage commerce and industry” (González et al. 1876, 515-516).

On the other hand, people were only useful and good when subordinated to the estate owner. The hacienda elite therefore suggested making subordination a public policy. In his memoir, Antonio Subercaseaux indicates that “authority does not need to intervene to improve the conditions of our tenant farmers. The interests of the landowners are clearly understood and what is required is that they set an example, limiting the law and establishing guarantees for individual initiative [...]” (Gonzalez et al. 1876, 510).

Therefore, the hacienda elite’s ideology assumes that these workers are not the opposition but actually necessary, in the sense that their limitations allow the elite to achieve their class mission through a relationship with their subordinates. If, in Laclau, this opposition to the hacienda elite is described as the “presence of someone who prevents me from being completely me” (Laclau and Mouffe 2004, 168), then they are not actually the opposition but actually the path to fulfillment. In this way, the hacienda elite is a platform through which the figure of the owner can come into his own. The basis of the contract between the owner and the tenant farmer is also used to draw up contracts beyond the hacienda.

Domingo Morel follows this line of thought in his paper titled ‘An Essay on the Conditions of the Rural Classes in Chile’, in which

he suggests that “corrective modernization by private individuals” is required. [...] It is not the State that must remedy the wrongs workers complain about or increase their salaries or improve the quality of their food and clothing. Rather, the State is limited to informing them of their rights and responsibilities and guaranteeing peace and work, keeping completely out of the matters of production and consumption” (Gonzalez et al. 1876, 511). The elite’s mission becomes the notion of the ‘other’. In this same vein, a writer at the time asked: “What will become of the rural classes? What can be expected of their morals or work if they do not have the hacienda and what they consider their own piece of land, which allows them to provide for their families?” (Barros 1875, 18).

Another approach to this landowning class ideology can be seen in the editorial of the *El Agricultor* newspaper (1841), which stated that “landowners act on the principal that workers are inherently bad and can only be dealt with harshly. This is where the habit of despotizing them comes from, making them so miserable”. Hacienda production before capitalism laid the foundation for their relationship with workers and tenant farmers, with the hacienda elite creating a discourse allowing themselves domination, while denying the identity of the ‘other’, excluding them and maintaining their lack of legitimacy.

The hacienda elite’s vision of the ‘other’ lasted well into the twentieth century. Their main political association, the National Society of Agriculture (SNA), described them in the following terms:

“[...] They rarely work at their own discretion. They are generally very lazy, do not mean well and do not cooperate with the owner’s interests, even when they are affected by his success or results [...]. If the worker makes an effort, he obtains better working conditions [...]. However, many of our workers do not have this option, more because of a lack of education than ability. When we mention education, we do not refer to technical knowledge or manual capabilities as much as to the morals that involve complying with one’s duty, through loyal obedience to the orders received, using one’s time and activities honorably and showing integrity in one’s behavior in general” (SNA, 1927).

4. THE HACIENDA ELITE’S IDEOLOGY AS A HEGEMONIC POLICY

The elite’s ideology as a means of achieving worker fulfillment was successful politically and institutionally, going from project to national ethos and then nationwide policy. At first, this consisted of the landowning classes taking advantage and holding any possible political position (whether local, regional and national), passing and manipulating the laws that tried to democratize the distribution of power, specific to the nineteenth century global context and promoted in Chile by intellectuals and the bourgeoisie. Among others, laws such as the 1854 Constitutional Law of Municipalities, the 1874 Electoral Reform Law and the 1891 Law of Regional Autonomy were eventually drawn up to protect rural areas from landowners.

Since Spanish occupation, the local Chilean elite had shown signs of its ability to use any bureaucratic instrument available to legitimize its power (Jocelyn Holt 1999, 2001; Castillo 2011). The first of these was the town council, through which they aimed to consolidate their identity. Among other things, they used the creation of a common cause as a result of their confrontations with indigenous groups, bandits, the mines, commerce and the Church, as well as their opposition to loans and tariff exemptions (Mellafe 1981).

The Spanish Crown gave landowners positions on town councils, allowing them to legitimize their power in the haciendas, a situation that went unchanged until after Chilean independence. Then, the elite experienced two difficulties, which they were ultimately able to overcome successfully. First was the creation of the Federal Constitution of 1826, which decreed that the territory should be reorganized into municipalities, the country divided into eight provinces and representatives elected by the people. This was followed by the Centralist Constitution of 1833, which gifted far-reaching powers to the Executive branch, centralizing political power in the capital and allowing the Executive to intervene in municipal elections.

However, on both occasions, landowners and their families managed to control these situations, using them to extend their own territorial power instead of simply focusing on taking over emerging urban areas. The mid-nineteenth century historian, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, criticized the hacienda elite's showy concentration of

power. “There is another serious situation unfolding here - the concentration of power in the hands of landowners, making them a triple authority over the helpless tenant farmer. We are talking of the landowner-owner of property or from whom land is rented, the landowner-commander of the militia and the landowner who is sub-delegate of the district. Why, then, does this triple oppression of the tenant farmer occur? Why is public power as an instrument of individual interest not avoided? Would it not perhaps be reasonable to ask for power to be divided up?” (1936, 68).

Another example describes the Chillan town council, which “[...] is made up of a mayor (the landowner himself), a second mayor (his step-brother), and three councilors (his godson, his cousin and one of his poor servants, to whom he lent something to wear on days when sessions were held). In the end, the only nominated spokesperson was also one of his close friends” (Mellafe 1981, 103). On the Los Andes town council, for example, the same families were still governing in the twentieth century as in colonial times, with power changing hands from generation to generation. Families such as the Meneses, Aguirres and the de La Fuentes continued to hold power up until the middle of the nineteenth century, rotating their way through the municipal positions of mayor or councilor. These old landowning families lived on the southern outskirts of Los Andes, around the so-called main street (Cortes et al. 2012, 330-336). Their capacity to occupy (monarchial or republican) bureaucratic positions at a local level allowed landowners to legitimize their power over the people and construct and build a hegemonic relationship with the

emerging national, political and administrative center and not just an autonomous one as in the monarchic period ^{xviii}.

As they were consolidated, the hacienda elite made the symbolic legitimization of working relations inside and beyond the hacienda their own. This was followed by bureaucratic legitimization, obtaining positions in the municipalities and finally by electoral legitimization, taking charge of reforms that favored democratic expansion through the symbolic and bureaucratic loyalty and legitimization they already possessed.

The 1874 Electoral Reform Law provided the hacienda elite with an electorate made up of both tenant farmers and workers, who used their votes as payment as previously explained. In this way, workers were introduced to the electoral system by the landowners themselves when the latter purchased their votes (Bauer 1970, 1994; Tobar 2010).

The 1891 Law of Regional Autonomy, which made the election of local governments more democratic and divided the country into regions, actually led to the consolidation of hacienda ideology through political electoral tyranny and mayor and councilor intervention in the electoral process. "The insuperable social and economic influence of the governing class on one hand, plus the people's inexperience in public business on the other, meant municipalities were unable to take advantage of the new situation" (McBride 1970, 154-155). This strengthened landowner control between 1891 and 1920. In short,

these reforms allowed large landowners to take over the reins of local, provincial and Executive power immediately. The province of Colchagua, for example, came to be known as the heart of the oligarchy, with families like the Errazuriz one controlling emerging municipalities such as that of Peralillo in 1902. As well as bequeathing land for the municipal building itself, brothers Carlos and Javier Errazuriz Mena obtained municipal positions in the elections for mayor. From this point onwards, certain families' national political control was consolidated. The Errazuriz family is, once again, a good example. "The President of the Republic, Federico Errazuriz, owned two estates, Pupuya and Los Maquis; Luis and Javier Errazuriz shared the large estate or farm or hacienda called Las Majadas; Ladislao Errazuriz had the San José hacienda and Elias Errazuriz had the Colchagua hacienda. Eventually, Javier Errazuriz owned the Peralillo hacienda. We calculate that 85 percent of the province belonged to the same family. In the neighboring area of San Vicente, the Idahue and Tagua Tagua farms also belonged to their close relatives" (Bengoa 1990, 85-86).

Therefore, an ideology involving a useless and barbaric population reached the Executive. Walker, one of Errazuriz' own ministers and also one of the civilians who conspired against President Balmaceda, describes this situation in verse, writing in 1879 that "the Gospel erased, altars destroyed, laws ridiculed, the virtue of crime / the working class masses are mobs of bandits / the blind multitude mother to horrible monsters" (Walker 1894, 228).

CONCLUSION

This paper maintains that Chile's hacienda elite used symbolic, pre-modern and pre-capitalist methods as a basis for dominating the work of rural groups. Chroniclers at the time indicate that the workers and indigenous did not respond to the modern rewards of salaries and economic incentives, meaning owners had to use methods from indigenous cultures or from pre-modern times in order to control their work. Therefore, in the haciendas, contracts between owners and tenant farmers were based on paying tributes. The landowner normally accumulated, consumed and squandered the tribute his own workers handed over to him, ensuring that the work was done and making the tenant farmers exclusively dependent on them. Beyond the haciendas, the hacienda elite used debt peonage as the basis for incorporating workers into a system of reciprocity. As a result of debt, bonuses, gifts and certain forms of payment - created and controlled by the owners themselves - the haciendas found a way of securing the work of important groups of external farm workers, whose living conditions were even worse than those of the tenant farmers.

As a result of these economic solutions using cultural elements, the hacienda elite constructed an ideology and mission that incorporated the hegemonic discourse that describes subordinates as the opposition. This, however, means they are understood as the aim of the elite's class mission rather than being those who prevent this being fulfilled. This is because the discourse on the vacuum of identity and productive incapacity surrounding their subordinates

created a modernization ideology for the elite, as well as making it possible. Therefore, the ideology created by the haciendas regarding the ‘other’ was not formally of exclusion but rather of inclusion through subordination.

Finally, it can be concluded that the hacienda elite were able to drive their ideology towards hegemony through politics, making use of every opportunity for nationwide political and administrative representation (including president-owners) and pushing through the modernizing and democratizing laws passed during the nineteenth century in their favor. Agreements were even made with the Chilean State to permit the elite’s subordination of the people throughout all of rural Chile until at least the middle of the twentieth century.

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ⁱ Cristobal Kay (1982) indicates at this point that the expansion of cereal crops in the mid-nineteenth century is fundamental to understanding the consolidation of landholder power.

ⁱⁱⁱ See more in Baudrillard (1989).

^{iv} For more information, see Bengoa (1990) and Collier and Williams (1998). Houses made of mud and straw. A typical and common working-class construction.

^v This article will use the concept of owner and landowner indistinctly.

^{vi} For more information about landowners' lives, see Valdés (1995).

^{vii} See more information in Dominguez (1867) and Eyzaguirre (1957).

^{viii} See more in Pereira (1994).

^{ix} See more in Eyzaguirre (2011) and Góngora (1981).

^x For more information about the Church's involvement with the working-class, see Tagle (1945).

^{xi} For more information about agricultural modernization, see Robles (2007).

^{xii} For more information about alienation, see Marx (2004).

^{xiii} For more information about landowners' lives, see Stabili (2003).

^{xiv} For more information, see Marx (2004).

^{xv} This is probably Graeber's work, a more complex and concise way of understanding this dimension of the debt as an arbitrary but cultural component of social relationships. In his critique, Graeber tries to explain the oppressive and arbitrary aspect of debt in capitalism by using examples from another cultures. On the other hand, Taussig's theory - crucial to this paper - explains how capitalism uses this arbitrariness to subordinate both the other and different societies. David Graeber, *Debt: the First 5000 Years*.

^{xvi} The symbol of exchange in this system was the salary token, which started being used to pay workers in (saltpeter and coal) mines from 1850 onwards.

^{xvii} Ideology in the sense in which Laclau uses the concept - in other words, the way in which contractual solutions (tributes and debt) began to embody "something beyond and in addition to themselves (...) the possibility of constructing a community as a coherent whole" (Laclau 2002, 20).

^{xviii} Important studies suggest that Santiago's centralism put the brakes on regional and municipal development, as well as impeding the development of autonomy and local government. As a result,

several conflicts occurred during the nineteenth century, leading to the creation of municipal laws in 1854 and 1891 to decentralize power in a very specific way (Illanes, 1993; Salazar, 1998). What these studies do not highlight is that the working-class's participation in these conflicts was very limited, since the conflicts were mainly between the elite. As well as the conflicts that occurred, there was also a spirit of reconciliation that allowed the elite's class domination to continue so that, despite the reforms aimed at decentralizing and democratizing the country, this group always managed to govern society as before.