Chile's social uprising and constituent process: toward a more-than-human understanding

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Abstract

Since October 2019, Chile has experienced the highest levels of social mobilisation and political reform in decades. The core demands made by these movements, as well as most academic and journalistic analyses thereof, appear to be centred on humans while paying little attention to other animals, plants and their environments. By drawing on forty-one interviews as well as seven months of participant observation and a range of online materials, this paper expands the analytical gaze of the aforementioned social movements and political reforms by arguing that there are two main ways in which the more-than-human world is part of them. First, because other-than-human beings and processes are relevant to the human-centred demands (inequality, education, healthcare, pensions) at hand. Second, because various human collectives have used the recent opening of political spaces to defend the interests of other-than-human beings. The most visible of these latter processes is the ongoing campaign to include the so-called rights of nature in the new Constitution; I question the conceptual coherence and intercultural justice of this proposal, and suggest an alternative based on the collective right of humans to defend the more-than-human. Throughout the paper, I consider how differences in the values of the various social and political actors involved tend to follow the contours of their geographies, identities and ethnicities.

Keywords: Chile; nature; environmentalism; neoliberalism; Mapuche; geography; values; rights; constitution; plurinationalism.

Introduction

On October 18th, 2019, thousands of people gathered outside metro stations in Santiago de Chile to protest against a government-issued increase in metro fares of 30 pesos (around 0.04 USD). Within a week, the gatherings had escalated into the largest and most widespread protests since at least the end of the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), spanning the entire length of the country and reaching over one million demonstrators in the capital (Alarcón 2020). It was soon clear that the rise in metro fares had had a detonating effect on a much broader and longer-standing set of issues, namely the deep and widespread discontent with the failure of three decades of democratic governments to leave behind the legacies of the dictatorship (what Julio Pinto and colleagues (2019) called 'the long shadows of the dictatorship') and deliver the aspirations of the bulk of the Chilean population (Folchi 2019a; Garcés 2019). Hence one of the most visible slogans of the protests: 'it's not 30 pesos;

it's 30 years'. Or, as a young man from Santiago said to me: 'the increase in metro fares was another humiliation in a long history of humiliations'. The protests that started on 18th October (henceforth 18/O) have variously been called *el levantamiento social* (the social uprising), *Chile Despertó* (Chile woke up), *el estallido social* (the social explosion), *el movimiento social* (the social movement) and *la crisis social* (the social crisis). In this article I favour the term 'uprising' because in the English language the word is semantically closer the social realities at play than the alternatives. At the time of writing, the social and political processes set in motion by the uprising are very much ongoing.

The mobilisations have principally called for fairer pension schemes, higher and fairer wages, and better public healthcare, education and transport services. Underlying these specific demands, there has been frustration and discontent with the structural inequalities created and maintained by the country's neoliberal model, which was enforced by the Pinochet regime (1973-1990), enshrined in the Pinochet-era Constitution, and perpetuated by subsequent democratic governments. During the dictatorship, Chile became the first country in the world to fundamentally restructure its economy according to neoliberal principles of strong private property rights, free markets, and minimal state intervention beyond creating and protecting such property and markets (Harvey 2005, 2-9). Since the reinstalment of democracy, the social critique of neoliberalism has been part of the widespread disenchantment of Chilean social movements with institutional politics, which have been considered elitist and inaccessible to the majority of the Chilean population, as well as largely unable or unwilling to deliver the demands made by Mapuche, environmental, labour and student social movements (Donoso & von Bülow 2017; Donoso 2017). All these demands have coalesced in the ongoing process, directly triggered by the uprising, of replacing the 1980 Constitution with a text drafted and approved through democratic procedures (hereafter referred to as the constituent process).

The issues at the heart of the uprising, then, appear to be exclusively focused on human affairs. Other-than-human animals, plants and their environments have been broadly excluded from the central discourses of the uprising as well as from many academic and journalistic analyses of it. This exclusion reflects widely shared values and priorities amongst the Chilean population. In a nationwide survey conducted in October 2019, which asked 'what are Chile's three main problems at present', 'the environment' accounted for just 5.6% of responses (falling from 9.4% pre-18/O to 3.4% post-18/O), with pensions, healthcare and inequality being the top-3 responses and all substantially increasing post-18/O (Activa Research 2019). Another illustrative example is Mario Garcés' (2020) book *Estallido social y una Nueva Constitución para Chile* (Social explosion and a New Constitution for Chile), in which the more-than-human figures only as a last thought in an isolated comment about this

being a good time for Chileans to rethink their relationship with their environment.

The fact that the core demands of the uprising, as well as the majority of analyses of it (see also Akram 2019; Garcés 2019; Folchi 2019a; Salazar 2019; Alarcón 2020), are narrowly focused on humans is unsurprising when seen in the broader cultural and ideological context of the country. According to the central text of the most popular religion in Chile, the Christian Bible (*Encuesta bicentenario* 2019), God created humans in His own image and the rest of the Earth to serve human interests (Genesis 1:26-29; White 1967). The upshot of this worldview is that humans are distinct from the rest of Creation, and that only their lives are ultimately valuable. (It is worth noting that less human-centred readings of the Bible have existed throughout the history of Christian thought (e.g. Simkins 2014); but for the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to acknowledge that, at least in the Western forms of Christianity that were exported to the Americas, anthropocentric views have dominated.) Notable secular ideologies are hardly less human-centred. Marxism, which inspired the socialist government of the Unidad Popular (1970-1973), has on the whole tended to value the more-than-human only as an instrument with which to serve human ends (Gray 1993). Neoliberalism, which under Pinochet replaced socialism as the national economic model, is based upon exchange value between humans in an ideal free market; therefore, it only accords value to the more-than-human world in the measure that humans value it, and then only when such values can be captured by market mechanisms (Harvey 2005).

But there are good reasons to be dissatisfied with analyses of the uprising (and of any social movement, for that matter) which focus too narrowly on human beings. Even if one were committed to a clear-cut distinction between humans and 'nature' and believed that the latter is only valuable as a means to serve the interests of the former, excluding this 'nature' from accounts of social movements risks neglecting the ways in which it matters to human beings, ranging from the material value of water and clean air to the spiritual value of cherished places. One way in which these values are relevant to the uprising is their unequal distribution in Chile. Indeed, historian Mauricio Folchi (2019b), writing in the weeks following 18/O, argued that – perhaps contrary to what is suggested by the statistics and analyses presented above – environmental injustice had been a significant component of the discontent that triggered the protests. More broadly, political ecologists have long claimed that the steep unevenness in the country's economic development stems from unequal access to natural resources (e.g. Bustos, Prieto and Barton 2014). For instance, Manuel Prieto (2014) shows how historically and politically established property rights of water resources have shaped, if not determined, who is able to profit from their economic exploitation.

At a more fundamental level, stark distinctions between humans and 'nature' are thrown into question by diverse cultures and knowledges. In fact, anthropocentrism is largely absent from cultures that are not historically steeped in Western monotheism and Enlightenment philosophy. These include

Mapuche, Aymara and other cultures indigenous to the land that is now called Chile and the Americas (e.g. Descola 2013). Outside Judeo-Christian theology, it is remarkably difficult to defend the view that humans are separate from the rest of the Earth and that only human lives are inherently valuable (Moore 1906; Gray 2002). Charles Darwin (1859), for instance, laid the groundwork for the received scientific understanding of humans as originating from the same evolutionary processes as all other lifeforms. In the last two decades, posthuman and more-than-human geographers have deconstructed the European Enlightenment notion of humans as autonomous agents separate from the rest of 'nature', who bear a special if not the only relevant form of agency (e.g. Panelli 2010; Sundberg 2014). On these post- and more-than-human views, it is mistaken to overlook the agency of other-than-human beings and processes in shaping and co-constituting societies and politics; it is also immoral to neglect the impacts of human activities on the more-than-human world.

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the ways in which the more-than-human world is relevant to the Chilean uprising and constitutive process. By drawing on ethnographic data, online materials and theoretical analysis, I will first expand our analytical gaze by considering the importance of other-than-human beings and processes to human-centred affairs; that is, I will consider the importance of these beings and processes owing to the value they have *for* humans. The rest of the paper will expand our focus further by considering not just the *relevance* of these beings for human concerns, but also their own *interests* and how they have been incorporated into the social and political processes that began or intensified on 18/O. I will give special attention to the most notable of campaigns that seek to defend the interests of the more-than-human world: ongoing demands to include the putative rights of 'nature' in the new Constitution. But, in sympathetic opposition to supporters of rights of 'nature', the present paper will expose the conceptual shortcomings of this approach, as well as its potential to do violence – epistemic and material – to the very non-Western cultures it claims to speak for. I will end by suggesting an alternative framework, based on the right of human collectives to conserve their lands and waters.

The belief systems and ideologies that I have identified as responsible for an excessively narrow focus on humans operate at much broader temporal and spatial scales than recent Chilean movements and politics. Over four billion people worldwide adhere to either Christianity or Islam, two religions that are highly liable to anthropocentric understandings of Creation and of humans' place in it (Pew Research Center 2015). Moreover, capitalist and Marxist ideologies, with their comparable emphasis on human concerns, have dominated political discourse and action in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries across the globe. Therefore, it is probable that many of the analyses and conclusions of this paper can be brought to bear on social movements elsewhere. The theories and frameworks deployed here are broad enough in scope to be of use, I hope, both to researchers seeking to understand how other

movements relate to the more-than-human and to activists who wish to advocate such considerations within their movements.

A note on terminology

As will become clear, 'nature' means rather different things to different people (Castree 2005). All of the meanings discussed here include forms of life that are not human or not entirely human, as well as the abiotic environments on which they and humans depend. The testimonies presented in this paper will show that variations in what 'nature' means and how it is valued tend to follow the contours of geography, identity and ethnicity. To the extent of my abilities, my discussions will be alert to such variations. Due to the notorious ambiguity of the term 'nature', as well as the fact that in Spanish (Chile's official and most widely spoken language), as in most other European languages, the meaning of the word rests on a questionable dualism between humans and 'nature' (Ducarme, Flipo and Couvet 2020), I will only use this word when quoting other people or when discussing their ideas if they were framed in such terms, and I will place it between inverted commas. Similar things could be said about 'the environment', a term of an unmistakable anthropocentric flavour, granted to it by its vision of the more-than-human world as merely the context or backdrop for human affairs (James 2015, 1-7).

Otherwise, I will use more specific terms. I have favoured the term 'other-than-human' over 'nonhuman' because the latter implicitly perpetuates the dualistic notion that things are either human or nonhuman; by contrast, 'other-than-human' allows for the fact that although entities like rivers or trees possess qualities that humans do not, there may still be important continuities between them and humans. When referring to collectives that include both human and other-than-human beings, I will use the term 'more-than-human'. A forestry plantation is an example of a more-than-human entity because it is co-constituted by the presence and actions of humans, trees and other beings and processes. It is true that the more-than-human world encompasses everything, and this may lead one to doubt its usefulness as an ontological category (if one thinks about it, it is ontologically equivalent with more-than-shrimp or more-than-condor). But given the insistence of Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment epistemologies on the divide between humans and 'nature', and the profound ways in which these have shaped Chilean societies and landscapes, the term 'more-than-human' has the epistemological virtue of signifying the expansion of analysis to incorporate other-than-human beings, and perhaps even of questioning presupposed divisions.

Methodology and research ethics

It is a well recited aspect of the uprising that many relevant groups – most notably, Chilean politicians and the international community – failed to see it coming. I certainly did not anticipate it, but I had already planned to spend one year in Chile as part of my research on values, and the uprising provided a

unique context in which to do so. This article draws on seven months of participatory ethnography (November 2019 – June 2020), 41 semi-structured interviews and a range of online materials. I employed a targeted sampling approach, whereby informants and materials were selected on the basis of my subjective assessment of their relevance to the research themes of this study.

A significant proportion of the empirical work was carried out in Santiago, as the capital was the origin of the protests as well as the principal hub of nation-wide debates about the uprising and its implications. For most of the duration of fieldwork, though, I was based in the Arauco and Cautín Provinces, in the Centre-South of the country. Two main motives drew me there. First, the wish to include rural voices, which so far have not received as wide a coverage as those of urban areas. The uprising, at least as presented by the media, has mostly been an urban phenomenon: protests quickly spread from Santiago to other large cities, including Valparaíso and Concepción (Garcés 2019), but rural areas have not seen comparable degrees of mobilisation. As a friend from a mixed rural and urban background put it to me: 'the explosion has happened in cities. As a consequence, the loggers and the fishermen who are also affected by these issues do not appear on TV'. Moreover, rural populations, by location, lie in more direct contact with other-than-human beings and processes, and as a consequence are able to provide alternative perspectives to those found in cities.

The second motive is that the Arauco and Cautín Provinces lie at the heart of Mapuche ancestral territories (the Wallmapu) prior to their colonisation by the Chilean state. There are many ways in which considering Mapuche perspectives on the uprising and constituent process is both interesting and important. Some of the core themes of the uprising had in fact already been central to pre-18/O Mapuche mobilisations, particularly the rejection of neoliberal politics and values, and the frustration with the unwillingness and/or inability of institutional politics to represent and deliver their aspirations (Pinto Rodríguez 2014; Bidegain 2017). In the words of Mapuche historian Fernando Pairican (2020, 13, my translation), 'the political presence of the Mapuche movement within the social explosion [...] diversifies the wider political process; at the same time, the explosion has enabled the recognition of Mapuche resistance in recent decades'. Pairican's words can just as well be applied to the present study. The voices of Mapuche informants included here expand the range of perspectives beyond the ken of monotheistic religions and Enlightenment philosophies. Nonetheless, given the histories of difficult and complex relations between the Mapuche and Chile, any account which too straightforwardly subsumes Mapuche demands within the remit of the uprising would be harmful and mistaken – so I will watch my step.

Ethnographic data include graffiti and other manifestations of street protest, informal discussions with a range of participants and one public debate held in Santiago in early December 2019. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis, except one interview, which was held simultaneously with two interviewees. Before the start of the covid-19 epidemic, all interviews were conducted in person; thereafter, phone and videocall interviews became

frequent. Interviewees included women and men who identified as Chilean and/or Mapuche, the youngest of them being 22 years of age and the oldest 85. Everyone I interviewed held some level of personal and/or professional relationship with the more-than-human, typically as students of ecotourism, park rangers, staff of forestry corporations, smallholder farmers, and activists. Interviews were recorded, with the exception of three participants who requested that I take notes by hand instead, and manually transcribed, verbatim. All interviews were conducted in Spanish; direct quotes were translated by the author. All data were analysed by the author, qualitatively and by hand (using pen and paper).

Participants appear anonymously, except those who asked to be named (pseudonyms can be distinguished from true names by their consisting of a first name only). I have tried, and continue to try, to make this research as participatory and reciprocal as possible, by listening to informants' views and struggles as impartially as I am able to, by offering to help with their own projects and commitments and, ultimately, by sharing the findings of this research with them as they are published. This project was approved by the University of Cambridge's Department of Geography Ethics Review Group on 19/09/2019.

Human-centred concerns

Owing to its central role in Pewenche culture, its peculiar evolutionary history, and its unusual morphology, the pewen tree, *Araucaria araucana*, is iconic of the mountains and forests of Central-South Chile. For an interviewee who is a non-Indigenous employee of one of the major forestry corporations in the country, the value of this species – the resources, heritage and wildlife associated with it – exists 'as a function of man, of the community, of people, as the ultimate end'. This interviewee recognised the importance of the more-than-human world for human matters, but remained anthropocentric on questions of value.

Drawing on testimonies like this interviewee's, the present section will explore the ways in which other-than-human beings are relevant to the uprising because they matter to human beings. In order to do justice to the testimonies presented here, it is useful to distinguish between two types of expressions of anthropocentrism. The informant above did not merely manifest views or behaviours suggesting that he relates to particular other-than-human beings in an anthropocentric manner; here as elsewhere in the interview, he also made the broader claim that harmonious natural states are never ends in themselves, but rather means that contribute to the good of humans. I will refer to this kind of informant, who holds the belief that the more-than-human world is only ever valuable in the measure that it serves human interests, as philosophically anthropocentric. By contrast, other respondents and discourses described the value of *particular* other-than-human beings and processes in unmistakably anthropocentric ways; but they did not express the broader view that the more-

than-human world does not have value of its own, independently of its contribution to human interests. These latter people may even have thought that the other-than-human beings in question also have value beyond their contribution to human beings, and simply omitted this value in our conversations, perhaps because it was considered irrelevant to the uprising. It is important to note, therefore, that unless I cite evidence for philosophical anthropocentrism, my describing a *particular* comment or relation as anthropocentric does not imply that those holding it will always think in human-centred ways.

A widely held view amongst informants was that, in the same way that the state and its governments had failed to meet demands for better healthcare, education, transport and pensions, these institutions had also failed to guarantee the social right to a healthy environment. As an interviewee in his thirties put it:

> There is also [an environmental component in the uprising] because there is a lot of talk about social rights, and one of them, which has been one of the most prominent in the uprising as well as the movements that preceded it, is the issue of access to water. As a human right, it is not at all respected here.

Virtually all interviewees mentioned the social injustices generated by Chile's water regime. The Chilean Water Code of 1981, written and imposed by the Pinochet administration, effectively privatised water access in the country. This radical reversal from the public, state-driven management of water resources supported by the 1967 Water Code constitutes the most recent swing of Chile's 'pendulum' of water regulation, which has been alternating between private and public management since the days of the Spanish colony (Bauer 1998). The 1981 Code created a framework of rights to the exploitation of water resources, which were transferred to private entities perpetually and free of charge. Water was thereby turned into a commodity, with responsibility for its allocation resting with market processes (Álvez Marín 2017). Cledia Flores, an interviewee whose livelihood is based on gathering forest plants in the Arauco Province, saw in the constituent process an opportunity to swing the pendulum back again:

> It would be great if there were a new Constitution because I would like rivers to no longer belong to one person [...] for waters to belong to this territory [...] for the government to appropriate and participate in this.

One example of water rights in social movements that predate 18/O is the collective MODATIMA (modatima.cl), whose mission so far has been to 'recover water sovereignty for territories and communities' by denouncing the water shortages caused by the for-profit buying and selling of water. By turning water into a tradeable commodity, the 1981 Water Code has facilitated the monopoly

over the resource by those who can pay the most for it (often, agricultural and mining corporations), at times leaving individuals and smallholder farmers under water scarcity conditions. This view of shortages as resulting from political decisions rather than natural conditions resonates with one of the defining principles of the field of political ecology: ecology is always already political. It is a view captured by posters and graffiti left in the wake of uprising protests (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Posters reading 'It's not drought; it's pillage' (seen in Santiago in March 2020). Bottom right: 'give the rivers back' (seen in Santiago in December 2020). The poster on the left features a half-living, half-dead fish, but it is impossible to tell whether the artist intended to present this animal as a resource for human use, as a life valuable in its own right, and/or as a synecdoche for the destruction of the broader ecosystem in which it lived. Source: author's own.

Public comments on an investigative journalistic article explaining how the current water regime came into being (Arellano 2013) also reveal that water inequalities contributed to the discontent that eventually triggered the uprising. One such comment, made in 2015, reads: 'Well, this is one more abuse, like the Isapres [health service], the AFP [pension scheme], the Constitution and the whole economic model that the Dictator left behind with the help of the right'. Premonitorily, a comment made in 2014 asks: 'What can we do when facing situations like these? [...] Will we be able to create a movement that is strong enough to challenge our politicians?' Popular disillusion with the inability of

institutional politics to bring about real change, so characteristic of the uprising, was captured by another comment, also made in 2014: 'Is there a Chilean politician who will be capable of carrying the flag of this battle and give our water back to all Chileans? I doubt it'.

In most cases – though not all of them – demands for change in water governance were motivated by the instrumental use of the resource by humans, rather than by the protection of water bodies for some other-than-human sake (for instance, intrinsic concern for the lives of the animals and plants who also depend on that water). As an interviewee who works for a wildlife conservation initiative put it: 'it has to do with the fees that people pay for water, not with conservation itself'. Note how, in each of the quotes presented in this section, the negative repercussions of the water regime were framed in terms of its impacts on human lives. Water was treated as a *human* right and the current legal frameworks responsible for its distribution were considered *socially* unjust. But note, also, that none of the testimonies I have reproduced here made any philosophical claims in favour of anthropocentrism: while each of these persons and collectives chose to emphasise the impact of the water regime on human beings, there is nothing in their words to suggest that they believed other-than-human beings can never be valuable for their own sakes, beyond their contributions to human interests. In fact, elsewhere in the interviews and conversations I held with them, the informants who provided the first and last water-related quotes in this section expressed non-anthropocentric views in relation to issues other than water.

Neoliberalism, anthropocentrism and the limits to growth

As revealed by movements for more equitable water governance, the 1981 Water Code and its implementation are inseparable from the broader neoliberal model that was written into the 1980 Constitution. Consequently, neoliberal politics have been a significant target of environmental protests since long before 18/O. The 2011 protests against the mega-dam project HydroAysén, then the largest mobilisations since the 1980s protests against the dictatorship, were significantly motivated by the social and environmentalist challenge to the privatised electricity sector, the 1981 Water Code and the fact that neoliberal doctrine had been baked into the Constitution (Schaeffer 2017). More broadly, many Chilean environmental NGOs have historically challenged the dominant neoliberal model and proposed alternatives that seek to balance development with social justice and environmental protection (Ulianova and Entessoro 2012).

The fact that many Chilean movements for water justice have chiefly concerned themselves with the interests of human beings and have in the same breath positioned themselves against neoliberal resource governance casts doubt on earlier work equating anthropocentrism with pro-business, neoliberal and even racist and patriarchal values (Gudynas 2014, 27-31). As I outlined in the Introduction, neoliberal logics are anthropocentric in that they only grant value

to the more-than-human world in the measure that humans value it in market exchanges; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that someone whose views align with neoliberalism would also tend to think in anthropocentric ways. But the reverse is not true – one can predominantly be concerned with the interests of human beings while critiquing neoliberal political economies, perhaps precisely because one thinks these systems are unjust or harmful to many humans. As earlier testimonies demonstrate, concerns about water governance were often motivated by ideals of social justice which in fact resisted business interests, extractivism and the inequalities generated by the neoliberal economy. Movements motivated by both anthropocentrism and social justice have a precedent in the years of the Unidad Popular (1970-1973); for instance, in the appropriation of large forestry estates by workers, who sought to sustainably exploit them to deliver long-term benefits to their communities and families (Bize Vivanco 2017).

Subsequent sections will consider the views of collectives whose efforts against neoliberalism and anthropocentrism have in fact gone hand-in-hand. Before moving on to these, it is worth making two further points about the perceived relations between the neoliberal political economy and the more-than-human world. First, a large sum of participants thought that unless there are fundamental changes in the dominant economic model and the institutions that sustain it, there will be no real and long-lasting improvement in the state of the more-than-human world. Specifically, the endless pursuit of economic growth, coupled with the priority given to the for-profit exploitation of natural resources over the wellbeing of the communities – human or otherwise – who depend on those resources for their livelihoods and wellbeing, was seen as the main barrier to real change. This was a view held by anthropocentrists and non-anthropocentrists alike. In a public discussion on the political ecology of the uprising, held in Santiago, an academic argued that

> In Chile the economy has always been based on the extraction of natural resources [...] State policy exists to allow economic activity to trump other considerations. Often, communities cannot say no [...] The Awakening is an opportunity to change this.

Another academic, who in the same discussion had made the philosophically anthropocentric claim that the ultimate aim of rethinking human relationships with 'nature' is to improve human wellbeing, commented: 'we can either change the economic system now, or it will change *de facto* when we hit the limits of natural systems.'

Second, it is worth highlighting that many of the testimonies presented so far implicitly conceptualise humans and 'nature' or 'the environment' as distinct but causally related entities. This conceptualisation is perhaps best illustrated

by the following quote, taken from an interview with a non-Indigenous man who runs a small, independent conservation NGO in the Arauco Province:

> The problems that likely triggered this situation [the uprising] have more to do with social issues, but the environment is directly related to society... they don't function separately. Society significantly influences the environment and the environment limits or makes possible societal development. Hence implicitly they go together.

Although there was widespread recognition of the causal connections linking the human and natural realms, these were often framed in terms of the humans having an impact on 'nature' (for instance, industry affecting water availability) and the natural realm in turn impacting the human realm (for example, water availability affecting the economy). But this was not the only way in which the interrelations of the human and more-than-human worlds were conceptualised. Some informants saw the human and more-than-human as *constitutive* of each other, rather than as distinct entities joined by cause-and-effect relations. To understand these views more fully, we must take a closer look at the Mapuche's relationships with the uprising.

The Mapuche uprising

> They asked us about this social movement that began on 18th October. And I said: for us, the social movement started much earlier than that. Our people have been killed since long before, for trying to defend this place, for thinking that we somehow belong to it. And if we don't defend it, who will?

> This has been a long time coming. In my area, at least 15, 20 years ago, Mapuche communities began to mobilise against the big corporations and big businesspeople [...] and we still don't see a concrete solution from businesses or the state; they don't recognise our ethnicity. [With the uprising] many people understood our communities' issues [...] since the social movement started here in Chile, I heard people saying 'actually Mapuche communities have been fighting these battles for a long time, and we've only now realised it'.

These quotes, taken from interviews with Mapuche individuals in the Arauco Province, instil caution against any simplistic inclusion of Mapuche voices in analyses of the uprising. As these and other participants explained, Mapuche mobilisations long preceded the uprising, and their people have defended their land and culture against the Spanish Crown, and later the Chilean state, for centuries. But these testimonies also illustrate important points of convergence and cooperation between the Mapuche's long history of mobilisation and the uprising. As the second quote suggests, Mapuche mobilisations and the uprising have been of a piece in their denouncing the inequalities generated by Chile's

neoliberal model (see also, for example, Pairicán & Álvarez 2011; Pinto Rodríguez 2014). Uprising mobilisations have often included significant Mapuche contingents: materially, with Mapuche people attending the protests; discursively, with demands for Indigenous rights and a plurinational state (Figure 2); and symbolically, with the *Wenüfoye* (the Mapuche flag) becoming the chief emblem of the protests (116 academics 2019). The purpose of this section is to investigate some of the ways in which Mapuche perspectives can extend the scope of the uprising beyond the confines of the human. Specifically, it will examine how Mapuche informants conceptualised the more-than-human world, and how they ascribed value to its various elements.

Figure 2. Photograph of a street mural in a southern town. Writing on the right-hand side reads 'Chile woke up', 'new Constitution', 'autonomy for the Mapuche people' and 'decent healthcare'. The third person from the left is playing a kultrun *(a Mapuche percussion instrument) and appears to be wearing traditional Mapuche jewellery. Top-left messages include 'quality education' and 'decent pensions'. Along the middle of the mural can be read 'free rivers' and 'more native forest'. It is noteworthy that all six demonstrators (human and otherwise) are marching in one cluster and in the same direction, suggesting that the artist(s) believe(s) these different actors are at one in their endorsement of the various messages of the mural. The other-than-human animal standing on his hind legs is a well-known dog,* negro matapacos *(black cop-killer), who became famous through his involvement in the 2011 student protest cycles, and who later became a symbol of the uprising (two years after his death in 2017). The widespread symbolic inclusion of* negro matapacos *in the uprising surely reflects the belief that the sentiments of the protests are shared beyond human animals. Other messages on the mural include 'no more repression' and 'no more abuses'. Source: author's own.*

The accounts given by Mapuche informants did not just acknowledge the causal connections between the human and more-than-human realms; rather, they conceptualised human and other-than-human beings as integral and mutually

constitutive elements of a broader whole. Speaking about the lands and forests surrounding us, primary school teacher Juan Ñahuelén seamlessly drifted in and out of talk about education, health, culture and memory. He described a good education as involving the direct experience of other-than-human life, such as planting native trees and looking after them. He also recounted how the lack of school funding foreclosed any possibilities of taking children to areas where native species thrive, an issue that was compounded by the fact that, all around the town in which he teaches, forestry monocultures dominate. He said the Chilean 'education system is geared towards turning us into workforce; it does not aim to make us happy, living our lives in our territory'.

For the Mapuche, at least according to those who participated in this study, this holistic approach was grounded in the land. A Mapuche interviewee in her fifties explained that

> The land is everything, everything. It's who gave birth to you, who looked after you and raised you. It feeds you and gives you energy. It gives you your relationship with your past, your present, your future. So I always wonder why you [meant plurally] compartmentalise everything into separate things, the same with health, you see, for us health is an integral thing.

This view of the land and its other-than-human inhabitants as constitutive of, rather than merely having an impact on, education, health and the economy has important implications for many of the core demands of the uprising. From this point of view, access to the more-than-human world is not simply another human right to be placed alongside the right to a good education or good health. Rather, the more-than-human is a *precondition* for a good education or health. This latter interviewee also claimed that

> [Nature] should be the first article of the Constitution, and the main one, because without nature, what are we? What are we? Tell me. There would be no identity, no space, no ceremonies, no religion – there would be nothing.

Although they did not phrase it in the same terms, several informants who did not identify as Mapuche shared the view that the more-than-human world fundamentally underlies social issues. A young woman who had recently finished a degree in ecotourism claimed that

> [Nature] ought to be the foundations of the new Constitution, because we are part of nature, we live in nature, therefore it has to be the foundation of this, and then we can start adding on social articles.

In turn, her colleague said about the uprising that 'if we lose the environmental battle we lose all other battles – they become irrelevant'. Unfortunately, the targeted nature of my sample, which deliberately sought out informants with direct personal and professional relationships with the more-than-human, does not enable us to gauge how widespread these views are among the wider Chilean population. Results from the survey cited in the Introduction suggest that this is a minority view (Activa Research 2019).

Viewing humans as embedded in the land rather than as distinct from 'nature' or 'the environment' was not the only way in which Mapuche participants rejected anthropocentrism. The testimonies provided by interviewees and the published literature on Mapuche philosophy show that, for many of them, humans are not the only beings whose lives are ultimately of value. Mª Soledad Antinao Curiqueo, whose job involves teaching Mapuche culture to the younger generations, explained to me that

> all beings that exist in this space – we're all equals. Therefore, nature ought to exist without being harmed in any major way. We have to live alongside one another in a sustainable way.

The rest of this paper will explore expressions of non-anthropocentrism in more detail: the differences between them, the ways in which they have found space within the uprising and constituent process, and in the case of proposals to include the rights of 'nature' in the new Constitution, their merits and shortcomings.

Non-anthropocentric ethics in the opening of political spaces

Mª Soledad was not alone in her belief that the lives of other-than-human beings matter in their own right, beyond the extent to which they contribute to or detract from human wellbeing. Similarly non-anthropocentric views came up time and again in protests, debates about the new constitution, and the interviews that inform this article. One of the most visible manifestations of non-anthropocentric ethics, particularly in urban areas, had to do with the mistreatment of other-than-human animals, especially domesticated ones. Urban graffiti produced during the uprising left no shortage of calls for veganism (Figure 3), and a campaign (which began in 2015 but which has been boosted by the constituent process) for the recognition of other-than-human

animals as sentient beings in the Constitution has gathered over 200,000 signatures (Generación M 2020).

Figure 3. Pro-vegan graffiti in Santiago. On the left, 'fewer cops, more plants' and on the right, 'less meat, more tofu'. Source: author's own.

Whereas the human-centred values of the more-than-human world were directly connected to the economic, historical and institutional processes targeted by the uprising, the same was not true of the welfare of domesticated animals. To be sure, social science research has established connections between the exploitation of human and other-than-human animals in factory farms, with particular emphasis on how capitalism's necessity for ever-increasing efficiency and profit-maximisation has led to the objectification of human and other-than-human labour (e.g. Vettese and Blanchette 2020). But these connections were never encountered over the course of my research. This may have been because the perceived impact of intensive farming practices on total human wellbeing was too insignificant for these relations to be visible in the principal discourses of the uprising. More generally, it is likely that the supreme aims of ending inequality and reforming healthcare, education, pensions and transport services can be achieved without any major concern for the wellbeing of farmed animals – while the same cannot be said of the degradation of the environments upon which humans depend.

But the lack of clear connections between education, healthcare and the economy, on the one hand, and the welfare of domesticated animals, on the other, does not mean that these issues are ethically unrelated. If one were motivated to protest by feelings of empathy and duty and one did not limit moral standing to the human species (*contra* Carruthers 2011), then it is reasonable to extend activism beyond the human animal. We may thereby see concern for the wellbeing of other-than-human animals as an *extension* of some of the motivations of the uprising: an extension beyond humankind of care and responsibility for the welfare of others. Graffiti in Santiago articulated this understanding of shared duty toward human and other-than-human animals, as

well as the contradiction of campaigning for the sake of the former while neglecting the latter: 'it is quite hypocritical to demand justice while oppressing with your taste buds'.

Intrinsic concern for the interests of other-than-human beings, as articulated and defended by animal rights activists and – as we shall see – those who advocate the rights of 'nature', has become part of the uprising and constituent process as a result of the political spaces that have opened up following 18/O. The protests that began in October 2019 soon triggered broader processes of national and political renewal, which have materialised in the democratic decision to discard the Pinochet-era Constitution and create a new *carta magna* for the country. In its extreme form, this process of renewal has been framed as a death and rebirth (for instance, in Figure 1, immediately above '*Devuelvan los ríos*', can be read 'the end of Chile'). Less radically, there was widespread agreement that the country had undergone a deep awakening, as captured by the recurring phrase *Chile Despertó*. When I asked an interviewee in the Cautín Province whether she thought there is an environmental component in the uprising, she responded: 'I think it is part of a broader whole, because we are waking up and we are no longer blindfolded by the system'. In other words: even though the protests in the weeks following 18/O converged around a fairly well-demarcated set of demands, these mobilisations opened up spaces for the whole of Chilean politics, economy and culture to be questioned, and for alternatives to be proposed.

Seeing the Chilean model in crisis and faced with the prospect of democratically deciding the terms of the new 'social pact' embodied in the Constitution, people who felt strongly about human relations with the more-than-human have used these political openings to make more-than-human ethics part of the uprising. As one interviewee from the South put it:

> Yes, I do think [there is an environmental component in the uprising]. At least when I went on marches and demonstrations, I campaigned for everything, everything [...] In the uprising, you take your own list of issues and you prioritise which ones you think are important. You see, I think that is how people operated.

This opening up of political space as a consequence of social movements resisting dominant political and economic power has precedents in the Ecuadorian and Bolivian constituent processes of the first decade of this century. As David Humphreys (2017) argues, the challenges to hegemonic power in these countries were underlain by broader and deeper resistance to neoliberal values of individualism, competition and private profit-maximisation. Via the influence of social movements on political campaigns, elections and constitution-drafting, political space was created for alternative values of solidarity and collectivism, toward both humans and other-than-humans. In Ecuador and Bolivia, these openings were used by environmentalist groups to

campaign, successfully, for the legal recognition of the rights of 'nature' (Akchurin 2015; Humphreys 2017).

The following section will explore equivalent campaigns in Chile. Although including the rights of 'nature' in the new Constitution is only one of several clusters of proposals relating to the more-than-human put forward by members of the constituent convention (the organ in charge of debating a drafting the new Constitution) (Rubio 2021), it warrants special consideration because it constitutes the most radical departure from anthropocentric perspectives. If the rights of 'nature' were included in the new Constitution, they could have profound consequences for the country and for the international legal landscape. The constitutional recognition of the rights of 'nature' would extend the conflicts, conundrums and trade-offs between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric ethics from the moral to the legal realm.

Reconsidering the rights of 'nature'

In 2008, Ecuador became the first state in the world to include the rights *of* 'nature' in its Constitution (Akchurin 2015). The preposition 'of' is crucial here. Many constitutions recognise the human right *to* the natural environment, including the Chilean 1980 Constitution (Article 19, 8). In the case of the Ecuadorian Constitution, 'nature' is not only an object of rights (the human right *to* 'nature'), but also a subject of them: the more-than-human world itself is understood to have rights of its own. Article 71 of the Constitution of Ecuador (2008) reads: 'Nature, or Pacha Mama, where life is reproduced and realised, has the right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes' (see also Articles 72 & 73). The inclusion of the rights of 'nature' (henceforward rights-of-nature) in the Constitution of Ecuador has been celebrated within many environmentalist circles as a rightful move away from anthropocentrism. Other states, including Bolivia and New Zealand, have since passed laws that recognise the rights of some other-than-human beings (Humphreys 2017; Kauffman & Martin 2018).

There is a significant contradiction in the fact that although the philosophies behind rights-of-nature tend not to see humans as standing apart from 'nature', rights-of-nature legislation has tended to codify 'nature' as a distinct legal subject with rights that are very different in content from humans' rights (Akchurin 2015). In the Constitution of Ecuador, 'Nature or Pacha Mama' does not enjoy the same rights as humans, nor are the rights of humans based on their evolutionary processes and ecological structures like those of 'Nature or Pacha Mama'. But despite their legal codification of 'nature' as distinct from humans, rights-of-nature frameworks are at one with the philosophies that underlie them in their belief that humans are not (or should not be) the only bearers of rights. They are uncompromisingly non-anthropocentric.

In spite of this, interviewees at times justified the inclusion of rights-of-nature in the new Chilean Constitution using claims with distinctly anthropocentric

flavours. Instances of this phenomenon included phrases such as 'we owe it to future generations', slipping into talk of the human right to a healthy environment, and sliding into discussions of the instrumental value of natural resources for humans. Informants did this without apparent awareness of the tensions between the different values motivating rights-of-nature and anthropocentrism. Indeed, a significant proportion of interviewees did not pick up on the distinction between rights-of-nature and the human right *to* the more-than-human world. On several occasions, when I asked interviewees whether they thought that rights-of-nature ought to be established in the new Constitution, their arguments in favour of doing so were based on generic calls for more and better protection of the more-than-human, alongside the assumption that rights-of-nature will be more effective at delivering this protection than current approaches, rather than specifically on the belief that 'nature' is a distinct entity whose specific rights ought to be protected by law.

Despite their contradictory character, these anthropocentric and pragmatic justifications have recurred throughout the history of campaigns for rights-of-nature. In other Latin American countries, proposals for rights-of-nature have been partly motivated by the hope that they will be more effective at conserving the more-than-human world than previous jurisprudence, as well as by the urge to validate the collective rights of Indigenous humans. In Bolivia, the Law of the Rights of Mother Earth establishes that 'The State and any individual or collective person must respect, protect and guarantee the rights of Mother Earth *for the wellbeing of current and future generations*' (my emphasis), thereby infusing rights-of-nature with anthropocentric motivations (Bolivia Law of Rights of Mother Earth 2010: Article 2). The foundational essay articulating and defending rights-of-nature written by Godofredo Stutzin (who was a well-known Chilean lawyer and environmentalist) opens with the claim that these legal reforms are a matter of 'practical necessity' (Stutzin 1984). In a broadcasted debate about the possible inclusion of rights-of-nature in the Chilean Constitution, Ezio Costa, CEO of environmental law NGO FIMA, argued that the human right *to* the more-than-human world has failed to bring about sufficient environmental protection, and that rights-of-nature could be an effective way to correct this (Diaz Levi 2020).

There are good reasons for doubting the pragmatic worth of including rights-of-nature in the new Constitution. For one thing, many of the worst cases of ecological degradation in Chile already violate the constitutional right of human beings to a healthy environment. Therefore, the root problem, legally speaking, lies with the lack of enforcement of existing laws rather than the absence of non-anthropocentric legislation. As a number of interviewees told me, writing in the new Constitution that 'nature' has rights will not achieve anything if powerful actors with an interest in degrading the more-than-human world continue to be able to dismiss the law.

The Ecuadorian and Bolivian precedents do not bode well in this respect. Despite the legal recognition of rights-of-nature, these rights have usually been overridden when they have conflicted with the states' extractivist agendas

(Merino 2018; Romero-Muñoz et al 2019). As a Chilean academic argued in a public debate in Santiago, echoing the claims made by other participants that changing the economic model is a *sine qua non* for sustainability, 'unless there is a change in the material economy, any change to the Constitution will merely be – as in Ecuador – a declaration of good intentions.' In this same debate, an Ecuadorian academic went further and argued that rights-of-nature had in fact introduced an additional hurdle to the legal protection of the more-than-human world by opening a Pandora's box of philosophical conundrums – what is 'nature'? What rights does 'nature' have? Who should speak on its behalf? – that slow down legal procedures. It is telling that none of the informants who were in favour of including rights-of-nature in the new Constitution gave any reasons for believing that doing so would result in the better protection of the more-than-human world – they simply assumed that this would be the case. This argumentative vacuum is likely accounted for by the fact that evidence for the effectiveness of rights-of-nature is, at best, contradictory and, at worst, disheartening. Yet faith in the ability of rights-of-nature to deliver a quantum leap in environmental protection prevails.

Supporting rights-of-nature on anthropocentric grounds, including the hope that it will be an effective strategy to protect the more-than-human world for the sake of human beings, risks undermining those human-centred goals. Anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric value systems hold different things to be ends in themselves. As a result, each value system will inevitably pull in different directions, at least some of the time. This tension did not escape Indigenous representatives in the constituent process of Ecuador, who, despite the resonance between rights-of-nature and Indigenous cosmologies, worried that rights-of-nature would restrict their access to natural resources in the name of conservation (Akchurin 2015). For those who would like to see the more-than-human world conserved for human-centred reasons, probably a more effective – and certainly a more coherent – strategy would be to develop and promote an enlightened form of anthropocentrism, which recognises that humans, present and future, rely on the more-than-human world for a host of often-irreplaceable material and spiritual values (e.g. Lenart 2020). This strategy would seek to understand and protect all these values for the sake of present and future human beings, rather than aiming to deliver these goals through value systems inherently at odds with anthropocentrism.

Value plurality and collective rights

The conception of 'nature' as a subject of rights has frequently been associated with non-Western cosmologies. Indeed, in many of the countries where rights-of-nature laws have been passed, Indigenous peoples have played important roles in these reforms (Akchurin 2015; Humphreys 2017). The proposal to recognise rights-of-nature in the new Constitution of Chile was seen favourably by several Mapuche interviewees. A young Mapuche man from the Arauco Province argued that:

> The first article of the Constitution should say that Nature, Mother Nature, is a living being, a being with a system [...] and that as a living being, Nature has rights, rights like you, like me.

Despite the affinity between rights-of-nature and Indigenous cosmologies (which stems from their mutual rejection of anthropocentrism), the campaigns for rights-of-nature that have emerged or been spurred on in the wake of the uprising have often been led by journalists, lawyers and activists who appear not to identify as Indigenous and who do not frame their discourses in Indigenous terms, concepts and narratives (e.g. Diaz Levi 2020). This was also the case in Ecuador, where the process of including rights-of-nature in the 2008 Constitution was mostly driven by internationally connected environmental lawyers and activists rather than by Indigenous movements, even as the idea of rights-of-nature gathered support from various Indigenous groups (Akchurin 2015). This is somewhat unsurprising given that much of the intellectual work that conceptualises and seeks to operationalise rights-of-nature has been undertaken by non-Indigenous scholars working within the structures and notions of Western Law (e.g. Stone 1972; Stutzin 1984; Nash 1989). These works have been motivated by ecocentric values, which – in the Western environmental philosophy where the term 'ecocentrism' has its origin – posit that ecological wholes such as species and ecosystems are intrinsically valuable, irrespective of their contributions to human interests (James 2015, 43-63).

Crucially, believing in rights-of-nature for ecocentric reasons is not the same as doing so based on Indigenous worldviews, because the two value systems belong in different epistemic traditions and make different metaphysical and ontological claims about the more-than-human world. The notions of species and ecosystems are derived from Western – mostly English-speaking – science (e.g. Tansley 1935), and they are not equivalent with *mapu* or Pacha Mama. These differences are of fundamental importance – they mean that disagreement exists not just at the level of what rights 'nature' should have, but also, more profoundly, in how the more-than-human is conceptualised, understood and experienced. One manifestation of these differences is the problem, widely debated amongst proponents of rights-of-nature, of giving legal rights to entities, such as ecosystems, which do not have legal voices and which cannot themselves advocate their purported rights (e.g. Stone 1972; O'Donnell and Talbot-Jones 2018). By contrast, in the Mapuche worldview, the land (*mapu*) does have a voice (Millalén Paillal 2006, 20). In fact, the name of language of the Mapuche, Mapuzungun, translates as 'the speak of the land'; in Mapuche cosmology the land also speaks, through its various elements, such as its birds (*ibid*).

Largely overlooking these fundamental differences, campaigns for rights-of-nature have tended to present themselves as convergent with Indigenous worldviews. One must look no further than Article 71 of the Constitution of Ecuador to find the rights of Pacha Mama articulated in Western scientific terms of 'structure', 'function' and 'evolutionary processes'. This syncretism of

'nature' and Pacha Mama has been lauded by activists and scholars who have seen it as a move toward decoloniality (e.g. Gudynas 2014, 73-75). But the problems that arise from attempting to amalgamate fundamentally different ways of conceptualising the more-than-human world – or, worse still, from subsuming one within the other – have been highlighted by those who are sceptical or critical of rights-of-nature. An Ecuadorian participant in a public debate in Santiago argued that to equate 'nature' with Pacha Mama is epistemically violent (that is, a harmful and power-laden misrendering of a concept). Through the inclusion of rights-of-nature in the Constitution, argued this informant, the Ecuadorian state has problematically appropriated Kichwa language and notions of the more-than-human.

In Chile, the Mapuche demands that have emerged during the uprising and constituent process focus more on their collective right to autonomy, reclaiming sovereignty over their ancestral territories and turning Chile into a plurinational state than on the presumed rights-of-nature (Namuncura et al. 2020). Strikingly, of the 17 Indigenous representatives in the constituent assembly, not one of them included rights-of-nature in their electoral programmes – but all of them proposed reforms to the water regime, the dominant development model and issues concerning socioecological justice (Rubio 2021). Tellingly, when I asked Mapuche school teacher Juan Ñahuelén for his views on rights-of-nature, he instead told a story about his family recovering their right *to* the land:

> The community was regrouped in 92-93 when their right to the land was reclaimed. Then they returned, they won this patch of land, with the right, my dad went back to how things were in his childhood, went back to coexisting with animals, plants, agriculture, the vegetable patch, the seeds, working to have feed for the chickens, the chickens give us protein, with eggs, with meat […] and then we let the land rest, we sowed elsewhere and let the land rest, so it is not overexploited, and that is how the land is looked after.

Later on, he added:

> All that we are asking for is the will of a people who want to live better in sustainability with ecology, with a beautiful surrounding, with good health […] this is a good cycle to recover everything to do with environmental rights and the right to live better.

Juan's response suggests that in some cases, better relationships with the land can be established not necessarily by declaring in the Constitution that 'nature' has rights, but rather by transferring land sovereignty and ownership to Indigenous communities.

Many of the problems associated with the fundamental differences in how Indigenous and ecocentric approaches conceptualise and value the more-than-

human world could be mitigated if, instead of attempting to establish the universal rights of 'nature' at the level of the Constitution, the Constitution recognised the collective rights of Indigenous nations to legal autonomy and self-determination. In this approach, rather than pursuing the chimera of state-level agreement on what 'nature' is and what rights it should have, communities with a shared culture would have the right to legally codify the more-than-human world on their own terms (e.g. *mapu* in Mapuche culture) and to legislate accordingly. As the testimonies presented throughout this article have shown, even within a targeted sample of those with direct professional and personal relationships with the land, the more-than-human was conceived and valued in radically different ways.

Legal pluralism has already been adopted in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the context of the guardianship and legal personhood of the Whanganui River (Charpleix 2018). In this case, the fundamental differences in Maori and British ontologies of the more-than-human and in their legal models have been accommodated not by amalgamating them into a universal declaration of rights-of-nature, but rather by recognising Maori ownership of the river and allowing Maori law to coexist with state law – a coexistence that rests on a set of mutually acceptable terms for mediating the relationships between place-based Maori law and the dominant legal system. As in Aotearoa/New Zealand, but unlike the epistemically violent move of equating 'nature' with Indigenous conceptions of the land, a pluralistic approach to the law in Wallmapu/Chile would constitute true progress in decolonising Indigenous territories as well as the jurisdictional system. It is well-suited to be part of broader calls for recognising plurinationalism in the new Constitution (e.g. Namuncura et al. 2020).

Importantly, renouncing the Constitutional recognition of rights-of-nature need not equate with anthropocentrism. Recognising the collective right of nations to legislate in relation to the more-than-human world on their own terms would allow less anthropocentric laws to be passed in Indigenous jurisdictions. As for non-Indigenous populations at sub-national scales, the Constitution could safeguard *the right of human collectives to protect the more-than-human world motivated by any combination of values*, anthropocentric or otherwise. By disentangling questions of value from the notions and practices of rights, it would be possible to recognise and literally do justice to the plurality of human values relating to the more-than-human without the need to construct the legal fiction of a universal, rights-bearing 'nature'. Moreover, while it appears unlikely that consensus on what 'nature' is and what rights it should have can be reached at the level of the state, agreement on *the human right to protect the more-than-human world* could plausibly be achieved. Because ultimately humans, rather than 'nature', would be the bearers of rights, this approach would not require a fundamental shift in Western understandings of the law.

Conclusion

Through the voices of tens of women and men who hold direct personal and professional relationships with the more-than-human, this paper has presented a less human-centred view of the uprising and constituent process which began in Chile on October 18th, 2019. I have identified two main ways in which the scope of the protests and ensuing political processes has been extended beyond the human. The first way has to do with the *relevance* of the more-than-human world to the economy, healthcare, education and other human-centred concerns. The second has to do with the political openings that have followed the uprising, which have been used by humans who care about the *interests* of other-than-humans to advocate and defend those interests. Throughout this article, I have highlighted how different actors, with their distinct geographies, ethnicities and identities, have tended to emphasise and mobilise different values relating to the more-than-human.

I hope to have shown that values are a useful lens through which to analyse the various ways in which the more-than-human matters to social movements, beyond the temporal and geographic limits of the Chilean uprising. The choice to distinguish between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric values was motivated by the strong influence of Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment worldviews in Chile, as well as by the wish to lay bare the differences between Indigenous and European-descended cosmologies. I encourage other activists and researchers partaking in or studying social movements to consider how ideological and cultural histories have shaped the ways in which people value the more-than-human, in general and with specific focus on the demands made by the mobilisations.

Given the socioecological injustices exerted by the Pinochet dictatorship and its aftermath, one can only view and participate in the ongoing reformation with hope for a fairer and more sustainable Chile. But some degree of sobriety regarding the potential for deep reform is warranted. History, a Chilean friend once told me in a confidential tone, shows that the powerful tend to appropriate social processes in order to maintain their privileges. The decision to exclude active lawmakers from the constituent convention has been a bold step to mitigate this risk, but the politically and economically empowered can still hope to render the process ineffectual through a variety of strategies, including the dilution of its practical significance. Any constitutional declaration of plurinationalism, of the rights-of-nature or – as I have proposed – of the human right to conserve the more-than-human is likely to conflict with extractivist agendas, as has been the case in Bolivia and Ecuador.

For this reason, I believe that those who claim that changing the country's economic model is a prerequisite for building more sustainable futures are fundamentally right. And yet, history also teaches that some of the most devastating instances of ecological wreckage and vandalism have occurred in regimes that were not neoliberal or even capitalist (Gray 1993). Dismantling the neoliberal logics in Chile's institutions is a tall enough order – but reformers

also face the more challenging task of replacing them with something that is more likely to deliver their aspirations.

Acknowledgements

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