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Review

Development and validation of a scale of support for violence in the context of intergroup conflict (SVIC): The case of violence perpetrated by Mapuche people and the police in Chile

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ABSTRACT

We develop and validate a scale that measures support for violence in the context of an asymmetrical intergroup conflict between the Chilean state and the largest ethnic minority group in Chile, the Mapuche people: the scale of Support for Violence in an Intergroup Conflict (SVIC). The proposed scale has two dimensions that capture the perceived acceptability of violence carried out in both directions: support for violence carried out by radical Mapuche activists and support for violence carried out by the police in the name of the Chilean state. We validate the scale in a survey conducted using two independent samples: a sample of Mapuche ($n_1 = 199$) and a sample of non-indigenous Chilean respondents ($n_2 = 195$). We test measurement invariance of the scale and find evidence that it is a valid instrument across both samples. Furthermore, findings suggest that the scale has discriminant validity, i.e., it correlates weakly with aggressiveness; as well as convergent validity, i.e., support for violence carried out by Mapuche activists correlates positively with Mapuche identification and negatively with Chilean identification, and the reverse is true for support for violence carried out by the police. We finish by highlighting the importance of measuring support for violence in the context of an asymmetrical intergroup conflict considering violence carried out by the different parties involved in the conflict, as well as the importance of validating the scale considering samples of representatives of both parties.

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1. Introduction

During the last century, violent intergroup conflicts among different ethnic groups, as well as between ethnic minority groups and national states, have been commonplace in different parts of the world (e.g., Lustick, 1996; Mays, Bullock, Rosenzweig, & Wessells, 1998). In particular recent incidents in Ferguson, Staten Island and North Charleston in the United States have raised attention to the extent and impact of excessive use of force in the policing of minority communities (Baker, 2015). In Chile, the long conflict between the largest ethnic minority group, the Mapuche people, and the Chilean state has become increasingly violent in recent years (e.g., Carruthers & Rodríguez, 2009). The social sciences have long been interested in understanding why people either condemn or tolerate such expressions of intergroup violence (e.g., Duncan, 1976; Henry, Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 2005). Understanding individuals' attitudes toward violence is important because individuals who favor violence are more likely to engage in violence themselves (e.g., Markowitz, 2001).

While a number of studies have proposed scales to measure attitudes toward violence in general (e.g., Anderson, Benjamin, Wood, & Bonacci, 2006; Blumenthal, 1972; Markowitz, 2001; Velicer, Huckel, & Hansen, 1989) to our knowledge only one scale has been developed to measure attitudes in the context of intergroup conflict. Henry et al. (2005) measured support for anti-Arab and anti-Western violence. A number of studies have measured attitudes toward police use of force, finding more critical attitudes among minority group members (e.g., Jefferis, Butcher, & Hanley, 2011), women (Johnson & Kuhns, 2009) and those with higher levels of education (Arthur & Case, 1994). However, none of these studies has focused on police use of force in the context of intergroup conflict and, more specifically, in situations where force is carried out in the name of a dominant majority against an ethnic minority that strives for social change.

Measuring people's support for violence in an intergroup context is a complex matter: attitudes depend on the specific conflict that is being addressed and on the intergroup implications of violence. First, violent strategies used by social groups in different conflicts are likely to be specific to the history of that conflict. Hence, scales that measure attitudes toward violence need to be tailored for each conflict in particular. Second, violent conflicts often involve bidirectional applications of violence. Crucially, people favor different types of intergroup violence depending on its goal (Blumenthal, 1972; Henry et al., 2005; Jackson, Huq, Bradford, & Tyler, 2013). While intergroup violence has often been understood as a means of maintaining status quo by majority or dominant group members, for instance in the form of police repression (violence for social control), violence can also be used by minority or subordinate groups to resist domination and promote social change (violence for social change) (Tajfel, 1981). We argue that situations where violence is carried out in both directions require scales to measure attitudes toward both types of violence (see Henry et al., 2005).

The aim of the current paper is to develop a scale that measures support for violence in the context of the current intergroup conflict between the Chilean state and the Mapuche people. Radical Mapuche activists often use violence against the police, as well as against the property of private companies and landowners, to claim for rights to ancestral land. Police officers, on the other hand, often exert excessive force against Mapuche people to dissolve demonstrations or raid communities (Carruthers & Rodriguez, 2009; Mella Seguel, 2007). While a growing interest exists in understanding the conflict between Mapuche people and the Chilean state (e.g., Carruthers & Rodriguez, 2009; Mella Seguel, 2007), no scale has been developed to measure people's support for violence. In this article we develop and validate a scale composed of two separate dimensions: support for violence carried out by Mapuche activists and support for violence carried out by the police. The development of the scale draws on a survey conducted in the southern city of Temuco, Chile (where the largest proportion of Mapuche people live) to two different samples: a sample of people who self-identified as Mapuche ($n_1 = 199$) and a sample who self-identified as non-indigenous Chileans ($n_2 = 195$).

The relevance of the current paper is twofold. First, we provide a short instrument that can be used in public opinion surveys or experimental settings to study people's support for violence carried out by Mapuche activists or by police officers in Chile. Second, we provide a scale that measures support for violence that can be adapted to other asymmetrical intergroup conflicts involving ongoing tensions between different ethnic groups and the state.

2. The conflict between the Chilean state and Mapuche people

The Mapuche people are the largest ethnic minority group in Chile (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2013). After resisting centuries of attempts of conquest by Spanish and Chilean forces, the Chilean state occupied ancestral lands of Mapuche people in southern Chile by the end of the nineteenth century. The territory was divided into reservation lands that were redistributed to non-indigenous buyers. Since then Mapuche people have claimed the recovery of land and the recognition of rights and autonomy. During the land reform of the 1960s and 1970s, part of the land was restored to indigenous owners, but during Pinochet's dictatorial government land concessions were given to forestry companies. Since the 1990s a number of measures have been taken to increase the rights of indigenous groups: an indigenous law was passed and an institution for indigenous development was created. However, many have argued that these measures were insufficient and a clash soon occurred between the demands of indigenous people and industrial (hydroelectric and forestry) interests (Bengoa, 1991; Carruthers & Rodriguez, 2009; De la Maza, 2014; Federación Internacional de los Derechos Humanos, 2006; Mella Seguel, 2007; Pinto Rodríguez, 2003; Richards, 2010; Simon & González, 2010). Between 1884 and 1980 Mapuche territories decreased from 6.1 to 0.8 hectares per person (Agostini, Brown, & Roman, 2010), and the latter has translated into a consequent impoverishment of the community (Skjævestad, 2008). Mapuche people face harder times than non-indigenous people in Chile: they are poorer (Agostini et al., 2010; Cerda, 2009; Skjævestad, 2008), show lower scores in the human development index (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2003), have lower education levels (Cantero & Williamson, 2009; Cerda, 2009) and show lower rates of upward mobility (Cantero & Williamson, 2009). Furthermore, Mapuche people face discrimination by non-indigenous Chileans (Radcliffe & Webb, 2016) and both Mapuche and non-indigenous people in Chile present implicit negative attitudes toward Mapuche people (Haye et al., 2010). They are stereotyped as being lazy, rude, violent (Saiz, 1986; Saiz, Rapimán, & Mladinic, 2008) and conflictive (Simon & González, 2010). It is thus not surprising to observe Mapuche people being perceived as a low-status minority group in opposition to high-status non-indigenous Chileans (Terwindt, 2009).

Mapuche activists have used a number of strategies to claim land and to demand rights for resources, ranging from peaceful demonstrations to the occupation of land and the setting on fire of property of private companies and landowners (Skjævestad, 2008). According to Skjævestad (2008) radical Mapuche people have chosen violent means and avoided legal procedures because they distrust the legal system due to cultural distance and perceptions of discrimination. Meanwhile, the judiciary has responded by applying anti-terrorist and internal security laws, limiting the rights of the defendants (Carruthers & Rodriguez, 2009; Federación Internacional de los Derechos Humanos, 2006; Mella Seguel, 2007; Skjævestad, 2008; Universidad Diego Portales, 2005, 2012). Others claim that the police have acted in increasingly violent ways and Mapuche territories have become more and more militarized (Carruthers & Rodriguez, 2009; Mella Seguel, 2007).

3. The present research

This article aims to validate the scale of Support for Violence in an Intergroup Conflict (SVIC), developed to measure support for violence used by radical Mapuche activists to claim land rights and by the police to control demonstrations and raid Mapuche communities. The validation of the scale was conducted using two independent samples: (a) one sample of Mapuche and (b) one sample of non-indigenous Chilean respondents. We test whether the SVIC is indeed composed by two distinguishable dimensions: support for violence applied by Mapuche activists and by the police. We then examine whether they work in similar ways among Mapuche and non-indigenous people. Finally, we check for both discriminant and convergent validity. Discriminant validity is examined by observing the relationship between the scale and physical aggressiveness. Individuals who report high physical aggressiveness should indeed be more likely to support violence. Yet, to achieve discriminant validity the scale should be different from a mere individual orientation toward aggressiveness. Thus, a positive but low correlation is expected. On the other hand, we test convergent validity by observing the correlation between the scores of both scales and the level of identification with Chile and the Mapuche categories. We expect individuals to be more supportive of violence carried out by the group they identify the most with and less supportive of violence carried out against this group. This is, acceptability of violence carried out by Mapuche people should be positively correlated with identification with the Mapuche group and negatively correlated with Chilean identification. The reverse should be true for the acceptability of violence carried out by the police.

4. Method

4.1. Sample and Procedure

A survey was conducted between December 2014 and February 2015 in the region of La Araucanía in southern Chile. This is the region with the highest contact between Mapuche and non-indigenous Chileans. Two convenience samples were considered: a sample of Mapuche people and a sample of non-indigenous Chileans. Ethnicity was determined by asking respondents 'Thinking about the ancestry of your parents and grandparents, do you consider yourself Chilean (or Mapuche)?' Each sample comprised 200 respondents, divided in quotas by gender and age. In order to control for potential socio-economic differences across the two samples, only individuals who attended public or subsidized primary schools (a proxy for medium–low socio-economic status in Chile) were considered for the samples. Three cases were discarded

Table 1
Items, means, standard deviations, and factor loadings for all items of the scale.

Items	Mapuche (n_1 = 199)		Non-indigenous Chileans (n_2 = 195)	
	M (SD)	Factor loading	M (SD)	Factor loading
Support for violence carried out by Mapuche activists				
Mapuche groups destroy machinery of agricultural landowners	1.69 (1.06)	0.84	1.57 (1.10)	0.85
Mapuche groups set fire to warehouses that belong to forestry companies	1.77 (1.26)	0.92	1.62 (1.22)	0.95
Mapuche groups throw stones to police officers to avoid being evicted from a land occupation	2.12 (1.32)	0.78	1.96 (1.36)	0.79
Mapuche groups set fire to trucks that belong to forestry companies	1.80 (1.25)	0.94	1.60 (1.23)	0.98
Support for violence carried out by the police				
Police officers use tear gas to break up demonstrations that support the demands of the Mapuche people	1.76 (1.11)	0.83	2.24 (1.20)	0.79
Police officers use force to raid Mapuche communities	1.57 (0.95)	0.88	1.97 (1.10)	0.87
Police officers use pellet guns to dissolve demonstrations that support the demands of the Mapuche people	1.41 (0.84)	0.79	1.59 (0.94)	0.79
A police officer beats up a Mapuche person who is resisting arrest	1.37 (0.76)	0.61	1.56 (0.94)	0.58

Note: Factor loadings are standardized coefficients for the model with scalar invariance (2).

Table 2
Goodness-of-fit indices and model comparison for models testing measurement invariance between the Mapuche and the non-indigenous Chileans samples (n_1 = 199, n_2 = 195).

Model	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA	90% CI for RMSEA		Model comparison
							LL	UL	
M0	42.276	38	0.998	0.997	0.035	0.024	0.000	0.057	
M1	57.341	46	0.995	0.994	0.069	0.035	0.000	0.062	$\Delta\chi^2$M1-M0
M2	64.629	52	0.994	0.994	0.071	0.035	0.000	0.060	$\Delta\chi^2$M2-M1
M3	97.740*	60	0.982	0.984	0.077	0.057	0.035	0.076	$\Delta\chi^2$M3-M2*
M3P	74.950	59	0.993	0.993	0.077	0.037	0.000	0.060	$\Delta\chi^2$M3P-M2

Note: M0: unconstrained model; M1: model testing metric invariance; M2: model testing scalar invariance; M3: model testing full uniqueness measurement invariance; M3P: model testing partial uniqueness measurement invariance.
* $p < 0.01$.

because respondents had actually attended a private school and other three cases were eliminated for having a response rate lower than 70%. The final samples correspond to 199 Mapuches (gender: 50.3% female; age: M = 39.26, SD = 16.63, Min = 18, Max = 87) and 195 non-indigenous Chileans (gender: 49.7% female; age: M = 38.97, SD = 16.86, Min = 18, Max = 80).

4.2. Instruments

We developed the items of the SVIC based on a review of different situations of violence that have been portrayed by the Chilean news in the last decade. The items were evaluated by two experts in the field (one Mapuche and one non-indigenous Chilean). Seven items were designed to measure support for violence carried out by Mapuche activists and six items were designed to measure support for violence carried out by the police. In each case, respondents were asked to what extent they thought different types of violence were justified or not justified, ranging from 1 (*never justified*) to 5 (*almost always justified*). With the aim of developing a short scale to be used in future research, the four items with the highest loadings in a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were chosen for each subscale. The scale was developed in Spanish (see items in Appendix A) and translated items are presented in Table 1. The final subscales show high reliability (all above .75; see Table 3).

Three items from the Physical subscale of the Trait Aggressiveness scale (Bryant & Smith, 2001) were translated into Spanish and used to test discriminant validity (e.g., 'I have threatened people I know'). Identification with the Mapuche people (3 items, e.g., 'I identify with the Mapuche people') and Identification with Chile (3 items, e.g., 'I am proud to be Chilean') were used to examine convergent validity. The same items were used to measure the different concepts in both samples. All scales showed high reliability (see Table 3) and items are presented in the Appendix A.

Table 3
Correlations between both subscales of the SVIC, aggressiveness, Mapuche identification and Chilean identification ($n = 394$).

		1	2	3	4	5
1 Support for violence carried out by Mapuche activists			−0.153*	0.312**	0.297**	−0.476**
2 Support for violence carried out by the police		−0.257**		−0.059	−0.232**	0.301**
3 Aggressiveness		0.231**	−0.005		0.016	−0.188**
4 Mapuche identification		0.258**	−0.452**	−0.008		−0.120
5 Chilean identification		−0.397**	0.100	−0.152*	0.146*	
Mapuche	M	1.848	1.531	1.720	4.261	3.567
	SD	1.098	0.746	0.758	0.767	0.943
	α	0.918	0.825	0.807	0.872	0.838
Non-indigenous Chileans	M	1.687	1.847	1.762	2.969	3.864
	SD	1.133	0.901	0.763	1.013	0.955
	α	0.941	0.868	0.759	0.904	0.871

Notes: Correlations above diagonal correspond to the Mapuche sample ($n_1 = 199$) and correlations below the diagonal correspond to the non-indigenous Chileans sample ($n_2 = 195$).
* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.

4.3. Analysis

We use multi-group CFA (see Dimitrov, 2010; Van de Schoot, Lugtig, & Hox, 2012) in MPLUS 7 to test a two-factor structure that supports the theoretical definition of the two dimensions of SVIC. We test measurement invariance to examine whether this two-factor structure holds for both samples. Five models are tested in a step-by-step manner, imposing more and more equality constraints. First, configural invariance (M0) is tested by examining whether the model fits for both groups (without constraining coefficients to be equal across groups). We then test metric invariance (M1; factor loadings constrained to be equal between groups), scalar invariance (M2; factor loadings and item intercepts constrained to be equal between groups), and uniqueness measurement invariance (M3; factor loadings, item intercepts, and residual item variances/covariances constrained to be equal between groups). We finish with a model of partial measurement invariance (M3P; same as M3 but with one free residual variance). We compare the models using Chi-square difference tests for nested models to determine which level of invariance was achieved.

We finally assess discriminant and convergent validity by correlating support for violence with aggressiveness, identification with Mapuches and identification with Chileans (using simple means).

5. Results

5.1. Measurement invariance

Table 2 shows results for the different models that test measurement invariance for the Mapuche and non-indigenous samples. We first find support for configural invariance (see M0): in the CFA with the unconstrained factor loadings and intercepts between samples, all factor loadings are significant ($p < 0.001$) and above 0.5. Furthermore, no additional path was required to obtain a good fit of the model. Second, we find support for metric invariance: the model which constraints factor loadings to be equal across samples (M1) was not significantly worse than the model with unconstrained factor loadings and intercepts between samples (M0). Third, we find support for scalar invariance: the model which constrained intercepts to be equal across samples (M2) was not significantly worse than the previous model (M1). Finally, we did not find support for uniqueness measurement invariance: the model which constrained the residual variance of every item to be equal across samples (M3) was significantly worse than M2. However, after freeing one parameter – the residual variance of the last item of the attitudes toward violence carried out by Mapuche activists – the model (M3P) fitted the data properly and was not significantly worse than M2. This suggests that the scale has partial uniqueness measurement invariance.

5.2. Discriminant and convergent validity

We examined discriminant and convergent validity observing the correlation between five scales: both subscales of SVIC, aggressiveness, Mapuche identification and Chilean identification. Table 3 presents the correlations among the variables for the Mapuche and the non-indigenous Chileans samples, as well as descriptive statistics for each scale.

As expected, support for violence carried out by Mapuche activists was weakly and positively correlated with aggressiveness and Mapuche identification for both samples, and it was highly and negatively correlated with Chilean identification in both samples. Support for violence carried out by the police, on the other hand, was uncorrelated with aggressiveness in both samples. The correlation between support for police violence and Chilean identification was non-significant in the Chilean sample but it was significant and positive in the Mapuche sample. Finally, support for police violence had a nega-

tive correlation with Mapuche identification in both samples (although the correlation was higher in the non-indigenous Chileans sample).

5.3. Mean comparison

We finish by using T-tests to compare the means of the different scales between both samples (see descriptive results in Table 3). Non-indigenous Chileans presented a significantly higher support for police violence compared to Mapuche respondents ($t(391) = -3.793$, $p < 0.01$; $\Delta M = 0.316$; $d = -0.382$) and a lower identification with the Mapuche people ($t(392) = 14.290$, $p < 0.01$; $\Delta M = -1.292$; $d = 1.438$), while no differences were found in attitudes toward violence carried out by Mapuche activists, aggressiveness and Chilean identification ($p < 0.05$).

6. Discussion

SVIC measures support for violence in the context of the conflict between the Chilean state and the Mapuche people. Specifically, SVIC is composed of two dimensions capturing the support for violence carried out by two different parties involved in an asymmetrical conflict: violence carried out by radical Mapuche activists and violence carried out by the police. Measurement invariance analysis showed that the scale worked similarly in the Mapuche and non-indigenous Chilean samples. This might be due to the high levels of contact between both groups in the area where data was collected. Furthermore, the proposed scale showed discriminant validity (i.e., it correlated weakly with aggressiveness) and convergent validity (i.e., the expected pattern of correlations with identification with Chile and the Mapuche groups was found).

In this research we have shown that support for violence, as measured by SVIC, is not content free and is not a mere reflection of people's aggressiveness. This is support for violence depends on the aim that violence seeks to achieve and whether this aim is consistent with people's identification with the different parties involved in the conflict. As a consequence, in conflicts where violence is applied by more than one party, it is essential to measure support for violence committed by the different parties involved.

We would like to highlight some limitations of this research. First of all, both samples considered were non-representative. It is for future research to validate this scale using representative samples. Also, short scales were used to measure aggressiveness and identity. In particular aggressiveness captured only one of the dimensions (physical aggressiveness) proposed by Bryant and Smith (2001) and has not yet been validated in the Chilean context. Even though reliabilities were high enough, future research would benefit from using longer scales and different dimensions of aggressiveness, as well as validating the scale in Chile.

7. Conclusion

A number of countries face ongoing conflict between ethnic groups and national States (e.g., Lustick, 1996; Mays et al., 1998). The violence used in the context of these conflicts as well as people's support for this violence are likely to be context-specific. As a consequence, scales that measure support for violence in the context of intergroup conflict need to be designed specifically for each conflict. However, there are a number of aspects that different conflicts have in common (e.g., excessive use of force by police officers against minority communities, and the use of violence by ethnic minorities to regain land). SVIC was developed specifically to capture support for violence in the Chilean context. However, we do want to propose that SVIC can be adapted (considering each specific context) to other conflict situations that involve disputes over land rights, based on ethnic identities.

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Appendix A. : Scales

Spanish versions of the Scales

Apoyo a la violencia llevada a cabo por activistas Mapuches

Que grupos Mapuche destruyan maquinaria de propietarios agrícolas.
Que grupos Mapuche incendien bodegas de empresas forestales.
Que grupos Mapuche lancen piedras a Carabineros para evitar el desalojo de una toma.
Que grupos Mapuche incendien camiones de empresas forestales.

Apoyo a la violencia llevada a cabo por Carabineros

Que Carabineros utilice bombas lacrimógenas para disolver protestas que apoyan las demandas del pueblo Mapuche.
Que Carabineros use la fuerza al allanar comunidades Mapuche.
Que Carabineros dispare balines o perdigones para disolver protestas que apoyan las demandas del pueblo Mapuche.
Que un Carabinero golpee a una persona Mapuche que está resistiendo el arresto.

Other scales (translated to English)

Mapuche identification

I feel very committed to Chilean people.
I feel very close to Chile.
I am proud to be Chilean.

Chilean identification

I identify with the Mapuche people.
I feel very committed to the Mapuche people.
I feel very close with the Mapuche people.

Aggressiveness

Given enough provocation, I may hit a person.
There are people who have pushed me so far that we have come to blows.
I have threatened people I know.

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