IMPERFECT MEDIA:
THE POETICS OF INDIGENOUS MEDIA IN CHILE

Juan Francisco Salazar

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UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY
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I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been previously submitted to any other tertiary institution.

Juan Francisco Salazar
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This dissertation examines the cultural constructions of information and communication media by Indigenous peoples in Chile. It includes a critical investigation into the emergence, current practices and future prospects of Mapuche media within situated and culturally mediated social space.

The research is informed by current anthropological interests in indigenous media and locates indigenous media theory and practice within three different, though overlapping fields of cultural production: applied visual anthropology, alternative media activism and new media theory. The research emphasizes the idea of a poetics of media, as a way of identifying the indigenous processes of making culture visible through media practice. The thesis uses a multi-sited and cultural constructivist methodology to examine the ways in which indigenous media is understood as socio-technical ensembles of social relationships. The idea of imperfect media, central to the argument of the thesis, refers to the way indigenous media practitioners are able to work outside the constraints of industrial modes of media production, circulation and consumption. Instead, the technological, aesthetic, and production strategies of “imperfection” of indigenous media allows for the possibility of Mapuche liberation, not subjugation.

The theoretical, historical and pragmatic concerns of the thesis lie primarily in the media processes that are contextualized by several instances of ethnic resurgence. Indigenous narratives are located at the centre of various forms of cultural activism and are being conceived as tactics in the construction of divergent imaginaries and oppositional public spheres. By concentrating the study on the Mapuche context, I clarify the process by which these practices transform social structures in the struggle for political self-determination, cultural autonomy and social recognition.
INTRODUCTION
The Poetics of Indigenous Media

*Imperfect Media: the poetics of indigenous media in Chile* is a project comprised of a written dissertation, and a 48 minute documentary video titled *De la Tierra a la Pantalla* (From Land to Screen). While both components examine the cultural constructions of indigenous communications in Chile, the major written thesis is an analytical and theoretical exegesis that locates indigenous media in Chile within broader social spaces of theory, practice and policy. The video component illustrates some of the case studies around the rise of Mapuche video and new media in Chile as poetic tools of political advocacy and cultural survival.

According to the latest national population census conducted in 2002, indigenous people in Chile account for roughly 4.5% of a total population of 15 million people (INE, 2003). The Mapuche people are the largest ethnic group in Chile, with significant representation in every administrative region of the country. With a population exceeding 600,000 people, the Mapuche have had a long history of political and cultural activism, proven by an enduring tradition of resistance, not only in Chile, but also in Argentina. Without doubt, the Mapuche constitute today the more politically active indigenous nation in Chile, a fact that is confirmed by the events occurring since the ‘levantamiento’ (uprising) of December 1997, which in turn has given a new face to the idea of a Mapuche movement that has been articulated since the 1940’s.

Despite notable and outstanding examples of Mapuche media works in recent years - many of which have received national and international recognition - the political project of indigenous communication in Chile is yet to become a field of cultural production in its own right. The purpose of this investigation is to inquire about the context of emergence of indigenous media in Chile and examine its current phase of development as a critical cultural resource. In addition, the investigation also explores the prospects of a complex yet promising future in which indigenous communication rights will have to play a decisive role in the new public policy environment including the reforms taking place in the cultural and audiovisual sectors with the development of a new institutionality.

A more personal aim of this critical examination of the problematics of indigenous media in Chile is that the information provided in both the written exegesis, but especially in the documentary video will be

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1 The title makes reference to two works coming out of Australia. One is the indigenous film training program developed by the Australian Film Commission in 1996 "From Sand to Celluloid", which was an innovative initiative for several aspiring Aboriginal filmmakers; the other makes reference to the work of Helen Molnar and Michael Meadows "From Songlines to Satellites" (Molnar and Meadows 2001:xii)
returned to the Mapuche communities and organizations, as a point of reference of some of the work in media being done today. It is my hope that this work will be an active call for more critical engagement with indigenous media in Chile.

Looking at it in more detail, the study is an examination of the ways Mapuche mediamakers, activists and scholars have begun creating a counter mediasphere from which to represent their stories, imagine their past and futures and tell their experiences. Therefore, the main research framework of the thesis is to understand the complex context of making Mapuche culture visible through media technologies. In the process of doing so, I have been able to – in the words of Clemencia Rodriguez - “witness a community looking at itself and in the process, transforming its self-images” (Rodriguez 2001:3).

Consequently, the central research problem investigates the social space of Mapuche media in order to examine the grounds and reasons that may explain the difficult, uneven and somewhat arrested development of indigenous media in Chile. The ongoing processes of building Mapuche media for example, are full of inconsistencies and contradictions. Despite the intensity and quality of a series of communicational projects and media products, and the courage of a series of indigenous and non-indigenous organizations, the impact is still to be felt in all its force. Nevertheless, Mapuche media is definitely underway and important interventions in national politics and the public sphere have started to happen, with an increasingly important impact on local communities and the broader society alike.

Mapuche radio stands as one of the earliest in the continent, yet it has had an irregular development since early radio projects of the 1960’s inspired by the Liberation Theology movement. Today there are several Mapuche programs on local and national radio, but there is little control or ownership by the communities or organizations. Mapuche video has been relatively marginal until very recently, when a new generation of documentary makers and media artists have started embracing this technology as a valid strategy of representation and communication. There is no such thing as an indigenous cinema and indigenous peoples remain utterly absent and invisible on television. The presence of indigenous people on mainstream media is confined primarily to news accounts of what the media has constructed as the ‘Mapuche conflict’, in reference to the current phase of mobilisations triggered by land rights struggles and cultural/environmental conflicts with corporate interests and the state. A similar case may be made for print media, such as newspapers or magazines, where indigenous participation has been rather minor.

Nevertheless, an impressive array of Mapuche organizations and individuals in Chile and abroad, have constructed a remarkable digital network of websites and online communication. These organizations have vehemently embraced the Internet as a viable tactic for building a counter-hegemonic discourse

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2 The video documentary De la Tierra a la Pantalla (From Land To Screen) was shown at the 7th Indigenous Film and Video Festival of the Americas in Santiago, Chile, during June of 2004.
that has started to impact in the national public sphere. These instances stand out as notable cases of radical indigenous media practices, which I argue can be seen as a strong yet incipient indigenous (Mapuche) public sphere.

It seems for a moment that there is a noteworthy leap from traditional to online forms of communication. This is because the dynamics of Mapuche Internet media have been so productive and fruitful, especially when compared to the lack of opportunities in televisual media. Today, the intricate network of Mapuche online activism supposes a potential mediasphere that is being constructed from the small rural towns in the south of Chile, to the big cities of Temuco and Santiago, as well as hubs in Brighton, U.K., Amsterdam, Paris and Uppsala in Sweden.

Consequently, in constructing a genealogy of this somewhat arrested, often uneven development of Mapuche media, I have set out to examine the conditions of its emergence in the last fifteen years and its current and future impact in the move for opening new discursive fields for a much needed autonomous indigenous mediasphere. I considered a series of variants that clarify the reasons behind this late flow of indigenous communications, particularly when compared to other more robust and mature examples in other parts of the world. These variants are more like departures from where to think about the emergence of Mapuche electronic and digital media. These include the state and its strategies for “enlisting the indigenous subjects” (Batty 2001), but also the role played by the media industries and non-governmental organizations. Of critical importance is the nefarious and long-lasting impact of seventeen years of military dictatorship. This variant refers not only to the impact on indigenous peoples of the profound and violent assimilationist policies of the military regime, but also the complete restructuring of the media industries.

The case study of Mapuche screen media focuses on Mapuche video and Internet activism and is grounded in recent theorisation within an emerging field of ethnography or anthropology of media (Ginsburg 1999; Ginsburg et al. 2002; Askew and Wilk 2002). This approach attempts to examine the social spaces where media is thought, practiced, produced and circulated. In this sense I have demonstrated the need to move beyond recent views of a Faustian dilemma which may be no longer relevant in certain cases of indigenous media production. Moreover, it shows that we can no longer talk about the three active nodes of indigenous media production commonly described in academic literature, namely Aboriginal media in Australia, Inuit and First nations media in Canada and Kayapó video in Brazil. Today there are equally remarkable examples coming out of New Zealand, Bolivia, Mexico, Russia, the United States, Taiwan and Chile among many other places.

Over the past fifteen years or so a range of academic literature has carefully documented the ways through which ‘ethnic minority’ groups have been embracing and using an array of
communication/information technologies, including film, video, radio and new digital media. This cultural appropriation of media technologies can be regarded as viable options for making indigenous culture visible in different social spaces, and also as ways of contesting the imposition of dominant cultural practices or elaborating and reformulating their own (Riggins 1992; Browne 1996; Ginsburg et al. 2002; Molnar and Meadows 2001; Prins 1997; Gumucio-Dagrón 2001; Ginsburg 1991, 1995, 1999; Turner 1991, 1994). In many cases, looking at the adoption of new media in a global context has been critical in the elaboration or reformulation of new discourses, in a context of permanent negotiation against the often forceful imposition of external dominant cultural practices.3

Yet despite increasing interest in indigenous media practices in recent years, the Mapuche case in Chile stills remains critically under-theorised and obscured by other more ‘spectacular’ (c.f. Debord) experiences. This work is therefore informed by recent interests within anthropological approaches to the study of culture and media (Ginsburg 1994, 1999, Ruby 2000, Prins 1997, Turner 1994), which have set up the foundations of fresh new fields of research, namely the anthropology of mass media (Spitulnik 1993, Allen 1994, Hughes-Freeland 1997, 2002, Dickey 1997), the ethnography of media (Ginsburg 1999, Ginsburg et.al 2002) or media anthropology (Askew and Wilk 2002). The emphasis on mediation has been a critical aspect of this new positioning and definitely opens itself to a variety of interpretations. In anthropology, there has been a shift from interests in ethnographic film towards a more encompassing terrain for the study of indigenous media; the writings of Faye Ginsburg, Terence Turner and others have been key in this shift. In considering the need to attend to these cultural and social dynamics of the media systems, Faye Ginsburg has been crucial in bringing indigenous media “within ‘the discursive space of anthropology’” (Banks and Morphy 1997: 31).

I therefore see this investigation as an original contribution to the emerging field of “anthropology of media”. In an attempt to move beyond the dilemma of a Faustian contract (Ginsburg 1991, 1994, Weiner 1997, Prins 2002), my discussion of the construction and use of audiovisual media as tactics of cultural activism by Indigenous Mapuche organizations, media makers and activists is also informed by scholarship in social and political theory, and communication and media studies. Emphasis has been placed in theoretical debates that have contributed in recent decades to the understanding of the social and cultural shaping of communication and information technologies. By incorporating a video documentary in looking at the cultural construction of indigenous communications in Chile, I see this work supporting efforts in posing a theory and practice of image production that intersects anthropology with media and communication studies (c.f. Ruby 2000).

3 Examples in recent literature on this topic can be found in Browne 1996; Riggins 1992; Ginsburg et.al 2002; Downing 1996; Downmunt 1993; and Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1997.
With the aim of providing a basis from which to open new discursive fields of media access, participation and practice, I also regard this work as a contribution towards the building of a more ‘multicultural’ media environment in Chile, one that is more open to the production, circulation and reception of divergent stories and images. In remapping the social spaces of media in Chile, this critical assessment proposes possible coordinates for valuing what an interconnected world might look like outside a hegemonic order (Ginsburg 2000 [1997]: 46). I expect to contribute to the understanding of the ways in which the production of time-based audiovisual media may be conceived as practices of cultural objectification (Miller 1995) and tactics for making culture visible (Ginsburg 1999, Wortham 2002).

In recent years, there has been increased recognition by national governments and international agencies of the right of indigenous peoples to pursue their own development objectives as indigenous peoples often conceive of development in radically different terms from mainstream agencies. As a consequence of this recognition, there is a growing need for a better understanding of the various ways in which development is conceptualised by indigenous peoples themselves. The significant increase and visibility of ethnic and indigenous nationalisms seeking cultural, and in certain cases political autonomy that has taken place in the past three decades has resulted in many ethnic groups in diverse parts of the world gaining recognition as distinctive political and cultural elements in both local and global affairs. Indigenous nations worldwide are today consistently creating new instances to voice impending demands on a daily basis in an ongoing struggle for inclusion and recognition as ‘global civic discourses’ (Wilmer 1993). These distinctive positions are examples of the fact that today indigenous nations are actively entangled in the cultural politics of their own countries. Effective coordinated mobilisation has increasingly allowed indigenous peoples to challenge the rhetoric of development, modernisation and other issues that add force to their on-going marginalisation.

Also important is the fact that in the past decade indigenous demands worldwide have gone from complaints to proposals, or what Sebastian Lara terms the move from futile objections to “the proposal for a world of decentralised but coordinated autonomies”⁴. In the case of Latin America for example, the last decade has seen dramatic events of indigenous mobilisation that in many cases have had profound consequences at the national level in several countries. The protagonism of indigenous movements in Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico in challenging and sometimes directly impacting in national politics remain paradigmatic demonstrations of this indigenous materialization into the national imaginaries of the Latin American States⁵.

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⁴ In a critical and erudite work, José Bengoa has outlined the processes of indigenous emergence in Latin America and the way many countries in the region have amended their respective constitutions to face this re-emergence of the indigenous question in the context of globalisation. See José Bengoa, La Emergencia Indígena en América Latina, FCE: Santiago, 2000.
⁵ Sebastian Lara is director of Inkarri Indigenous Documentation Centre in Bilbao, Spain. www.inkari.net
⁶ In terms of ethno-cultural diversity, there are over four hundred ethnically differentiated indigenous groups in Latin America today. While some of the original populations have few members, many others exceed a quarter of a million and, in some
The well-known and documented Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico since 1994 is just one case among of a series of uprisings taking place all over the continent. The immense media coverage of the Zapatista struggle has become in a sense a media spectacle that has concealed other similar processes of cultural mobilisation. In Guatemala, Ecuador and Bolivia, to name only some of the most relevant examples, these mobilisations are a clear example of the eruption of indigenous discourses that attempt to break with centuries of imposed silence and racist denial.

The impressive case of Ecuador, where indigenous mobilisations have been pivotal in the ousting of two presidents, is quite remarkable. In Bolivia, indigenous and peasant organizations have also been the key forces behind the strongest revolts since 1996, particularly in 2001 and recently in September of 2003 where President Sanchez de Losada was also forced to resign. Today, Evo Morales, an Aymara leader, is a strong figure of the opposition in Bolivia. Felipe Quispe, another Aymara leader was also a radical, yet popular politician in the country.

Although the situation in Chile resembles those of other Latin American countries, it also has a series of particularities that have to do with its modern cultural history. The right to communicate has therefore been important to the reformulation of a Mapuche movement and has taken a key place in the political agenda of different indigenous organizations across a series of indigenous groups. In turn, the struggle over the control of information has become an integral tactic in the elaboration of a renewed voice that has started to challenge the common ignorance and indifference within the national public sphere.

For all the reasons mentioned above, it is critically important to raise concerns in relation to the increasing politicisation of indigenous issues occurring against the backdrop of the United Nations’ Decade of Indigenous Peoples (1994-2004). The emergence and growth of indigenous movements at a global and local level, and increasing visibility of indigenous activism in national, regional and global affairs is intimately tied to the rise of Fourth World theory (Seton 1999) and the push for the decolonisation of research in relation to indigenous knowledge (Smith 1999, Strathern 1999). For these reasons I have considered it necessary to problematise the complexity of the notions of indigenousness and aboriginality in reference to the diversity of indigenous peoples worldwide.

cases, even one million people. The total indigenous population of the continent is estimated by the United Nations to be 50 million.

7 One of the most comprehensive reviews of Zapatismo online in the first years after the 1994 uprising is provided by Harry Cleaver’s website at the University of Texas, listed in the bibliography. For a critical analysis of the radical use of the Internet by the Zapatista movement see Villarreal and Gil in J.H. Downing 2001.
The examination of this politicisation of indigenous affairs is informed by recent writings in political philosophy by Italian scholar Giorgio Agamben. Although Agamben constructs his theory of sovereignty and exclusion in reference to refugees and not indigenous peoples, I have found his construction of social exclusion to be very useful in relation to the poetics of indigenous media.

By poetics, I refer to "the process of making". A poetics of indigenous media is therefore concerned with the way media comes into being and functions in a given community, group or culture. It is concerned with investigating how these social practices of media are grounded in cultural politics and social action. The poiesis or making of media as processes and products of cultural representation becomes the key element. Through a poetics of indigenous media the social practice of media is understood as the outcome of human agency where experience is the ultimate object of poetic representation. From a more organic perspective, the push for indigenous self-representation and autonomy may be understood as the self-asserting capacity of [cultural] systems to “maintain their identity through the active compensation of deformations” (Maturana and Varela, 1979). In this context, the term media is meant in a practical/methodical way, as a form of action, and not exclusively in a technical/logistic way, as the incorporation of gadget, materiality or tools (Hans Ulrich Reck, personal communication 2004).

Acknowledging that indigenous engagements with audiovisual technologies of information and communication have their own logic, the structuration of indigenous media needs to be contextualized therefore in larger processes of cultural activism, including of course new processes of ethnic resurgence. The call for making culture visible for strategic political purposes is what some authors refer to as the “dynamics of objectification” (Miller 2000) through which this logic may be understood. On a similar level but in specific reference to indigenous video production in Mexico, Erica Wortham has defined Indigenous video as a “hybrid, derivative cultural phenomenon that it is constituted in its circulation” (Wortham 2000). Consequently, as discussed in more detail in following chapters, indigenous media is better understood as a power strategy to develop new ‘regimes of truth’ (c.f. Foucault 1980) and ‘counter public spheres’ (c.f. Fraser 1993), than as a neutral ideological construction.

Moreover, increasing transnationalisation of cultural flows has meant that cultural networks that were at one stage restricted to local communities, regions or nations, have become interconnected through communications and information technologies. When these interconnections come to reproduce social relations of power we can certainly agree that it is an expression of neo-colonialism. However, this inter-

9 Professor Hans Ulrich Reck, from the Kunsthochschule fur Medien in Cologne, Germany, was a Visiting Professor at the School of Communication, Design and Media of the University of Western Sydney during March 2004.
10 In reference to Miller and Slater’s conceptualisation, I use the notion of objectification here to refer to the way people engage with information/communication technologies as material culture through which they are “caught up in processes of identification” (Miller and Slater 2000), and not as the systematic process of rendering indigenous peoples ‘objects’ of research or Western forms of representation.
communal dialogue has also fostered new mechanisms of resistance by linking actors on a transnational level that are acting at the local level. In any case, the disjuncture that takes place between cultural, material and economic flows has meant that a worldwide reshaping of traditional cultural boundaries is taking place. Many of these boundaries have been dissolved and disrupted and many others have emerged or been redefined. In the particularity of this research, the impact of globalisation on the local level has had an impact in the commodification of indigenous cultures. As Smith et al. (2000) suggest, indigenous cultures are today “available to a wider audience, often without that audience ever having to leave home. It deliberately invites outsiders in” (2000:3)\(^\text{11}\).

Technologically mediated constructions and representations of identity, and increased interest by indigenous peoples in making their cultures visible through electronic or audiovisual media, are rapidly becoming crucial elements in the formation of innovative forms of intra communal communication, while simultaneously interacting with the broader societies in which they live and networking with other local solidarities worldwide.

I have examined the processes of Mapuche engagements with audiovisual communication and information technology, and the way in which these media are culturally constructed as effective tools for celebrating cultural survival, mobilising and calling for political action as well as powerful poetic weapons for redefining identities. In doing so I have set out to examine the ways indigenous media in Chile has been embraced as a social practice carried out by relevant groups seeking out alternative tactics to confront and negotiate their cultural difference. By focusing on the development of indigenous media in Chile as a particular process of cultural objectification, this thesis explores contemporary indigenous issues of self-determination and decolonisation and the ways in which these issues make their ways to the academic world of discourses and paradigms. These media technologies of objectification are considered here as crucial in the production of an *indigenous imaginary* that may then perform strategically as a reversal and displacement of shifting public policies or dominant techniques of representation. An indigenous imaginary is not a poetic mental faculty for fantasising an ancestral past. On the contrary, I refer to what Lister et al. define as “a realm of images, representations, ideas and intuitions of fulfilment, of wholeness and completeness that human beings, in their fragmented and incomplete selves, desire to become”(60).

Serious and well-regarded attempts have been carried forward by indigenous media activists in Chile to develop a platform through and from which to speak, imagine, and think themselves in their own languages and cultural formations. Despite continuing efforts, indigenous media in Chile has proven to

\(^{11}\) In this particular regard it is important to note that Harald Prins (2002) has called for attention to the dangers embedded in this increased visibility of indigenous images and symbols as indigenous people are placed in a vulnerable position to be targeted by governments and private interests.
be a painful venture that is yet to develop its full potential. The incipient, yet fervent emergence of Mapuche communications in Chile is rooted in historical contradictions and grounded in the context of re-democratisation after seventeen years of military rule. Moreover, it occurs in parallel with the strong processes of ethnic resurgence flourishing particularly in Latin America since 1992, and the expansion of processes of economic globalization after 1989.

As it happens in most cases of indigenous peoples adopting ‘foreign’ audiovisual technologies, the processes are far from smooth and unproblematic. In this regard, the different perspectives on the issue may be grouped in one of two general views that have developed in recent years and which in one way or another make reference to the “paradox of media power” (Couldry and Curran 2003). On the one hand is the optimism and utopianism of a ‘global village’ perspective, on the other is a dystopic perspective that looks at media globalisation as another form of Western imperialism and the introduction of new technologies as destructive of indigenous cultural traditions and languages. Faye Ginsburg refers to this paradox as the Faustian dilemma facing indigenous media practitioners and researchers alike. The key point in both cases seems to be the objectifying of culture through what Miller (1995) calls the ‘new technologies of objectification’ (like film, video or the Internet) through which cultural dynamics become artifacts that can be circulated, consumed and manipulated. At the same time as they propose new possibilities for horizontal dialogue and understanding, these media pose significant pressure for fostering more alienation and rupture (Miller 1995). However, objectifying can also be taken as a tactic for reverting these pressures and elaborating oppositional discourses and ways of seeing and knowing. In this sense, I consider the appropriation or indigenization of media technologies in light of what Michel Foucault terms the “insurrection of subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980: 81); a process that spans from Latin America, to North America, the Pacific and Australasia.

In the first instance, some have argued that contemporary media are embedded in the codes and values of dominant societies, as well as in a series of formal conventions required in their use. In such a case, the appropriation of these media by indigenous groups has been questioned by those who argue that the use of modern communication media is in effect the last onslaught of colonialism, one that renders traditional forms of communication inefficient or obsolete. Such indigenizing of media technologies has been - in many cases - severely questioned by both indigenous and non-indigenous sectors that have raised concern about the possible destructive force of these technologies as they supposedly follow the logic of the dominant societies. On one level, some academics (Weiner 1997, Faris 1992) maintain that

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12 The dilemma posed for indigenous media practitioners of whether or not to adopt ‘Western’ technologies as potentially destructive of their ‘traditional’ modes of information and communication.

13 Linda Tuhiwai Smith uses this concept to refer to both the re-centering of meaning in the indigenous world of images, landscapes, stories, metaphors, and as a reference to the Indigenist project in Latin America which is examined in more depth in chapter two. Molnar and Meadows (2001) offer a similar view where indigenising refers to the cultural appropriation of media technologies into an indigenous context or setting.
visual technologies are restricted to culturally specific Western modes of vision and thus are not translatable to other cultural formations. In this thesis on the contrary, I put forward the opposite view. That is, since technologies are not neutral and are culturally constructed, they may be understood with an “interpretive flexibility” (Bijker 1992) that does not deny the possibility of appropriation by indigenous or other subaltern or non-western groups. If we look at the case of video technology for example, it could be argued that since its inception in the late 1960’s, its cultural logic was that of opposition to hegemonic or mainstream forms of communication and art (like television or painting for example). In my view, this cultural logic may be reversed depending on the user, and the kind of cultural formation and intention lying behind the use of a specific technology such as video.

The second point of view emphasises the role of media as poetic tools for self-determination by indigenous peoples. From this perspective, media are embraced as powerful strategies for shaping counter-discourses and alternative public spheres and even as new forms of re-inventing cultural identities. Ginsburg (1999) suggests how indigenous media may be regarded as a strategy of ‘shooting back’ to the dominant cultures in reference to other works that talk about ‘writing back’ to the empire (Bhabha 1994) or ‘firing back’ to the market (Bourdieu 2002). In many cases, this strategic reversal of stereotypes is used as a form of healing historical disruptions in cultural knowledge, social memory, and for preserving cultural identity between generations and across indigenous communities. By “using the inscription of their screen memories in media”, Ginsburg argues, “indigenous peoples have been able to ‘talk back’ to structures of power and state” (Ginsburg 2002)14.

The logic underlying the use, conceptualization and appropriation of media by indigenous peoples has as much to do with tangible technological artifacts as it does with processes of cultural mediation. This requires that we look at technology as something more than a piece of hardware in order to comprehend how technology is better understood as a social relation of power. In this regard, it is critically important to look at the interest that communication and information technologies have acquired in the agenda of several indigenous nations worldwide and the impact on the everyday strategies for cultural survival and political advocacy.

As I noted, this research is concerned with the way in which these social relationships are recreated, composed and imagined through those audiovisual media works (film, video and new media in particular) explicitly engaged in representing culture from an alternative perspective. However, if it is necessary to understand that the “formal qualities [of cinematic or video texts] cannot be considered apart from the complex contexts of production and interpretation that shape its construction” (Ginsburg 1999), I disagree when it is implied that we should focus less on formal quality than on the processes of

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mediation. I think both should be emphasised, as content has become increasingly a critical aspect in the cultural logic of indigenous media practice. The academic interest in ‘process’ should also consider the ‘product’ as a fundamental element in the formation of strategies of cultural resistance. A product of fictional entertainment like a film or a telenovela may be critical in naturalising indigenous languages and cultures, as several contemporary cases demonstrate; like Zacharias Kunuk’s Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, or examples of Maori television series in Aotearoa (New Zealand) such as the Aroha series. As communications scholar Antoni Castells i Talens suggests (2003), blurring concepts such as cultural resistance and fictional narrative may lead us to conclude that scripts with ideological weight are needed for indigenous media priductions, particularly as marginalised people live “in a well of automatic politicisation of its culture” (30). Political denunciation videos play a key role in indigenous mobilisation, Castells i Talens reaffirms, yet he also poses the challenge of reminding us that a culture that only represents itself as activist cannot achieve normalization. On a similar note, but in reference to indigenous media in Australia and the South Pacific, Helen Molnar and Michael Meadows have demonstrated that indigenous people throughout the world “do not necessarily see themselves as imprisoned by the dominant culture of the mass media and, in fact, find their own ‘spaces’ in which to produce alternative viewpoints and cultures” (Molnar and Meadows 2001:xi).

I will come back to these points again in the following chapters. For the moment, I’d like to stress the importance of conceptualising indigenous cultural identities as sites of permanent struggle and negotiation. More than an inherited essential property, I think of indigenous identities as the construction of power strategies within mediated politics of location.¹⁵

At the centre of a poetics of indigenous media lies the issue of self-representation, inserted in the notion of self-determination. As has been vastly documented, for the past two decades several indigenous media organizations and individual artists have been able to pose a serious challenge in their attempts to wrest control of the production and circulation of their representations away from the groups that have traditionally controlled it. For example, the CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador) was established as a network of indigenous nations in 1988 and is one of the most active indigenous organisations in the continent. Responsible for organising annual media events such as film and video festivals, in which hundreds of indigenous videos are shown, it also constitutes a space of debate and regional exchange. One of its primary focuses has been the debate on the elaboration of indigenous visual languages as a way of contributing to the development of independent indigenous media, both in terms of production and distribution. In December of 1994 the CONAIE signed the Quito Declaration, which in its central points declares,

“We [indigenous peoples of Ecuador] proclaim our right to the creation and recreation of our own image. We reiterate our right to access and appropriation of new audiovisual technologies. We demand respect for our cultures (both our spiritual and material cultures). We demand that images that are recorded in indigenous communities be returned to them. We need to organise the production of our own videos and make them extensive to a mass audience; we need to construct effective and collective networks for inter-communal exchange; we need to facilitate indigenous creativity by promoting the diversity of genres and formats acknowledging all the potentialities of our ancestral forms of self-representation”\textsuperscript{16}.

In this sense, indigenous media is a \textbf{channel or weapon for political activity} in the on-going struggles for self-determination and cultural autonomy of indigenous peoples. as well as a \textbf{strategy for negotiating} identity and constructing self-representations by asserting their presence televisually within national imaginaries. The project \textit{Mekaron Opoí D’joí}\textsuperscript{17} with Kayapó people in the Brazilian Amazon, was first established by Brazilian photographer/filmmaker Monica Frota with the assistance of U.S. anthropologist Terence Turner. Since its inception in 1985, as has been documented quite extensively (Turner 1990a, 1990b, 1992, Gumucio-Dagrón 2001), the Kayapo arguably became more politically conscious of their culture often reinventing their collective identities as political strategies towards non-indigenous audiences\textsuperscript{18}. Representation through video has become in recent years a fundamental part of the Kayapo’s political and ideological offensive. As \textbf{an intervention strategy or social tool} to irrupt in mainstream national/transnational cultural politics, indigenous media has become crucial in the promotion of social and political transformation and insertion of local narratives into national mediascapes. As will be shown, an interesting case is currently being posed by Mapuche online journalism in Chile (Salazar 2003).

Surrounding this layer, an understanding of indigenous media supposes the development of appropriate approaches to understand indigenous knowledge systems and they way they are communicated. In this sense, indigenous media is a \textbf{cultural resource} that offers an\textbf{alternative form to traditional oral communication}, which doesn’t cause the dislocation produced by print-based media (Molnar and Meadows 2001). Browne asserts that radio promised to be a useful tool for native groups because as a method of oral communication, it did not necessitate a written component, which was useful for groups that do not use writing systems.

\textsuperscript{16} For details visit online publications by Cefrec-Calib at http://videoindigena.bolnet.bo/
\textsuperscript{17} The translation reads "the one who creates images” in Ge language (Gumucio-Dagrón,2001)
\textsuperscript{18} In this context the work of Vincent Carelli and the Video nas Aldeias project has been crucial to understand indigenous media production in Brazil since 1987.
One important example of indigenous community media is the controversial Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS) in Australia, launched in 1987, which despite criticism has allowed for community radio programmes to be developed and broadcasted in Aboriginal languages throughout Australia (Molnar 1994). In this regard, indigenous radio works as a form of healing disruptions in cultural knowledge, in historical memory, and in ethnic identity between generations, indigenous media is an important mechanism for fostering processes of cultural revival through the recovery, adaptation and transformation of traditional knowledge and language usage. Examples range from the launching of a national Maori television network in March 2004 to projects like Video in the Villages started in Brazil around 1987 by Vincent Carelli (Aufderheide 1995). Video in the Villages has promoted for over 15 years the encounter of Brazilian indigenous communities with their images. The project’s proposal is to turn the video into a tool that will enable the expression of their identity, reflecting their vision about themselves and about the world. While equipping the indigenous communities with video equipment, the project has stimulated image and information exchange among the nations. Initially the training of indigenous video-makers was done village-by-village, providing records for their own use. Today, through national and regional workshops, they learn and discuss together ways to present their reality, for their own people and for the world.

Indigenous media is also an important source of employment for indigenous peoples in the media industries. One important example may be seen in Bolivia, where a strong movement for indigenous video training, production, and distribution has been consistently growing since 1996 after the founding of the Indigenous National Plan for Audiovisual Communication. The movement's media organizations, CEFREC and CAIB, offer extensive training and production facilities, which in turn open up sources of employment for indigenous media makers. Nearly 100 works including documentaries, video postcards, and fictions have been produced by indigenous people and peasant communities throughout Bolivia and have won international recognition and film festival awards.

On another level, and because in many cases it is grounded in the logic of recovery and ethnogenesis, indigenous media is a way of resistance to outside cultural domination whereby indigenous groups appropriate media technologies and networks to counter the perpetuation of negative stereotypes or revert potential hegemonic negative impacts of mass media imperialism through which aspects of their societies have been objectified, commodified and appropriated by the dominant societies in which they are immersed (Ginsburg 1996). An interesting example of this can be found in Maori television series produced in recent years in New Zealand where through genres like sitcoms, drama or soap operas, Maori language and culture is positioned using the dominant code. For this reason, indigenous media

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19 I’m referring in particular to the Aroha Maori Drama Series, a series of 6 x 1/2 hour television programs screened in 2002. For more information refer to http://www.arohafilms.co.nz/Arohadrama.htm
is an alternative to mainstream media and a powerful educational outlet consistent with the ways in which the meaning and praxis of indigenous knowledge has become increasingly self-conscious, including the recovery of language. An important case which still needs to fulfil its full potential is the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in Canada, launched in 1999 (Molnar and Meadows 2001).

On a different level we may include the ongoing issue of cultural survival. In this sense, indigenous media is a system of social relations and networking aimed at reaffirming communal social solidarities, where local conjunctures are strengthened and linked through transnational strategies and cross-cultural collaborations across national borders. A crucial example of this is the Tanami Network in Central Australia (Molnar and Meadows 2001).

These are only a few examples among a variety of experiences, all of which suggest that struggles for self-determination, cultural recognition and political autonomy are inextricably linked to the control over the production and circulation of indigenous systems of knowledge, including of course visual media representations. The activities explain, as Seton puts it, the “urgent efforts for retaining control and/or regaining those social and cultural solidarities that allowed them to identify as a distinct community before the onslaught of colonialism” (Seton 1999). On a similar note, Faye Ginsburg reminds us of the fact that it is common within the safety of academic and theoretical research to overlook what the stakes are for those who are powerless to control representation of their lives (Ginsburg 1994).

Furthermore, in uncovering the historical, political, economic and cultural conditions that have impeded until recently the formulation and conception of indigenous media in Chile within the national public sphere, I suggest possibilities for potential future directions, particularly in the indigenous production, consumption and participation of new interactive digital media technologies. The idea of establishing possible directions for further development will be linked to the comprehension and understanding of these issues in different global contexts, particularly in the countries where indigenous media production is being debated for the past 30 years. Experiences in Australia, New Zealand and Canada have been included as paradigmatic examples coming out of English speaking ‘developed’ media industries, whereas Brazil, Mexico, and recent instances in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia are key to understand the Latin American context.

The main research question in this thesis addresses the erratic and problematic development of indigenous media in Chile. In this sense, what may be the contextual causes that have impeded until recently a more robust formation of indigenous communication practices? Part of the answer to this question has to do with the fact that the Chilean public and media spheres may be characterised by an astonishing lack of pluralism, due primarily to the embarrassing level of economic and ideological
property concentration, and the lack of appropriate regulation on this issue. Other key factors are the impact of sixteen years of military dictatorship in the media industries and the closing of several channels of independent media production, while channelling the few options for oppositional media into political activism against the military regime. Moreover, the complete disengagement of the state in the 1980’s towards indigenous nations and grassroots communications, and the lack of state involvement on promoting indigenous communications during the past decade may be put together with the relative neglect of international cooperation funding for Chile in the area of indigenous communications.

Consequently, the central point in this dissertation is to understand the cultural construction of indigenous media in Chile, outline its emergence and look for possible paths of short and medium term development. The project clearly sets out to investigate the construction of communication technologies such as video and the Internet in a context of cultural and political activism. The emphasis of this research has been placed in the mediating role that these technologies have in the revitalizing, recovering, redefining, emancipating and inventing of indigenous cultural solidarities and artistic expressions in Chile at the turn of the 21st century. I am confident that this is a worthwhile question to be posing at this stage, as little research on Mapuche media practice, production and consumption has been conducted.
CHAPTER 1
PROJECT DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Despite the increasing protagonism of indigenous movements in civil and political affairs, indigenous media has remained largely invisible to First World publics, at least until very recently (Shohat and Stam 1994: 52). In this regard, the 1990’s have seen a renewed interest in anthropological examinations of the social practice of media (Ginsburg 1999, Ginsburg et al. 2002), which coincide with an important growth in indigenous media production and control. The response from some anthropologists working on media today has been to embrace earlier claims for a more active engagement by anthropology with media technologies as instruments of cultural mediation or as mechanisms for imagining communities (Michaels 1985, Spitulnik 1993, Ginsburg 1999), and the usefulness of an anthropological perspective into studies of mass media.

In this chapter, I discuss the framework of the project in terms of its design and implementation. Drawing on different research methods, the nature of this project is more exploratory than explanatory and a range of different methodological strategies has been considered. These strategies were designed in a way that they could be constantly adjusted to the information and data being collected throughout the research, so as not to fit the data into a rigid theoretical/methodological scheme. In this sense, it was useful to start from the notion of ‘methodological interdiscursivity' in order to be able to bridge studies of broad sociopolitical discourses with more specific ethnographies of media studies. With the aim of linking different approaches in anthropological accounts of communication, technology and media, the emphasis in interdiscursivity as method allowed me to place the attention on a dialectical tension between representation and action. Because technology is not the product of a unique technical rationality but of a combination of technical and social factors, as Feenberg suggests from a hermeneutic constructivist approach, the study of these factors must include not only the empirical methods of social science but also the interpretive methods of the humanities in order to get at the underlying meaning of technical objects and activities for participants. Meaning is critically important insofar as technical objects are socially defined (Feenberg 1992).

The function of this chapter is to explain the characteristics of this project while offering a general epistemological discussion of different methodological procedures and techniques. It begins with a brief reference to the objectives and spatio-temporal scope of the thesis and then continues to outline the design and structure of the project. As is discussed in more detail later on, the research project brings together different platforms for the collection and presentation of information: written exegesis, video documentation and online configuration. Consequently, I then go on to analyse and discuss several research strategies predefined as suitable for the project objectives and research premises. The section
summarises the activities that were envisaged in pursuit of each objective as well as the strategies used for collection of primary data. Finally, the chapter also addresses ethical issues related to the ethnographic aspect of the research.

1.1. Research problem and context: media and Indigenous peoples in Chile.

*La Alegria ya Viene* (Happiness is Coming) was the slogan of the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (Coalition of Parties for Democracy) in the presidential campaign of 1989, held in the midst of enormous uncertainty, as sixteen years of military rule were coming to an end. An overwhelming sense of optimism was felt in different levels of Chilean society, including indigenous peoples who had been deeply neglected by the assimilationist policies of the military regime. A few months before the presidential election of 1989 – the first since September 1969 - the then newly formed Coalition signed a political agreement with several indigenous organizations, primarily Mapuche left-wing factions, in what came to be known as the *Nueva Imperial Pact*. Recognizing the strategic importance of negotiating with indigenous and peasant organizations to secure electoral success, this tacit agreement meant that indigenous peoples were formally integrated into the new political scenario¹. Several promises were made, including the guarantee of a new Indigenous Act, which came into being in 1993 after three years of complex debates. A year before the introduction of the new law, the population census of 1992 - again the first one held in twenty years - revealed the most unlikely of facts: the indigenous population in Chile accounted for almost 10% of the population. There was an inevitable acknowledgement that indigenous people were ‘alive’, and were living ‘here and now’. The statistics received considerable media attention and coverage in early 1993 and boosted a rich debate in intellectual and academic circles that ranged from sociological and statistical analysis, to political and cultural studies. The fact is that there is still critical work needed in terms of media and communications and this work expects to open up the debate towards further research.

The Indigenous law of 1993 was one of the important outcomes of the Aylwin Government (1990-1994), the first democratic administration of the Chilean transition regimes. Among the most important new set of rights that this new Act incorporated were: participation rights, land rights, cultural rights and rights to state funded programs of social assistance, for which the Indigenous agency CONADI² was formed. CONADI works as the decision-making body in terms of indigenous policies and is comprised of indigenous and non-indigenous representatives.

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¹ For a more detailed account of the indigenous involvement during this period and during the early years of the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (Coalition of Pro Democracy Parties), refer to Jorge Calbucura 2001 in the bibliography.
² Corporación de Desarrollo Indígena (CONADI) is the Chilean government’s Corporation for Indigenous Development.
Despite the assertions incorporated in the Indigenous Act to design and implement more efficient policies relating to indigenous peoples, the indigenous situation in the country has deteriorated considerably from 1993 onwards. The neo-liberal consolidation during the years of the Frei Government (1994-2000) - which saw the consolidation and expansion of a series of corporate projects in areas of conflict - was a key period in which the environmental and indigenous demands were severely contested, often ignored, and mostly opposed.

Three successive democratic governments in the past fifteen years have been incapable of dealing efficiently with the growth of indigenous demands and in many areas, the indigenous legal framework has proven to be insufficient. Moreover, the drastic consequences of deficient government policies involving indigenous peoples have often had very negative outcomes, as will be examined in more depth throughout the thesis.

For instance, the respect and protection of indigenous cultures and languages was assured by the promises of promotion of indigenous programs in indigenous languages on regional radio and television stations, and the creation of indigenous radio networks and communication media incorporated in Article 28, paragraph C of the new Indigenous Act of 1993. Ten years later, few of these promises have been implemented, and the undeniable fact that indigenous peoples in Chile have today a null presence in the media is a clear indication that indigenous sectors have been given little opportunity to access, own or control the means of mass media production and dissemination.

In the context of democratic transition since 1990, the Pact of Nueva Imperial was symbolically broken in December of 1997 and coincided with the peak of an environmental movement, the first uprisings in Mapuche rural communities in southern Chile and the following massive mobilizations of Mapuche organizations in major cities. Underlying this new surge of indigenous mobilization, as shown in my documentary video for example, is the attempt to confront the corporate expansionism in indigenous territories (primarily forestry, mining and hydro-electric dams), the passive attitude of the government (which has reacted by repressing the indigenous actions), the unfulfilled promises of the 1993 Indigenous Act, and the general indifference of the Chilean society at large.

The Chilean forestry model has been publicized as an example of modern forestry development and has been exported as such to the countries of the region. However, such forestry development model, implemented during the military dictatorship and resulting in economic concentration, the displacement of thousands of peasants and indigenous people and negative environmental impacts, are now being severely challenged by those affected and their political solidarities.
The question has been constructed in the media and widely accepted by the public opinion as the ‘Mapuche conflict’. The implications of a ‘Mapuche’ conflict put the blame on one element of the conflict: the indigenous claims and demands, yet it leaves aside the other two variables: the state and the corporate interests in the area. If land claims are at the core of the Mapuche uprising and the emergence of a renewed movement for political and cultural autonomy, we must note that most of the logging companies operating today in what used to be Mapuche ancestral territory were established between 1974 and 1980. During this period private companies acquired public and/or indigenous land through fraudulent auctions or simple land transfers of state-controlled companies to newly created private ones (Calbucura 2001). Many times these transfers were done in collusion of the military regime. This is an important issue because many of the current land claims are not only for ancestral land, but also for properties expropriated during the military regime (1973-1989), as is the case for other indigenous nations in the country.

Cultural and social studies of media have rarely included the indigenous factor as an important area of research. Most of these figures account for socio economic data, yet there are no empirical or social indicators to determine the level of penetration of communication media in Mapuche homes, or what kind of programs they watch on television or hear on radio. The same can be said for other indigenous peoples in the rest of the country.

The level of access and participation of indigenous people has been quite marginal in most media, with few exceptions in radio and more recently the Internet. On television, indigenous participation has been practically nil. If indigenous productions have made it to national and international festivals, they have been completely absent from television broadcasting. If we take into account that the seven free-to-air television networks are as a whole the most important exhibitor, producer and buyer of audiovisual or televisual productions in Chile, then the invisibility of indigenous productions is quite serious.

The audiovisual industries have been one of the fastest growing sectors in the Chilean economy in recent years. During the 1990’s economic growth in Chile averaged 6%, while the audiovisual industries grew by almost 16% (Trejo 2000). Today the audiovisual sector represents 1.3% of the country’s GDP (Consejo Nacional de Television, 2003).

Nevertheless, the Chilean public and media spheres have been characterised as among the least pluralist in the region, due primarily to an excessive level of economic and ideological property concentration and the lack of appropriate regulation on this issue (Sunkel and Geoffreoy 2001).

In total the seven networks offer over one hundred thousand hours of programming each year (Aliaga 2000: 18-19) none of which is produced or specifically aimed at indigenous groups. The broadcasting
law states that a minimum of 40% of the total programming offered by a television network must be produced locally and at the moment there isn’t much of a problem in this regard. What is striking though is that the law states that channels need to broadcast a minimum of one hour a week of cultural programming (Ibid:21). It is stunning to observe that cultural programming accounts for less than 1% of the total yearly programming of several television stations.

This is in summary how the media environment has confronted the emergence of indigenous media in the country. Increasingly important within the specific emergence of Mapuche media in Chile during the 1990’s is the question of representation. The new government of President Lagos since 2000 has made huge efforts in the design of public policies for the development of an audiovisual culture as well as the normative, economic and institutional elements necessary in a possible new cultural legislation. There is acknowledgement that within this new audiovisual institutionality, local, community and indigenous communications have not been the major priority (Ignacio Aliaga, personal communication, 2003).

The appropriation of information and communication media such as radio, video and the Internet has gradually become a critical element of the Mapuche struggles for self-determination and self-representation. In several cases, they have turned out to be efficient political assets, in other circumstances poetic tools of cultural survival and linguistic revival. With this background in mind, I have placed media practice, or the poetics of media, at the core of the problematization.

**Research Questions**

The research was guided by attending to five basic sets of problems or tasks. These are respectively addressed in the four chapters that follow.

1. How has indigenous media been conceptualised in theory and practice? In what ways is indigenous media production constituted as an everyday tactic of cultural objectification for the purpose of cultural survival or political action? In what way may indigenous media be theorised as a socio-technical ensemble, a network of human and non-human elements, a cultural construction of meanings and social relations? How can we theorize on the digitalisation of indigenous knowledge, stories and images within divergent, overlapping public and media spheres at local and global levels?

2. What are the particularities of the Chilean public and media spheres in explaining the growth of indigenous media? What have been the strategies for making indigenous peoples in Chile visible and

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4 Ignacio Aliaga has been a key figure in the construction of the new audiovisual environment. I interviewed him in his position of Director of Film and Video of the Ministry of Education in July 2003.
invisible from a national imaginary? What kind and degree of media participation do indigenous people have in the national public sphere? What is the role of media in relation to the Mapuche conflict and its representation?

3. How are communications and media technologies inserted in the contemporary Mapuche agenda in Chile? How can we theorise the cultural construction of media technologies as tools for the strategic reversal of stereotypes, social interaction, political mobilisation, and cultural mediation in the Chilean context? What is the peculiarity of the Mapuche case? How have Mapuche organizations and individuals embraced media in the building of oppositional forms of representation and imagination? What types of program making activities characterise Mapuche media? What is the role of media in the re-invention of the Wallmapu, or Mapuche nation, a Mapuche national consciousness of ethnic citizenship and territory? What is the impact of Mapuche media in the overall Chilean picture?

4. What is the level of autonomy of indigenous media processes and the role of the state and the transnational networks of information? What needs to be considered when proposing the building of indigenous communications in Chile? What sort of media policies are to be developed for the support of indigenous media? What could be the role of visual anthropologists in regards to the emergence of indigenous media practices in Chile? In this regard, how is it possible to identify the complexity in the relationships between indigenous media work within the indigenous communities, as well as state policies and agents, the national mediascape, diverse cultural brokers within a complexity of regional, national and transnational spheres of production and consumption? What are the benefits for local indigenous organizations and individuals in Chile of the appropriation of electronic media technologies?

1.2. Objectives and Scope.

Consequently, from the posing of these questions, I set myself the following objectives:

Firstly, to see this work as an opening of discursive fields of theorisation and debate for the design and development of indigenous media in Chile. Secondly, to establish a genealogy of the development of indigenous media in Chile and critically analyse how and why Indigenous groups in Chile have been marginalised by an inappropriate access to media participation and control. Thirdly, to locate and analyse the work of Mapuche media production organizations and/or individuals in Chile and identify their strategies for appropriation and use of audiovisual and digital media. Then, to critically analyse and theorise the role of electronic media and communications in the indigenous agendas in terms of cultural studies of technology. Finally, to elaborate a set of recommendations for short/medium term possibilities of indigenous media program development using new media technologies.
The inquiry is primarily encompassed in Chile within a 15-year period covering from 1989 to 2004. The body of the work is framed by the development of indigenous media during the last decade, which coincides with a major shift in indigenous appropriation and theorisation of media in a period of political uprising and cultural ethnogenesis. The research concentrates primarily on Mapuche media and secondarily on other case studies, for example the prospects for future development of Rapa Nui community TV (Easter Island) and community video in Likanantai communities. Nevertheless, it has been carried out from a cross-cultural and comparative approach. In this sense, I have tried to move away from single-site anthropological inquiry with the aim of pursuing a more multi-sited research strategy. Research was conducted in several countries and relying strongly on Internet sources and personal communications. Particularly as indigenous media practices lie within the realm of discourse regimes and modes of thought, it is the creation of meaning and the transnational circulation of signs, symbols, and metaphors that guides the exercise of indigenous media production and theorisation. Conducting the investigation from Australia and focusing the problem in Chile (and incorporating the Latin American context) has also been advantageous in order to fit in the study of outside cultural influences on the research topic and have a wider perspective on current cultural theorisation, not only ones originating from the U.S. and Europe.

The major outcome anticipated is that this project will contribute to the field of study in which its inserted and will effectively open up the debate into the possibilities of building a new institutionality for indigenous communications in Chile by proposing a series of recommendations based on the investigation.

1.3. Project Design: multi-platform and multi-sited research.

The thesis has been devised in such a way that information is arranged and displayed as a multi-platform project that incorporates different formats in order to support the varied nature of the information collected and elaborated. The project has been designed as coherent and convergent written, audiovisual and interactive scapes divided into two different formats/platforms.

The first part corresponds to the written exegesis. The investigation has been divided into the six chapters outlined in the following section, plus bibliography and appendices.

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5 Discourse is used here as a fluid term that refers to the form of expression (verbal language, visual image or otherwise) with which any particular group of a society describes and evaluates a conception of truth and situates itself in a relational position of power within a particular ideology. Thus “the discourse of power,” in Michel Foucault’s term is the way language and linguistic structures are used to keep political power in the hands of dominant institutions.
The second is the social documentary, shot on digital video and finished for DVD. Through previously recorded programs made by indigenous activists, live action video and interviews with indigenous media practitioners in radio, video and the Internet, the film explores the emergence and future of indigenous media in Chile. More specifically, the program has been constructed around several topics developed in the written exegesis, particularly in looking at different views on the Mapuche conflict, the role of communications media in the political agenda and the work of several Mapuche media makers who extrapolate into the problems and possibilities for building Mapuche communications. In this regard, the film is primarily expository rather than analytical.

The research strategies were designed by considering what George Marcus has called multi-sited research. The aim has been to understand the connections, associations, and relationships that form indigenous media in Chile. In this sense, this thesis is positioned among emergent methodological trends in anthropological studies of media, concerned with the translation of established modes of ethnographic practices into more complex objects of study and thus moving away from more conventional single-site location research, to multiple sites of observation and participation situated in the interstices between the "local" and the "global" (Marcus 1995). To complement this section, in the following paragraphs I offer a brief discussion of the process of selecting an appropriate interdisciplinary methodological approach. Generally speaking visual anthropology has been historically concerned with either the production or the interpretation of visual cultural systems of representation. However, the dichotomy between visual information produced by the researcher (primarily as a method) and visual products made by ‘those under study’ has become increasingly blurred in recent years, giving way to what some authors refer to as collaborative representation (Banks 1997; MacDougall 1998). In this sense, visual research methods have been crucial in the development of this thesis at three levels: as an illustration of the theoretical discussion; as a methodological strategy, and as a pragmatic outcome. A key point in the design of a suitable methodology for this project has been the integration of different modes of research that allow for an applied and public anthropological engagement, not just with the interpretation of visual codes and artefacts, but also with their distribution, funding and responses in different contexts of reception. In relation to the traditionally passive involvement of anthropologists in the pragmatics of media practice, little work has been done in recent years in terms of engaging in applied research and the implications of visual anthropologists for policy or practice. This aspect is particularly important given the nature of the media industries in Chile and the recently introduced audiovisual frameworks and policies in which visual anthropologists have had null input.

6 The visual material will also be redesigned or re-versioned for a bilingual website aimed at providing basic information and links, and incorporating downloadable extracts of the final written thesis and compressed QuickTime files & photo archive of the fieldwork and video component.

The research problem of Indigenous media in Chile is examined by acknowledging macrotheoretical theories and narratives of the world system without focusing exclusively upon a single site of intensive ethnographic investigation. These macrotheoretical approaches are grounded in transdisciplinary work that includes media studies, communication theory, international politics, science and technology studies, film theory, feminist and cultural studies in a broad sense. In this manner, I situate my approach within a field of research that has been referred to as an anthropology of media (Ginsburg 1999, Ginsburg et al. 2002, Askew and Wilk 2002) in the sense that I have set myself the task of observing the social relations that organize indigenous media production and consumption in Chile. This entails looking at the cultural relations between different social actors, and how these relationships get mediated through technologies that are embedded in larger social and political contexts of cultural mobilisation and activism. In this regard, the research also falls within the sub-field of applied visual anthropology (Pink 2004).

With this aim in place, the objective is to look at the actual impact of indigenous Mapuche media in generating an alternative – often oppositional - public sphere. Acknowledging the relevance of fieldwork and the need for reflexive engagements with those social actors in the context in which they live and work, the questions asked by an anthropology of media are also driven by theoretical assumptions. The need to theorise complexity is taken here as a way of questioning the hegemony of fieldwork and empirical research as fundamental aspects of anthropological inquiry.

At another level, the act of working on indigenous issues and interacting with indigenous researchers and media professionals also prompted several considerations. With few exceptions, research always happens within the framing of specific scientific or disciplinary approaches. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith has sharply asserted in regards to the decolonisation of research it will always be difficult “to discuss research methodology and indigenous peoples together, in the same breath, without having an analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices” (Smith 1999:2).

1.3.1 Structure and Organization of the Written Exegesis

The exegesis has been organised into six chapters including this general introductory chapter. Part One, encompassing the first three chapters, positions the academic, theoretical and methodological framework of the inquiry. It also provides a brief yet critical history of the research and an overview of related literature. More importantly, it situates the theoretical and political background of the thesis, critically examining current theoretical debates in the anthropology and philosophy of media. In a context of transnational cultural flows, the section focuses on the construction of indigenous identities and narratives from an international perspective, focusing on the emergence of indigenous activism.
worldwide. This sets the base for a more profound examination of indigenous media and the associated anthropological interventions in an account of different theorisations around the social practices and cultural constructions of media technologies, which will prove useful when looking at the Chilean context.

This first chapter situates the locus of the investigation and summarises the structure and organization of the information provided. It discusses the methodological strategies used to illustrate how the objectives of the project have been achieved. The chapter provides a description of methods and discussion of procedures used during the investigation with the objective of testing different approaches to the particular case study presented in Chapters four and five. As discussed in the pages that follow, of importance in this chapter is the way in which multimedia components (a video documentary and a website) have been constructed as integral complements to the main exegesis, particularly the way the documentary video has been constructed as a methodological strategy of collaborative practice-based research.

In chapter two, I trace the problematic conceptualisation of the notion of indigenousness and/or aboriginality and the ways in which it has been constructed in international juridico-institutional models in an increased form of politicisation of indigenous life. What has been termed the Indigenous emergence in the age of globalisation (Bengoa 2000) refers to the consolidation of the rise of indigenous activism since the 1970’s as part of broader movements for civil, ecological and ethnic rights. These processes are tied to the rise of what has been labelled “fourth world theory” (Seton 1999) and the “decolonisation of research” (Smith 1999). The politicisation of indigenous life has to do with complex questions of citizenship, autonomy, ethnicity and self-determination, which are addressed here with the hope of providing a useful framework from which to look at indigenous media in general and its more recent emergence in Chile in particular.

In chapter three, I address the global emergence and development of indigenous media from different positions, by outlining three fields of theorisation and practice that I think have created the necessary conditions for the consolidation of indigenous media in a range of diverse cultural contexts. In this sense, this chapter works as a kind of epistemology of indigenous media and provides the academic grounding for the research by developing a critical framework from which to outline the history of the research in anthropological studies of media.

A second field of cultural production is given in the context offered by the increased interest of non-governmental organizations in communications, also since the 1970’s, together with a reshaping of the communication and media industries, and the possibilities offered by what some have referred to as “small media” (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994; Ginsburg 1996) or “low cast” media
(Burnett 1996). I have preferred to use the notion of imperfect media, borrowing from Julio García Espinosa’s film manifesto Towards an Imperfect Cinema (1969) as the argument also draws from film theory and contemporises some of the film manifestos from the New Latin American cinema of the 1960’s. In reframing the concept into the notion of imperfect media, I conceptualise indigenous media as alternative forms of cultural media(tions), actively designed to the formation of counter-public spaces within the spaces where images, stories, and cultural understandings get produced, circulated and consumed. In a similar way as Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi’s (1994) construction of ‘small’ media as a ‘big’ form of political mobilisation and survival, I have attempted to characterize ‘imperfect’ media as the best model for indigenous media.

The basis of the debate turns around the cultural construction of technology as the frame to understand indigenous media. It also contemplates the challenge of indigenous engagement with media within the “visual” debate in anthropology and ethnography of media. To these changes in the audiovisual/media industries we should also add the possibilities of production and consumption offered by new digital information and communication technologies in the last decade as they pertain to the growth of indigenous media worldwide. It has proven useful to critically address the notions of indigenous peoples and their access to new media technologies and networks before dealing with the notion of indigenous media itself. A critical evaluation of relevant literature is useful in order to examine the ways in which indigenous media relates to broader frames of reference (i.e. visual anthropology) and the mechanisms through which visual anthropology could be constructed into the future as an effective practice within the critical studies of communication and media.

With this intention in mind, I reformulate the need for opening discursive spaces for an applied and public visual anthropology existing not only in the entrails of academia, but also in the terrain of media practice. The impact of ethnographic film in fostering the development of shared visual ethnographies or independent indigenous productions is also addressed, given the importance of ethnographic film in the emergence of indigenous media. Finally, the argument is positioned analytically in relation to the broader project of visual anthropology and its different contemporary theorisations such as the anthropology of media (Ginsburg 1996, 1999), the anthropology of visual communication (Ruby 2000), or media anthropology.

This chapter is also important as a benchmark to situate the emergence of indigenous media in Chile in a comparative, cross-cultural and international context. For this reason, the discussion and literature review is accompanied with a series of relevant examples of media practices and issues worldwide. These illustrate and demonstrate the cases being put forward by a series of academics and practitioners, indigenous and non-indigenous. In reference to important ‘models’ of indigenous media production around the world, special consideration has been given to Latin American indigenous media practices as
they share common ground with the Chilean experiences. Nevertheless, examples from experiences in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, which have been constructed here as paradigmatic models of indigenous media practice, have also been included. The aim is not to analyse in depth each of these practices, but to offer lines of debate relevant to the incipient development of indigenous film, video and the Internet in Chile.

Part two comprises chapters four and five and focuses exclusively on the politics of indigenous media representation and production in Chile. It offers and an in-depth examination of the emergence, development and possible future directions of indigenous communications and media in Chile, as well as a close examination of Mapuche media practice, based on fieldwork research and comparative analysis.

Chapter four introduces the historical background and current political, cultural, and legal situation of indigenous peoples in Chile, as a way of emphasising the need to consider the political and cultural conditions in which cultural/media work is being produced, as it is demonstrated in the video. In this sense, this section is meant to provide an introduction to the current political situation by outlining the major conflicts of interest between indigenous groups, the state and private national/transnational enterprises from a cultural/historical perspective. The documentary video provides a window into the conflict by incorporating images of the different uprisings and comments by people involved.

The first section of the chapter is a critical view of the colonisation of the indigenous imaginary and analyses the development of a Chilean national imaginary, and the way in which a stereotypical image of ‘the indigenous’ has been constructed since Colonial times. The section offers a brief outline of the construction of aboriginality in Chile and looks at the indigenous representations in the construction of a national imaginary from photographic accounts since the late 19th century to the Internet of the 21st, and from silent films to telenovelas. Acknowledging the politics of representation in Chile from a cultural-historical perspective will allow the reader to understand the etic construction of indigenous imaginaries, and more importantly, the indigenous responses to these categories through the use of a multiplicity of media and political strategies. This issue is explored further in the video through an interview with visual anthropologist Gastón Carreño who is part of a multidisciplinary team of researchers investigating the use of Mapuche icons in the construction of a national imaginary. The final part of the chapter is a critical review of what has been termed the “Mapuche conflict” in the media and the broader public sphere. The issue is also critically addressed by the interviewees in the video.

Chapter five explores the emergence and current developments of Mapuche media in Chile. In doing so, I offer an understanding of the indigenous emergence in the context of democratisation after 1989, in order to establish the importance of communications and media in the new indigenous agenda. Information and communication media have begun to be taken seriously as key elements in the
production of "indigenous imaginaries", as well as tactics of reversal in the non-indigenous constructions of aboriginality. The idea of performing a genealogy of Mapuche media does not come from the need to define and explain an origin of these practices, but to critically analyse and expose the details and accidents that occur with every beginning. In a philosophical sense, this genealogy of indigenous media in Chile is aimed at “unveiling the silencing, exclusion and violence which are always, the genealogist contends, the condition of possibility of the origin, the origin of the origin so to speak” (Avelar nd:1).

After establishing a critical genealogy, this section of this chapter offers a detailed account of current developments in indigenous media in Chile through a detailed examination of the key actors and networks working in Chile. Its main focus is the development of Mapuche media since the mid-1990’s in a context of cultural and political turmoil. In this chapter I offer a more detailed analysis of current initiatives being carried out by different Mapuche organizations and media practitioners working on radio, video and the Internet. This is also well documented in the video, which takes a closer look at the work of Mapuche video maker Jeannette Paillan.

The chapter ends with an examination of the current Chilean mediasphere and speculates on the cultural futures of indigenous communications in Chile. It provides a model to map the Chilean media environment and show how indigenous communications might be positioned in the short to medium term. It analyses the relationship among different actors in a network formed by government agencies, programs, decision making, policies and funding on the one hand, and the role of training bodies, international cooperation, media networks and the audiovisual industries on the other. Emphasizing the politics of indigenous representation and communications in the Chilean national mediascape, the chapter theorises on the future prospects and possibilities in the digital realm. The chapter looks generally at the incipient media development in other indigenous communities, such as video in Likanantay communities in Calama and community media in Rapa Nui (Easter Island). Finally, I take a closer look at the forthcoming 7th CLACPI Indigenous Film and Video Festival as an example of the problems that need to be resolved when looking at the possibilities for building autonomous indigenous communications in Chile.

The final section consists of the conclusions to the investigation where I set up a series of recommendations for the impending process of building an indigenous media institutionality.

1.3.2 From Land to Screen: a video on the emergence of Mapuche media.

*De la Tierra a la Pantalla* (From Land to Screen) is the documentary video that I have written, produced and filmed as part of this research. In a sense, it was designed as a way of addressing three major questions of visual research: issues of documentation, representation and collaboration. In this section I have described the nature, structure and style of the video component and in the next section I will
explain how it fits as a research strategy within the methodology, particularly in regards to the issues of representation and collaboration mentioned above.

Michael Renov (1993) in his elucidation of a poetics of documentary film has acknowledged four fundamental tendencies in the practice of making (film/video) documents, which he takes into consideration to comprehend the “epistemological, rhetorical and aesthetic terrain within which the documentary enterprise has historically arisen”(35). These four tendencies or discursive functions of documentary are preservation, persuasion, analysis and expressivity. What is interesting about Renov’s proposition in relation to my research is his concern with the notion of poetics as they concern the problematics of power. In this sense, I have acknowledged the fact that not only are the analysis of cultural and aesthetic media practices in Chile embedded in the dynamics of social spaces, but also the fact that we are dealing here with the production of knowledge and discursive forms that are socially and historically determined. Therefore, in considering the formal aspects in the making of this documentary film I have taken into account a visual and sonic design that may be considered historically and ideologically contingent to the reality of indigenous communications in Chile.

In terms of the nature and style of the video component the first aspect considered was the issue of producing a record of the indigenous media ‘scene’. Renov speaks about the revelatory power of the camera to record and preserve reality (1993:25). The reporting and audiovisual documentation of indigenous issues in Chile has focused largely either in a current affairs style reporting of current conflicts and uprising, or in an ethnographic style exposition of traditional cultures, ceremonies and folklore. However, there has been no serious attempt whatsoever to document, record or examine their on-going struggle for the right to democratic and pluralistic communication and information. In this sense, I see the film as an original contribution. I wanted to observe and record the mediated processes of indigenous self-representation as a way of contributing to the overall project of indigenous knowledge production. The style used was expository in the sense that voice-over narration was not used and text was kept to a minimum.

The second aspect considered was the issue of creating awareness. I wanted to be able to generate a visual intervention in Chilean cultural politics by producing a collaborative effort that dissected a decade of Mapuche media production leading up to to CLACPI International Film and Video Festival. As will be discussed in more detail in chapter four, indigenous self-representation in Chile has been characterised by its impossibility and historical invisibility. I wanted to produce a document that could promote the Mapuche struggle in terms of communication rights and persuade the audience to move to a certain comprehension of the issue (Renov 1993). In this sense, by placing these media activists and their struggle in a video document, I was looking for a way of empowering their cause, making it
important and demanding a documentary on it in order to visualise this ‘hidden reality’ which has not been the interest of mainstream media, and for the same case, of mainstream cultural research.

The third aspect taken into account was the issue of combining traditional written cultural analysis with a critical use of documentary. Furthermore, the video production was also conceived as a contribution to the debate around the possibility of developing a theory and practice of image production that may cross between anthropology, film and communication studies (Ruby 2000: 6). I didn’t want to produce a program that was non-critical or non-political, or that would focus on a celebratory worldwide understanding of indigenous politics. In the first instance, De la Tierra a la Pantalla is a hybrid social documentary that critically analyses and interrogates the contingencies of indigenous media production and participation in the Chilean media. It was conceived as a tactic of visual intervention into the Chilean communications environment through a series of ‘actors’ who present their views on the themes discussed. In a time when Chile has recently signed free trade agreements with the European Union and the United States, the internal indigenous demands remain largely unresolved and have been pretty much put aside by three consecutive democratic governments, particularly during the Frei government (1994-2000). Despite various efforts, the indigenous issue has clearly been the weak point of the successive ‘transitional governments’, which have for the most part aligned with national and transnational corporate interests to the detriment of indigenous interests. It is a fact that for many in Chile the indigenous demands pose a serious danger to national security and social stability. One of the important aspects of this documentary is that it is timely in addressing an issue that has been taken for granted in Chile: the right of indigenous peoples to have access and control of their images, sounds, stories and the ways in which they want to construct and share the information concerning their realities. This is what I wanted to analyse and interrogate through the film.

The film is structured into three broad parts: in the first, the characters introduce how they see the Mapuche conflict, how it may be understood from a Mapuche perspective and how it has been criminalized in the media. The narrative is structured around a series of interviews with several Mapuche activists. The second part looks at the role of communication and information technologies in the Mapuche political agenda. The characters define what indigenous media is in the context of Mapuche cultural activism. Finally, the last part is a close and more intimate look at the work of video maker and journalist Jeannette Paillan and the way she conceives and puts indigenous media into practice. In this sense, the film brings together different techniques and narratives, blurring the genres of conventional documentary, experimental video art and ethnographic film, all of which raise a possible fourth dimension to be considered; the issue of appropriation.

The expressive aspect of this documentary was important, as I wanted to give attention to aesthetic considerations. In many cases, the footage is rough and jagged due to the fact that I was working alone,
and with several limitations in terms of time, lighting and many times without being able to choose appropriate locations. In a sense, it is a ‘rough’ film, where I often had to work with situations beyond my control. Nevertheless, I wanted to counter the fact that aesthetic considerations have on many occasions been historically undervalued in documentary film practice.

A combination of footage was used to create a multi-dimensional visual ambient. The document is largely based on three types of footage: first, live action footage, including interviews, that I shot in the winters of 2002 and 2003; secondly, the use of pre-existing film clips produced by Mapuche media practitioners and activists, which also includes footage shot by Jeannette Paillan at land seizures and indigenous protests. Photographic stills from Mapuche websites have also been used, with prior consultation to the respective webmasters. These stills are primarily the banners and logos of the Mapuche websites and some others coming out of reports published in several Mapuche websites. The third type of footage corresponds to the remix and sampling of the previous two, and is explained in more detail in the following section.

As I have just mentioned, from the outset - in January 2002 - the production was aimed at a particular audience: the public participating in the CLACPI Festival recently held in Santiago de Chile in June 2004. The audiences in this event were primarily indigenous and non-indigenous media makers, activists, policy makers and visual anthropologists.

Other audiences were also considered: academic circuits and international film festivals. In this respect, and taking into account the nature of new media artefacts, I chose to produce the film in Spanish with English subtitles. I do not regard the film as an ethnographic one in the strict sense of the genre. There is no scientific (anthropological) description of the Mapuche culture conducted within a pre-established theoretical framework. This is not to say that the video program does not have anthropological value, as there was indeed prior involvement with the subjects involved. In this regard, the film isn't merely a one-off involvement in another culture, so it is not a conventional documentary either, where a crew of outsiders working under the industrial constraints and conventions of documentary filmmaking come to a community, take the pictures and leave. The narrative style and audiovisual treatment is also neither strictly ethnographic nor exactly a conventional documentary as it also takes some elements from video art aesthetics. At the end, I was more interesting in “doing visual ethnography” (Pink 2001) whereby I could stress the importance of using video for ethnographic research. The purpose analysis being not the

8 Interviews are a key element in the telling of the story as a way of giving confronting testimonies and controversial opinions on the addressed topics. The main characters interviewed narrate the story and evoke their subjectivity as a window to their realities. In the case where text has been included, it has been done in order to communicate specific background information to international audiences.

28 An inspirational reference in this regard has been the Swedish experimental documentary Lucky People Center International, (Erik Pauser and Johan Soderberg, 1997). Soderberg and Pauser’s use of visual sampling, remix and quotations as a powerful narrative strategy has been quite influential for my video, as I will discuss now.
translation of 'visual evidence' into verbal knowledge, but the exploration of the relationships between visual and other knowledge (Pink 2001:96). I do want to stress though that the film required certain cultural knowledge and the process of making it falls closer to what Pink (2001) calls “visual ethnography” and Ginsburg, “media ethnography”. The process of being part of the poetics, or the building of Mapuche media is what stands out for me. The final product illustrates some experiences of this edifice in process, yet my involvement in the process has been unforgettable.

1.3.2.1. Visual Sampling and Remix: new media and collaborative media practice.

Firstly, the video component has been conceived as a methodological strategy in order to gain access to the subject matter. Since indigenous media production is the core theme of the investigation, the production of a video documentary was the best strategy for approaching the participants and informants in the fieldwork and proposing a more collaborative approach to traditional research. As it was demonstrated during the fieldwork stages, it was much more positive to get work and get the people involved when they were told they could take part in producing a documentary about their work, rather than a research being imposed on themselves. This was devised as a strategy to overcome the bad connotations that the word research often carries in certain contexts, particularly in regards to the Mapuche people. As Linda Tuhiwai-Smith clearly expresses, when the word research is mentioned in many indigenous contexts “it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research” (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999:1). Some of the people included in the documentary were just one-off interviews, yet, the follow up of events and activities was helpful in establishing mutual trust and rapport.

Secondly, since one of the primordial aims of this investigation is to share the outcomes to the widest audience possible, the documentary video has been conceived as a practical outcome that may transcend the problem of who really reads a PhD thesis outside of related academic circles. Particularly as an instrument for visualization of the themes explored in the written exegesis, the visual document provides a visualisation of the issues by adding the critical commentary and integration of divergent views on the topic. The mass-mediation power of a video documentary is much stronger than that of written research, in the sense that the documentary allows for the circulation of collaborative research to a wider audience through public screenings and international film and video festivals. In this regard, the video was invited to open the 7th American Festival of Indigenous Film and Video (CLACPI) in June 2004. The video was chosen as a way of showing, at least in part, the context of indigenous media production in Chile. In this sense the documentary may also be regarded as an independent product to the written exegesis and will probably circulate in broader contexts of reception.
Despite being designed from the outset as methodological strategy, and as an independent product of mass circulation, for me the video component of this thesis acquires real value as a form of collaboration in media practice. Within the film, I see myself as a kind of theme editor, bringing a series of images and discourses together into a single piece of work. It is a way of addressing the issue of who is really the author of the piece and the death of objectivity in terms of where the story is being told from. The answer is that there is no single author, but a surprising combination of several views. Although I retain control and authorship of the piece, I do so through the mixing of my material with previously recorded material in order to generate visual interventions. In this sense the video documentary serves the purpose of narrative inquiry; that is, the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling. In this regard the video production provides a narrative of the experience through the montage of images, words and sounds.

The inspiration for this approach is not entirely new, as it has been applied in the music industry in the last decade or so, particularly in the electronic music scene. My approach is also framed by aspects of Lev Manovich’s work, particularly his argument that new media culture brings with it a number of new models of authorship which all involve different forms of collaboration. What is interesting about Manovich’s proposed understanding of the language of new media and its implications in a larger context of contemporary cultural economies is that “new media industries and cultures systematically pioneer new types of authorship, new relationships between producers and consumers, and new distribution models, thus acting as the avant-garde of the culture industry” (Manovich 1999).

For the purpose of this project, I have identified several levels of collaboration that were carried out throughout the production of the documentary video. In the tradition of Jean Rouch’s anthropologie partagée (Barbash and Taylor 1997, Ginsburg [1996] 2000) collaboration between filmmaker and the participants of the film has a long history, going all the way back to Robert Flaherty’s films in the 1920’s. An in-depth review of this tradition lies outside the scope of this thesis, though it is important to note the impact of MacDougalls’ call in the mid-1970’s for moving beyond observational cinema and developing what he termed participatory cinema. The films made by the MacDougall’s in the 1970’s and 1980’s were known for their service to the communities’ interests, yet the filmmakers in the end always maintained control of the content and style. In this sense, the video project may be categorised in the same way, as I have had the last word in terms of organising the content and formal/aesthetic material. The video has been made in accordance with the interests of the participants, yet the ultimate decision has remained with the producer. Since an ideal situation of real collaboration is difficult to achieve - both at the pragmatic and theoretical levels - a key point of this project was to overcome the

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10 For a critical summary see I. Barbash and L. Taylor’s Cross Cultural Filmmaking, University of California Press, 1997 pp. 74-89, in which they mention the case of the National Film Board of Canada’s Challenge for Change initiative which began in the Fogo Islands in the early 1960’s and throughout that decade.
theoretical hurdle of collaborative media practice. In this sense there are two important differences with the issue of conventional collaboration, as exemplified in the work of the MacDougalls’ both in Australia and India.

The first difference has to do with a collaborative experience that was carried out during a field trip to the Alto Bio Bio region in the winter of 2002. On that occasion, I was asked by Mapuche videomaker and journalist Jeannette Paillán to work as a cameraperson in her latest research project on the controversial relocation of several Pehuenche families to a new site, due to the construction of the contentious Ralco hydroelectric dam in their ancestral territories. During those two weeks, we were both working together for both our projects. I was doing camera for her, and she was doing field production for me, thus making use of her rapport within the Pehuenche community at El Huachi, which in turn allowed me to shoot inside the communities. It was in this context that I shot one of the four video-interviews with her.

On a second level, a different form of authorship associated in this case with new media marks a difference in terms of teamwork. Firstly, it includes collaboration over a network either in real time or not, which is a common pattern of social communication in the context of new information and communication technologies. I was able to share aspects of the film by sending small Quicktime files from Australia to Chile for the purpose of feedback and participation. Consequently, the video documentary was designed as a form of sampling some of Jeannette’s already produced work. By remixing clips from her works, and combining this with my own footage of activities and interviews, I was able to propose an alternative way of collaboration. As I have said, this practice has been popular in electronic music. Manovich (1999, 2002) has articulated a number of principles of new media, which he conceives as tendencies explained by the nature of (digital) representation in new media. Since this research is concerned with the way indigenous cultural (media) products are produced, used, valued and received within a context of cultural objectification for political action it seemed that the logic of variability was relevant to discuss collaboration in relation to the issue of appropriation. For Manovich the principle of variability implies that a new media cultural object may exist in potentially infinite different states. Basing his argument on examples like the programming of commercial Web sites to customize Web pages for every user, or the more common case of DJ’s that remix already existing recordings, Manovich speculates into the possibilities that the principle of variability may also structure a digital film into multiple versions.

11 Manovich distinguishes five basic principles or tendencies in new media; numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability and transcoding. In a sense, these principles overlap and contain each other; they are interdependent. For the purpose of this project, I have focused on his fourth principle, variability.
For the purpose of constructing a film that could be combined with the themes explored in the written exegesis, I assumed that every element of the footage – archival footage, still images, live action, narration, interviews, music - was a discrete entity able to be manipulated. It is necessary to state at this stage that I actually shot the bulk of the footage used in the version that accompanies this work. Now, it is also important to state that some of the images included were shot by others and are part of these other’s completed works.

The intention has been to have ‘visual quotes’ to these other works and thus use the concepts of remix and sampling\textsuperscript{12}. As a metaphor, remixing suggests a “systematic re-working of a source” (Manovich 1999), which I understand as being different to appropriation of a source. My intention has been to rework some of the cultural signs used in the videos of Jeannette Paillan – mainly in regards to images of social unrest - rather than attempt to modify these signs. Accordingly, these images are inserted in the narrative of my video as kind of ‘visual quotes’ that are placed in a similar context of signification; that of indigenous mobilisation and the need to inform and ‘show’ these actions through views that may offer an alternative to the hegemonic construction of these events in mainstream media or other work by non-indigenous media makers. This discussion can be related to Loretta Todd’s definition of appropriation in relation to cultural autonomy\textsuperscript{13}. Similarly to Todd’s view, my intention is not to speak for someone else or recruit the images of others as my own, or pretend that I am an expert on somebody else’s experience. It is about finding other forms of collaboration across ruptures in space and ethnic background and working towards a common goal: the building of indigenous communications in Chile. In relation to Todd’s construction of appropriation, Hart Cohen distinguishes between appropriation and expropriation, which he defines as “the unauthorized removal of objects or artefacts from their usual context of use and collective ownership” (Cohen 2002: 322). Jeannette Paillan handed me ten hours of footage on MiniDV for my perusal. On one occasion, she urged me to use some of her footage to make given points in my video as there was clearly a “fair use” (Weil 2002) of the images (Jeannette Paillan personal communication, Telephone conversation Sydney-Santiago, January 2004). For this reason, I have not spoken for, told, defined or described these images as my own (Todd 1990: 24) and I have worked according to common criteria for informed consent\textsuperscript{14}.

1.3.3. Sources and data collection

Given the nature of this investigation, a qualitative approach has been preferred, especially as the aim of the thesis is more to interpret and critically analyse a particular situation rather than the finding of

\textsuperscript{12} Because there is no concept to theorise this practice in videomaking I have borrowed these concepts from the music scene.  
\textsuperscript{13} Loretta Todd discusses this in her 1991 article “Notes on Appropriation”, published in Parallelogramme, Vol.16 No.1.  
\textsuperscript{14} For Anderson and Benson (1988) the criteria for informed consent are: conditions free of coercion and deception; full knowledge of procedures and anticipated effects; and individual competence to consent (Cohen 2002: 324). In the case of my video, all of these were compiled.
universal explanations. Below, I have outlined the basic sources of information and data collection used in this research, both at the quantitative and qualitative levels. The research was conducted over a period of four years and was divided into four consecutive stages. In general terms, the *modus operandi* was performed in the following way.

It was essential at the beginning of this project to determine what role I was going to play in order to ensure facilitation of the study and acceptance by indigenous media practitioners in Chile. I didn’t want to design the whole project as a neutral observer looking at things from Australia. This was the reason behind the three field trips, in an attempt to become part of the process of building indigenous communications in Chile, by being able to share certain goals and cultural inscriptions, yet at the same time residing outside the country.

**a. Quantitative Sources:** The following sources were consulted as background for collection of statistical data.

+ **Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (National Institute of Statistics) Chile (INE):** statistical information was retrieved on total indigenous population, rural/urban population percentages, levels of poverty compared to the rest of the population, levels of literacy, access to education and health, media and communications.
+ **Consejo Nacional de Televisión (CNTV) (National Television Council):** statistical information was retrieved on media ownership, audience and consumption studies, programming, cultural participation in the media industries and lack of indigenous representation.
+ **Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) (Latin American Council for Social Sciences):** specific statistical information on television news coverage of ‘Mapuche conflict’.
+ **Fundación Futuro (Futuro Foundation):** population survey carried out in regards to public perception of ‘Mapuche conflict’.
+ **Consejo Latinoamericano de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas (CLACPI):** details and information on indigenous media production in Latin America.

**Qualitative sources**

A combination of qualitative methods was employed, mainly during fieldwork totalling nine months over a period of four years. Information was gathered through field notes, informal and structured interviews, short-term observation, review of visual material for elicitation purposes, and participant-observation in several activities. A personal diary was kept during the three field trips to Chile, especially for notes or information arising from the field, which was useful for the annotation of personal comments and opinions not found in published or written sources. Informal email
communication to discuss specific issues was carried out on a permanent basis between August 2002 and February 2004.

b.1. Groundwork

Bibliographic and Archival sources: General secondary sources on indigenous media topics, visual anthropology, critical media studies, cultural and communications studies were found in the following libraries and archives:

Library of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Chile, Santiago.
Library of the Catholic University of Santiago (Campus San Joaquin).
Library of Universidad ARCIS, Santiago.
National Library of Chile, Santiago.
Museo Regional de la Araucania in Temuco.
Museo Mapuche de Cañete.
Universidad de La Frontera, Temuco.
Laboratorio de Antropologia Visual, Universidad Catolica de Temuco.
Instituto de Estudios Indigenas, Temuco.
Library and Audio-visual Documentation Centre of the Chilean Museum of Precolumbian Art, Santiago.
University of Western Sydney, Ward Library.
University of Sydney Fischer Research Library.
Australian National University, Canberra.
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies (AIATSIS), Canberra.
University of Technology, Sydney.

Visual sources: The use of visual sources included the examination of indigenous films, ethnographic films, documentaries and art videos as well as the production of websites and CD-Roms. Particular emphasis was placed on looking at material being produced in Australia and New Zealand as well as material coming from Mexico, Bolivia and Brazil. This material from different countries was analysed in order to understand processes of indigenous documentation and representation in films of cultural survival. Moreover, several films and videos were used for elicitation purposes in coordinated meetings with indigenous media practitioners in Chile to share and exchange ideas around these indigenous “foreign” products. Besides the study of general indigenous resources, prominence was given to the analysis of pre-existing visual representations in print, video and new media work being produced by Mapuche communicators, journalists and media activists.
b.2. Fieldwork

**Conversations and Interviews:** Informal conversations and semi-structured exchanges were held with several indigenous persons as well as academics and media practitioners in both Australia and Chile (Santiago and Temuco). Some of the most prominent were;

Margarita Alvarado (June 2003), Professor of Aesthetics at the Catholic University of Santiago, distinguished scholar on Mapuche aesthetics. Convenor of the symposium on visual anthropology at the 51st Congress of Americanists recently held in Santiago.

Sara Imilmaqui (Santiago, June 2002), Huilliche activist of international recognition in indigenous rights, living at the time in Santa Barbara, Chile and working in support of the Pehuenche struggle against the Ralco Dam in southern Chile.

Rodrigo Araya (Santiago, January 2001), anthropologist from the University of Chile, founder of Ekhos Communications agency and the development of indigenous and popular telecentres.

Alexandra Halkin, coordinator Chiapas Media Project (Sydney, September 2003 and March 2004)

Semi-structured interviews (all recorded on video tape) were conducted with the following people:

Jeannette Paillán (Santiago and El Huachi, June 2002 and June 2003), Mapuche journalist and video activist, director of Lulul Mawidha Mapuche research centre, CLACPI representative in Chile and coordinator of the VII American Festival of Indigenous Film and Video. She has produced 5 five documentaries on the Mapuche situation from 1994 to 2003, most of which have been shown internationally.

Elias Paillán (Santiago, June 2002 and June 2003), Mapuche journalist and radio producer director of Juvken Mapu Mapuche documentation centre and host of Wixage Anai weekly radio program on Radio Tierra, Santiago.

Alfredo Seguel (Temuco, June 2002), Mapuche communications specialist, founder of Mapuexpress.Net online news and discussion service from Temuco, Chile and member of Konapwsman, association of young Mapuche professionals from Temuco.

Ruben Sanchez (Temuco, June 2002), Mapuche researcher at the Instituto de Estudios Indigenas of the University of La Frontera in Temuco and founder of Net Mapu online documentation centre.
Sofia Painequeo (Santiago, June 2002), Mapuche folklorist and cultural educator. Director of Aflaiai Mapuche cultural Center and music organization. Director of Chemu am Mapuche pigeñ video in 2001.

Ignacio Aliaga (Santiago, June 2003), Director of Audiovisual Programs at the Ministry of Education, Santiago.

Claudio Mercado (Santiago, June 2002), visual anthropologist and researcher at the Museum of Precolombian Art in Santiago. Director of several videos and coordinator of several indigenous media workshops and related initiatives.

Esteban Villarroel (Temuco, June 2002), visual anthropologist at the Catholic University of Temuco and producer of video By-Pass Temuko.


**Participant-Observation:** The observation consisted of attending indigenous radio programs, being present at various video shootings, and following the work on online websites. I observed several radio broadcasts of Wixage Anai on Radio Tierra in Santiago and I was interviewed by Elias Paillán for the program on July 10, 2003 to discuss my project. Participant observation was carried out during a field trip to the Alto Bio Bio region where I was asked by Mapuche filmmaker and journalist Jeannette Paillán to work as a cameraperson in her latest research project on the recent controversial relocation of several Pehuenche communities due to the construction of the contentious Ralco hydroelectric dam. Participation has been also been possible by being invited by the Lulul Mawidha Mapuche Research Centre to be a consultant to the organising committee for the 7th American Festival of Indigenous Film and Video in 2004, which was extremely useful in order to examine and understand the cultural politics of indigenous media practice in Chile. Observation was also carried out in a series of community meetings and conferences. In particular, there was a very informative gathering in which I was invited to attend as an observer. This was a special event carried out in a remote indigenous rural community, some 800 kilometres south of Santiago. The event was organised by Lafkenche indigenous community organizations, who had invited a United Nations observer (Rodolfo Stavenhagen) to substantiate accusations of Human Right abuses by the Chilean government. Nearly 1000 indigenous and non-indigenous leaders and participants attended this event.

**Ethnographic sources:** In order to understand the interrelation among several indigenous media actors and networks a general ethnographic approach was adopted. More than an ethnographic research in the
sense of in-depth involvement with a community, the inquiry was framed in an ethnographic understanding through short-term ethnographic fieldwork being conducted during the three field trips to Chile, totalling 6 months. The organizations approached for study were:

Jvfken Mapu, Santiago.
Lulul Mawidha, Santiago.
Foiliche Aflaiai, Santiago.
Konapewman, Temuco.
Pewenche indigenous community in El Huachi, VIII Region, Chile.

As an integral part of the methods used, several Mapuche online websites were reviewed regularly - once a fortnight between June 2001 and December 2003 -. The main Mapuche online resources monitored were:

Ñuke Mapu, produced at the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Uppsala, Sweden.
Mapuche International Link, produced from Bristol, U.K.
Mapuche Stichting Folil, produced from Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Rehue Foundation, also from The Netherlands.
Kolectivo Lientur, produced in Temuco, Chile.
Mapuexpress Net, produced in Temuco, Chile.
MapuNet, produced in Temuco, Chile.

Ethical issues were considered throughout the inquiry due to the nature of qualitative observational and participant research, which involved permanent interaction with people and organizations. Participants were at all times in full knowledge of what the project involved and what the outcomes were going to be. As was agreed at the outset, Mini DV and DVD master tapes of the video have been sent to people involved in it for their own perusal. At all times, it was made clear that the investigation, and in particular the video production were not in any way intended for harming or putting any individual or organization at risk, especially considering the delicate political situation in Chile. The communication with participants stressed that the project had a cultural advocacy purpose to contribute to the cultural building of indigenous communications in Chile and that the data would be presented in an objective way. The video will be screened as part of the forthcoming CLACPI Festival in Santiago in June 2004.

Having outlined the main research problem and methodology of the investigation, I will now move on to theorize the notion of indigenous media in order to provide a framework of analysis to examine its recent emergence in Chile.
CHAPTER 2
THE POLITICIZATION OF INDIGENOUS LIFE

Indigenous Emergence and the rise of the ‘Fourth World’

In this section I analyse the way in which the notion of indigenous peoples has been ideologically constructed and reproduced as a form of domination in a context of increased ‘politicisation of indigenous life’. This increased politicisation of indigenous issues may be understood in two ways. On the one hand lies the recognition of an intellectual and discursive field of theorisation on identity politics and indigenous matters, relating to an increased interest in what has been referred to as ‘Fourth World theory’ (Griggs 1992, Seton 1999). On a different level, this conceptualisation also refers to the fact that despite indigenous identities becoming increasingly managed and organised through state policies over the past two decades, politicisation also draws on the strategic responses by indigenous cultural formations to the nature of sovereign power in the states in which they have been in most cases forcefully inserted. In this regard, this politicisation occurs in a broader context of the globalisation of social life (Giddens 1993).

Since the early 1970’s, there has been outstanding growth in the presence of indigenous peoples at an international level. It is the case that indigenous peoples had been, until recent years, physically absent from decision-making forums, and made invisible during centuries of external and internal colonialism. This fresh visibility of indigenous peoples in global affairs marks a new realm for both local indigenous and national politics, at the local, regional, national and transnational levels. It supposes a new reality that traverses eco-politics, access to information, international law, the politics and economics of health, traditional systems of knowledge, and control over representation in the media.

The notion of ‘Indigenous Peoples’

The notion of indigenous peoples has not only received attention, but has also become a controversial conceptualisation in what has become a real struggle to describe what should or shouldn’t be included within this concept. In this chapter, I support claims that the notions of indigenousness and aboriginality are ideological and colonialist constructions of modern Western scholarship. These may be useful

1 In reference to Giorgio Agamben’s recent work on political philosophy and the politicization of what he terms ‘bare life’ as one of the primary conditions of modernity.
2 The concepts of Indígena and Indio in Spanish have received considerable attention among Latin American scholars. For a recent comprehensive review and commentary on this work see José Bengoa, *La Emergencia Indígena en América Latina*, Fondo de Cultura Economic, Santiago, 2000.
categories to identify certain ethnic groups for the purpose of study, but fall short when accounting for cultural diversity and social change. In revisiting the social constructions of these terms, I argue that the struggle for the power of interpretation demonstrates how memory and identity cannot exist outside their context of representation. These new scenarios of interpretative power locate indigenous narratives of cultural survival in a pendulum where local voices spread globally at the same time that global cultural flows affect experiences at the local level.

The indigenous social movements that have emerged or re-surfaced in the last 30 years have clearly become sites of resistance, and pose new challenges for contemporary media and cultural theorists attempting to make sense of effective modes of investigation that could account for both the processes of indigenous integration on a global scale and the processes of self-identification at a local level. The rise of indigenous movements has been understood as part of broader processes of cultural identification in the context of the disintegration of those cohesive and homogenising forces grounded in the nation-state.

The categories used to identify the indigenous populations of the world have become increasingly problematic. By United Nations estimates there are around 350 million people in the world that are regarded, and in most cases regard themselves, as being ‘indigenous’ (Schaedel and Delgado 1998; UNESCO 2002; CELADE 2001). These statistical estimates subsume an incommensurable array of cultures and knowledge as vast as an ‘infinitude of windows open to the world’⁴. Consequently, the first dilemma arising from this general categorisation is that this notion is not constructed within a perception of cultural knowledge based on oral traditions and exchanges, but based on information provided by the states in which these nations exist, or on economic rationalist perspectives of such transnational organizations as the World Bank. It is the case that indigenous knowledge on space, time and identity does not always match the Western conceptions of territoriality, identity and cultural boundaries. As happens with other concepts, it has thus far proved impossible to arrive at a commonly accepted legal definition of “indigenousness” or “aboriginality” that pays justice to the way different people see themselves in relation to other groups and the dominant societies in which the live. Perhaps the most critical objection to the use of this term has to do with the implicit collectivisation under one concept of a diversity of populations whose main similarity is having experienced colonialism and cultural imperialism (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999:6). Moreover, as different institutions adopt different terminologies the notions become interchangeable in academic and legal discourses.

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⁴ The quote is from Aylton Krenak, a renowned indigenous leader in Brazil, and one of the directors of the Uniao de Nações Indigenas of Brazil and was cited from a strategic report conducted by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI). www.aeci.es
The term ‘Native Peoples’, for example, refers mostly to the non-European origins of an individual or group, and is often used in the U.S. (e.g. Native North Americans). The term 'First Nations' has been used to recall the definition employed in the 19th century colonial treaties between first or original inhabitants and subsequent waves of settlers (as in Canada for example). This notion carries a strong connotation in the concept of nation, in contrast to people. The term ‘autochthonous’, which actually comes from early 20th century geological classifications of the qualities of soil, has been used to refer to ‘autochthonous peoples’ as those populations living in the same territory since immemorial times, or so considered. It is a term moderately in use in France – autochtone - to refer to an indigenous person or population.

Broadly speaking, Anglo-American literature, as well as most cases in Latin America, has given preference to the term ‘Indigenous’. While in English this term carries strong connotations of authenticity and belonging, in Latin America it carries profound implications. In Mexico the word, Indio (Spanish for Indian) has been commonly used whereas in other countries (i.e. Chile) it is considered a strong word with certain offensive connotations. In other cases as is common in Australia or Argentina for example, the term ‘Aboriginal’ has been the preferred one, which refers more to the colonial conditions of ‘Black Australia’. In the general literature in Spanish, two other notions have become increasingly popular in the 1990’s: pueblos originarios (originary peoples) and naciones originarias (originary nations). This is the case in Chile where in certain circles the term indígena has given way to the politically correct term of pueblos originarios, which is a concept that in international law has strong connotations to the notion of self-determination (Villoro 1999).

Amid all these terms, that are in most cases used indistinctively, the term indigenous peoples is perhaps the one that has flourished more successfully in the international context as a term that identifies the right of peoples to self-determination within a context of cultural and linguistic diversity.

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5 Operationalisation of the term ‘indigenous people’ has been a difficult task in Latin America for the past two centuries. A report published in 1992 by the United Nation’s Latin American Demographic Center (CELADE) discusses the various approaches used to define indigenous peoples, along with their strengths and weaknesses. The most commonly used approaches today are to identify indigenous people by their language spoken, self-perception, and geographic concentration.

6 It is important to mention that in Spanish the word pueblo has more profound ideological connotations and does not translate literally as people, which in Spanish translates as gente. It has increasingly become a preferred reading by indigenous sectors which nevertheless maintains the status quo in most situations.

7 Despite certain degree of acceptance in different sectors, particularly from indigenous organizations, it is important to note that because of the term’s association with the more problematic concept of self-determination, there has been strong rejection in other sectors of Chilean society. Rolf Foerster (2003) notes that it is precisely because of this nexus that the Chilean Congress rejected the indigenous peoples proposal for ethnic recognition. The question of ethnic citizenship (basically referring to the possibility of being Mapuche and not Chilean) received an important set-back when right wing senator Alberto Espina stated that his party would not support the expression pueblos originarios (first nations) as it appears intimately related to issues of sovereignty and self-determination and could be the basis for future attempts of separatism by Mapuche nationalists.
It is clear that the term is being permanently contested at different levels of local, regional and transnational sites of discussion. Despite this, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) suggests,

“the term has enabled the collective voices of colonized people to be expressed strategically in the international arena. It has also been an umbrella enabling communities and peoples to come together, transcending their own colonized contexts and experiences, in order to learn, share, plan, organize and struggle collectively for self-determination on the global and local stages” (Smith 1999:7).

The emergence of the term indigenous peoples, mainly coming out in the context of indigenous activism in North America in the 1970’s, coincides with the first meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in 1977, sponsored by the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Since then, the Group has met regularly once a year in Geneva, Switzerland. As part of the annual meetings, Indigenous participants from all over the world have been delineating an inclusive self-definition from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples’ experience with colonialism.

One of the first systematic attempts to arrive at a definition of Indigenous Peoples, which marks yet another chapter of anthropological interventions in the topic, was commissioned to anthropologist Julian Burger by the United Nations in 1987. Burger based his work from earlier works by Jose Martinez Cobo in the late 1970’s, also conducted under the auspices of the UN. Martinez Cobo’s all-encompassing definition (1980) considers as indigenous, those communities, populations and nations that, living on a territory in a historical continuum with those societies existing before European colonization, consider themselves as distinct from other sectors of society, and insist in preserving, developing and transmitting their ethnic identity and rights to territory to future generations in accordance with their own ancestral cultural patterns, social institutions and juridical systems. Burger was able to compile the book Report from the Frontier: The State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, which remains a reference text for scholars around the world and is still being used at the UN to define the indigenous peoples of the world. A few years later, in 1990, Burger went on to publish another book, The Gaia Atlas of First Peoples. Although the definition has achieved certain consensus among indigenous peoples and acknowledges the cultural diversity of indigenous groups, it remains quite controversial and has been subjected to strong criticism.

Efforts to establish a useful typology of indigenous peoples continue. From a geopolitical perspective, there is consensus in regards to what the WGIP refers to as ‘pre-existence’, which assumes that indigenous peoples are the descendants of the original inhabitants of a given territory that has been
overcome by conquest. However, the situation of people living today in Africa or Asia for example, who are the descendants of the original inhabitants of a given territory, may be different from the processes of conquest of people living in the Americas or the Pacific. What I am suggesting here is that ‘pre-existence’ is not a fixed category that explains the history of every indigenous nation of the world. On the contrary, the notion of cultural difference needs to be addressed as a critical point of debate when trying to define what is included and excluded in the idea of indigenous people, even among indigenous groups themselves. Indigenous peoples are not only those descendants from inhabitants that were there in a given space before the Europeans, but more importantly those that clearly distinguish (differentiate) themselves in a socio-cultural context from the surrounding population, and who moreover subjectively consider themselves to be indigenous, and are accepted by the group as such. Lorenzo Nesti (1999) for example, positions these definitions in the anthropological and sociological features contained in the term ‘indigenous’, in relation to the way in which indigenous peoples have been defined in international law.

International law, Nesti claims, defines as indigenous those descendants from human groups that exist within a national territory from Pre-Columbian times and who maintain their own cultural and ethnic manifestations based on the criterion of self-accreditation as an indigenous person. The problem of self-accreditation is important particularly as questions of sovereign power of states over indigenous populations have to do with the inability of international law to bend the will of the sovereign to recognize certain others as members.

The notion of indigenous peoples is intimately related to an even more problematic concept, that of indigenous ‘wisdom’ and that of ‘traditional’ systems of knowledge. In historical terms, the knowledge and identity of indigenous populations have been effectively politicised, appropriated and misrepresented by different actors and under varying circumstances. In her blunt and candid account of indigenous knowledge in the context of the decolonization of research, Maori researcher Linda Tuhiiwai Smith has eloquently exposed the cultural formations of Western research that explain the colonization of indigenous knowledges by establishing a positional superiority of Western knowledge. In this sense, this politicisation of indigenous knowledge may be understood in two ways. The first one is in reference to Giorgio Agamben’s constructions of the logic and historical roots of sovereign power (Agamben 1998). Agamben has shown that the sovereignty of the modern nation state may be understood as a mechanism through which the sovereign power (state) gives form to the life of the people it embraces.

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8 This idea is taken from Giorgio Agamben’s work in the politicisation of what he calls ‘bare life’. Although it lies out of the scope of this work, Giorgio Agamben’s work on the logic of sovereignty may prove helpful to contextualize the politics of representation of indigenous peoples in national and transnational mediascapes (Appadurai 1990). The novelty of the coming politics, Agamben argues is that it will no longer be a struggle for the conquest or control of the State, but a struggle between the State and the non-State (humanity), “an insurmountable disjunction between whatever singularity and the State organization” (Agamben 1998).
not only of its included political citizens but of its excluded stateless inhabitants. Agamben does not refer specifically to indigenous peoples in his articulation of exclusion. He maintains that the notion of bare life of the *homo sacer*, is a life that is expendable, politically unqualified, not worthy of being lived. If we accept for a moment that *indigenous life* can be associated to natural or bare life (Zoë) -as opposed to political life (Bios) in Agamben’s terms, we may probably be able to support from a political and philosophical standpoint the fact that indigenous peoples have been included in the juridical order of the States where they are inserted solely on the basis of their civil exclusion.

Yet, indigenous knowledge may be also understood from the opposite side of things, that is, as a signifier of the politicization of indigenous peoples' practical knowledge. Seen from this instrumentalist point of view, knowledge is an appreciated political device used by indigenous peoples to get their worldview, perspectives and aspirations heard in political fora.

**The Rise of Fourth World Theory**

While economic analyses are important, it must be noted that the political interests of indigenous nations cannot be reduced to purely economic considerations that disregard their struggle for cultural autonomy. Starting from a "Fourth World perspective" (Ryser 1996: 8) allows a more all-encompassing analysis than pure economic theorising, which is mostly limited by a core-periphery structural analysis of the capitalist world system. In my view, one of the most comprehensive analysis of Fourth World theory is Kathy Seton’s analysis of indigenous social movements as sites of power in the era of globalization (Seton 1999). In this critical and erudite work, Seton explores the challenges that the rise of Fourth World theory and indigenous politics pose to contemporary political economic analyses. The increasing emphasis on knowledge and global environmental concerns has made claims on the possession of such knowledge a valuable political instrument - claims that have been widely accepted and stimulated by the fact that it is framed as traditional, environmental and indigenous (Seton 1999). This emphasis on the cultural objectification of indigenous knowledge on or by indigenous peoples is a critical element underlying what has been referred to as the rise of Fourth World theory (Griggs 1992, Seton 1999). The notion of Fourth World Peoples was first introduced in the mid 1970’s (Manuel and Poslums 1974) amid conflictive connotations of economic and social dependence. The term is still popular within certain indigenous peoples “in an attempt to validate their difference in a three-world scheme of things” (Hyndman 1991 in Seton 1999). Fourth World theory was fashioned by a diverse assortment of people, including "activists, human rights lawyers, and academics but principally leaders of resisting [indigenous] nations" (Nietschmann 1994: 225). Through information networking, they share thoughts, knowledge and resistance tactics in meetings and by photocopy, mail, telephone, fax, computer modem, and computer bulletin boards (Nietschmann 1994). For Griggs, the notion of Fourth World refers to nations forcefully incorporated into states which maintain a distinct political culture but are
internationally unrecognised, which make for 5,000 to 6,000 nations representing a third of the world's population, and whose descendants maintain a distinct political culture within the states which claim their territories (Griggs 1992:1).

Despite the fact that the notion of Fourth World has been applied to indigenous peoples in acknowledgment of the limitations of the Three Worlds schema, the notion refers specifically to the product of struggle and opposition by diverse aboriginal peoples fighting back to achieve more acceptable relations within the states that encapsulate them (Seton 1999). Other views are not so optimistic, or do not really consider the notion of Fourth World exclusively for indigenous peoples. In a time where national, regional and local economies depend ultimately on the dynamics of the global economy to which they are connected through networks and markets, as Castells suggests, the information economy reaches out to the whole planet but does not include the whole plane. It excludes the majority in an uneven geography of what Castells conceives as an emergent Fourth World of exclusion, populated largely by women and children.

In an erudite work on indigenous and ethnic minorities’ use of electronic media Donald Browne (1996) constructs a broad and pragmatic conceptualisation of indigenous people and media identifying indigenous peoples as those population groups “presently living in a given area [that] were first on the scene, according to available records” (Browne 1996: 3).

While Browne’s definition coincides with the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples’ notion of chronological and territorial ‘pre-existence’ it is not adequate to understand the situation in certain parts of Africa and Asia for example. In these areas, indigenous peoples are not necessarily those who were there before the Europeans, but more importantly those who clearly distinguish themselves in a socio-cultural context from the surrounding population. Indigenous peoples should not be characterised solely based on an identifiable territory and the evidence of settlement in it, but also by a common culture and language, common spiritual ideas, and a certain economic structure. According to Browne’s treatment of the subject, Basques and Kurds are indigenous peoples of Spain and Iraq respectively. In my opinion, this simplistic construction does not resolve important questions. In Chile for example, half of the indigenous Mapuche population lives in the urban periphery of Santiago, where they have migrated consistently from the rural areas since the 1940’s. The indigenous population that originally occupied the territory where the Spaniards founded Santiago in 1541 was consistently obliterated until their ultimate extinction in the 18th century. For Browne, “those who can establish that

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9 The concept of Fourth World has also been appropriated in other fields of theorisation to refer to geographical difference (the Americas), economic difference (those third world countries with less resources) or, like recent writings in queer theory that have also used the notion of Fourth World with the similar intention of validating sexual difference. For a background on the term Fourth World see Griggs 1992. For a good critical summary of the notion of Third World and Fourth World see Shohat and Stam 1994 pages 25 to 37. See also L.T.Smith 1999, or Escobar 1995.
they have been in the area for the longest time, and continue to live there, would be the indigenous peoples of that area” (Browne 1996:4). This definition is not useful, as it does not consider populations in transit who have been displaced by different social-political reasons, or those communities of people already exterminated, and more importantly, it does not refer to contemporary hybrid and syncretic cultural flows of human groups that consider themselves ‘indigenous’ and different in reference to adjacent societies, or those whose ‘nation’ or community is split into different countries.\(^\text{10}\)

Browne’s work opens relevant questions on the concept of indigenousness and the need to address what may be the differences between indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities. Yet, Browne distinguishes this again by reducing the explanation to settlement and occupation of a discrete portion of land or geographical area. He maintains that “the most readily apparent difference is that indigenous peoples inhabited a particular region centuries or even millennia before someone else did” (Browne 1996: 5).

On a similar line of thought, yet going one step further than Browne in discussing what he calls the media imperative for ethnic minority survival in the age of mass communication, Stephen Harold Riggins (1992) conceives indigenous people (and indigenous media by extension) as one of the three categories that define what he refers to as ‘ethnic minority’ and ‘ethnic minority media’. Riggins seems reluctant to use the category of indigenous media, and divides ethnic minorities into three levels; aboriginal (or traditional indigenous groups), modern indigenous minorities, and immigrant or diasporic minorities (forced or voluntary). Examples of the first would be aboriginal peoples in remote Australia, New Zealand, the Americas, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, Greenland, Finland and certain parts of Africa. Examples of the second would be communities of Kurds in Iraq, Welsh in the U.K or Basques in Spain. Examples of the third would be Iranians in Los Angeles, Latinos in the U.S., Turks in Germany, Greeks in Australia, or Indians in the U.K. or Fiji. This taxonomy is at least dubious. Where should we put urban Mapuche people, who account for almost 75% of the total Mapuche population in Chile. On a similar line, where should we locate Maori communities, as ‘modern indigenous communities’, or alternatively as ‘traditional indigenous groups’?

In my opinion, Riggins’ attempt to categorize ethnic minorities fails to acknowledge well-established theorisation on cultural hybridity (i.e. Garcia Canclini 1989) that shows how the ‘traditional’ and the modern become blurred in a multitemporal existence. On a certain level, it is also a problem in Browne’s account of indigenous electronic media, and it is very problematic in Schaedel and Delgado’s work (1998) since it seems they neglect the existence of urban indigenous people by asserting that indigenous peoples who live and have been raised in major urban centres, “claim their indigenousness commemoratively, for their absolute uprooted condition differs from other traditional indigenous

\(^{10}\) As is the case of the Aymara in Bolivia, Peru and Chile or the Mapuche in Chile and Argentina.
peoples' biocultural sites, settlements, communities, and collectivities that have continuously lived on their territories the negative impact of colonial powers first and the nation-state later” (Ibid).

In their attempt to amend the definition of indigenous people from an anthropological perspective, Schaedel and Delgado claim that “Indigenous People are ordinarily peasants, belong to sedentary cultures that inhabit biocultural sites, and are, in certain cases, seminomadic and rural”. In constructing indigenousness as a binary opposition between traditional or ‘pure’ indigenous peasants and “commemorative urbanised indigenous peoples” (Ibid. 1998), they also fail to recognise multitemporal and hybrid subjectivities\(^\text{11}\). From such a perspective, Aboriginal people in Australia, Inuit in Canada and Pehuenches in Chile would not be considered indigenous nations.

In a different context, the terminology promoted by the United Nations is that of a basic and all-encompassing notion of cultural difference that characterises indigenous peoples by a common culture and language, common spiritual ideas, an identifiable territory and specific economic structure. However, these are also the main features of any ethnic minority, not necessarily considered ‘indigenous’ – sharing of a common language, religion, culture, a relationship to a particular territory, even the subjugation by a dominant culture or majority society.

As I said, the United Nations terminology puts emphasis on ‘cultural difference’ yet the limitation of this concept is that it supposes the construction of difference as relating to marginalisation. If we take the case of Bolivia for example, where over 50% of the country’s population is indigenous, it may be assumed that native nations are different to the rest of the mestizo population or those of African descent, but when we equate that difference with marginality or the notion of minority the concept becomes complicated.

The danger lies in that these constructions become naturalised in a discourse that reproduces the fact that indigenous peoples often are left aside of the decision-making situations in their respective countries where they have little or no representation. Moreover, laws often do not protect them from abuses in human, civil and environmental rights. In addition, indigenous communities are increasingly marginalised by the population surrounding them, causing the concept of ‘indigenous peoples’ to become a political term to refer to those who are not in power in modern nation states and live in the margins of a so-called ‘Fourth World’.

\(^\text{11}\) An important example is that of the Pehuenche communities in the Alto Bio Bio region in southern Chile who have lived for generations in the high mountains where farming is not possible. A large number of families were relocated over a period of ten years (1992-2002) due to the construction of a series of hydro dams. They were given large portions of land in exchange for their ancestral lands where farming has been at least problematic. This issue is explored in more detail in my documentary video that accompanies this exegesis.
In political terms, another problem with the U.N.’s allusion to the ‘non-dominance’ of indigenous groups –within the states in which they are and have been historically embedded- is that it is constructed as a characteristic feature of indigenousness. This point is problematic, as ‘indigenous peoples’ are categorised according to a pre-existing typology based on their socio-economic organization, population demographics, and relation to their natural and built environments.

In this context, the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its convention 107 constructs yet another category by referring to members of ‘tribal’ and ‘semi tribal’ populations in independent countries whose social and economic conditions are at a less advanced state than the stage reached by other sections of the national community. The notion of tribe may be adequate if placed against notions of indigenous self-identification like those use in certain parts of Australia (‘mob’) or in certain areas of the Unites States (‘band’). Yet, it may also have connotations to a pre-colonial way of life that is definitely not applicable to indigenous persons in an urban and cosmopolitan context.

Yet another example, the definition of the World Bank emphasises geographical ‘isolation’ and ‘non-monetised’ economies as defining aspects of indigenous peoples. In these two cases, the emphasis is on the perceived underdevelopment and pre-modern features of these populations. On a similar line, the Asian Development Bank regards as indigenous peoples those with a social or cultural identity distinct from the dominant or mainstream society, which makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the processes of development.

All these conceptualisations are lacking in at least one respect. For example, aspects of traditional cosmology, access to resources, intellectual and information rights, remain yet to be incorporated in the debate, particularly if the argument of "non-dominance" is taken for granted, or at least made natural or neutral. We cannot have neutral definitions of what it means to be indigenous. From an indigenous perspective, the right to self-identification is a fundamental right, which is the basis for a broader recognition that includes culture, language, philosophy and religion.

As shall be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, indigenous peoples are in many cases aware of their original forms of political sovereignty and are actively engaging with this issue, despite fragile relationships with centralised institutions. This happens not only in the case of centralised political authority based on coercive force (Schaedel and Delgado 1998) but also in the context of the Western notion of democracy, which has been repeatedly questioned in indigenous circles^{12}. This debate about the essence of sovereign power in modernity is not new of course, but has taken centre stage within the rise of ‘Fourth World theory’.

^{12} See Linda Tuhiwai-Smith 1999 listed in the bibliography.
At the peak of the Latin American *Indigenismo*, the notion of indigenous was not different to that of peasantry. *Indigenismo* or Indigenism refers to a political and cultural movement sweeping across Latin America during much of the 20th century. Its origins may be traced back to the 1910’s, when Latin American societies begin to “look in the mirror” and construct themselves as a mestizo society. In basic terms, it is a non-indigenous ideology crossing over the areas of arts, culture, politics and socio-economics constructed as an attempt to rescue the indigenous subject from oblivion and oppression and reaffirm the complexities of Latin American modern identities. It assumes a passive indigenous subject that needs to be represented, rescued and constructed from the enlightenment of Western values. In this way, government policies across the whole continent were applied to indigenous peoples without previous consultation. Although they varied in time according to the dominant ideological perspectives, ranging from liberalism to socialism, they did not differ substantially in their assimilating approaches.

This ideal of assimilation of native peoples to the modern principles of citizenship is one of the most delicate issues surrounding this problem as it implicitly denies cultural difference at the same time as it disrupts the public opinion’s and the nation’s self made image of a homogenous society due to the presence of pre-existent autochthonous populations.

In conclusion to this section, and independently of the emphasis -political, economical or cultural- it is clear that in recent years the term indigenous has started to pose more than a few problems of definition, and needs to be theoretically and pragmatically problematised. I suggest that the question of definition be treated with ‘interpretive flexibility’ (c.f. Bikjer 1992), focusing on specific contexts, as the contextual meanings of cultural identification are a different matter to the question of definition. This flexibility allows for contemplating difference and adaptation as more fluid categories of cultural identification. Therefore, it is critical to think of a construction of indigenousness that is not confined to those nationalities in permanent conflict with the nation-states in which they are inserted, and be able to transcend the victimisation of their historical exploitation, while moving away from developmental categories or seeing them as passive receivers. Constructions of aboriginality and indigenousness need also to be addressed in terms of their intersubjectivity to overcome the processes of objectification of indigenous peoples. This is particularly important when addressing questions of indigenous representation in the media, as well as indigenous media production and control.

In my opinion indigenousness is a discursive artefact created by the difficulty of dealing with radical alterity (c.f. Taussig 1993). Understanding how this categorisation works does not assume accepting the need for it. In a discursive analytical context, it seems meaningless to search for absolute criteria to characterise indigenous peoples as a fixed social category. Indigenousness is created by social processes and changes along with the cultural context and the technological environment. This is of course also true for the present attempt at conceptual definition. At the same time, the concept of indigenousness can
also be used to discuss the distribution of power and to illustrate dominance versus resistance. It is especially the dominant society’s conception of indigenous peoples as foreign ‘others’, which constitutes the discursive concept of indigeneity. In the context of this work then, the notion of indigenous is used as an ideological construct, definitely contextual and fluid, and based on differences that inform the multiple power strategies of cultural survival by an immensely diverse group of people worldwide. This positioning is often no more than discursive and has meant that indigenous nations are today actively engaging in political/cultural activism by directly challenging the rhetoric of development and modernisation and those “issues that underpin their on-going marginalisation” (Seton 1999).

Having acknowledged the accepted constructions of indigeneity in different fields -based primarily on land, language and culture - I have tried to move beyond these essentialist definitions and work more on constructivist notions of identity and culture. In doing so, I maintain that it is important to move away from the idea of indigenous peoples as obstacles to development, fixed outside of history that maintain a pure and authentic cultural identity. More importantly, there is a need to abandon the notion of indigenous when we refer to a particular group and replace it by the self-perception name (e.g. Koori for Aboriginal mobs in the Sydney area, or Mapuche).

For Jesus Martin-Barbero for example, cultural identity is defined in terms of cultural resistance and in his major works he has openly criticised conventional ways of thinking about the notion of indigenous. He has outlined a perspective in which indigenous cultures are understood as being “an integral part of the capitalist productive structures of society” (Martin-Barbero: 1987). This indigenous ‘re-invention’, addressed in the previous section, assumes a re-emergence of old and new indigenous identities in a context of global capitalism, and entails a renewed visibility and an implosion of processes of ethnogenesis coming not only from “Western” scholarship on the topic, but more importantly from fresh and critical research/practices originating from indigenous researchers and cultural activists alike.

Many indigenous persons and leaders are today academic and technical professionals, media practitioners, or educated intellectuals – not only in Western history and society but also in indigenous knowledge. The extent of these new discourses in many cases implies the rewriting of official histories and the need for more strict environmental policies to protect bio-cultural sites and systems. From a

13 It has been useful to conceptualise the processes of ethnogenesis as a social construction of indigenous realities in new contexts. The term ethnogenesis sums up this simultaneous eruption of indigenous politics and indigenous narratives not only in Latin America but also on a world scale. It has been used effectively in connection with the emergence and development of indigenous political instrumentalities, including media. Ethnogenesis marks the beginning of a renewed sense of group identity in which the roots of past histories are explored, reclaimed and reinvented as a frame for present struggles and future prospects. Ethnogenesis can take almost any form, attach itself to any object, event, era, legend as a ritual space in which re-claimed identities are explored, acted out, performed and expressed. So, this social construction of ethnicity is intimately linked to the cultural construction of technology/media that is being discussed in the final section of the following chapter.

14 Linda Tuhiwai Smith offers a detailed and critical discussion on the reformulation of the ‘native’ intellectual in the framework of post-colonialism (1999:71).
hermeneutical point of view, the multiplicities of discursive elements in the new indigenous political agendas come into play through a variety of strategies. Where there is power there is resistance and in this sense, as Feenberg appraises following Michel Foucault’s conceptualisations of regimes of truth “discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a point of resistance, and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Feenberg 1992).

In the following chapter, I discuss the reasons why Mapuche self-representations are important in terms of correcting the images that have been constructed about indigenous peoples in Chile. They are important precisely because stereotypes and stories about indigenous peoples have been a significant aspect of their oppression and objectification. Edward Said’s (1978) insightful critique of Orientalism is a key reference text in this regard, as are Robert Hodge’s (1990), Brian Attwood’s (1992) and Marcia Langton’s critiques of Aboriginalism in Australia during the early 1990’s.

In the following three sections of this thesis I have addressed the way in which indigenous media has been positioned by indigenous and non-indigenous researchers, activists and media practitioners alike in relation to three specific fields of cultural and media production. Firstly, I locate indigenous media within visual anthropology and recent reconceptualisations of an anthropology of media. Then I situate indigenous media within the legacy of media activism in particular Third Cinema. Finally, I look at indigenous media in the context of new media and the network society. In order to discuss indigenous media it is crucial to understand what is implied in this notion.

In this regard, Browne interestingly suggests that the differences between indigenous peoples and other ‘ethnic’ and social minorities have relevance to the electronic media. He questions the policies of building indigenous communications and the real possibilities of the social technologies to provide indigenous people with a voice of their own. Following Riggins in this respect, Browne suggests that the main difference between indigenous peoples and other ethnic minority groups is their sense of history as one time sovereigns of their lands. This question of sovereignty that I have briefly referred to here is of course one of the key foundations of indigenous media production.

As I discuss more thoroughly in the review of literature that follows, many other scholars also situate indigenous media production and practice in relation to broader instances of cultural activism (Turner 1991; Marcus 1996; Ginsburg 1999, Ginsburg et.al 2002) by arguing how media practiced by ‘minoritised people’ may be understood as counter-hegemonic fields of cultural production in response

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15 For these authors, aboriginalism and aboriginality are terms used to describe firstly the mechanisms through which images of Indigenous Australians are the product of representations by non-indigenous ‘experts’. Secondly, they refer to an idea of radical otherness that is constructed in the public sphere without ever interacting face to face with indigenous persons (Langton 1993), and they also refer to those institutions that exercise authority and control over indigenous Australians ‘by making statements about them, authorising views of them and ruling over them’ (Attwood 1992:1).
to the introduction and dissemination of dominant forms of mass media (Ginsburg 1999). As Marcia Langton points out in reference to racist constructions of Aboriginality in Australian media, there is a need for more critical theory that engages in intertextual constructions of Aboriginality in a context of intercultural dialogue (Langton 1993:34-35). A similar position has been suggested by David MacDougall (1997) when he pushes for an “intertextual cinema” that includes and combines the multiple positions of those engaged in the creation and consumption of screen representations of culture.

In the following chapter I discuss how indigenous media may be re-thought not only as a problematic form of political activism (Ginsburg 1995, 1999) but also as an emerging genre (Ginsburg 1995), and more broadly as specific instances of cross-cultural communication happening in a context of what Garcia Canclini calls “multitemporal heterogeneity” (Garcia Canclini 1995). In this sense, indigenous media may be conceived as a hybrid space of media practice happening between elite art and high culture and the hegemonic order entailed by mass media and should be considered beyond some version of the two dominant tropes which Ginsburg (1991, 1995) has conceptualised as Faustian contract or global village. For this reason, as indigenous media has become an independent field of cultural production by and for indigenous peoples, it is situated at the crossroads of contemporary politics of cultural identity and representation and therefore has the potential to render the modern binary logic of self/other obsolete in terms of the politics of representation of cultural purities between the so-called traditional and the modern. I strongly consider that it is indeed possible to develop alternative practices and aesthetics using forms so identified with the political and economic imperatives of Western consumer culture and the institution of mass society. I do believe technologies can be re-shaped by their users, as is the case of the indigenising of audiovisual media such as video, film or the Internet. Indigenous media practice has a key role to play in what Shohat and Stam have called “polycentric multiculturalism”, and in efforts to unthink the Eurocentric and commercial foundations of mainstream media. As Shohat and Stam put it, “polycentric multiculturalism demands changes not just in images but in power relations… it is about dispersing power, … about empowering… [and]… about transforming subordinating institutions and discourses” (Shohat and Stam 1994:48).

In summary, the question of the social construction of the notion of indigenous peoples remains quite problematic. At the core of the debate lie questions of citizenship and the demands of indigenous movements for inclusion and recognition of their ethnic identities. The question of ethnic citizenship is intimately to the also problematic issue of autonomy. Indigenous people today demand a more profound recognition of their civil rights to self-determination and self-representation, which in many cases directly challenge the narrow conceptions of sovereignty and sovereign power invested in the nation-states.
Indigenous research and the rise of ‘fourth world theory’ have began opening up new discursive fields of theorisation in a call for understanding the possibilities of new political subjectivities in a postnational era. In this way, indigenous media has a key role to play in informing and disseminating alternative views on the role that indigenous peoples should be playing on the international and increasingly global stage.
CHAPTER 3
THEORIZING INDIGENOUS MEDIA

Visualizing Identity / Mediating Culture

This section of the investigation frames and contextualizes recent theorisation on the emergence and growth of indigenous media as a discursive space of cultural practice. The emphasis is on examining the ways media have become increasingly critical in the constitution of new indigenous subjectivities and collectivities in a context of global production and circulation of symbols and meanings. Since these cultural flows are regularly grounded in local social solidarities, a key concern in this section is to examine the cultural constructions of information and communication technologies, particularly the ways in which these media become integrated into what may be termed an indigenous field of cultural production\(^1\) at local, national and transnational levels.

By considering how the growth of indigenous media takes place within particular discursive fields, we will be in a better position to understand the reasons and conditions for the somewhat arrested development of indigenous media in Chile. Having previously defined the problematics of an uncertain indigenous media sphere in Chile as the main research question driving this investigation, I have positioned this examination within four overlapping discursive fields.

Consequently, and having already discussed the categories of indigeneity in the previous section, I provide a critical overview of the history and development of anthropology's concern with the visual, not so much as a method for representing culture but as a site of cultural practice. The impact of visual anthropology and the legacy of participatory methods in ethnographic film are critical aspects in the emergence of indigenous media. Although indigenous media emerges within contexts outside of anthropology, visual anthropology in particular is a key field where questions of production, representation and mediation of cultural identity have been enthusiastically raised and fervently contested. Consequently, this second section broadly examines the emergence, development and contestations of ethnographic film in particular and visual anthropology in general, in order to argue how indigenous media can and has been positioned theoretically within, or in contrast with, a primarily Western and non-indigenous project.

Accordingly, indigenous media can also be positioned along the legacy of what has traditionally been referred to as alternative and participatory media (Couldry and Curran 2003, Downing 1984, Protz 1991, \(1\) In reference to Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualisation of a field of cultural production (1993) as a system of (power) relations among agents and/or institutions engaged in generating the value of works of art, while creating cultural capital for themselves.)


Gumucio-Dagron 2001); revolutionary and ‘Third Cinema’ (Chanan 1983; Gabriel 1989; Solanas and Getino 1983), independent and community media (Thede and Ambrosi 1991), radical media (Downing 2001) or more recently tactical media (Lovink 2000, Meikke 2003), alterative media (Roncagliolo 1991), or citizen’s media (Rodriguez 2001). In this sense indigenous media in general has grown out of alternative forms of cultural and technological mediations where the relations established with other people –consumers, distributors or producers- and technologies, as well as the process of production (representation), are often more important than the final product. Particular attention is placed in relation to how this social practice of media may be considered a practical route for constructing counter-hegemonic forms of audiovisual representations. In this third section, I argue that indigenous video may be conceptualised following the notion of imperfect cinema developed by Cuban filmmaker and theorist Julio Garcia Espinosa in 1969. In general terms, my intention is to demonstrate that audiovisual media like video or the Internet have been constructed as expressions of indigenous autonomy constituting an alternative social formation for indigenous communities in Chile. The historical and current politicisation of indigenous issues are critical aspects to take into account when attempting to understand the ways media is increasingly understood as a mode of mediating identity and as a form of cultural mediation.

I then go on to examine a fourth field of media production, one informed by how indigenous communications are located analytically in relation to the intensification of new modes of information and communication based on new digital technologies and networks. In particular, I look at the way we may understand the cultural construction of indigenous media as a socio-technical system. In situating indigenous media amid the global expansion of audiovisual industries and the possibilities offered by new information and communication technologies - in what Castells calls a ‘network society’ - I elaborate on the usefulness of constructivist theories of technology in order to recognize a distinct logic of indigenous media and situate the production of indigenous knowledge in the realm of the digitisation of culture.

By situating indigenous media practice and its theorisation against these discursive fields we will be in a better position to comprehend in what ways indigenous media practice may be constituted as an ‘everyday tactic of cultural objectification’ for the purpose of cultural survival and political action. For that reason, all four entries are grounded in specific instances of indigenous media theory and practice, and the examples, models and cases mentioned or included here are designed to illustrate the points of
debate. Particular attention has been put on Latin American cases, yet the work is informed by circumstances occurring in several other contexts such as Australia, New Zealand, or Canada.

This chapter informs the ones that follow, where attention is paid to dissecting the political economies in which indigenous media practice in Chile is situated, and the way these social practices of media are embedded in the building of national imaginaries and public media spheres (Chapter Four). In this regard, the configuration of this framework will be the basis to explore the cultural mediations of Mapuche politics and identity through the signifying practices of video, radio and online forms. As a way of tracking out the particularities of the Chilean context that explain the impediments to an independent development of indigenous media, particular interest has been placed on examining how these mediated practices are appropriated and constructed from local solidarities and become integral aspects in the building of oppositional spheres of imagination and representation (chapters four and five).

3.1. Visualizing culture: from visual anthropology to the anthropology of media.

In this section I review the main literature that has looked at ways in which indigenous media has been positioned against the broader project of visual anthropology, particularly ethnographic cinema. I examine how indigenous media may be critically located within recent shifts to an anthropology/ethnography of media and technology. I do not see a teleological connection between indigenous film/video and ethnographic film, yet visual anthropology in general has had an important impact on indigenous media. At the same time, indigenous media poses new challenges to ethnographic documentaries and the constructions of a Western anthropological engagement with the visual. The main purpose arises from the interrogation of how pictorial media has been conceived as a means of producing culture and as an agency for constructing knowledge about culture, and the way this may be applied to the Chilean context. Looking at cultural, political and communicational agency for reproducing and transforming cultural identity among people who have experienced cultural/political exploitation is particularly important for setting the theoretical background from which to look at the processes of indigenous media practice in Chile. I think is important to take into consideration Faye Ginsburg’s reminder that it is quite common within the safety of academic research to forget what the stakes are for those who are unable to control the representation of their lives (Ginsburg 1999). Clemencia Rodriguez goes even further when trying to understand the implications of alternative media. I quote extensively from Rodriguez, as her thoughts are very enlightening, particularly if we agree that indigenous media implies,

having the opportunity to create one's own images of self and environment; it implies being able to recodify one's own identity with the signs and codes that one
chooses, thereby disrupting the traditional acceptance of those imposed by outside sources; it implies becoming one's own story teller, regaining one's own voice; it implies reconstructing the self-portrait of one's own community and one's own culture; it implies exploring the infinite possibilities of one's own body, one's own face, to create facial expressions (a new codification of the face) and non-verbal languages (a new codification of the body) never seen before; it implies taking one's own languages out of their usual hiding place and throwing them out there, into the public sphere and seeing how they do, how they defeat other languages, or how they are defeated by other languages . . . what matters is that for the first time, one's shy languages, languages used to remain within the familiar and the private, take part in the public arena of languages and discourse (Rodriguez 2001:4).

In considering this new field of anthropology of media, I concur with calls for narrative constructions of indigenous histories in their own terms and the importance of taking into account the social practice of making that work, including the processes and networks created for that end. This renewed anthropological interest in mass media(tions) has posed original questions on the intricate interconnectedness between the value of the text itself, which often embodies in its own internal structure and meaning, the forms and values of the social relations they mediate, and the complex contexts of production and interpretation that shape its construction (Ginsburg 1999).

It is necessary to clarify that by no means do I pretend to offer an in-depth critical examination of the history of visual anthropology. The task has been to underline certain debates within the historical and ongoing concern with the visual in anthropology, in order to position the emergence and development of indigenous media against these points. The purpose is to situate the emerging genre of indigenous media in reference to the cultural logic of visualising the ‘Other’ in anthropology and ethnographic film. From the silencing and exotic reconstructionism of early ethnographic film, through to the observational construction of a speechless subject in the 1960’s, through participant film-truths and calls for shared collaboration, self-representation and media participation during the 1970’s, and towards ethnographies of media in the 1990’s.

Some of the key questions that have accompanied the turbulent history of visual anthropology have to do with the ways indigenous peoples and their representations are positioned within visual anthropology’s technologically mediated ways of seeing. If media products (or objects) are essential to the construction of cultural imaginaries, indigenous media has emerged in part as a critique of both anthropological and Western authority. Therefore, despite important legacies by individual visual anthropologists advocating for indigenous control over their images (i.e. Eric Michaels in Central Australia, Vincent Carelli or Terence Turner in Brazil), indigenous media has grown with a completely different political project to
ethnographic film. In terms of the politics of representation embedded in visual anthropological practice, how do we understand the fact that indigenous people are appropriating technologies that supposedly conform to Western logics and forms? How are indigenous aesthetics in media and communication technologies such as video, film or television being understood?

This section has left aside broader conceptualisations of visual anthropology that embrace other specializations more related to communication theory such as kinesics or proxemics among other interests and bodies of research that take into account the cultural dimensions of visual language as human communication. The focus here is firstly on anthropological film (and video) and secondly on new digital media and other recent mediations of knowledge formations.

On this level of analysis, there is consensus in that the term "visual anthropology" emerged from an Anglo-American tradition in anthropology, and was coined immediately after Word War II (Worth 1980:7 in El Guindi 1998:458). During this period, visual anthropology implied the use of cameras to make (scientific) records about (other) culture(s). However, visual anthropology as it pertains to the visual interpretation of culture through technologies of mechanical (and today digital) reproduction precedes this era and may be traced back to its roots in the advent of modern audiovisual technologies of pictoralization (cf. El Guindi 1998) - mainly photography and film - developed in Europe and the United States over a century ago.

Stemming out from its common 19th century, Euro-American techno-cultural foundations, ethnographic film practice developed primarily as a method in cultural anthropology, infatuated with the desire to explore, document, explain "and symbolically control the world" (Ruby 2000:168). The early emphasis on the exotic and/or the pathological are important when considering that visual anthropology has historically been in essence a Western tradition of thought and practice. Non-Western critiques of this tradition have become important in contemporary anthropology only in recent years and further developments will be crucial as they pose “pertinent issues of cross-cultural representationality” (El Guindi 1998:459). In this context, indigenous media production emerges as a positive critique of visual anthropology.

The earliest precursors within this Western tradition can be traced back to the scientific positivism of the late 19th century with the pictorial representations of Felix-Louis Regnault in France, Alfred Cort

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3 As an introduction to the history of the field, I suggest Fadwa El Guindi’s chapter “From Pictorializing to Visual Anthropology” in H. Russell Bernard (editor) Handbook of Cultural Anthropology. Interestingly, El-Guindi traces the major distinctions within the field particularly in terms of methodological strategies, including ethnographic film, research film, photo-elucidation, native-informants use of cameras among other distinctions. The work is however rather conservative and apologetic of anthropology’s concern with politics of visual representation. For a more critical overview, see Faye Ginsburg 1998. “Institutionalizing the Unruly: Charting a Future for Visual Anthropology” in Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology.
Haddon and Baldwin Spencer in Australia and Franz Boas work in the U.S. and Canada, all of which became, in a sense, the rationale to follow in the ethnographic filmmaking of the following decades. The tradition of documenting reality, implicitly begun with the Lumière brothers, was maintained in the early part of the 20th century. These first 30 years (1895-1925) are important because, as an extended arm of European and American colonial expansion, cinema and photography play a pivotal role in the anthropological constructions of "the ethnographic Other". Most criticism of ethnographic film argues that ethnographic films should be considered imperial spectacles based on a scientific positivism that, as Stoller comments, “shamelessly muted the voice of those in front of the camera” (Stoller 1998:91, Rony 1996). In this sense, I think it is possible to argue that modern anthropology is characterised by a visualist bias4.

In her illuminating book The Third Eye, Fatimah Rony (1996), has commented on this visualist bias by arguing that during its early years of development, cinema became one of the primordial means through which race and gender became naturalised (Rony 1996). She includes here the works of Robert Flaherty and Edward Curtis in the 1920’s as well as Marcel Griaule among others during the 1930’s as examples of ethnographic film’s pervasive racialisation of indigenous cultures in a displaced temporal and social realm5. Although many consider Flaherty to be a pioneer in collaborative film practice – where Nanook is regarded as an early attempt in multivocality - Rony discusses Flaherty’s figure as the father of a male’s club of explorer/artists that opened up ethnographic cinema for other image hunters (Rony 1996). I will take up this point again in following chapters, when I look at early ‘ethnographic’ photography and its impact on the exoticisation of indigenous peoples in Chile.

After this first period, in which the ‘visual’ documentation of an ‘exotic other’ never becomes fully institutionalised as a truly scientific method within anthropological inquiry, the works of Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead from the 1940’s onwards indicate an important step towards the consolidation of “visual anthropology in a discipline of words” (Mead in Hockings 1975). In developing the framework for what has been termed the anthropology of culture and media, Ginsburg (1991, 1995, 1999) invokes the legacy of Mead and Bateson (and others), who took media as a serious aspect of scholarly inquiry. Later, during World War II, they and other American anthropologists studied Japanese and German cinema as ethnographic documents for the U.S War Office to help them understand differences in national cultures in order to assist the allied forces (Bateson 1943).

During this period, both scientific ethnography and documentary cinema were pretty much founded on a commitment to reporting a form of truth and experiential reality through a series of implicit discursive

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forms of filmic representations of ‘Others’. Rony refers to them as ‘taxidermy’ (1996), where the discourses not only create an ‘imperial imaginary’ (Shohat and Stam 1994) but also a kind of ‘imperialist nostalgia’ (Rosaldo 1989 in Shohat and Stam 1994) where the focus is on the conventions of Western science in its historical dichotomy with Art, as expressed in modern Western thought.

Despite these early efforts, a ‘native’ voice was going to remain muted for much longer with the probable exception of Jean Rouch’s films in West Africa starting in the mid 1950’s. The foundational work of Mead and Bateson has been extensively accounted for (Hockings 1975; Ruby 1980, 2000; Banks and Morphy 1997; Ginsburg 1995, 1996; Prins and Ruby 2002) and their interest in the visual documentation of culture - after dying out for more than a decade in the immediate post war period - resurfaced strongly in the early 1960’s. Therefore, the period from 1942 to the early 1960’s shows that visual anthropology was more than a transitory ‘threat’ to the establishment, as in fact it was soon going to become an important field within the humanities and social sciences. It seems important to underline at this point that the interdisciplinary and comparative nature of anthropology, as Banks and Morphy claim, may be regarded as a “constant tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces” (Banks and Morphy 1997: 1). Despite becoming in recent years a more established academic field within sociocultural anthropology, visual anthropology still maintains a difficult relationship with the anthropological establishment. As Banks and Morphy have pointed out, visual anthropology has “always posed a threat to the coherence of the centre” (Ibid.). Furthermore, ethnographic film has never been very secure within anthropology as Jay Ruby points out (Ruby 2000). Since the institutionalisation of the Society for Visual Anthropology as a section of the American Anthropological Association in the early 1970’s, Ruby notes, visual anthropology became accepted by the anthropological mainstream mostly as a pedagogical and auteuristic device and not so much a method of research or a form of inquiry in its own right.

In the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, ethnographic film began receiving more attention by anthropologists looking for alternative methods of constructing knowledge about ‘other’ cultures. The key figure of this period was French anthropological filmmaker Jean Rouch. Rouch’s films were early important efforts to juxtapose cultural commentaries of Europeans and Africans, accommodating not only diverse views but also multiple formal strategies, including fictional, parodic, and avant-garde techniques (Ginsburg 1999). Despite never allowing for an independent ‘African’ voice Rouch's legacy has been linked to more contemporary works by Third-World and indigenous media makers, particularly those works engaged in the repositioning of cultural authority and experience. Paul Stoller has written extensively on the legacy of Jean Rouch’s ‘cinema of cruelty’ and his early work in West Africa and later collaborations with sociologist Edgar Morin. Stoller has shown how Rouch work was going to have

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6 The notion of film as anthropological discourse has been explored in more detail by Crawford 1992 listed in the bibliography.
profound effects not only in modernist cinematic sensibilities (i.e. the French ‘new wave’) but also in the postmodern turn in anthropology during the mid 1980’s.

Not content with the limitations of ethnographic film practice, American anthropologists and communication scholars started opening new possibilities for engaging with the visual in anthropology. Seminal is the work of Sol Worth at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, and Jay Ruby and Richard Chalfen, because together they established the first visual anthropology program in the United States at Temple University in 1974.

It is possible to argue that visual anthropology becomes partially formalized as a field of study within the period between 1966-1975 as several periodical publications begin to be established, either independently or inserted within ‘traditional’ anthropology journals (i.e. American Anthropologist) (Hockings 1975; Ruby 1975, 2000; Banks and Morphy 1997; MacDougall 1998; Rollwagen 1988; Ginsburg 1998).

The beginning of this period is marked by the work of Sol Worth and John Adair with Navajo Communities after 1966 and the publishing of their book ‘Through Navajo Eyes’ in 1972. Together, they argued that if anthropology was going to pay serious attention to filmmaking (as was beginning to occur since the late 1960s with the ethnographic film work of Tim Asch, Robert Gardner, John Marshall, and later David and Judith MacDougall), then anthropologists needed to attend to the cultural and social dynamics of the media systems they were engaging with, what Worth (1976) called the "shift from visual anthropology to the anthropology of visual communication".

The work of Jay Ruby since 1969 is crucial to understanding the development of visual anthropology as an academic discipline interested in pictorial media as a means of producing culture. Ruby’s work coincides with the beginnings of Timothy Asch’s work at Harvard University. However, if the Harvard group was more interested in ethnographic film, the Philadelphia one was more inclined to the study of communication as a field of research and theorisation grounded in anthropology. As Ruby has claimed, their work was concerned with the development of “a theory and practice of image production that bridges the gap between anthropology, film and communication studies” (Ruby 2000: 6).

For the next decade the main interests would lie in establishing the boundaries of visual anthropology, ethnographic film and anthropological cinema within both anthropological and film establishments, and the social sciences broadly speaking (MacDougall 1976, Heider 1976, Ruby 1980, 1982). An important event that marks a sort of coming of age for visual anthropology is the conference and subsequent book, *Principles of Visual Anthropology* edited by Paul Hockings in 1975 (with a second edition reprinted in 1995). This volume summarizes the main points of debate in those years. The role of ethnographic film
in the production of cultural and historical knowledge, the documentation of those ‘disappearing’ cultures under the onslaught of capitalism, the debate between observation and participation. More importantly, it includes the first explicit call to move away from observational cinema as a cinematic strategy of inquiry (MacDougall 1975), which had been the tour de force in ethnographic film in one way or another between 1960 and 1980 (Loizos 1997).

While for Heider (1976:8), ethnographic film should reflect ethnographic understanding and is more than the simple sum of ethnography plus film, others propose to leave the label "ethnographic film" for films essentially not ethnographic, or produced by people not trained in anthropology (Rollwagen 1988b: 287). Other views in this period propose the adoption of alternative terms such as anthropological cinema (Ruby 1971) or "anthropological filmmaking" (Rollwagen 1988) to reflect films based on anthropological theory or for the construction and communication of anthropological knowledge. Others see the function of ethnographic film as a way of reconstructing cultures on film (Balikci, 1975).

In 1976 two important efforts to define ethnographic film and its prospects were published in English (MacDougall in Nichols 1976; Heider 1976). More importantly, in the later part of the 1970's there was renewed interest in reconceptualising a more direct dialogue between indigenous subjects and anthropological interpretation in what has been seen as serious attempts within ethnographic film to allow room for a ‘native voice’.

Examples of these approaches may be found in earlier works by Jean Rouch since 1954, or the Worth and Adair experiments in the late 1960’s with facilitating film equipment in Navajo communities, or the MacDougall’s films in the late 1970’s. Despite efforts for shared and collaborative representation, or experiments with transfer of technology, the notion of a distinct indigenous concern with media representation was yet to come into being. In this sense, indigenous media has been regarded as a product of anthropological filmmakers’ sensibility towards allowing for an indigenous voice in their own films.

Worth and Adair’s work in Navajo communities marks the incipient interest during this period with “informant-made films” (El-Guindi 1998) as experiments in cultural representation. Much has been written about how Navajo communities may or may not have had a culturally specific way of seeing and making films. In this regard, during this period there is still the view of “native film as experiment” (Ibid.) rather than a real interest by indigenous groups to use ‘foreign’ technologies of representation. As El Guindi claims, “years later, cameras were given to indigenous populations for advocacy, political purposes, and as devices for cultural and political self-representation to resist encroachment on their territories and exploitation of their resources …” Video technology with automatic synchronous sound
further facilitated this genre and became an additional resource available to informants in their productions. (El Guindi 1998. 480). In my opinion, El Guindi’s view reflects anthropology’s patronising explanation for the emergence of indigenous media, and assumes that independently of the interest of indigenous peoples, technology is “given to informants” for ‘their development’.

The experiments with handing the camera to informants remains however marginal to the problematic of academic positioning of ethnographic film within anthropology. Anthropologists and ethnographic filmmakers still need to think more carefully about how film ‘may do the sheep good’7. In this sense, as I noted before, I see indigenous media as a separate and distinct project to ethnographic film. The role of ethnographic filmmakers and visual anthropologists in building up indigenous media is important in certain cases8, yet they form just a minor variable in the whole complex context in a broader field of indigenous cultural production. Like ethnographic film’s concerns with processes of identity construction, indigenous media grows out of the climax of indigenous rights movements in Canada, the U.S. and Australia, with several cases following in Latin America after the mid 1980’s.

Indigenous peoples’ concerns with self-representation emerge primarily as a reaction to decades of being objectified by outsiders, including representations by anthropologists. Moreover, as claims for self-representation become an integral part of the indigenous movements worldwide into the 1980’s, the struggle of indigenous groups coincides with several other events. The launch of satellite communications in countries like Canada and Australia, the expansion of video recorders worldwide, and the transnationalization of mass media, all pose a challenge to indigenous peoples’ adaptation to new global communication environments. Technological innovation, mass media globalisation and deregulation, indigenous activism and artistic experimentation are as important to explain the emergence of indigenous media as it is the interest by ethnographic filmmakers and visual anthropologists in facilitating collaboration. In the case of Latin America, it is important to add the complex processes of modernisation and democratisation as key aspects in the emergence of indigenous media there.

By the end of the 1980’s, ethnographic film was again in trouble (Nichols 1994, Minh-ha 1989, Ruby 1991, Prins 1997b). On one level, the polemic had to do with whether ethnographic film should be undertaken by filmmakers with training in anthropology (Nichols 1994) or by anthropologists with training in filmmaking (Ruby 1991)9. Other disputes had to do with a problem of definition. On one side were proponents of observational approaches still looking for anthropological truth; on the other side

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7 I am referring to an anecdote in Worth and Adair’s book Through Navajo Eyes (1972) where an elder asks them if filmmaking won’t do any good to his sheep, then why bother doing films.
8 Terence Turner with the Kayapo in Brazil, Vincent Carelli with Video in the Villages, also in Brazil, Harald Prins ‘indian country’ in the U.S. or Eric Michaels with the Warlpiri in Australia.
9 I would say that the Ruby-Nichols polemic, started 15 years ago, is still very much alive today and is of critical importance when positioning the work of indigenous media makers and the challenge posed by indigenous media in general to ethnographic film (Ginsburg 1996, 1999).
were participatory approaches more concerned with the need for collaborative efforts and more political advocacy. While both Nichols and Ruby agree on the need for more interpretation and reflexivity in ethnographic film, they take opposite views when looking at the future of ethnographic film. For Nichols, it lies in the work of indigenous and other minority media makers trained in filmmaking who can construct their own versions of their cultures and overcome the limitations of academic anthropology. For Ruby it lies in “anthropologically grounded theories and anthropologically trained ethnographic filmmakers talking control of the genre” (Ruby 2000:31). While Ruby supports and acknowledges ‘native representations’ as unique and valuable, he doesn’t consider them “ethnographic” as they are produced and consumed within the community, or they make statements about their own communities and not about an ‘other’.

This specific polemic inside ethnographic filmmaking is informed by a larger problem occurring more or less since the mid 1980’s. What has been termed ‘the crisis of representation’ in anthropology was felt quite strongly in ethnographic research (and therefore filmmaking) when the field became opened to a context of a contemporary world system of capitalist political economy (Marcus 1986). Within this ‘reflexive turn’ in anthropology, which generally refers to the impact of postmodernism and post-structuralism coming from philosophy and literary criticism on anthropological discourse, the emphasis on textual analysis and the implications of ‘writing culture’ or the anthropologist as creative writer were initially articulated by North American anthropologists such as George Marcus, Michael Fischer and James Clifford. This follows views of anthropology as cultural interpretation and of ethnography as ‘thick description’ (cf. Geertz 1973). Ruby notes that the "ethnography as text movement" (Ruby 2000), was at the same time an attack on anthropological mainstream as it was a move to reinvigorate anthropology and a response to those challenges coming from outside anthropology10. It was more a concern with the constituting of an anthropological self rather than the construction and interpretation of an ‘other’. By the early 1980’s, anthropological cinema was already acknowledging a crack in the mirror of representations (Ruby 1982) and the inexorable push for self-reflexivity in ethnographic and documentary film becomes almost an academic requirement. Nevertheless, I think we risk being patronising if we think for a moment that this act of self-awareness was the sole element that prompted the development of indigenous media.

In my opinion ethnographic film has clearly been a project of speaking about and speaking for indigenous peoples, with different degrees of reflexivity and interpretative openness. What all these divergent views have in common is that they are grounded in U.S anthropology, although it is noteworthy to stress the fact that many shifts in visual anthropology have emanated from U.S. anthropologists. In this sense, a serious postcolonial criticism of visual anthropology remains to be

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written. The work of Adolfo Colombes (1985), is perhaps the first of this kind\textsuperscript{11}, offering a postcolonial criticism of visual anthropology and ethnographic film that asserts how ethnography has been a constructed as modernist project of giving voice to an ‘other’ while suppressing it.

What is important during this period of reflexive turns in anthropology is that there are serious questions about authority in the production of anthropological texts (including visual texts). Questions of power become intrinsic to anthropological inquiry, as can be shown by the legacy of Michel Foucault in the work of several anthropologists (Fischer, Rabinow, Marcus). The social and political context and the power relations inherent in media productions become issues of increasing debate. In the case of ethnographic film, some argue that it had progressed from innocence in the 1950’s to self-consciousness at the beginnings of the 1980’s (Loizos 1993). In this sense, it was not only about speaking about or speaking for an ‘other’ but using this ‘other’ as an excuse to critically address the ‘self’. The main debates arising in the mid 1980’s regarding indigenous media and ethnographic film have to do with the challenge posed by the fact that indigenous peoples could and wanted to represent themselves. In this sense, this period sees several calls that regard ethnographic film practice as speaking with or speaking alongside indigenous people, and indigenous media as ‘speaking within’ and/or ‘speaking back’ to the broader societies. During this period, the notion of \textit{indigenous media} started being used in different academic circles, such as Aboriginal television (Michaels 1986) and Aboriginal broadcasting (Molnar 1990) in Australia, indigenous video in Mexico, Maori radio (Beatson 1996) in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Native indigenous communications in Canada (Valaskakis 1983) or Inuit television and broadcasting in Canada (Roth and Valskakis 1989).

The concern of anthropologists working in non-governmental organizations (and not in ethnographic film) was crucial in developing indigenous video in the 1980’s. The creation of the \textit{Consejo Latinoamericano de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas} (CLACPI) in Mexico City in 1985 for example, is critical for understanding the development of indigenous cinema and video in Latin America. With its current headquarters in La Paz, Bolivia, and directed by Ivan Sanjinés, CLACPI was established by non-indigenous researchers, media practitioners and social anthropologists alike who shared an interest in the development of autonomous and self-managed indigenous communications. Since its inception, CLACPI has become one of the key organizations at the continental level and has been a key agent in the organization of six important international film/video festivals, which have become milestones in the development of indigenous video in the region. After the first one in Mexico, other festivals have been held in Brazil 1987, Venezuela 1989, Peru 1992, Ecuador 1994, Bolivia 1996, with the most recent held in Guatemala in 1999\textsuperscript{12}.

\textsuperscript{11} Other key work in this area which pose similar criticisms are Rony 1996, Minh-ha 1989, Smith 1999, Russell 1999.

\textsuperscript{12} The last festival held in Chile was organised by CLACPI and Lulul Mawidha Mapuche Research Centre, with the cooperation of several indigenous organizations.
If we look at the development of Aboriginal media in Australia, a country with a notable tradition of ethnographic film, the emergence of indigenous media may be seen as a combination of sustained struggle and opposition by Aboriginal organizations on one hand (Molnar 1995, Molnar and Meadows 2001) and state mechanisms for Aboriginal integration on the other, or what Philip Batty calls processes for ‘enlisting the aboriginal subject’ (Batty 2001). Despite involvement by anthropologists (e.g. Eric Michaels between 1982 and 1987), I don’t see a factual impact of ethnographic film or anthropological cinema in the emergence of Aboriginal media in Australia.

Eric Michaels’ work in Australia could be said to have continued the pioneering work of the ‘visual communication anthropologists’ in the U.S. already mentioned. In an account of his work in remote Australia between 1982 and 1987, Ruby (2000) ascertains how Michaels contributed to the field by looking at fundamental differences between oral and electronic information societies and the implications of those differences when considering the introduction of a new communications technology. In this sense, Michaels’ work was an attempt to demonstrate the ethnocentric constructions embedded in Western media and the importance of ethnography of communication as a field of theorisation and method for understanding indigenous engagements with ‘foreign’ technologies of audiovisual representation. Michaels was one of the first anthropologists to construct a notion of indigenous media distinct from the project of ethnographic filmmaking and anthropological cinema and paved the way for academic narratives of indigenous media in the 1990’s (Ruby 2000).

However, Michaels work remains highly controversial; controversy that has not been helped by his premature death in 1988. In some of his essays, he raises the issue of moving beyond textual analysis and focusing on social processes of production when discussing aboriginal television. His celebration of cultural continuity in modes of cultural production across media in his accounts of Warlpiri media remain insightful.

Michaels’ descriptions of active and subversive Warlpiri audience readings which use kinship as the basis for an understanding of plot and character in American films have become classic studies in what Ruby calls the anthropology of visual communication. However, some have criticised his reification of traditional knowledge and oral forms of indigenous communication, of subjects that actively resist and adapt to technological innovation but hardly change or negotiate their cultural identities in the contemporary Australian mediasphere. The social practice of Aboriginal media that Michaels was...
exploring is not a monolithic realm of traditional versus modern, but an intrinsic dynamic field of ‘cultural bargaining’ to use Philip Batty’s term (Batty 1993).

The anthropology of media: towards an applied visual anthropology

In the last fifteen years or so academic narratives have shifted to an interest in anthropological examination of the social practice of media (Ginsburg 1999, Ginsburg et al. 2002) which have consolidated alongside a burst in indigenous media production. However, with few exceptions, indigenous media remained until the mid 1990’s largely invisible to “First World publics” (Shohat and Stam 1994: 52). The response from some anthropologists has been to embrace earlier claims for a more active engagement by anthropologists with media technologies as instruments of cultural mediation or as mechanisms for imagining communities (Michaels 1985, Spitulnik 1993, Ginsburg 1999), and the usefulness of an anthropological perspective in studies of mass media.

These works have been considered to be the foundations of a new field of research, namely the anthropology of mass media (Spitulnik 1993, Hughes-Freeland 1997, 2002), the ethnography of media (Ginsburg 1999, Ginsburg et.al 2002), anthropology of visual communication (Ruby 200), visual ethnography (Pink 2001) or media anthropology (Askew and Wilk 2002). The emphasis on mediation has been a critical aspect of this new positioning and definitely opens itself to a variety of interpretations.

This shift in anthropological inquiry from earlier interests in ethnographic film toward a more encompassing terrain for the study of indigenous media are concerned with the need to attend to the cultural and social dynamics of the media systems that anthropologists – among other scholars - engage with. Faye Ginsburg has been crucial in bringing indigenous media “within ‘the discursive space of anthropology’” (Banks and Morphy 1997: 31) as is the work of other anthropologists in the such as Terence Turner and Harald Prins, a dutch anthropologist active in the U.S.

This change has been stimulated by ethnographic approaches in media studies as well as by the participation by anthropologists in contemporary indigenous peoples' movements within and across nation-states. The control of the means of mass communication and the active role of indigenous peoples as media producers themselves in these movements, have reconfigured the space in which the ethnography of many of anthropology's traditional subjects can still effectively be done, in what has become an inherently multi-sited space of inquiry (Marcus 1995).

The noted merging of production and reception sites in media studies has reinforced this tendency in the design of ethnographic research on indigenous media. Invoking, on the one hand, the notion of shared
anthropology or regards comparés already present in the work of Jean Rouch in the 1950’s and 1960’s, and on the other hand her own concerns with this "shift from visual anthropology to the anthropology of visual communication" (Worth 1976; Ruby; Michaels; Chalfen) have made Ginsburg one of the key figures in this emerging field of research. Her work is part of what is considered a relatively small-scale yet maturing area of interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and cultural criticism interested in understanding the relationship between contemporary media practices and social action. Her concern for processes of cultural mediation in the construction of indigenous identities in the age of electronic reproduction has been a key contribution to the field. As Ruby ironically puts it, “the anthropology of visual communication is a relatively new area of study, a field yet to ‘realize its potential’ - a polite way of saying that only few people are interested in it” (Ruby 2000:223). Ruby characterises this new field as three times marginal as it “deviates from the mainstream of anthropology, of communication, and of visual studies” (224).

From the context of resurgent ethnic identities and how we can think of them as cultural discourses constructed amid a network of multiple positions, a link can be established to the now classic work of Jesus Martin-Barbero on communication, mediation and hegemony. Martin-Barbero’s work remains helpful when criticising the limitations of media-centric and technological-determinist perspectives. In his view, communication practices have to be understood within processes of socio-cultural mobilisation. Mediations shape positions in social and political structures. They take the form of translations between languages, genres, and cultures, and describe negotiations in contested spaces or at certain moments in history.

In a similar sense, but in reference to Aboriginal media in Australia, Philip Batty refers to negotiation as ‘intercultural bargaining’ whereby mediation can also refer to choices of media, methods, or strategies of cultural appropriation. In this sense, Martin Barbero’s proposal to move from the technologies to the processes of mediation emphasises the socio-cultural interventions that emerge from the use and practice of media, which in turn define cultural production and reception. For Martin-Barbero, the media are spaces for mediation and this for him entails looking at how culture is negotiated and is an object of transactions in a variety of contexts, ranging across the cinema, the popular press, radio, television, the circus, musical performance, and much else besides (Schlesinger and Morris 1997). Only in this way, according to Martin-Barbero, it is possible to determine the negated forms of everyday participation and the way in which these actions offer entry points in the dominant power structures through the appropriation of new uses or the subversion of new discourses. That said, the process of mediation is a kind of structure encrusted with everyday social practices. It is from these mediations that the constructions that limit and form the social materialities and cultural media representations are forged. Although his major works focus in the analysis of the syncretic nature of popular practices in Latin America, his provocative works are concerned with the way in which 'mediations' are discourses on the
making of identities and this becomes quite important, by extension, to the understanding of indigenous media.

These practices of negotiated mediation contribute both to the preservation of ‘traditional’ cultural identities and to their adaptation to present-day demands, in what Ginsburg calls “the re-signifying of the traditional” in indigenous media practice (Ginsburg 2002). This is the case for example, of a series of Mapuche images that get re-signified on Mapuche websites, as is examined in more detail in chapter four. Ginsburg understands these practices as a sort of ‘strategic conservatism’ where cultural activism becomes the “self conscious way in which [Indigenous peoples]… are using the production of media and other expressive forms as a way not only to sustain and strengthen their communities but also to help transform them” (Ginsburg 2000:30).

In a similar way, other authors have addressed these issues by looking at strategies of cultural subversion and conversion from the perspective of “innovative traditionalism” (Bennett and Blundell 1995), or “the paradox of primitivism” (Prins, 1997a) through which iconic images of indigenous people may be effective symbols of cultural survival, but may also “pervert the cultural heritage that indigenous peoples are committed to preserving” (Prins 1997a: 243)15.

Indigenous appropriation of new technologies is a kind of “appetite for acquiring certain technologies” (Ruby 2000:224) and should not be seen as a sign of cultural destruction or that a given culture is ‘unhealthy’. We need to understand appropriation in terms of adaptation and cultural change, which in many cases assists in the recovery and endurance of traditional practices and knowledge, not on their replacement. In this way, the indigenising of media (Molnar and Meadows 2001) becomes part of a strategic reversal of Eurocentric constructions of media technologies. I’m thinking something along the lines of what in art history is known as the Brazilian cannibalism movement in the 1920’s and 1930’s, or what Vargas Llosa terms ‘archaic utopianism’ in reference to the work of Jose Miguel Arguedas in Peru.

On similar lines, Harald Prins’ (1997a, 1997b, 2002) conceptualisation of a perplex or paradox is particularly interesting as it refers to the ways indigenous activists, action anthropologists and committed filmmakers negotiate the representation of exotic imagery of primitivism as a instrument of political agency, particularly to produce a response from an audience that may be able to identify indigenous imagery and place it in a familiar cultural niche through ‘beautiful’ images and ‘good’ editing (Prins 1997a: 262-263). In this sense, it is common to see that contemporary ethnographic documentaries for television are more worried about meeting the horizon of expectations of a global audience rather than

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15 In both of these instances, there is an echo to Luce Irigaray’s apparently essentialist conception of female sexuality which in fact works more like a tactical reversal of Freud’s and Lacan’s patriarchal constructions of sexuality.
challenging them. Indigenous rights struggles are not only framed in films of cultural survival (Prins 1997a), which show common ideological views of indigenous peoples as romantic traditionalists, victims of progress, fighting to defend traditional knowledge and ways of life. In effect, these approaches have pervaded much of the theorisation and practice in development and alternative communication since the 1950’s onwards. It is about time that both anthropologists and media scholars attended to the implications of Indigenous media production and the appropriation and deconstruction of Western mass values (Ginsburg 1995, 1999, Ruby 2000, Hartley and McKee 2000).

In this way, I think is useful to consider Martin-Barbero’s construction of multiple cultural identities being formed in resistance to hegemonic structures of power as a place where hegemonic and subaltern senses are articulated. This argument against a mediacentric viewpoint suggests that any communication process should be addressed from the standpoint of social movements, rather than beginning with assumptions about media power in what he calls the “blackmail of the elite” (Martin-Barbero 1987). His proposal is that we attend instead to the mediations - not the media or the text in order to analyse how the popular classes interpret symbolic media products. Following Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, Martin-Barbero - and others like Garcia Canclini for example - maintain that meanings are not simply decoded according to the intentions of the dominant culture (c.f Hall 1980) but that the notion of hegemony breaks down with the idea of a vertical power, of a non-negotiable notion of power.\footnote{A horizon of expectations is the range of aesthetic, economic, moral, religious, social, symbolic or political values that a given audience may anticipate when confronted with a new text. An important concept in reception theory, it is also a key issue in relation to the reception of ethnographic films and videos (see for example Martinez 1992, in Crawford and Turton 1992).}

An anthropology of media is therefore grounded in cultural and social anthropology and in focusing on social relations; it considers media both as an intervening agent of mediation and as material culture. It is committed to the study of media production, distribution and consumption at global, mass, alternative and local levels. In this context, the term media is meant both in a practical and tactical way, as a form of action, and in a technical and logistical way; as the incorporation of hardware, material artifacts and tools.

In a similar way, Ruby (2000) argues for an anthropology of visual communication founded in the assumption that the “unit of analysis should be the social relations within a community that result from the production and consumption of images and should not focus exclusively on the image as text or artifact” (Ibid. 225). This is precisely the aim of Chapter Five, to examine and identify the emergence of

\footnote{This is in reference to Stuart Hall’s early work on communication exchange where messages are decoded in three ways: a preferred reading that operates inside the dominant code and which fails to contest the implicit dominant ideology; a negotiated reading where negotiated codes of the dominant ideology are accepted by the audience member’s social position; and oppositional readings which elaborate a substitute or oppositional code that criticises or rejects the codes of the dominant ideology.}
Mapuche use of visual and pictorial forms in their everyday lives to maintain their social identity. If understanding the flow of information is a critical point to understand any given cultural formation, then I think that understanding the flow of information through new media technologies can be useful for understanding the indigenous emergence or processes of ethnogenesis during the 1990’s.

For Askew (2002) the anthropology of media is rooted in fieldwork through a reflexive engagement with social actors in the contexts in which they live and work, and is interested in how these social practitioners of media put together their texts, negotiating authorship with appeals to what they believe audiences want or need. I tend to agree with this claim, however it seems to me that the empirical quest should always be accompanied by strong and critical formulations and we cannot assume that the questions asked by the anthropology of media, as Askew proposes, are not driven by theoretical assumptions. At the end of the day broader theoretical questions regarding how indigenous media alter understandings of mainstream media, politics and representation are necessary. If the anthropology of media is going to address the need to develop a critical perspective built on a body of knowledge about the politics and aesthetics of indigenous media representation, then new discursive spaces are needed, both in terms of theorising complexity and contextualising media into larger fields of practice.

Theorising complexity entails theorising the relationship between culture and technology, which is of particular relevance to situating indigenous media beyond the already mentioned ‘Faustian dilemma’. Accordingly, important attempts to theorize the anthropology of science and technology have been underway in recent years. As Born has contended, “it is striking that new digital technologies, on the few occasions in which they have been addressed within visual anthropology, tend to be conceived instrumentally, as unproblematic means for new kinds of research or for the enhanced analysis and presentation of anthropological materials” (Born 1997: 139).

Within this anthropological interest in technology, many other fields within cultural anthropology have emerged with different degrees of confidence, among others, sociology of technology and culture (Hess 1992, Thomas 1991, Escobar 1994, Bessinger 1993, Hakken 1995)\(^\text{18}\), virtual ethnography (Miller and Slater 2000; Hine 2000), anthropology of information technology (Born 1997), and anthropology and hypermedia (Biella, 1993a). Also important is to mention Bruno Latour’s contributions to an anthropological and sociological understanding of science and technology (Latour 1987, 1993).

All of these approaches are important to understand the emergence of indigenous communications in a networked society (c.f Castells 1996) and provide ways of understanding how indigenous knowledge is

\(^{18}\) Arturo Escobar’s seminal work "Welcome to Cyberia: Notes on the Anthropology of Cyberculture" published in 1994 in Current Anthropology is one of the first texts to call attention for the implications of technoscience for both anthropological theory and ethnographic research.
currently being constructed and reconstructed through digital media. Moreover, the social and cultural study of science and technology has become a major arena in which genres of multi-sited ethnographic research have established their importance (Marcus 1995) and this also applies to the yet to be developed anthropology of new media.

As will be discussed in more detail in the last section of this chapter, one of the important aspects of understanding technology as a system of relations is that these relations are in fact struggles for power among actors, institutions and networks. Struggle for power of self-determination, self-representation, struggles for access and control of media production and its discourses. This investigation is therefore not oriented in any way to the study of the impact of media, or the effects of technology on indigenous peoples. As I have already stated, the emphasis is more on those processes of cultural construction of media technologies, understanding these processes as mediated communication networks for redefining social relationships, negotiating cultural and ethnic identities and even reinventing new social solidarities.

In summary, a common and recurrent problem of inquiry in all of the approaches described above has been the relative uncertainty of how to approach the ‘visual’, both in theoretical and methodological terms. Visible culture has been at the core of inquiry since the inception of anthropology as a social science a century or so ago. In the following section I position indigenous screen media theory and practice in a broader context of alternative and participatory communication and media activism. I argue that in order to understand how indigenous media works are positioned and received in different contexts (dominant or subaltern, global or local), attention needs to be paid to both formal and textual qualities, as well as the broader processes of cultural mediation; otherwise indigenous media risks being classified forever as oppositional media. Much has been written about process in regards to indigenous media, which reflects the academic anxiety for models of participatory communication obscuring the analysis of content as a valid variable.

Indigenous media occupies an intermediate and hybrid space between global mass media and local interpersonal uses of communication technologies. Conceived as a form of cultural activism, through which indigenous peoples engage in the production of media and other forms of expression as a way of sustaining and strengthening community solidarities, yet also as a way of transforming their communities and knowledge, it is important to note that ongoing processes of ethnic revitalisation are also grounded in paradox.

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19 By indigenous knowledge I refer to traditional wisdom that is generated within indigenous communities, that is location and culture specific, and is the basis for decision making and survival strategies based on traditional ‘cosmovisions’.
In this regard, Faye Ginsburg offers a middle-range approach to revise the project of ethnographic film and expand the context in which it is understood as a representational practice. Ginsburg calls it “the parallax effect” through which she invokes a dialogic relationship between ethnographic film and indigenous media. For her, the parallax effect is consummated by juxtaposing “these different but related cinematic perspectives on culture” (1999: 158) – that is ethnographic film and indigenous media – whereby ethnographic film is revived from its traditional narrow role of cultural description and observation. In Ginsburg’s argument, indigenous media’s challenge to ethnographic film may be illuminating or disorienting but in any case, carries a sense of change in perspective from the part of ethnographic film. What is often at stake in indigenous media production is a matter of cultural survival, as Ginsburg and others such as Harald Prins or Alexandra Halkin to name only a few have demonstrated for over a decade. On the contrary, I see ethnographic film still located in the safe and comfortable world of Western academic/cinematic practice. That particular difference relating to cultural activism is what will be addressed in the next section.

3.2. ‘Imperfect’ media: articulating indigenous video activism.

In the previous section, I outlined the ways indigenous media may be positioned in relation to ethnographic film and visual anthropology as a distinctive project, with a different political agenda and aesthetic considerations. The social space of indigenous media is radically different to the academic and scientific space of ethnographic film. Nevertheless, visual anthropology is still a valid project and several indigenous media experiences worldwide have emerged with collaboration from engaged visual anthropologists and ethnographic filmmakers. Some have argued that indigenous media should displace ethnographic film as a form of representing culture (Nichols 1994, Minh-ha 1989), while others have argued for the development of a framework to think of ethnographic film and indigenous media as different but related projects of representing, mediating and understanding culture through media (Ginsburg 1999). As was discussed in the previous section, indigenous media may be regarded as an example of what MacDougall (1997) calls ‘intertextual cinema’. It occupies an intermediate and hybrid space between global mass media and local interpersonal uses of communication technologies.20

In this section, I locate indigenous video media amid communication initiatives for social change within the legacy of media activism in general. Indigenous media, or more precisely, indigenous communications are naturally positioned against the backdrop of international approaches to alternative communication. Indigenous media as a project of cultural autonomy and self-representation shares with

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20 I use the term ‘media’ in a loose sense to refer to technologies of representation, such as film or video, and technologies of communication and information like radio or the Internet. I also conceive media as a means or instrument through which an action is made and a result is effected. In other words media is worked as social relations or the processes of mediation within an interpersonal, inter-communal or intercultural context. Therefore media has been used here as a form of representation, as a signifying practice, as a factor of intervention and as a social relation between individuals and collectives of people.
many other expressive forms the questioning and undermining of the terms development, modernisation and communication. Independently of the diversity of approaches within media activism, of whether we are talking about tin miner’s radio in Bolivia, or diasporic Iranian video and television in Los Angeles, it is possible to see a convergence within these approaches in relation to questions of access, participation, control or autonomy. As Ambrosi suggests (1991) the common denominator is the achievement of democracy, which takes place in different social and symbolic, real or virtual sites of struggle. Moreover, it is the struggle against the ‘enclosures of information’ (Boal 1995) posed by modern communication technologies and the way information flows for the most part within prescribed directions and within certain boundaries where images get pigeonholed, manipulated and circulated according to dominant discourses.

**Alternative media in retrospective**

The emphasis in this research lies in the renewed interest in community, alternative and participatory media occurring more systematically since the early 1980’s, particularly with the introduction of home video recorders, personal computers and satellite communications. Community media (radio, television and video production in particular), have contributed enormously to the collective and personal empowerment, to the demystification of commercial (private and public) media, to revert power relations and strengthen local social solidarities

Understanding media activism as an intermediate social space of media practice, I demonstrate that the emergence of indigenous video in the last twenty years is not confined solely to the sympathetic legacy of participatory methods in ethnographic film and current interests of ethnographic documentaries in the indigenous struggle for cultural survival (Loizos 1993, Moore 1992, Crawford and Turton 1992, Prins 1997). As I have already suggested, the rise of indigenous media practices in the past three decades is located at the conjuncture of a number of historical and socio-technical developments.

Even before the establishment of the Working Group on Indigenous People in 1977, the United Nations had already recognised in 1948 that freedom of information was a fundamental human right, which becomes inscribed as a basic right in the first Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The central role of communications has been largely recognised since the 1950’s and it is not the aim of this work to review its history in any detail.

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21 There is abundant information on the history of community video and alternative media. See Hammelink 1995, Gumucio Dagron 2001, Downing 2001 or Atton 2002 in the bibliography. For a comprehensive review of this 'activist' engagement with media, that encompasses not only indigenous work but also media being produced by a variety of other minoritised subjects, see Ginsburg et al. 2002.
In general terms however, it is important to note that for decades governments and international non-governmental agencies framed their approaches on determinist and utilitarian conceptions of communication technologies supported by Western conceptions of economic rationalism. In these instances, the adoption and/or transfer of technological artefacts and know-how were seen as panaceas for the problematics of ‘modernisation’ and ‘progress’ of ‘developing’ countries. It was clear by the beginning of the 1980’s that the emphasis on mass society, mass communications and mass culture from either functionalist or Marxist approaches had led to an outstanding imbalance in the free access, participation and circulation of information. An example of this is the Many Voices One World report commissioned by the UN International Commission for the Study of Communication in 1980. Known as the MacBride Report, the study coincides with the Martinez Cobo Report of the same year. Both reports may be regarded as having paved the road for the possibility of indigenous digital communication networks since the early 1990’s, as will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

With an openly denunciatory tone, the main impact of the MacBride Report was a theoretical and factual shift to consider the historical specificities of societies, a move to demystify technology and the emphasis in the cultural determinants of reality. By rejecting rigid economic and technological determinism, the Report coincides with the beginnings of British Cultural Studies which were an important milestone in understanding that the mass media not only tends to reproduce interpretations which serve the interests of dominant groups. They are also 'a field of ideological struggle' where the dominant encodings may be decoded beyond a passive reception of preferred readings, towards negotiated and even oppositional readings (Hall 1980).

The World Communication Report, published by the United Nations in 1989, became the reference text in international communication for social change during much of the following decade. The 1990’s were dominated by views of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) (Thede and Ambrosi 1991), the idea of an information economy, and moves towards privatisation, deregulation and transnationalisation. In certain contexts, like South America, the question of democratisation was also a key element in understanding the rhetoric of the communication age.

The circuits opened by new media technologies ranging from early video camcorders in the late 1970’s, to satellite communications in the early 1980’s, to digital video and interactive media in the 1990’s, are critical elements to take into account that indigenous media is both a product of the ongoing legacies of indigenous activism worldwide and also the outcome of a whole new generation of indigenous media makers interested in using media as expressive and creative forms of social action. Therefore, it is important to note that the uses and re-appropriation of these media forms are as diverse as the indigenous groups that use them. Video technology became available in the U.S., Canada and many
European countries by the late 60’s, in Japan by the early 70’s, and in some Latin American countries in the early 1980’s.

In its beginnings, portable and relatively inexpensive video technology was conceived as an instrument of radical counter-culture. It was rapidly embraced by many artists and activists as the most radical technology to fight the power of apparatuses and institutions such as television, education, the Art establishment and later on has become an efficient mechanism for communication outside of corporate transnationalism.

Video artist Bill Viola distinguishes for example between two main periods in the institutionalisation of video media within artistic practice in Europe and North America; a video-as-process period spanning 1963 to 1976 and a video-as-product period since the early 1980’s, to the introduction of digital video in the mid 1990’s. What is interesting about Viola’s claim is his examination of the ways that an entire first wave of video artists concentrated on finding the unique features of video technology as opposed to cinema and particularly television. Viola shows how in this stage, video was used to record life as it was, almost no editing was involved and the works were done by groups or collectives of artists working together through a collective process of image making. The collective process, or the poetics of artistic work is in this case more important than the final result or product. At the end of the 1970’s, with the shift from black and white video to colour video, and the emphasis on editing, there is also a move to individual activity and the professionalization of the discipline. The process became less and less important, while the final product of artistic activity, the object to be exhibited and consumed became more important.

While the temporal periods that Viola suggests for his two historical categories do not match the development of video in Latin America, there is a similar conceptualisation of video media as the embracing of a form of subversion or opposition. In this regard, the cultural logic of video (Turim 1991) may be also applied to other contexts of media practice, in this case political video in Latin America.

If we consider the pattern of development of indigenous media worldwide, in most cases we can observe the use of media as tools for cultural and political intervention and allowing indigenous peoples to voice and hear the situations that affect them.

In Latin America, video became an important tool for recording oral histories in traditional communities, collective memories, and an instrument for popular self-organization and education. In certain cases video became a key tactic of opposition such as in the pro-democracy movement in Chile between 1982 and 1989. In this case, as is discussed in following chapters, several collectives used video to confront the official histories being deployed during the military dictatorship. The introduction of video in Chile
in 1980 and its use as a political medium of activism by clandestine collectives such as Teleanalisis or Proceso is a clear example of the overlapping of these two video media categories: video-product and video-process (Roncagliolo 1991). On one side was the need to produce audio-visual materials to counter official discourses broadcasted by the military through television and print media. On the other hand was the use of video as a strategy of popular self-organization against the dictatorship.

With the purpose of theorising indigenous video activism I have focused on re-working the notion of ‘imperfect cinema’ developed by Cuban filmmaker and theorist Julio Garcia Espinosa in 1969 in relation to his manifesto for an anti-Hollywood cinema that finds its aesthetics and cultural articulations outside of the hegemonic order imposed by industrial and mainstream cinema. I argue that without the determinist ‘third worldist rhetoric’ present in most of these works (Gabriel 1989, Solanas and Getino 1983, Chanan 1983), the notion of imperfect cinema and third aesthetics may be updated and reworked in the context of indigenous media production, particularly in film and video practice. In doing so I am arguing that it is time to think of indigenous media beyond either the mass or interpersonal realms; or if it is destructive of tradition or on the contrary, naively liberating. These polarities continue to obscure much of what Uncapher calls the “complex even revolutionary changes presently occurring at intermediate levels” (Uncapher 1994:1). Too much emphasis on a kind of ‘Faustian dilemma’ (Ginsburg 1991) has the risk of resulting in either social or technological determinism. As some have put it, it is time to move beyond the “rigid categories of power and binary conceptions of domination and subordination that elude the fluidity and complexity of alternative media as a social, political, and cultural phenomenon” (Rodriguez 2001:6). This complexity and fluidity of alternative media applies to community indigenous video, which in turn offers important “coordinates for understanding what an interconnected world might be like outside a hegemonic order” (Ginsburg 2000 [1997]: 46).

From Imperfect Cinema to Imperfect Media

By rearticulating Garcia Espinosa’s idea I am hoping that the concept of imperfect will withstand such a radical reconception, to allow a theorization of the politically emancipatory use of video by indigenous collectives and individuals.

One of the basic notions used to understand the New Latin American Cinema as it was forged in 1967 is that it sustained itself on the concept of representing Latin America as a historical project informed by mutual histories of underdevelopment and modernisation, cultural imperialism and shared struggles. At its peak in the early years of the 1970’s, it was an attempt to name a continental experience of modernity. As Zuzana Pick has pointed out, “the unfolding of the New Latin American Cinema – as an ideological project and a cinematographic practice - is the result of its capacity to conceptualize the

22 I have also referred to Garcia Espinosa’s most recent re-examination of his own work (Espinosa 1985 in Martin 1996).
social and political impact of cinema as a cultural practice” (Pick 1993:3). This capacity to conceptualize the socio-political implications of media practice has also been one of the most relevant features of the Latin American communications and media scholarly tradition. An account of this tradition lies outside the scope of this research.

Julio Garcia Espinosa’s *Toward an Imperfect Cinema*, along with Glauber Rocha’s *Aesthetics of Hunger* and Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino’s *Third Cinema* are three of the most important works that came out of the Seventies movement known as 'New Latin American Cinema.' The political foundations were built on an ideal of social change, aesthetic foundations on radical views on hunger and poverty (Rocha 1966). The move towards an “imperfect cinema” (Garcia Espinosa 1969 in Chanan 1983), was a clear call to subvert the hegemonic structure of film production, distribution and consumption represented by the Hollywood system23. If this New Cinema represented only the cinematic aspect of an explosion and implosion of artistic creativity during these years (i.e. the ‘boom’ in Latin American literature and music), perhaps the most distinguishable characteristic of the “movement” was the belief that a new kind of cinematic language could be put together to bring about a whole change in society.

The call for a “Cinema of Underdevelopment” (Birri 1967 in Chanan 1983) responded to the need to involve the popular participation of society; to involve audiences in the process of transformation, education, consciousness and revolutionary action. Secondly, it was intended in the first place as a warning against the technical perfection of hegemonic cinema. For Garcia Espinosa any attempt to match the perfection of the commercial films contradicted the basis implicit in a revolutionary cinema; the call for an active and participatory audience. Garcia Espinosa was interested in a new poetics for the cinema that could be, above all, a "partisan" and "committed" poetics, a "committed" art, a consciously and resolutely "committed" cinema - that is to say, an "imperfect" cinema. For him, an imperfect cinema could make use of documentary or fictional modes of representation and could serve any genre.

What interests me about updating the concept of imperfect cinema and its application to ‘small’, ‘citizen’ or ‘radical media’, is the way in which indigenous video for example –or any other form of video activism for that matter- may deal with the misleading notions of ‘perfection’, ‘quality’, ‘rating’, that today surrounds most of the hegemonic media spaces. The notion of imperfect implies there is no such thing as an absolute, or perfect, televisual language -there is no perfect cinema or television. Imperfect media is about the constant search for new languages, not obsessed with technically impeccable modes of representation, but one that reflects and is grounded on the needs of its users. Imperfect media is an open area of experimentation for new visual languages, not prescribed by network

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23 As some of this filmmakers have later on conceded (Garcia Espinosa 1985 in Martin 1996), the attack was not so much on Hollywood narrative or particular films, but more on the industrial mode of production that was not suitable for the Latin American experiences.
television, and the mainstream circuits of image flows. Indigenous video may also be thought of as imperfect in Garcia Espinosa’s rejection of the division between producers and spectators or consumers and as a form of deconstructing non-indigenous narratives, where formal experimentation is never excluded but put into practice.

Like imperfect cinema, imperfect media is also a way of “unthinking eurocentrism” in the media and a call for the decolonisation of media practice, from the methods of film and video making dictated by the dominant industries.

Interestingly, the idea of a New Latin American Cinema started losing force after 1983, and coincides with the rise in grassroots and independent video in Latin America (Festa and Santoro 1991; Auferheide 1993; Roncagliolo 1991; Ranucci and Burton 1990 in Burton 1990). In fact, the beginnings of indigenous video production in Latin America can be traced back to 1983 with the publication of the booklet *Towards an Indigenous Video* by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) in Mexico. The book is still important for understanding what goes on in Mexico today. In a sense the ‘official birth’ of indigenous video in Mexico also comes to redefine in turn the use of video for political and cultural awareness.

An example of imperfect video may be seen in some recent videos coming out of Zapatista communities in Chiapas, which are distributed by the Chiapas Media Project initiative. In many of these videos, such as *Caracoles* (2003) for example it is possible to see a quest for what Shohat and Stam term the “archaic sources of alternative esthetics” (Shohat and Stam 1994: 295). The emphasis in some of the Zapatista videos on collective process, call to action, and participant spectators through focusing on rallies, speeches, collective ceremonies and activities may be regarded as a particular aesthetic of resistance.

Another example of imperfect video may be seen in Tracey Moffat’s *Nice Coloured Girls* (1987) and her construction of an oppositional narrative to questions of Aboriginality, gender and European colonialism in Australia. Moffat appropriates a series of contradictory discourses in a kind of anti-realism that undermines any attempt at univocal modes of narration (Shohat and Stam 1994) and questions the strict conventions of what Aboriginal cinema is or should be.

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24 The CMP is a US-Mexican non government cooperation initiative benefitting Chol, Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Tojolabal indigenous communities started in 1997 with a series of consultations with indigenous community leaders. The CMP’s main office in San Cristobal de las Casas was created in 1998, and today, all five of the autonomous indigenous regions of the state of Chiapas have trained video makers working with the CMP, which in a sense has become a forum for indigenous peoples to create their own media, promote their autonomy and tell their own stories through distinctive narratives.
As opposed to the practice of many filmmakers of the New Latin American cinema, Zapatista video in Mexico for example is radically collective; an instance of both video-process and video-product where subjects are called to cooperate, collaborate and co-produce their own films. The attempts of revolutionary filmmakers of the social documentary tradition in Latin America in the 1970’s to ‘rectify’ the image of the people as represented in traditional cinema was condemned to fail from the moment the subjects never participated in the process of film-making. Both projects emphasize the impact of film or video respectively on social memory. The main difference is that the collective of Latin American filmmakers always spoke for someone else; the oppressed, the worker, the peasant, the ‘indian’. Indigenous video makers, on the contrary, speak for themselves.

As Daniel Miller (1995) has argued, film, video and other media may be seen as “new technologies of objectification [which]... create new possibilities of understanding at the same moment that they pose new threats of alienation and rupture” (Miller 1995:18). Although still framed by the apparently unavoidable Faustian dilemma perspective, what is interesting about Miller’s concept of ‘objectification’ is the emphasis on media as tactics of strategic reversal and his call to understand how people many times resolve “or more commonly live out these contradictions on local practice”(18.)

The notion of tactical reversal is key to my understanding of imperfect video. In his influential book The Practice of Everyday Life, Michel de Certeau (1984) distinguishes between the concepts of strategy and tactic. Strategies, he suggests, are grounded in institutions and technologies of power, either in implicit or concealed form. They presuppose a structure of orientation in time and space and function as a plan that imposes itself on a given social landscape. On the contrary, de Certeau conceives tactics as determined by their lack of power, and as being shaped by external limitations rather than internal possibilities. For de Certeau, tactics are the tools of the oppressed, constructed ‘blow by blow’ and those which are often ultimately contained by strategies being deployed from above.

In my opinion, indigenous media may be seen as both a tactic of opposition and as a strategy of resistance. When theorising the implications of indigenous media we need to take into account that we are also talking about power as technical know-how or a strategy of power-knowledge. Foucault has demonstrated how power is more appropriately seen as something productive, not only repressive. Power as a relation circulates within a network formed by histories, cultures, individuals and technologies.

Following de Certeau’s works, Lovink uses the notion of ‘tactical media’ to refer to the critical usage and theorisation of media practices in pushing for all kinds of potentially subversive political issues.

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25 In this sense, I have used the term strategies of exclusion in Chapter Four to refer to the consistent programs of assimilation carried by the Chilean State on the indigenous populations of the country.
(Meikle 2003). Tactical media in this sense refers to temporary actions of subversion aimed at provoking and contesting dominant codes without the aim, in principle, of consolidating a long term strategy of subversion. Tactical media may be an aspect of imperfect media/video, though not constrained to temporary actions or ‘pantallazos’ such as the ones organised by Teleanálisis in Chile under the military regime. If we look at Zapatista video in Mexico or the work coming out of Cefrec-Caib in Bolivia, there is a clear long term strategy of building alternative spaces of media practice, a practice that goes well beyond a transitory tactical provocation. The case of Inuit producer Zacharias Kunuk in Canada is also worth mentioning. For the last ten years Kunuk has worked with different organizations at Igloolik in the creation of screen dramas and stories about Inuit life in the area before the 1930’s. His company, Isuma Productions, has produced several very successful programs such as Qaggiq (1989) or the half-hour drama series Nunavut between 1993 and 1995. All these productions are spoken integrally in Inuit language and are a key case in point of this strategic objectification of culture for political purposes (Miller 1995, Ginsburg 1999, McLagan 2002).

This strategic objectification, this ‘making culture visible’ (Wortham 2002) is based on the deliberate circulation of ‘cultural material’ (McLagan 2002). In this way, the concept of imperfect video needs to be analysed in relation to what John Urry has called the “electronification of memory” (Urry 1992) in much the same way Faye Ginsburg elaborates on the notion of “screen memories” (Ginsburg 2002). Reworking a concept initially developed by Freud in 1899 that explained the phenomenon through which an early memory may serve as a screen for a later event and where hidden memories are concealed and repressed by imposed ones, it is interesting that Ginsburg actually inverts Freud’s use of the term. By looking at the work of Inuit media makers, Ginsburg shows how indigenous media practitioners use screen media to reclaim their own collective stories and histories rather than to mask them. Many of these stories tell traumatic tales of oppression and colonisation. As Ginsburg points out they have been erased “in the national narratives of the dominant culture and are in danger of being forgotten within local worlds as well” (Ginsburg 2002). In such contexts, indigenous societies live very much in the present, often with memories that have present relevance but may articulate inconsistent

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26 The Bolivian Plan of Indigenous Audiovisual Communications constitutes a concrete outcome of a long process by which several indigenous and peasant organisations in Bolivia established, in conjunction with CEFREC (Centro de Estudios, Formación y Realización Cinematográfica, an independent Film Education Centre), the basis for the development of a long term scheme of audiovisual communication. Mainly working with video, it is interesting to note how indigenous people in Bolivia have been able to start inserting their cultural narratives in broader spheres, based on their ancestral forms of communication and representation. Through this scheme, a varied and thriving indigenous media practice has emerged, establishing the foundations for a series of exchange practices at the national level allowing for the continuation of traditional forms of oral and collective memory. As such, video has come to be conceptualised as a tool for empowerment and as a tactic to elaborate an ambitious strategy for cultural survival, promoting a more democratic and multicultural participation in the mass media. The Bolivian Plan of Indigenous Audiovisual Communications is a benchmark case in Latin America in regards to establishing alternative mechanisms of negotiation and exchange with the national society. In other words, it offers an open possibility to insert local narratives in the national and/or global context.
cultural pasts. The question of the ‘electronification’ of memory (Urry 1996: 63), provides an interesting dimension to examining the role that memory plays in our image-fed society. Digital technologies, interactive media and information systems have the potential to become relevant mnemonic devices for indigenous histories, which are often composed of bits and pieces.

Social memory is a key element in imperfect media practice because it refers to the dialectics between official, monumental, positivist history and the rebellious, irreverent, or interested mishearings, which circulate in a given culture. Social memory is thus dynamic, and capable of infinite modulation, since it is constituted, not by any centripetal narrative, nor by the centrifugal revisions of that narrative, but by the network or web which all, or some, of those narratives create. Social memory can never be comprehensively summarised, since it is fragmentary and contradictory. Moreover, it is held in disparate, largely inaccessible consciousnesses, so it can be apprehended only through the evidence of its performance in discrete events, often read against the grain. But the intangibility of social memory does not render it unimportant, since it helps form the views and attitudes, and hence actions, of the present. The question of social memory may be also said to be at the core of the articulations of what George Marcus calls an “activist imaginary”.

Video is essentially a reflective medium, since its infinite technical possibilities to combine images, sounds, speech, text and narrative offer an opportunity unseen in any other medium to reflectively apply or undermine the conventions which regulate the strategies of institutionalization, representation and distribution of art. For that reason, and also under the influence of the social and cultural trends of the era, video in its pioneer phase - in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s - functioned as part of a wide front of anti-institutional cultural opposition which combined forms of social and cultural reflectivity, advocating the application of concepts of social solidarity, de-hierarchization of values and anti-monopolistic distribution of knowledge and information.

Not surprisingly, the majority of works presented are documentaries because this film genre has been an effective tool to capture and problematise historically ignored ‘truths’, prevailing as the privileged format for cultural recuperation. Although it has started to change, in Latin America the majority of indigenous media production is constituted largely by denunciatory documentaries. With the few exceptions of feature films coming from Bolivia and Mexico, the case in Latin America is different to other places such as Canada, New Zealand or Australia and to a lesser extent the U.S., where there has been an emergent indigenous cinema focusing on drama and experimental narratives.

What is interesting about the examples of feature films like Zacharias Kunuk’s Atanarjuat; The Fast Runner (Canada 2000), or Ivan Sen’s Beneath Clouds (Australia 2002), or Maori films such as Once Were Warriors (Tamahori 1994), is that fictional narratives can also be the key to cultural subversion.
Melodrama as a subversive genre was a point raised by several feminist film theorists in the 1980’s, who began looking at the bold potentiality of drama. In the Latin American case, many filmmakers such as Valeria Sarmiento for example, used melodrama as a specific strategy of transgression and feminine sensibility. The inclusion of indigenous languages in fictional narratives is crucial because it transcends the mere utilisation of language for practical purposes and a language different to the dominant one becomes legitimised through its naturalisation.

In much of her work, Sarmiento deconstructs the social, cultural and historical codifications of Latin American machismo, such as in her film A Man when He is a Man (Sarmiento, 1982). In most of her films the gendered articulation of the subjective and the collective can be recognised as oppositional to the hegemonising tendency of dominant male cinematic practice. Coco Fusco emphasises how Sarmiento takes on melodrama “to explore what the genre highlights but social mores repress – obsessional desire and sexual transgression” (Fusco 1989).

In effect, and despite being strongly rejected by Third Cinema filmmakers in the 1970s, Castells i Tallens is right in pointing out that melodrama can be an effective poetic tool for fighting against the romanticism and exoticism that are so characteristic of indigenous representations in national cinemas. In Wichan (Meneses 1994) for example, one of the most powerful strategies of resistance is that Mapudungun becomes the natural language, not the minority language.

*Once Were Warriors* (Tamahori, 1994), which received strong criticism from several Maori groups, relies on melodramatic strategies to deal with the sociocultural crisis within a Maori community, a crisis resulting from the community's gradual alienation from both ancestral Maori culture (the role of the warrior for example and contemporary cases of domestic violence) and contemporary western New Zealand culture.

According to Castells i Talens (2003) indigenous cinema in Latin America has the potential to become a tactic of cultural resistance, not only because of the use of indigenous languages in the films which break the idea that Spanish or English are the languages of audiovisual expression. On the contrary, it breaks with important stereotypes. Stereotypes historically forged in the main currents of Latin American cinema, from the silent era onwards, including the ideological constructions of the New Latin American Cinema of an indigenous-peasant at the core of the class struggle set in a rural context.

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27 Research on the melodramatic genre leads has brought important debates about how female subjectivity and spectatorship are traditionally constructed. For a general discussion on the melodramatic imagination see Brooks 1976, Abu-Lughod 2002, Mulvey 1986, Fusco 1991.

28 As will be explored in more detail in Chapter Four, an example of this is the Chilean film Wichan directed by Magali Meneses in 1994 which is entirely spoken in Mapudungun and uses non-professional actors from different Mapuche communities at Lago Budi, Araucania Region, Chile.
Castells i Talens argues that an indigenous cinema depends not only on fresh views by native filmmakers, nor exclusively on the aesthetic and formal strategies of telling the stories. It also depends on its circulation and reception. When audiences start engaging with films spoken in marginalised languages, those realities become part of the everyday, and stop being alien or exceptional. Castells i Tallens speaks about indigenous cinema but the question remains; how to define an indigenous cinema? In Australia, for example, as O’Regan has pointed out, an Aboriginal cinema is emerging from the spaces of non-indigenous and indigenous partnerships (O’Regan 1996), which is the view of the Australian Film Commission. In the last twenty years, Australia has produced over twenty feature films that would be classified as indigenous films according to this taxonomy, such as Tracey Moffat’s BeDevil, Rachel Perkins Radiance and more recently One Night the Moon, the above mentioned Beneath Clouds and Australian Rules, Black or White, Nicholas Parson’s Dead Heart, Rolf de Heer’s The Tracker, and Philip Noyce’s Rabbit-Proof Fence, among others. The point I’m trying to make is that independently of the question of what is or isn’t an indigenous cinema, in the Australian case there has been a minor, yet noticeable concern with putting certain Aboriginal issues on the big screen. Comparatively, there is nothing like this being done in Chile at the moment. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

Castells i Talens goes further in suggesting that if fictional narratives as entertainment have been common strategies of assimilation, they can also be strategies of resistance. This is an important point since much theorisation in communication, media and cultural studies today conceptualises the politics of resistance exclusively in terms of subversive action (Rodriguez 2001, Atton 2002). I quote extensively from Rodriguez, who argues that,

“Because ‘alternative media’ rests on the assumption that these media are alternative to something, this definition will easily entrap us into binary thinking: mainstream media and their alternative, that is, alternative media. Also, the label “alternative media” predetermines the type of oppositional thinking that limits the potential of these media to their ability to resist the alienating power of mainstream media. This approach blinds our understanding of all other instances of change and transformation brought about by these media” (Rodriguez 2001).

Fictional narratives are important for imperfect video or cinema because they allow the telling of stories outside of the conventions of ethnographic films, current affairs reports and/or television documentaries. As Catells i Talens puts it,

“it is precisely the apolitical appearance of a film what can constitute its subversion. On the contrary, the more exceptional indigenous languages are made in Latin American cinema, the more they will remain
languages of exception. If they appear in the screens as folkloric reports, they will be folkloric; and if they are only presented with balaclavas, they will be masked languages” (Castells i Talens 2003; my translation).

**Imperfect media and the notion of counter-public spheres**

The examples mentioned in the previous section demonstrate how indigenous media practices have grown to become crucial endeavours for both communities and individuals in creating and contesting social, visual, narrative and political spaces. More importantly, there have been many cases in which indigenously produced texts have intervened in the creation of national and other forms of dominant cultural imaginaries that have historically excluded or misrepresented indigenous peoples’ stories and images. Despite clear examples, empirical and theoretical accounts of globalisation have yet to fully incorporate the importance of indigenous media – as well as other ethnic minority media - within the ongoing integration of media systems in what Arjun Appadurai (1990) conceptualises as the increasing flow of material culture, capital, people, images and ideas in a global cultural economy. More critical analysis is also needed in regards to the impact of indigenous cinema and video in the broader public and media spheres in which they are located.

Since Habermas’ publication of the influential and today contested *The Structural Transformations of the Bourgeois Public Sphere* in 1962, there has been considerable work on the reaches and limitations of his ideal conception of a public sphere. A comprehensive critique of Habermas’ early work and the diverse reformulations on public sphere theory escapes the scope of this brief article. Nevertheless, there are important issues that are necessary to frame the discussion on Mapuche video and Internet, particularly because Habermas’ conceptualisation falls short in relation to the new electronic politics of a mediated mode of information posed by the Internet.

According to Habermas (1962), the exercise of power needs the permanent control of public opinion. The discursive power of the Chilean elite groups, for example, clearly shows how the manufacture of consent is achieved through the mass media. In this sense, the state in Chile has given the burden of representation to the mass media, which in several cases are themselves owned by the same corporate groups at the centre of dispute with Mapuche communities in the south of Chile (Seguel 2002).

In their critique of Habermas’ idea of a public sphere, Negt and Kluge (1993 [1972]) suggest that the bourgeois public sphere, although supposedly representing all of a society, did not represent every ‘context of living’. Following this idea, the Chilean public sphere, including the mainstream media, is supported by a façade of legitimation whereby certain social discourses are privileged over others and

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29 See for example John Downing 2001 or Nancy Fraser 1993 in bibliography.
where public opinion is dominated by an ignorant and arrogant common sense that is mirrored in the media. Negt and Kluge use the notion of ‘oppositional public sphere’ to refer to those who are not part of the bourgeois public sphere, and to a space that acts as a forum for new ideas.

Similarly, Nancy Fraser (1994) has argued for a more inclusive concept of the public sphere that includes a variety of ‘subaltern counterpublics’ that may overcome the elitism and homogeneity of a bourgeois public sphere as defined by Habermas. A politically effective oppositional counterpublic, as Fraser claims, would be a space where groups with no voice are able to develop the resources to pose a consistent challenge to dominant practices. If counter public spheres are places to open alternative discursive spaces and facilitate the participation of marginal groups, then the Mapuche case offers, if not yet a consistent challenge, then definitely a potential space for the circulation of dissident and oppositional voices. As is discussed in more detail later on, the Internet provides a space relatively protected from the dominant discourse, in which an alternative Mapuche imaginary can be articulated. But before looking at Mapuche online activism, it is necessary to consider the rise of a ‘network society’ (Castells 1996) and its implications for indigenous peoples.

3.3. Digitizing knowledge: new media and indigenous mediascapes in Latin America.

Los resultados del proceso nos ha enseñado a presentar nuestra propia voz tal cual como queremos que sea y que entiendan en base a la lógica de nuestra realidad, es por ello que hemos dado importantes pasos, pasando de la “queja” a la “propuesta” del “discurso” a la “práctica” en otras palabras hemos ingresado muy fuertemente a copar los espacios para la enseñanza de generar una cultura de respeto, generar una cultura de consulta, una cultura de participación y una cultura de política indígena. La lucha indígena no es de hoy ni de ayer, es de todos los días y será para siempre, hasta que llegue el día en que haya realmente la igualdad de condiciones y de justo equilibrio; la solución de ayer lo necesitaba para ayer y para hoy requiero de otras soluciones alternativas que sean para hoy, Y para mañana se necesita garantizar la historia viva de los pueblos originarios.30

The quote reproduced above is a good way of getting the discussion on digital media started. It corresponds to a section of a manifesto written by Mino Eusebio Castro, an Asháninka leader from the indigenous community of Marankiari Bajo, Peru. The excerpt clearly summarises the new socio-technical disjunctures of the contemporary Latin American cultural economy as well as the role of

30 Mino Eusebio Castro, Ashtajiaro itsari birákocha (Let’s appropriate the White Man’s network). Unpublished document.
information and communication technologies in the renovated political agendas of many indigenous groups. Moreover, Mino Castro’s political manifesto is a clear sign of this process of ethnic resurgence. By taking into account the historical and social background as well as the cultural politics of this new indigenous emergence in Latin America since 1992, it is possible to conceptualise this notion of emergence in two ways. The first one is in the sense of emergency, as in urgency. The indigenous demands today are extremely urgent, and cannot be put off and delayed any more, even though governments and business sectors have been slow in realising it. The urge is every sense of the word, including the push to have authority over their representation in the media and ascendancy in efficient and independent communication media at the service of indigenous peoples. As Bengoa (2000) suggests, “the question of recognition has been placed at the core of the indigenous demand” and that is why many Latin American countries have been forced to pass several amendments in their national constitutions. Not all of these legislative corrections have had an effective impact, but the question of ethnic rights or “ethnic citizenship” (de la Peña 1997 in Bengoa 2000:144) has been clearly thrown into the discussion. Media, ethnicity and citizenship form the very core elements in this new digital mediasphere.31

There is little doubt that the indigenous movements today are much more complex than in the past. It seems quite clear that this indigenous ‘re-invention’ is a re-emergence of old and new indigenous identities comes not only from “western” scholarship on the topic, but more importantly from fresh and critical research/practice originating from indigenous researchers and activists. Indigenous scholars worldwide have developed critical frameworks that not only condemn the historical and philosophical bases of Western research and forms of representation but have also contributed to the urgent need to decolonise research methodologies in setting agendas for planning, evaluating, criticising and implementing indigenous research and media practice.

With notable cases of rebellion and resistance movements throughout the five hundred years of colonial history, it is in fact silence and invisibility that have been the general features of indigenous survival in the Americas. This is why the notion of emergence can also be understood as resurgence. The indigenous struggle is not invisible or disguised any more. It is in many cases up front and open. If during colonial times indigenous peoples were subjected to silence, in the 19th century Latin American republics they were conditioned to servitude. For much of the 20th century, artists, activists and intellectuals spoke for them and their necessities. But at the turn of the century, independent voices have surprised the unaware Latin American societies (Bengoa 2000). One of the most dramatic examples was the population census of 1992 in Chile – the first one in 20 years - in which almost 10% of the population identified themselves as indigenous. Until then, many indigenous groups in Chile had supposedly vanished forever, while others were condemned to integration to modernity and assimilation.

31 De la Peña talks about “dual citizenship” in his analysis of indigenous autonomy in Mexico (see Bengoa 2000: 144 in bibliography).
to the wider society. The results shocked not only the intellectual and academic world but also Chilean society at large. This indigenous resurgence may also be understood as a ‘proactive reaction’ to the fact that indigenous people in Latin America have not been invited to the “wedding of free market and representative democracy” (Bengoa 2000; Dominguez and Lowenthal 1997).

On the other hand, this idea of emergency also connotes the sense of urgency. Ethnic citizenship and the question of autonomy have become urgent issues in the rearticulation of the Latin American indigenous movements during the 1990’s (Bengoa 2000 144-148). The struggle for autonomy is in fact the most radical wing of this emergence in times of globalisation.

Political and cultural autonomy are intimately related to communicational autonomy. As was pointed out at last year’s “World Conference Against Racism” in Durban, South Africa, indigenous media can also play a critically important role in combating discrimination against indigenous peoples. With this in mind, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has already held two training sessions and workshops for indigenous journalists. The High Commissioner also made it possible for several indigenous journalists to attend and cover the World Conference in Durban. Out of these efforts emerged the beginnings of a network of indigenous journalists in cyberspace.

This notion of an indigenous mediasphere is similar, yet broader in spectrum to other related conceptualisations, such as Hartley and McKee’s (2000) notion of an indigenous public sphere in Australia. In this sense, it may be argued that a indigenous mediasphere happens both within countries, and in the interstices of global communication. In his comparative work on Australian Aboriginal and Canadian First Nations representations in their respective national media, Michael Meadows has demonstrated that the range of media being produced by indigenous sectors is crucial in facilitating cultural citizenship, in ways that differentiate it from other media. Various studies have argued, for example, that Indigenous media production in Australia, the South Pacific and Canada has contributed to a re-conceptualising of Habermas’s notion of the public sphere (Molnar and Meadows 2001; Avison and Meadows 2000).

This indigenous mediasphere may be said to have been crystallised worldwide in the United Nations’ declaration of an International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People (1995-2004). Today this social space of media production is populated by a diverse array of people, most notably the indigenous artists, intellectuals, academics, lawyers, communicators, journalists, historians and media makers who

32 See www.indigenousmedia.org
33 Hartley and McKee’s conceptualisation is clearly about non-Indigenous constructions and imaginations of the Indigenous, and does not refer to a environment of indigenous media production and practice. As Meadows (1998) points out, the indigenous media sector – incorporating radio, television, film, print, and multimedia technologies - is, in itself, an influential cultural resource ...[and] the fastest growing media sector in Australia (Meadows 1998: 69).
strenthen the potential for creating autonomous indigenous communicational spaces. Besides the Declaration of 1995, the United Nations and other international non-governmental organisations have been organising a series of world summits on the information society where indigenous discourses have become increasingly visible and audible. I’m not denying that the situation of most indigenous people in the world remains critical and dangerously precarious. I am not evading the everyday and ongoing struggle of indigenous peoples for their most basic human rights. In several cases indigenous peoples worldwide have made it clear that the promotion of the Internet by governments constitutes yet another exercise in control and coercion. If digital division is cultural exclusion, digital inclusion is not necessarily cultural inclusion.

Many scholars have noted (Forte 2002, Delgado 2003, Pilco 1999) certain defining aspects of the information paradigm that influence and stimulate indigenous marginalisation, such as the orientation of ICT’s according to a neoliberal market logic; elevated costs of technological infrastructure and access in indigenous areas; geographical isolation; lack of technical know-how; absence of regulatory legal frameworks; low degree of connectivity; and in general, the hegemony of technological production concentrated in a small nucleus of industrialised countries.

The World Wide Web has the potential to both reproduce or disrupt the social formations and legitimating conditions of dominant societies. The development of digital capitalism (Murdock 2004) may result in the commodification of indigenous identities, while at the same time we can celebrate the possibilities for the development of new social literacies, political alliances and independent cultural production. Again we are confronted with the kind of paradox of media power (Couldry and Curran 2003) or the Faustian dilemma defined by Faye Ginsburg. Nevertheless, as Delgado suggests “indigenous peoples do not see cyber-communication as a substitute for traditional organizing, but rather as a catalyst to it” (Delgado 2002), and this is the departing point of this final section of the chapter.

Just as video networking was critical in Latin American video movement in the 1980’s, digital networking using the internet has allowed many indigenous organizations and individuals to contrast their respective social, cultural, and political situations within and between indigenous communities internationally. One critical example is the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA). Located in Quito, this group represents more than 400 indigenous groups from the Amazon in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Peru, Surinam, and Venezuela.

The indigenizing of digital information and communication technologies (DICT) is a clear example of what I am arguing as cultural construction of technology. Culture is not only shaped by technology, but also determines it. The appropriation of DICTs by indigenous organizations has to do with finding efficient ways for intra-communal communication, and as a way to communicate and inform the broader
societies in which indigenous nations live\textsuperscript{34}. More importantly, DICT’s are constructed as useful technologies for the formation of a new “pan-indigenous discourse” (Bengoa 2000:138) or cultural scape (c.f. Appadurai 1990).

The complex network of Mapuche websites being produced within Chile and from several locations in Europe is a remarkable example. This issue is dealt in much more detail in Chapter Five, where I argue that Mapuche online activism may be regarded as an incipient counter public sphere that occurs within a broader and global indigenous mediasphere, or a kind of pan-indigenous public sphere constructed through the internet but strongly grounded in ‘real’ and local socio-cultural solidarities.

In a recent article published in the influential Argentinian \textit{Diario La Nación}, several analysts from prestigious Latin American NGO’s presented their views on the current indigenous emergence in Latin America. In the article, Marcos Alonso, president of the Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe, or \textit{Fondo Indigena} as it is commonly known, argues that a new network of relations between indigenous leaderships in Latin America is being woven, which may end up in a scenario of supranational conflicts. In his view, there is a threading of conflicts currently happening all over the continent. Other analysts perceive that the recent events in Bolivia may provoke a regional outbreak of indigenous nationalism, particularly in Ecuador. What is stressed by all the experts interviewed in the article is the high degree of interconnectedness of the indigenous movements in the region. In May 2003 several indigenous leaders from seven Latin American countries met in Mexico City where they put forward a communiqué stating their goal to reclaim political power at any cost, without rejecting the armed struggle. Five months later, one of these leaders, Felipe Quispe was a key figure in the massive mobilisations that resulted in the resignation of Bolivian president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada.

In this sense, Mino Castro’s manifesto is clear on this point. He argues that the indigenous demands of today have moved from complaint to proposal. In the words of Sebastián Lara (1999), it has progressed from complaint to “the proposal for a world of decentralised but coordinated autonomies”\textsuperscript{35}. In order to address what this world may be like I propose that indigenous media be considered as a socio-technical system of relations where the cultural construction of technology becomes a crucial way of theorising the current phase of digitalisation of indigenous knowledge.

The question of digitalisation of knowledge has to do with how new digital information and communication technologies offer alternative possibilities for cultural recuperation and revival, not just

\textsuperscript{34} This is an important issue discussed by Mapuche media makers and activists in my video.

\textsuperscript{35} Reference in Inkarri Indigenous Documentation Center in Bilbao, Spain. p://www.inkarri.net/yo/2004/home.htm
for political mobilisation. It is a question of ‘cultural control’ (Bonfil Batalla 1981), and more specifically of cultural and intellectual property.

The symposium “Indigenous Identities: Oral, Written expressions and New Technologies” that took place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 15 to 18 May 2001 is another example. The event brought together 64 indigenous and non-indigenous speakers — academics, experts, authors and publishers — from 18 countries worldwide. According to the final report, some twenty indigenous communities from all five continents were represented (UNESCO Report 2001). This event set out to further those aims in accordance with the recommendations of the conference “Towards A Constructive Pluralism” (UNESCO, January 1999) and the workshop on Cultural Challenges of the Decade of the World’s Indigenous People (UNESCO, October 1999), as well as the objectives of the United Nations Year for Dialogue Between Civilizations (2001) and the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001). The event was an important site of debate in relation to the “safeguarding, transmission and mutation of indigenous cultures” and the associated potential benefits of new technologies, such as bringing those often-isolated cultures into contact with others around the world (UNESCO Report, 2001).

Events like these do not imply a radical change in the situation of marginality and lack of participation of a large number of indigenous groups. However they constitute successful examples of indigenous groups forming networks through which to express a distinctive political and cultural force in their own right. In this regard, more critical work is needed to examine the ways technological change has been narrativised to create this renewed indigenous mediasphere, both in physical social spaces and in the realm of cyberspace. As Augé suggests, what is needed is a “new regime of fiction” (Augé 1999:6) that explains the conditions of circulation between the individual imagination (the dream), the collective imagination (the myth) and the fictional imagination constituted through artistic, literary or media practice; in this particular case, it is political practice through digital media.

**The cultural construction of Indigenous Media.**

In 1969, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman introduced their influential social construction of reality model. They argued that reality is socially constructed and that a sociology of knowledge should analyse the processes in which this construction occurs. If the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality and the relationship between human thought and the social context in which it arises, the anthropology of media is concerned with the cultural construction of audiovisual information and communication technologies, as well as in the relationship between cultural identity and knowledge and the cultural contexts in which they arise. The interest in the cultural construction of indigenous media also extends from the work of several scholars that developed social
constructivist frameworks in the 1980’s and 1990’s (Mackenzie and Wajcman, 1985). Much of the social constructionist approach to technology is drawn from Berger and Luckman’s sociology of knowledge and other constructionist approaches to communication grounded in systems theory.

As promoted by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, Wiebe Bijker, Trevor Pinch, John Law, and many others, social construction of technology (SCOT) approaches have been a major force in studies of technology and culture. They have offered vital alternatives to positivistic and deterministic conceptions of technology; rich notions of human and technological agency; and new objects and approaches for the cultural, historical and philosophical approaches to technology.

At the same time, critics have charged that SCOT does nothing more than repeatedly discover that its objects are “socially constructed.” It expresses the resistance to the existence of cultural universals and verges on the theories of radical cultural relativism. Thus, the social construction of knowledge argues that "... knowledge is a social construction rather than a (more or less flawed) mirror held up to nature" (Bijker and Law 1992: 13). In the same line of reasoning, the SCOT approach holds that "... technologies and technological practices are built in a process of social construction and negotiation, a process often seen as driven by the social interests of participants" (Bijker and Law, 1992: 13). The cultural aspect of technology is also important to consider. A cultural construction of technology, then, not only sees technology as an outcome of the working of society, but holds that viewing technology as part and parcel of a society entails investigating information technology in interaction with culture. The duality of technology consequently comprises the idea that technology is both created and changed by human cultural actions as well as used by humans to accomplish some action (Dirksen, 2001).

On a similar level, some anthropologists have argued that cultural constructivism is not a challenging political critique (Faris 1997), and in doing so fail to observe that indigenous productions already exist in a dialogical relation with other already existing visual products in contexts in which visual technologies have long been established in the cultural environment. Many anthropologists have argued that since film is a cultural product with particular foundations in Western visualism, it therefore has the potential to subvert non-Western means of knowing. However, because technologies are not neutral, it is not in the technical properties of a thing, but in the way they are used and the purposes of that use that confer the crucial cultural meanings of that use, including the "self-identity" of the user (Turner 1997)\(^6\).

\(^6\) In this paragraph I am referring to a interesting debate that took place with the publication of James Weiner’s article “Televisualist Anthropology” in the journal Current Anthropology (April 1997). In it, the use of video media by indigenous peoples as valid instruments of cultural resistance is strongly criticised and dismissed. Weiner also condemns the lack of theoretical consistency of anthropologists working on indigenous media. In my view, Weiner and others (e.g James Faris) still represent the voice of authority of a Western establishment in a increasingly obsolete anthropological project that struggles to maintain its position of privilege within studies of technologically mediated cultural representation. Indigenous media exists independently of anthropologists showing clips of indigenous produced videos to other anthropologists that compare them and contrast them with their own lack of understanding of non-western or non-capitalist filmic constructions. In my view, the
Therefore it cannot be assumed that this potential or this cultural inscription of (Western) technology works only in one direction.

The appropriation of a new product is ultimately a process of negotiation between different constituencies and the development of content is ultimately a social process. Both technologies and their content must become embedded in specific contexts in order for them to have meaning; what Faye Ginsburg (1995) calls “embedded aesthetics” within the rhetoric of self-determination. This is a process of appropriation involving the acquisition, placing, interpretation and integration of an artefact into existing changes/changing social and cultural practices (Preston and Kerr 2001:110).

For the purpose of this work then, technologies of communication and mediation are understood, in reference to indigenous media, as a repertoire of cultural practices through which producers and receivers actively disseminate and accept specific codes in diverse, often divergent ways. These cultural practices entail different tactics of cultural survival, preservation and adaptation to contemporary demands of interculturality. These interpretations of the technology are often referred to as ‘technological frames of meaning’ (Bijker & Law 1992) to refer to the concepts, techniques, and resources set of theories, expertise, values, methods of testing, and physical tools and devices “available to communities as they negotiate about the putative character of innovation” (Bijker & Law 1992: 19). Indigenous Media texts and products are not therefore isolated phenomena, but are inserted in historical conditions and placed in intertextual and intercultural frames of reference. As a social relation and cultural practice, it is possible to consider indigenous media with more flexibility. As relevant social groups carry on processes of cultural construction, technology is appropriated and resignified as socio-technical ensembles by different interpretative communities for their intrinsic attributes in the context of new technological frames of signification (Bijker and Law 1992). As feminist critiques of technology have shown (Cockburn 1992; Cockburn and Ormrod 1993), technology is not just a social relation, but moreover can play a key role in the formation of identities (cultural, gender or ethnic). Thus, technologies have an “interpretative flexibility” (Bijker 1992) or as Andrew Feenberg (1992) claims, technology is determined in its meanings and normative content by the social world in which it is embedded.

Indigenous media by extension should not be understood in a narrow, technical sense, but rather as a set of cultural practices in which media makers and audiences actively produce their own, often divergent, critique of “empowerment” put forward by Weiner and Faris, has to do with the fact that in real terms, no bureaucrat or politician in Canberra, as Weiner argues, is actually capable of eliminating with a stroke of a pen, “the elaborate channels of funding that keep some of the central Australian Aboriginal media projects going” (Weiner 1997). In my understanding, Weiner and Faris promote a technological determinism that implies that Western technology and its corresponding institutional structures are universal, therefore cannot be appropriated by ‘non-western’ societies without a ‘loss of identity’ in the process. The core of the debate has to do with what Andrew Feenberg (1992) calls “reappropriations” of technology by users, i.e. the transformations of existing technology through innovative usages.
meanings. Media texts are not isolated phenomena, but rather are situated in specific historical conditions, and embedded in intermedial and intertextual frameworks. In a contemporary media scene characterized by technological convergence, global flows in interconnected cultural economies, by textual networks and intensive patterns of media use, indigenous users and makers of media are no longer passive recipients of messages, isolated from the production and cultural construction of technology. On the contrary, there are many examples that suggest the role of consumption as creative adaptation in the practice of everyday media consumption.

Indigenous media and communication technologies are born out of complex negotiations between different partners, indigenous and non-indigenous, human and non-human actors. During the late 1970s’s, different federal agencies in Australia for example conducted a series of investigations and experiments in order to determine the best way of establishing an indigenous broadcasting service. These “included reports on the ‘broadcasting needs of Aboriginals’, ‘implementation strategies’, ‘media training’ and ‘comparative studies’ of indigenous broadcasting services in other countries. The complex negotiations between different sectors produced a given set of recommendations that lead to the establishing of the BRACS model in the mid 1980’s. This is pretty much the situation in Chile today, where there is a clear need to develop an indigenous broadcasting service. As will be discussed in more detailed later in the following chapter, the main difference is that the Chilean democratic governments after 1990 have done little in regards to studying the needs of indigenous peoples in Chile, and implementation of strategies, media training nor undertaking comparative studies of cases in other countries. There has been no negotiation whatsoever in relation to the cultural construction of indigenous communications. Perhaps, in this sense, the recipient of technology can be interpreted as an agent situated in various contexts of media applicability and technological comprehension, not readily agreeing or opposing but constantly negotiating between technological discourses and personal histories. The cultural history of technology, thus, contributes to how these negotiations have finally occurred in a particular time and place and how this communication influenced other forms of cultural activity.

When looking at the digitisation of culture for example it is crucial to take into consideration that technology is not neutral or only a piece of hardware. It is in fact an exercise in dialogic imagination (Bakhtin 1984) within networks of human and technical mediations. In this sense, I want to refer to two interesting articulations of the World Wide Web coming out of Latin America, both of which are relevant when looking at indigenous presence, use or access to digital networks of information.

The first one is Sebastian Lara’s articulation of the World Wide Web as a Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), with three overlapping levels. The web (la red) where the totality of the information and the flow of communication follows the pre-established hierarchy of dominant groups; the weft (la trama) composed of horizontal structures and open non-hierarchical alternatives of info-exchange; and the
counterweb (la contrared), that supposes clandestine, rebellious and illegal uses of the Internet (Lara 2001).

On the other hand, Hernandez and Calcagno (2003) develop a typology of indigenous websites, which summarise the modes that indigenous communications have acquired in the information society. The authors distinguish websites by the ethnic origin of their creators, by the level of representation of the institutions, by the geographical location of the creators, by the origin of the funding agent, by the language used on the web site and by the main interests or subject matter of the website.

In the first instance, Hernandez and Calcagno (2003) include two variants. Firstly, those websites developed by non-indigenous peoples, generally intellectuals, foundations, academic institutions, governmental organizations, social science professional associations and NGOs with an emphasis on disseminating historical, social, political, linguistic, ecological, ethnic and technical aspects, legislation, denunciaments against actions that threaten territories, organizations, people, human and cultural rights. Secondly, websites produced by indigenous peoples as in the case of websites developed by local grassroots organizations, NGOs and associations that coordinate the activities of various regional, national and international ethnic organizations. The primary objective of these sites is “to use the web to display the presence and points of view of the indigenous organizations about topics of interest for the communities: globalization, the economy, indigenous politics, relations with the national society and transnational businesses, cosmology, history, art, native language courses, dictionaries, grammars, etc” (Hernandez and Calcagno 2003:11)

In summary, this chapter locates indigenous media within three fields of cultural production. Firstly, the important legacy of advocate visual anthropologists and ethnographic filmmakers who have been important in the establishment of several programs of indigenous communications for change, mostly in relation to video media. The challenge ahead will be to observe the impact of indigenous productions on the very essence of ethnographic film and the possibilities for mutual illumination; what Ginsburg has called the parallax effect. As I argued, an important issue is still the position from which both projects emanate and the fact that in many cases indigenous media has grown in response to centuries of visual objectification in the hands –or the cameras- of ethnographic filmmakers.

Secondly, indigenous media may also be positioned within theoretical and pragmatic frameworks offered by alternative communication and different constructions of this field; radical communications, tactical, alterative and citizens media, or as I have suggested, imperfect media. Indigenous media remains a project of contestation to the ‘perfection’ of the transnational and hegemonic media systems. In remapping the social spaces of media in Chile that make the core of the following two chapters, this
critical assessment proposes possible “coordinates for valuing what an interconnected world might look like outside a hegemonic order” (Ginsburg 2000 [1997]: 46).

The third social space where indigenous media has been located is one of networked communities where knowledge is produced and circulated in radically different forms. The establishment of indigenous networks through the Internet, the intervention in national and international politics, and in general the dissemination and circulation of indigenous knowledge through new digital information technologies poses an important field of research and practice. The Internet has become a useful political tool for indigenous groups to voice their demands. The Internet has been a medium (or a combination of media) where indigenous groups have had better possibilities of self-managing their websites and circulate their information with less control and censorship than other media, perhaps with the exception of radio which today is still the most accessible and popular medium for indigenous peoples. The Internet poses many challenges and possibilities, including the chance of developing counter-hegemonic views to that of states and media conglomerates.

In the chapters that follow, I have returned to these issues but in particular reference to the Chilean context. I have started by locating indigenous people historically in relation to the state and the way they have been constructed or represented in the national imaginary. In order to examine the emergence of Mapuche media, which is the case study offered here, it is indispensable to look at the ways the ‘majority’ society has made indigenous people visible or invisible through technologies of visual representation, in ways through which culture becomes objectified in media products. This objectification works in two directions. Either as strategies of colonization and commodification through which indigenous people are included in the national imaginary as ‘others’; or as strategies of counter-hegemonic constructs through which indigenous people self-consciously objectify their culture for political purposes as ways of visualizing culture and mediating identity.
CHAPTER 4
(IN)VISIBLE EVIDENCE

Cultural imaginations in the Chilean public sphere

A genealogy in its strong philosophical sense, designates not only the study of the origin of a phenomenon, but also the unveiling of the silencing, exclusion, and violence which are always, the genealogist contends, the condition of possibility of the origin, the origin of the origin, so to speak.

(Idelber Avelar n.d unpublished manuscript).

In the previous chapter, I positioned the emergence of indigenous media in general terms within three fields of knowledge, theorisation and practice. Firstly, anthropology’s concern with the visual, where I looked at how indigenous media is positioned in relation to ethnographic film and documentary. The main purpose was to examine the challenges posed by understanding how indigenous media works in theory and in practice within the new field of the anthropology of media. Secondly, I analysed the legacies of film and video activism where I looked at different approaches to identify and theorize indigenous media as an oppositional strategy based on the notion of imperfect media. Finally, I proposed a way to understand indigenous media as a socio-technical ensemble and I looked at the growth of indigenous voices, images and discourses in what has been referred to as the network society in the realm of globalisation of digital information and communication technologies.

Before examining the cultural constructions of Mapuche media in chapter four, I have contemplated several strategies of exclusion through which indigenous peoples in Chile have been marginalised. Excluded as indigenous persons from the state and barred in the media, mostly to be constructed and imagined in the public sphere through the codes of dominant groups. In this sense, I revisit some of the aims and outcomes of the previous chapter and place them in the Chilean context. Therefore, in looking at the beginnings of Mapuche media later on, I examine firstly the neglected role of visual anthropology, the key role of video activism and social documentary, the impact of digital media and the new realm of network communities. Also important has been to refer briefly to the role that the Chilean public and corporate media have had in the construction of a national imaginary where indigenous icons have been commodified according to discrete values.

The development of indigenous communications in Chile up until today has been very problematic. A combination of factors have made the development and institutionalisation of indigenous communication programs a faulty process, and it is thanks to the push of several individuals and
organizations that we can talk about an incipient yet fervent indigenous media sphere in Chile after all. Despite having several elements in common with other experiences mentioned in previous chapters, the combination of unique political and cultural circumstances make the Chilean indigenous media context, predominantly Mapuche, quite different.

This complex combination of factors and variables has to do in part, as I said, with the little interest shown by anthropologists to study or promote independent indigenous video. Ethnographic film has played a marginal role among Chilean anthropologists, yet the foundation of an electronic journal of visual anthropology in 2000 and the coming of age of a recent generation of young visual anthropologists may be a cornerstone for future work.

Apart from the non-existence of a serious tradition of ethnographic filmmaking, the interest for researchers in sociology, cultural criticism and media studies has tended to focus on the complexities of popular culture (Richard 1998), market culture and consumerism (Brunner 1998), Chilean cultural industries and globalisation (Hopenhayn 1994 and 1998; Brunner 1995; del Villar 1999), media and democratisation (Munizaga 1999), or television and identity (Sunkel 1998, Catalán 1995, Subercaseaux 1998; Fuenzalida 1997). The ‘indigenous question’ has been seriously ignored in my opinion, and in several instances it has been subsumed within studies of popular culture. As Hartley and Mckee (2000) suggest in reference to their work in Australia, “media studies, concerned on either horn of its own methodological dilemma with the endless present tense of ‘popular culture’ and ‘public policy’ respectively, has largely neglected questions of Indigeneity…” (5) ¹.

What is lacking, assuming that there is at least one public sphere that is broader than any other public sphere – like a Mapuche public sphere for example - is more critical research in terms of what is or should be the role of the electronic media in facilitating dialogue between “majority” and “minority” populations in Chile. Among whom is the dialogue being held with. How do “majority” and “minority” programs (productions) and news reporting serve to facilitate this dialogue?².

This disengagement on the part of media scholars and intellectuals, with notable exceptions, may be also said of the Chilean political class. Paraphrasing Mapuche sociologist Jorge Calbucura when he refers to the painful disengagement of the Chilean political class (2001), there has been an abrasive disengagement of cultural and media theorists with regards to indigenous media and artistic production.

¹ Despite Hartley and Mckee’s claim, there has been a strong interest by several scholars in media and cultural studies in Australia to deal with questions of aboriginality and the media, which contrasts sharply with the Chilean scene. See for example Michaels, 1986; the special issue of Continuum edited by Tom O’Regan in 1990 on the work of Eric Michaels; Muecke 1992; Attwood 1992, 1996; Langton 1993; Meadows 1995, 1996, 1998, 2001; Avison and Meadows 2000, O’Regan 1996, Batty 1993, Batty and O’Regan 1996; or Molnar 1994, Molnar 1999.

² These set of questions have been adapted from the work of Donald D. Browne (1996, 2001) on electronic media and indigenous peoples.
In this regard, I see a serious deficiency in the Chilean context in terms of investigating what some have called an “indigenous public sphere” (Hartley and McKee 2000). There is no audience research or ethnographic studies of media reception and consumption. There is also a serious lack of empirical qualitative studies in terms of indigenous audiences for example. What happens when Mapuche men, women and children who had always and only seen themselves as audiences start to reconstruct their self-perspective and social context as they became message producers and senders? The media sell audiences and the advertising agencies buy them. Of all the empirical studies conducted during the past decade or so, not a single one incorporates what might be termed the ‘indigenous variable’ in the research on cultural and media consumption. The categories of analysis in most empirical audience research include age, gender, education and socio-economic background, but none have investigated the cultural or ethnic variables, especially considering that almost a million people in the country identify as belonging to a particular ethnic group.

On yet another level, the analysis of the factors that have impeded until recently the structuration (c.f. Giddens) of indigenous communications would be incomplete without a reference to the negative legacy of the dictatorship. The impact is to be seen not only in the repression of state apparatuses, but also in the hundreds of indigenous people exiled, and thousands tortured and disappeared. As I have discussed in the later part of this chapter, the Pinochet years saw the deployment of the most brutal policies of indigenous assimilation and land seizures.

Another critical point is the fact that the nascent film industry that had started to flourish in the early 1960’s (particularly important in the production of social documentaries) was completely shattered after the coup of September 1973. The film industry had already been severely affected by the economic crisis of the last period of the Allende government and the economic embargo imposed by the United States. State resources were re-oriented to developing the television industry, which quickly became the most important medium for ‘reconstructing’ the country from the trauma of the socialist revolution. Video activism was fervent in the 1980’s but was channelled to fighting the dictatorship and documenting the pro-democracy movements, with little interest in documenting or promoting indigenous cultural survival.

3 In reference to Clemencia Rodriguez 2001.
5 The issue of indigenous political activists who were exiled in the 1970’s has been recently placed on the discussion table by a series of Mapuche cultural critics such as Arauco Chilhuaialaf, professor at the University of Paris VII.
7 An example of the extreme conditions at the end of Allende’s government is Patricio Guzman’s project of documenting the people’s struggle, that later became his epic film The Battle of Chile (1976-1979). In a letter addressed to Chris Marker at the end of 1972, Guzman explains the tense and critical context for filmmaking in the country (Guzman 1980).
Another negative legacy of the dictatorship is that three consecutive democratic governments since March 1990 have shown little interest in the development of autonomous indigenous communications. Only in the past couple of years, a new project for building a new ‘audiovisual institutionality’ has come into place as a result of the work put together by several actors and organizations.

Nevertheless, the Chilean public and media spheres have been characterised as among the least pluralist in the region, due primarily to an excessive level of economic and ideological property concentration and the lack of appropriate regulation on this issue (Sunkel and Geoffreoy 2001)\(^8\). The background problem of the television industries in Chile is that they are the prey of a small and concentrated advertising market where no more than 80 companies – mostly belonging to only four economic groups – take up almost 75% of the advertising expenditure. This may be an indication that Chilean television promotes the view of a reduced number of powerful economic groups that finance it and not necessarily of the citizens\(^9\). Clearly, the economic and commercial liberalism of the market contrasts with the tight political and ideological control. This context applies to the national broadcaster \textit{Television Nacional, and also} to print based media (Ominami y Trejo 2000). As these authors claim, Chilean television is a big advertising program occasionally interrupted by programs oriented to reinforce the brand of the sponsors’\(^{10}\) (Ominami y Trejo 2000), Internet reference [www.chile-hoy.de](http://www.chile-hoy.de).

On a similar note, projects developed with international cooperation and the efforts of Chilean and foreign NGO’s have been placed elsewhere, with little interest in developing or promoting indigenous communications, as is the case in other Latin American countries\(^{10}\). I examine this scheme of factors in more detail in the three chapters that follow and argue that indigenous communications in Chile are basically the result of struggle and opposition by committed indigenous and non-indigenous scholars, media activists, journalists and social communicators.

\(\text{8 On a similar note Michael Meadows has noted that the Australian mediascape is arguably the most concentrated in the Western world and thus the cultural importance of alternative and independent media (Meadows et.al. 2002).}

\(\text{9 Sunkel and Geoffreoy (2001) offer an insightful analysis of media ownership and political economy of the Chilean media. They stress the oligopolic nature of the Chilean mediasphere, particularly in print media and television, which are dominated by four economic groups. Three of these had close ties with the military regime and today are closely associated with right wing parties and conservative congressmen. The Edwards Group which controls a network of national and regional newspapers including El Mercurio; The COPESA group who owns the second largest national newspaper La Tercera and several other businesses in the housing and educational markets; and the Claro Group which control the first private television network Megavisión and other interests in several other industries. As has been discussed in Chapter Four, Mapuche activist Alfredo Seguel, has investigated the strong links between these groups and their associations with the two major logging holding operating in the conflict areas in the south of the country. According to Seguel, there is an intricate network formed by the logging companies, the major groups described above and certain groups within the Congress and the Government. For Seguel, as is the case for several other Mapuche activists, this is reflected in the treatment of the ‘Mapuche’ conflict in the press, the public opinion and the main media outlets.}

\(\text{10 A paradigmatic case in my opinion is the Plan Nacional de Comunicacion Audiovisual developed by CEFREC and CAIB in Bolivia.}\)
As is discussed from here on, the goal remains the development of specific policies promoting indigenous communications and the understanding of the need to contemplate indigenous communication rights as basic elements of indigenous cultural and political autonomy. Before engaging with the specific context of Mapuche cultural and artistic media practices I think it is helpful to conjecture on the ‘radical entanglement’ (Campbell and Shapiro 1999:ix) between the historical discourses constructed by the state in the context of a distinct public sphere in Chile and an emerging indigenous mediascape. With the aim of interrogating how these new Mapuche imaginaries have started to take place in the public sphere, I begin with outlining the political and juridical situation of indigenous peoples in Chile in historical terms, particularly as it pertains to the Mapuche people. Drawing on the discussion outlined at the beginning of chapter two, I address the politicisation of indigenous cultures in Chile in the context of what Jose Bengoa terms ‘the indigenous emergence in Latin America in the context of globalisation’ (Bengoa 2000).

Following this introductory historical outline, I have gone into discussing the historical construction of an iconic Mapuche image in what I refer to as ‘the colonisation of a Mapuche imaginary’ which occurs through the dominant society’s manufacture of certain images that become icons of representation of what is pre-defined as Mapuche. In doing so, I discuss different and selected engagements with indigenous representations in media, from early 20th century photography to recent telenovelas, and with references to the few existing cases in cinema and ethnographic documentary. Finally, I provide a summary of the current conflicts occurring in the south of the country in the frame of the Mapuche uprising, started in 1997. This ethnic mobilisation has been constructed in the public sphere and the media as the ‘Mapuche conflict’. The ‘conflict’ is a key factor to reveal the cultural implications of the incipient development of indigenous media in a contemporary context of political activism and cultural uprising.

In this way, the first section of the chapter contextualises the main indigenous nations in Chile concentrating on the historical and political the relations with the state from the beginnings of the Republic to the end of the military dictatorship (1810–1989). The second part of the chapter analyses the ways through which the Mapuche nation was not only forcefully incorporated into the Chilean State, but also the mechanisms through which the Mapuche was constructed as a concept of ethnic difference where only a handful of visual images were enough to support this radical alterity. More importantly, I focus on the forms in which the Mapuche have been imagined through ideological apparatuses of representation and produced in the national and public spheres coming from the state, but also independent fields of image production, like documentary film for example. The third and final part of the chapter is aimed at informing the reader of the cultural politics of the last fifteen years by outlining the current challenges, problems and disputes faced by indigenous organizations and individuals in
Chile. These are the key elements to take into account for understanding the plea for appropriation of audiovisual media and the development of alternative public spheres to fight the historical basis of racism, denial and assimilation.

### 4.1. Strategies of Exclusion: pueblos originarios and the state in Chile.

The release of the data collected during the 1992 population census attracted considerable media attention and heated academic debate at more or less the same time as the new Indigenous Act was being passed by Congress. According to the census data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in 1992, nearly 8% of the population identified with one of the three indigenous nations included in the consultation: Aymara, Mapuche or Rapa Nui. The results of the 1992 census and the reaction by the public reflected the reluctance of many sectors of Chilean society to admit “the hidden reality” that emerged from it, happening at the crest of the re-democratization process started in 1988 with the plebiscite that rejected General Pinochet’s intentions to remain in power for another 8 years. For Mapuche scholar Jose Ancan the census was an “involuntary socio-political success” that nevertheless, brought face to face two versions of Mapuche identity, the extremes of "Mapucheness" at the end of the century: the informal that enters the mansions of the rich through the side door, who's standing on some corner of the marginal periphery, swelling the drinking crowds of bars, a masked, fleeing, contradictory apparition that, when in front of the mirror, recognizes himself through his "otherness" and the other, official, fed by proper truths and certainties, but too a constructor of stereotypes of invented authenticity (Ancan 1997:4).

However, this information has not been restated by the data recently made available for the 2002 population census, in which only 4% of the Chilean population did considered themselves as belonging to an ethnic group. The problem arises from the fact that the 1992 census addressed the question in relation to the ‘cultural recognition’ of indigenous nations, whereas the 2002 census included a much more specific question on ‘cultural belonging’ to an ethnic group. Importantly, the new census incorporated the eight existing indigenous nations in Chile today. Nevertheless, these numbers are still of great importance and are openly being used to counter the long-term myths constructed in the national

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12 A report by the Mapuche Liwen Centre of Studies in Temuco argues that such formulation was based on the supposition of a supranational common identity (Chilean) and allowed for a voluntary adscription to an indigenous nation, in terms of the recognition of its existence, rather than as an active belonging to that culture.
13 With slightly more than 600,000 people, the Mapuche are the largest indigenous nation and account for 87.3% of the total indigenous population of the country. The remaining seven nations account for the remaining 13%, among which the Aymara stand out, accounting for almost 8% (48,501 people). The Atacameño population is 21,015 (3%), the Quechua 6,175 (1%) the Rapa Nui 4,647 (0.7%), the Colla 3,198 (0.5%), Kaweshkar 2,622 (0.3%) and Yamana 1,685 (0.2%).
imaginary regarding the ethnic composition of the country. They have also been helpful for the recognition of indigenous peoples as distinct societies with particular rights within the state. The statistics have been used consistently by a new wave of Mapuche ‘intellectuals’ and media activists in their written or visual accounts of the new phase of Mapuche mobilisation happening in the last decade.

The Mapuche people, with a population of 604,349 (INE 2003), are not only the largest indigenous nation in Chile, but also one of the most numerous in all Latin America, with a significant population (another 200,000 people) living in the south-west of Argentina\(^\text{14}\). Of the total population, three quarters live in urban areas, while half of the population resides in what has been recently conceptualised by several mapuche intellectuals as the *Wallmapu*, or the ancestral Mapuche territory in the south of the country.

Another quarter of the total population lives in the suburbs of Santiago with a marginal percentage scattered around the rest of the country (see illustration).

\(^{14}\) In light of recent Mapuche assertions of the reconstitution of the Mapuche nation, or *Wallmapu*, it is important to note that for nearly two centuries, the Mapuche formed an intricate complex of chiefdoms spreading from the Atlantic Coast south of Buenos Aires to the south of Chile.
Of the Aymara population of nearly 50,000 people, two thirds have migrated consistently in the last four decades from their ancestral homelands in the northern Andes, on the border of Peru and Bolivia, to cities located in the Atacama Desert (mainly Arica in the top north and other cities such as Iquique, Calama, and Pozo Almonte, among others). The remaining third live primarily off the herding and breeding of llamas and alpacas in the highlands of the Andes, above 3,000 meters and/or as peasants in the fertile desert valleys. The assimilation of Aymara ancestral territories to the Chilean state after the Pacific War (1879-1883) with Peru and Bolivia resulted in the split of the Aymara nation into three countries, with most of the population of nearly 1.5 million today living in Bolivia. For the past one hundred years, the Aymara have been completely ignored by the Chilean authorities and policy makers. Indeed, from 1885 to 1993 there was no specific legislation to recognise the most basic cultural or environmental rights. On the contrary, the only juridical policies actually implemented such as mandatory education and military service, have been aimed at consolidating their assimilation to Chilean society. Unlike the case of the Mapuche in the south of the country, Aymara lands have never been acknowledged to traditional owners in successive laws and have often been considered to be public property.

The lack of legal acknowledgment and protection of Aymara lands and water resources has generated significant conflicts due to their registration by other Aymara or non-indigenous persons. This is the case of Likanantay communities who, like their neighbours live in high altitude desert valleys. With a different language and cultural history, but with many cultural elements in common, the environmental impact of mining and the access to water resources constitutes the single most problematic issue for these communities. The loss of their ancestral water resources by virtue of the 1981 Water Act passed by the military regime and the application of this code of law for almost two decades, has allowed the development of a process of appropriation of Aymara's traditional water resources to national and transnational mining companies. These companies have successfully petitioned the Chilean State for more flexible water concessions to develop their businesses, and today it is possible to see many towns that have been partially or completely abandoned in a process of increasing migration to the neighbouring cities like Calama and Antofagasta, as is the case of Likanantay communities, or Arica in the case of the Aymara.

As has been discussed in more detail in chapters four and five, the Likanantay or Atacameño people, who have been recognised as a separate indigenous group since 1993, offer an interesting case of cultural ethnogenesis, which has been reflected in a series of political actions, including the use of video technology.
Now, while the conflict of Aymara and Likanantay communities is primarily based on land and water rights, the Rapa Nui situation has more to do with cultural autonomy and self-determination. With a population of 4,647 people, around half of the Rapa Nui people live on Easter Island, with the remaining population living primarily in the regions of Valparaíso and Santiago in central Chile. For years, the crucial demand of the Elders Council of Rapa Nui has been the restitution of their ancestral lands by the Chilean State, according to the treaty signed in 1888 by the Chilean State and the Elders Council. For this purpose, they have sued the government in the National Courts, as well as made several presentations at international meetings. Until now the Rapa Nui have not been successful in this goal, although a recent proposal was raised to allow Easter Island to become an independent region within the country, and not just a province as it stands today.

The Chilean State has consistently implemented several strategies whereby indigenous peoples have been consciously excluded from civil society, consistently made absent from the public sphere, invisible in the national imaginary and typified in the media. My aim is not to offer a detailed historical and political analysis of these relations, but to summarize the cultural politics that define the way the Chilean State has dealt with the indigenous question in the foundation of a national imaginary and identity.

Generally speaking, all the discourses originating from the newly formed Chilean republic from 1810 onwards have promoted and reinforced the image of a racially homogenous mestizo society of European and Creole descent. As a defining notion of modernity, the unified state under a single nationality translates into the fact that indigenous nations in Chile were not recognised in their cultural and ethnic specificity until the introduction of the new Indigenous Act of 1993. The political and legal frameworks throughout Chilean political history reflect in effect a distinctive form of denial where indigenous people have been included in the juridical order only to be excluded. Many Mapuche scholars today have criticised the new Act for similar reasons. It does not provide room for an “ethnic citizenship” (De la Peña, 1997), one which accounts for a kind of dual citizenship within the state that does not imply the rejection of ethnic identity and adscription.

The question of ethnic citizenship may also be examined in relation to Giorgio Agamben’s work on political philosophy. In reference to his examination of the camp as an essence of the modern state, Agamben suggests that the state can actually recognize any claim for identity. What the state cannot consider is the affirmative expropriation of identity, or what he considers the potential for human beings

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to belong (1998:35). Sovereign power therefore maintains itself in its capacity to suspend law in a state of exception which constitutes itself as a rule. What Agamben refers to as the sovereign ban, or state of exception, is the extreme form of relation by which something is included solely through its exclusion.

In Chilean political history, recognition of indigenous sentiments of belonging outside the juridico-political order, deal primarily with a past constructed largely from the cultural and symbolic codes of the dominant society, either by the scientific construction of the ‘native’, or from a folkloric perspective aimed at tourists and informed by ‘official’ history books.

More than a decade after the end of military rule in 1989, three consecutive democratic governments have not been able to amend the key sections of the Chilean Constitution of 1980, which was designed under Pinochet’s regime. The current Constitution does not provide a base for the existence of cultural diversity as it proclaims under one of its central articles that everybody is Chilean under one single Constitution. The Indigenous Act of 1993 developed as a result of the process of democratic transition and can be seen as a clear example of how the state needed to regulate the indigenous question according to available technologies of discipline (cf. Michel Foucault 1980). After decades of military dictatorship, new forms of national sovereignty needed to be developed, not only to account for emerging indigenous demands but also to accommodate defiant pressures by a neo-liberal private sector pushing for more investment, privatisation, expansionism and transnationalisation.

The Law of 1993 was long overdue in order to replace the nefarious Act No.2.568 of 1979 that in turn had replaced the Indigenous Act introduced in 1972 by the Allende government. The critical point of the law of 1979 was that it allowed for a ‘legal’ and regulated way of conducting the arbitrary divisions and expropriation of indigenous land. Consequently, most of the logging companies that today operate in what used to be Mapuche ancestral territory in Southern Chile were established between 1974 and 1980. During this short period of time, private sectors linked to the political and economic Right acquired today’s forestry territories through fraudulent auctions or simple land transfers of state-controlled forestry companies to newly created private ones (Calbucura 2001). This is one of the most critical aspects of the Mapuche demand today, and one that has taken prominence in the Mapuche media, particularly in the video work of Jeannette Paillan and the online activism of several organizations in Temuco. Before 1993, and particularly during the government of the military junta, the indigenous question did not exist as a separate issue from the peasant demands. The policies of the period basically followed the main governmental concerns outlined decades before in regards to the extreme conditions of poverty of indigenous people. According to Jacques Chonchol, ex-Minister of Agriculture in Allende's government, the dictatorship held the "main responsibility" over the current conflict, given that it implemented a counter agrarian reform where the 300,000 hectares that had been returned to the communities as a historical reparation in 1972, were taken away from them and auctioned in fraudulent
operations where the forestry companies bought them at very low prices. In this way, the forestry companies have monopolized lands and have even forested in agricultural soils.

In the next few pages, I provide a summary to show how indigenous people in Chile have been constructed historically within the realm of the nation-state. I begin by clarifying that in the case of the Mapuche, a large part of this original nation was not annexed or incorporated into the Chilean State until the later part of the 1870’s. The same occurs with many of the other indigenous groups; Aymara and Likantatay after 1885, Rapa Nui after 1888.

**Historical Background to the situation of indigenous people in Chile**

In the case of the Mapuche, there is agreement among historians that the Spanish conquest of the territory initiated in 1536 was brought to a standstill in 1580 after the Spanish armies were defeated in the Battle of Curalaba. The event is known through most historical accounts and official history books as the Curalaba disaster. The fact is that the Spanish advance was stopped and a new frontier established in the Bio Bio River, 500 kilometres south of Santiago. With the exception of Mapuche territories south of the Bio Bio, and the yet to be occupied territories of the extreme south, the Spanish colonial deployment covers the rest of the indigenous territories to the north.

Succinctly, the colonial period spans more or less from 1580 to 1810, and as a unique case in the European ‘conquista’ of the Americas, the Spanish Crown was forced in 1643 to recognize an ‘independent indigenous nation’. This nation was far from the metropolis of the Viceroyship located in Lima, and the resources to continue a military campaign were scarce. Although there is considerable debate regarding the real degree of freedom enjoyed by the Mapuche as a ‘nation’, what is relevant about this process is that between 1643 and 1881 a vast territory was not occupied either by the Spanish Crown nor by the Chilean State.

The independence from Spain, however, and the advent of the Republic in 1810 did not introduce substantial changes in the situation of indigenous peoples in the rest of the country. On the contrary, and despite the fact that in the treaty of 1643 the Spanish Crown had formally acknowledged the free status of the native Mapuche, most policies and legislations introduced after 1810 were going to have disastrous consequences. In general terms, from here onwards the relationship between the state and the

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16 This has been a key aspect of the post-1992 Mapuche struggle for cultural and political autonomy and is a point currently being brought into the discussion by Mapuche intellectuals and activists alike. As is discussed in fine detail in the next chapter, Wallmapu has been deployed as a critical concept of the renewed Mapuche discourse. Mapuche filmmaker Jeannette Paillan has traced the cultural history of this notion in her latest documentary film also named *Wallmapu* and released in 2002. Jeannette discusses the implications of her film in my documentary, which accompanies this thesis.
indigenous nations may be defined by the strategies of ‘inclusion’ developed by the state to forcefully reduce, assimilate and integrate the indigenous populations to its sovereignty.

Accordingly, the first step was to ‘reduce’ indigenous territories to the minimum value possible for ‘development’. The recently formed Chilean Republic introduced the first law related to indigenous issues as early as 1813. This apparent benevolent act to abolish the caste system introduced in colonial times by the Spanish brought together the final assault on the dispossession of indigenous land, as traditional land owners did not have any kind of legal protection against the way in which land was being ‘legally’ alienated. Certainly, this juridical equality didn’t have any relation with a social equality and was actually the first attempt by the state to develop its assimilation policies through which a single law system is imposed in all its citizens, not contemplating cultural, racial and linguistic difference.

In summarised terms, the legislation and policies during the period 1813 to 1927 deal exclusively with the issue of indigenous land. Several successive laws during this period were aimed at regulating the indigenous land; their acquisition, alienation, expropriation, as well as the re-settlement of indigenous communities in small reservations (Aylwin 1999). Responding to the increasing demand for agricultural land, the state resolved to form special villages in the central zone of the country for the concentration of the indigenous population. The objective was clearly to make more land available to satisfy the private demand. In the end, this legal document allowed for the public sale of thousands of hectares of ancestral indigenous land and the removal of its inhabitants to formal villages. Moreover, the positivist liberal thinking of the times was also reflected in these laws as it was declared that indigenous peoples could enjoy the same social rights as the rest of the Chileans.

The intention of the state to occupy the territories south of the Bio Bio River and ‘regularise the legal situation’ of ‘Chilean’ settlers south of the border, became manifest in a new law introduced in 1852 by the Ministry for Colonisation. This period also sees the colonisation of the Patagonia and territories south of the Mapuche nation. Inherent in these policies was the urgent need to include the rich ancestral indigenous lands in the agricultural development strategy of the country. Importantly, this law establishes the province of Arauco, which implies more than a symbolic incorporation of the Mapuche territory. By creating a new ‘Chilean’ province south of the border, the newly introduced law gave powers to the President of the Republic to regulate the situation in the frontiers and seek the ‘protection’ of the indigenous peoples to provide for their ‘prompt civilisation’ to Chilean society. In the following decades, new edicts are introduced to fix the procedures for the transfer of land through the approval of a government official who acts for the protection of indigenous people, who are determined to be disabled before the law.
Acknowledging the abuses of the previous legal regime and disregarding the full legal capacity of indigenous peoples’s self-government, this new regime inaugurates the state’s protectionist policies. Effectively, in subsequent decades, the juridical equality of indigenous and non-indigenous people ceases to have a juridical foundation and all land policies become regulated by the introduction of the Civil Code of Laws in 1856. This new Code is the foundation of the Chilean juridical order and among many other effects it established a new regulated regime of registered private property. In 1866, the Chilean Parliament passed a new law declaring the lands south of the Bio Bio river to be public, empowering authorities the right to allocate them to individuals for their colonisation, and creating a commission in charge of settling down the indigenous populations in those lands over which they were able to prove possession (Aylwin 1999).

Consequently, after 1860 the policies of the state became much more explicit and frontal. Assimilation policies were to achieve their highest point during the 20th century through the legislations that allowed for the eradication of land and the educational-ideological assimilation through schools, church and other institutional technologies of power (c.f. Foucault 1982). These processes reach a high point during the military regime (1973-1989). Simultaneously, the state deploys strategic policies of integration aimed at emphasizing the indigenous claims through national (Chilean) political parties and institutions. This period of state protection proves to be disastrous as three successive laws introduced in 1866, 1874 and 1883 were crucial in the initiation of the final assault for annexation of the indigenous territories, both north and south of the borders of the time. Parallel to this, the Chilean government launched a strategy in order to enable the military occupation of their territory, in what was euphemistically called “Pacification of the Araucania”17. Despite unorganised resistance by Mapuche groups, the Chilean army ended up defeating and subjugating most of the groups, finally imposing Chilean laws over Mapuche ancestral lands after 1883. These put an end to the Mapuche nation18 that was recognised by the Spanish Crown in 1643, and fulfilled in this way a decisive phase in the consolidation of the Chilean nation structured from the notion of sovereign power of the state. I will come back to this point later on, as it is from the perceived menace to these territorial fragments where the Mapuche struggle for reinvindication is formulated19.

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17 In fact this is still the term used today in official history books. It is a highly contested term in Mapuche circles as it clearly implies that the Chilean State had no other alternative than to “pacific” the Mapuche.

18 This period marks the end of what Mapuche intellectuals and activists conceptualise today as the Wallmapu, a territory that incorporates parts of Chile (Gulumapu) and Argentina (Puelmapu), which until the 17th century spanned from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific.

19 Interestingly, the video Chemu Am Mapuche Pigeiñ made by Mapuche activist and folklorist Sofia Painequeo in 2001 explores the impact of these images of colonisation. In a sometimes naïve attempt to tell the story of the origins of the Mapuche people, Painequeo creates several montages and juxtapositions of iconic images of Chilean colonisation. These include a firearm, a Spanish conquistador, a priest, a 19th century Chilean military, the Civil Code of Law of 1856, the current political constitution and the building of today’s Ministry of Justice.
Between 1879 and 1927, the Mapuche were settled in land granted by the state through communal titles extended to their chiefs and family members. The 3,000 reserves or "reducciones"²⁰ granted by the state to the Mapuche, included 510,000 hectares of land, which represented only 6.39% of their ancestral territory south of the Bio Bio River (Aylwin 1999). The remaining land was left for colonisation, either by European settlers who were encouraged by the government to do so, or by Chilean colonisers, to whom the lands were sold at convenient prices. Just as the idea of a ‘Mapuche country’ was being eradicated, the current borders of the country were being defined. This issue has been one of the most prominent to surface in the current Mapuche demands for cultural autonomy and self-determination and has been addressed in several Mapuche media productions and websites.

Between 1879 and 1888, the two other major indigenous nations became incorporated into the Chilean State. Firstly, the Aymara, during the Pacific War (1879-1884) in which part of what were Peruvian and Bolivian Andean highlands in the north were annexed by Chile as the victorious country. With these, Aymara and Atacameño people were inserted into the borders of the country. In 1883, the annexation of the Mapuche territories that had started in 1862 is consummated, and in 1888, Chile claims possession of Easter Island (Rapa Nui). During the same period, Chilean authorities granted in concession to individuals large extensions of lands in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, in what constituted the traditional lands of the Aonikenk (Tehuelches) and the Selknam (Onas), without reserving for them any land that would allow their physical and cultural subsistence (Aylwin 1999). In 1879 in the early stages of the four-year long Pacific War, the Chilean army occupied San Pedro de Atacama (then part of Bolivia and the cultural centre of the Likanantay people) and by 1881, it had occupied extensive territories to the north, of what was Peru at the time. The immediate consequence was that both Aymara and Atacamenian (Likanantay) people were cut into four different countries, Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina. This has had important consequences because the Aymara are an important political force in Bolivia, yet they are quite marginal in Chile and Argentina. The Aymara involvement with media in Bolivia has been notable, whereas in Chile as been nil.

From 1881 onwards, the Chilean state applies the full strength of its administrative apparatus, incorporating its legal institutionality relating to indigenous land. Aymara and Atacamenian collective lands were considered by the state as public property because there were no papers to prove who owned these lands, according to the new law introduced in 1874. Moreover, the few ‘privileges’ of the superceding law of 1883 regarding the land division of the Mapuche were never applied to Aymara and Atacamenian people. These laws were enforced on indigenous territories almost unmodified until 1973.

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²⁰ These titles were called reducciones - Spanish for reservations - due to the divisions they imposed on traditional indigenous lands.
The annexation of Easter Island, or Rapa Nui, to the Chilean State in 1888 was a product of the Sovereignty Concession Act of 1888 by which the local Rapa Nui chiefs conceded partial sovereignty to Chile for the commercial usufruct of part of the island. Due to the state’s inability to administer such a distant possession, the Chilean government of the time decides to transfer land rights to powerful French and English companies such as Merlet & Co. (1895) and Williamson Balfour in 1903. In 1916, after the disastrous consequences under which large part of the Rapa Nui population were practically enslaved by the companies, the contract was terminated and the island was again administered from the continent. From 1917 until 1965, maritime and naval authorities based on the continent administered the island and the Rapa Nui people were subject to a special legal system by which they were deprived of the rights established by the Constitution.

From 1927 until the end of the military rule in 1989, the state implemented the most important policy of land division yet, also implementing the provision of private ownership titles of indigenous lands. These policies were settled in the two successive laws of 1927 and 1931, which brought about major conflicts for illegal usurpation of traditional indigenous land. The policies affected the major indigenous groups, namely the Mapuche, Aymara and Rapa Nui.

In summary, indigenous people were not entitled to these new laws of private ownership. The results of the legislations passed from 1927 until the end of the 1970’s were based in finding out the most efficient way of dividing the indigenous communities into small private properties. The consequences of these policies were not only detrimental for those communities affected but were quite a failure from the state’s point of view. In forty years of attempts to divide them (1927-1967) just over 800 communities completed the process of land division, of which 793 did so between 1931 and 1949, period in which the division could be made without the consent of the indigenous peoples themselves.

This period is quite relevant in the modern history of the Mapuche as what had until the first decades of the 20th century been a silent and constant flow of Mapuches into the cities became a flood during the 1930s. Furthermore, far from having abated, this process of migration even increased in the context of re-democratisation (1988-1998), where the new frontier has become the ‘big city’ (Ancán 1999). As Ancán points out the current process of urban migration occurs in a context of “inter ethnic relations

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21 The case of the Rapa Nui is also symptomatic. By 1933, all of Easter Island was registered by the Chilean State in its name, and without any form of consultation or agreement whatsoever with the Rapa Nui councils. As Aylwin maintains, “following the agreement subscribed between the Rapa Nui Chiefs and the Chilean State in 1888, by virtue of which the sovereignty of the Island was granted to Chile, the ancestral homeland of the Rapa Nui was administered until 1953 by a French corporation. This company turned the island into a farm, relegating islanders to live in a reduced part of their lands (the village of Hanga Roa), and submitting them into a semi slavery regime”. In this same year, the Indigenous Issues Directorate (Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas) was created by the Chilean government with the objective of putting into practice the policies and modifications of the law of 1931, basically as a way of making more efficient the expropriation of indigenous land, and the radication of indigenous people in reserves. These policies were grouped together in the new law of 1961, which was going to frame the parameters until 1972. In 1966 the Rapa Nui people were granted citizens rights, under a special amendment.
between the post-reductional Mapuches and the Chilean nation-state” (Ibid). Paradoxically, this contemporary urban reality has remained relatively invisible as several authors claim and despite the historical presence of Mapuche in the cities, this undeniable reality remains in a state of semi-obscurity, poorly understood by social scientists, authorities, and - ironically - in the ‘official’ Mapuche discourse of the day’ (Ancan 1999). This issue has been consistently examined by several Mapuche scholars in recent years. The topic of urban Mapuche and migration was actually the subject of Jose Ancan’s first video work: Wiñometun Ni Mapu Meu (Return to the Land), which is considered to be the first documentary video directed by a Mapuche22.

By 1966, the large amount of indigenous organizations that had begun to emerge since the 1940’s – most of them heaving in urban centers like Santiago and Concepción - began working on a new proposal, which was given to the newly elected president Salvador Allende in 1970. With a series of important modifications, the Chilean Congress passed the law in September 1972. The Indigenous Act of 1972 was elaborated and put into practice in the context of the agrarian reform sweeping the country - and most of Latin America - since the mid 1960’s. It was indeed an attempt to benefit indigenous people from the land reform processes initiated by the state. For the first time in Chilean history, there was a legal body, which defined indigenous peoples independently from their land. The land division policies were ceased and a new way to deal with indigenous issues was attempted. Despite differences with previous decades, there is still a patronising understanding of the relationship between the state and indigenous people. The new law contemplated the formation of an Institute for Indigenous Development, responsible for channelling the state policies on indigenous issues, and promoting their ‘development’ and ‘integration’ to the rest of the society.

The period also saw a strong emergence of indigenous based political parties aligned with the Communist and Socialist Parties and the Popular Unity movement23. Again, the push for integration was significant, as it was taken for granted that the indigenous struggles only became meaningful as a part of the broader processes of class struggle and revolution, or as part of the communitarian doctrines of the social-catholic movement, inspired by the Liberation Theology movement. The emergence of an ethnic identity was subsumed by class struggle and the Mapuche were defined as exploited ‘peasants’24 as it’s implied in the social and agrarian reforms of the period 1964-1967. The Latin American left was responsible for completing the integration of indigenous peoples into the dominant societies by incorporating the indigenous struggle as part of the class struggle of the oppressed. This was also

22 It is also important to note that most of the Mapuche born in Santiago who today are reputed video makers, art historians, journalists, sociologists and lawyers share the fact that their parents migrated from the south between 1940 and 1960.
24 For a detailed account of this process in Latin America see Jose Bengoa, La Emergencia Indígena en América Latina. Santiago: FCE, 2000.
reflected in the New Latin American cinema movement for example, where indigenous peoples never stood out independently of the struggle of peasants, with some probable exceptions in Brazilian Cinema Novo, where there was an attempt to recover Brazil’s indigenous lore. Still, there was no acknowledgement whatsoever of the urban context in which a large number of Mapuche people already lived, or their cultural history, language specificity or traditional knowledge.

In Chile, the Popular Unity Government (1970-73) managed to enforce some restitution of lands to indigenous collective unions, as well as social programs of technical assistance, which were short lived and in many cases inefficient due to the impact of political polarisation and increasing social unrest, which led to the military coup of September 1973. The first years of dictatorship saw several Mapuche and other indigenous leaders and their families murdered or exiled which, among many consequences, is crucial when we look at the emergence of Mapuche online activism in chapter five. Because of this, the law of 1972 was going to be short lived. After the military coup of September 1973, the law was left almost inert and much of the land that had been given to indigenous communities (and peasant organizations) as part of the agrarian reforms was returned to its pre-1964 ‘owners’. This was carried out despite the fact that these territories were part of larger ancestral indigenous communities before 1927.

The land reforms stopped immediately after the military coup and all the land seized by peasants and indigenous groups in five years, or returned as part of government programs of historical reparation, were gradually reinstated to private owners. In 1978, the first legal amendments to regulate these land procedures were introduced by the military regime. The outcome of the new policies was an increase in the alienation of indigenous traditional land for commercial purposes, and meant a serious setback in relation to the rights of indigenous groups to be recognised as such by law. The Institute for Indigenous Development was shut off in 1974 and a large sector of the indigenous society is hit by all the force of the military repression. Like many other Chileans, hundreds of Mapuche activists were exiled, many others tortured, while others vanished forever. Due to the strong opposition of human rights and religious organizations to these abuses, the law of 1978 is amended giving way to the law no.2750 of 1979, which was going to bring the most negative effects yet, as the indigenous land divisions reached a critical point.

Between 1979 and 1991 alone, 1,739 communities were divided and subsequently expropriated, which accounted for roughly 60% of the remaining 350,000 hectares of land owned by Mapuche families or communities. The impact was far more important than can be expressed in this brief summary. As Aylwin suggests, it was during this period that, “together with the repression of indigenous organizations, a legislation imposing a clear threat to the subsistence of their lands and cultures, as well as to their existence as peoples, was enacted” (Aylwin 1997). In a similar way, the law (D.L. No. 2885)

25 The work of Mapuche activists in exile is crucial in this regard, as has been discussed in more detail in following chapters.
of 1979 openly ignored the Rapa Nui ownership of their land. According to this law, the Rapa Nui could request the government the issuance of individual property titles over lands then occupied by them, equivalent only to 7.5% of the island, thus legitimating the public ownership over the remaining lands existing there.

The Indigenous (Mapuche) movement and the return to democracy (1988-1992)

During the early 1980’s the Mapuche political movement re-emerged once again, along with a timorous Aymara political rearticulation through the formation of several small and independent NGO’s in the north of the country. These worked primarily as social assistance agencies to defend the interests of Aymara and Atacameño communities in the Andean highlands of northern Chile. By the end of the 1980’s, there were a series of Aymara organizations working towards the reinstatement of traditional Aymara culture. A few years later, the population census was going to reveal the cultural difference between Aymara and Atacameño cultures, with similar demands but in different cultural contexts. This is an important issue that has been present in many Atacameño community videos produced in the last five years, as is discussed in chapter five.

In 1988, the Comisión Especial de Pueblos Indígenas CEPI (Commission for Indigenous Peoples) was created within the Indigenous Program of the Chilean Commission of Human Rights, a non-governmental agency. A year later this commission gave way to a broader National Council of Indigenous Peoples which gathered for the first time most of the Mapuche, Rapa Nui and Aymara organizations of the time under a single umbrella organization. This moment clearly reflected the active participation of indigenous groups in the country’s fight towards the restitution of democracy in the period 1988-1990. Their organizations played a crucial role in the process leading up to the restoration of democratic institutions. Due to this situation, many of their demands were a part of the government program that was presented to the electorate by the coalition of democratic parties (Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia) in the 1989 national elections, won by the coalitions’ candidate Patricio Aylwin.

Understanding the importance of democracy as a framework for the achievement of their rights, several indigenous representative organizations signed an agreement with the Coalition in 1989. According to this agreement, which was known as the "Acuerdo de Nueva Imperial", or Nueva Imperial Agreement, they would support the Concertacion in its efforts to re-establish democracy, in exchange for the legal and constitutional recognition of some basic rights. Among these rights were included the most fundamental of all: the recognition of their existence as diverse and distinctive peoples within the Chilean society. The law would also contemplate the recognition of their special cultures, identities and languages, the protection of the lands currently owned by them and the recuperation of those which they
claimed belonged to them. Also important were the implementation of policies that would enable their economic development in a way consistent with their cultures, and the right to participate in decisions regarding their future, including the development of independent communication and information media outlets and systems. I quote extensively from Aylwin (1999) who has commented that,

in accordance to the same agreement, the first Coalition government, together with indigenous representatives from north to south, entered into a process leading to the drafting of a proposal for the legal and constitutional recognition of the rights before mentioned. The proposal was worked out through a Special Commission on Indigenous Peoples composed both of government representatives and of indigenous leaders elected by their organizations, representing the different indigenous peoples' of the country. The same initiative was afterwards debated in hundreds of meetings in rural communities and urban areas, and later, in January 1991, on a National Congress of Indigenous Peoples with the participation of 500 leaders. (Aylwin, 1999)

The newly elected government presented the proposal to the National Congress in 1991 in a package which included, among other aspects, a constitutional amendment, a legal initiative and the ratification of recently introduced Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization regarding the protection of indigenous peoples rights. Two years later, the Congress approved Law No 19253 of 1993 – commonly referred today as the “Indigenous Law” - for the "protection, promotion and development of indigenous people". Nevertheless, neither the constitutional amendments, nor the ILO Convention presented to Congress, were approved. Today, ten years later, Convention 169 remains unratified by the Chilean government. Again, this has become a key issue in the media campaigns promoted particularly through Mapuche online newspapers, email bulletin boards and websites.

Many issues remain pending up until today and several limitations were imposed to indigenous demands on the process leading to its approval. However, this law acknowledges rights, which were considered in 1993 to be of great relevance to Indigenous organizations, like the recognition of their ethnic and cultural difference, protection of land, language and culture, financial support for the implementation of economic or cultural initiatives, bilingual and bicultural education, the establishment of the so-called "indigenous development areas" in spaces which constitute the ancestral homelands of indigenous people, and the agreement to work towards autonomous communication and media outlets controlled by indigenous organizations.

However, for many Mapuche scholars, this new law is the latest embodiment of an indigenist discourse. For Ancán for example, this discourse, hegemonized and controlled by leaders and organizations, and lately by the state indigenist organ CONADI, takes its ultimate form in this new law which he rejects as
being indigenist while pointing out that in only three of its articles (75-77) there is a direct concern with the plight of the urban Mapuches (Ancan 1999)\textsuperscript{26}.

In tracing the strategies by which the Chilean State has been able to enlist the indigenous subject, the purpose has been to demonstrate how these procedures have been effectively strategies of exclusion masked under the idea of inclusion (either as assimilation or integration). I’m not trying to suggest an uncomplicated distinction between the ‘oppressed’ on one side and the ‘oppressors’ on the other, as there are multiple speaking positions in both sides.

Having said that, Michel Foucault’s work for example, and later on Gilles Deleuze in his collaborations with Felix Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), have shown how the foundations of sovereignty have to do with the normalization and capture of what lies outside. I have briefly referred to the ‘Pacification of the Araucanía’ as a clear example of this.

In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, “the law of the state is … that of interior and exterior. The state is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what is capable of internalizing” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 360). The indigenous reductions imposed over a period of two centuries clearly show the ways in which the sovereign power of the Chilean State internalized the indigenous ‘reality’ by constructing a new social social space, an interiority; the reduction.

Agamben (1998) complements these ideas through what he calls the “logic of indistinction”. These may be relevant to explain not only the condition of emerging ethnic consciousness under the flag of class struggle, and the indistinctiveness of the Mapuche struggle, but more profoundly, to realize that the Chilean government has been able to test its law reforms being impelled since 2001\textsuperscript{27}, by applying the new juridical order to contain the Mapuche uprising of the last six years. These reforms allow the State to consider exceptional circumstances – like terrorism for example - as “state of exception”. This has been one of the most covered issues in the Mapuche online press and has received a great deal of attention by Mapuche scholars, as will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. I quote extensively from Agamben, when we writes that,

what is outside is included not simply by means of an interdiction or an internment, but rather by means of the suspension of the juridical order’s validity – by letting the juridical order, that is, withdraw from the exception and abandon it. The exception

\textsuperscript{26} Ancan, among others, has been vociferous in rejecting the recently announced Reconciliation Report (October 2003) which has been criticised for promoting an indigenist perspective. A good discussion may be found in the second edition of Azkintuwe. a recently founded Mapuche national monthly newspaper. See Cayuqueo 2003 in the bibliography.

\textsuperscript{27} These are part of the new criminal and processual reform introduced in 2001, as is mentioned in the video by activist and journalist Alfredo Seguel.
does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule. The particular ‘force’ of law consists in this capacity of law to maintain itself in relation to an exteriority (Agamben 1998: 18).

As will be discussed in more detail in chapter five, where I refer to the impact of Mapuche media, several indigenous organizations and scholars have raised their concern and have reacted vigorously against them, mainly through the ‘Mapuche press’\textsuperscript{28}. These examples demonstrate that the current form of state sovereignty in relation to the Mapuche uprising is clearly a position of exception, or, what Agamben has called the “abandonment of subjects to a condition of bare life”, by which they are stripped out of their political rights (Agamben 1998: 29).

Having critically outlined the juridical strategy of exclusion, I continue on to address key points in relation to the strategy of colonization of a Mapuche imagination. I argue that these instances of exclusion work not only at the political and juridical level, but also in they way the Chilean nation imagines itself as a community, where indigenous discourses, gazes and voices have been excluded in favor of the social and cultural constructions of the dominant society.

4.2. Imagining Indians: dynamics of objectification from photography to telenovelas.

In May 1998, Santiago was host to the 8\textsuperscript{th} International Congress of Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs. The promotional artwork for the congress featured a Mapuche woman in the forefront of an image of what seemed to be a brain in the background. The woman’s image was cut from a photograph taken in the early 1920’s (Alvarado 2000) and utilised in a completely different context. The public response from CONACIN is reproduced below\textsuperscript{29}.

\begin{quote}
… We were stripped out of our land. We were deprived of our gods and language. We were brought alcohol and venereal diseases. And after all the plunder now they want to appropriate our images and treat us like drunks, criminals and drug addicts. Our faces and ways of seeing have been taken away. Besides negating our images and usurping our archives of dreams, they have colonised our imagination through the mass media. You don’t even have mercy from your own God…(my translation).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28} I discuss the notion of a Mapuche press in the following chapter in reference to a series of news coverage.

\textsuperscript{29} CONACIN is the National Indigenous Corporation, a national private indigenous organisation.
This unfortunate incident clearly exemplifies the position of a vast majority of Chilean society towards indigenous peoples. The title of this section refers to the film *Imagining Indians* (1992) by Hopi video maker Victor Masayesva Jr, where he critically addresses the politics of Native American representation. As Fatimah Tobing Rony (1993) points out in an interview with Masayesva, *Imagining Indians* “addresses the absurdity and indignity of dominant’s culture appetite for images of Native Americans” (27).

On a similar note, in this section I offer a brief outline of what I have termed the colonisation of the Mapuche imaginary and the appetite (or lack of it) of Chilean society for images of the Mapuche. If in countries like Brazil or the United States, for example, there has been an intense obsession with representing and recording their respective native populations in film and photography, in Chile the case has been quite the opposite. There has been a systematic push for making indigenous peoples invisible. In cases where there is representation of any kind, these are done consciously or unconsciously as practices that exoticise the native ‘other’.

In this section, I use the concept of colonisation differently to the sense of political assimilation explored in the previous section, and I concentrate more in determining the dynamics of the commodification of a historically determined Mapuche iconic image. These dynamics of commodification can be better understood in relation to Miller and Slater’s work on the Internet in Trinidad.30 Dynamics of objectification’ (Miller and Slater 2000), refer to the way people engage with technology as instances of material culture through which they identify with a given socio-cultural formation. Taking on this conceptualisation of ethnic self-identification through technology, I see the colonisation of a Mapuche imaginary being consummated in the public sphere through technologies of objectification such as cinema, photography, television and the printed press. An important element to take into consideration is the relative prominence of the image of the Mapuche and the relative marginality of other indigenous groups. In this sense, the construction and representation of indigenous stereotypes is and has been made largely in reference to the Mapuche. The word indigenous in Chile is most of the time a synonym for Mapuche and I think it is clear that a Chilean national imaginary has been confabulated from the perspective of a dominant society that has constructed itself from 1810 onwards looking at the Mapuche ‘other’, and in that process seeing its own reflection31.

Although my emphasis is in observing this colonisation through technologies of mechanical reproduction and mass mediation, it is possible to argue that this visual colonisation was systematically deployed well before the late 19th century. Alonso de Ercilla for example, one of the first Spanish

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30 Daniel Miller and Don Slater. 2000. *The Internet: an ethnographic approach*. Oxford: Berg. In this book, the authors consider that certain driving forces and patterns of change occur when a cultural formation embraces a new technology.

31 In regards to similar conceptualisations in the case of Australia, see for example Faye Ginsburg 1993a or Annette Hamilton 1990 in the bibliography.
cronistas from the 16th century could be said to be the first to elaborate a stereotype about the Mapuche people. Writing between 1540 and 1550, this Spanish soldier exalted the bellicose attitude of the Indigenous groups that resisted the Spanish invasion. The effect was not so much intended as an exaltation of the ‘noble spirit of the Mapuche’, but a way of reinforcing the might of the Spanish army against the military organization of their enemies.

However, the understanding of this construction as an exaltation of the Mapuche has become a ‘preferred reading’ (c.f Hall 1980), for the last four centuries. This idea was very useful, for example, in the military campaigns during the early part of the 19th century when Chilean armies were fighting the Spanish for independence. It is striking to see the absolute absence of Mapuche images in this period of independence. This image of the brave Mapuche who resisted the Spaniard conqueror due to his libertarian spirit is still very popular, especially every time the historical context of the time invites for a re-validation of a ‘Chilean spirit’, like an important soccer match for example! However, if we consider that a national social memory is based on the founding event of the independence from Spain in 1810, the Mapuche have been absent or at least invisible.

The genealogy may be traced back even further than Alonso de Ercilla, firstly to the Crusades, which “inaugurated ‘Europe’ by reconquering the Mediterranean area … [and thus catalysing] European’s awareness of their own cultural identity” and showing in the process how “feudal religiosity paved the way for racialized conquest” (Shohat and Stam 1994: 60). Much of the cultural imagination of an ‘Other’ - Muslim and Sephardi Jews - during the Spanish Reconquista in the late 15th century was transported to the Americas during the early decades of the Spanish Conquista. The European ideological apparatus of ‘othering’ through discipline and punishment was transposed to the Spanish colonies and Chile was no exception. Contemporary to Ercilla, Francisco Nuñez Pineda y Bascuñán’s Cautiverio Feliz offers the first divergent account of the Spanish colony in Chile. A Spanish soldier like Ercilla, Pineda y Bascuñán was captured in battle and spent several months as ‘prisoner’ of war among a Mapuche community. While in captivity he was able to write a sort of early literary ethnography that showed the ‘inside’ of the Mapuche warrior. Written in 1670, the crónica is inspired by an early notion of the ‘nobility of the savage’ and describes the culture, the people, the food and even the mentality of the Mapuche.

These are just two important examples among many cases that bring to mind Serge Gruzinski’s conceptualisation of the “war of images” that frames the colonisation of the Americas, both in political and symbolic terms. Gruzinski suggests for example that the high appeal of Jesuits to indigenous

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32 The title of Pineda y Bascuñán’s chronicle can be translated into English as Cheerful Captivity and some have seen in this account the first ethnographic description of the Mapuche (Bengoa 1982). The chronicle was turned into a film in 1998 and has received strong criticism from indigenous circles for its revisionist vision of a ‘primitive’ Mapuche way of life (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication July, 2002).
Americans was possible through the enduring and dramatic appeal to the Amerindian imagination. The outcome of these wars of images - as key features of the conquest and colonial periods - is not an unproblematic indigenous conversion to a Western, European or Christian imaginary. On the contrary, the spectacular syncretism of images is one of the defining characteristics of how Latin American indigenous and non-indigenous societies regard themselves today.

On a different note, the early 1980’s mark a considerable epistemological shift in the conceptualisation of the Mapuche among Chilean historians. The focus on the “Frontier History” and the emphasis on contact and exchange offered alternative views on the relationship between the Mapuche society and the Colonial administration first and the Chilean Republic after 1810. This view emphasised the active engagement of the indigenous subject in the politics of frontier exchanges and was helpful to dismantle a series of stereotypes that dominated not only official history but also the forging of a collective imaginary of the dominant Chilean society. However, this epistemological shift fell short of deconstructing the elaboration of a different image of the Mapuche.

The Mapuche heroes in the collective imagination remain the series of caciques, toquis and lonkos who fought the Spanish during the first two centuries of colonialism. These images have become recontextualised within the current Mapuche movement - they feature considerably in Mapuche websites - and may be regarded as examples of the complex dilemma of primitivism (Prins 1997a; 2002).

The dilemma identified by Prins refers to how the same images that at the turn of the 20th century were used to commodify indigenous cultures as a kind of “double internal colonialism” (Prins 2002: 60), are now being resignified as appealing “counter-hegemonic constructs” (72). The illustration shows a 19th century Mapuche cacique, or leader, and was used on Indymedia Argentina’s website to illustrate an article on Mapuche land struggles in Neuquen Province, Southwestern Argentina.

Within this historiographic perspective, the Chilean national consciousness was forged by the civilisation brought by the Spaniards, represented in the language, religion and the idea of order, all of which have permeated the collective unconscious (Julio Pinto, et al. 1999:140 in Foerster 2002:15). This issue is addressed again in the following chapter, when I examine the ways in which the Internet has been utilised by Mapuche historians, sociologists and anthropologists to respond to these interpretations, in what I have referred to as an incipient indigenous public sphere.


34 Several Mapuche intellectuals (Calbucura 2001, Valdes 2000, Millaman 2001, Ancan 2003) have made the point that there is a shift from classical stereotypes to that of terrorists.
The dynamics of photographic objectification

Moving on from the origins of how the images of Mapuche people have been historically objectified into material cultural products, I concentrate now in analysing how this objectification and commodification has been formulated through specific technologies of power such as photography, documentary video and more recently, television.

One of the first impacts of the swift popularisation of photography in the mid 19th century was the fact that paintings of miniature portraits began to be replaced by photographic portraits. The early use of photography for the project of eugenics is one among many examples of the authoritative force embedded in the photograph’s – and the photographer’s - ability to fix and record reality where the photographic image becomes an index of reality (c.f Sontag 1977).

The power that photography enjoyed over other systems of image production until the early decades of the 20th century was given by its apparent ability for imprisoning reality without depending on a subjective image-maker (like a painter sees the world). This understanding has been substantially challenged from Walter Benjamin onwards, towards a position where it is understood that it is not ‘reality’ photographs make immediately accessible but images that depend on a context of viewing; a way of seeing (Sontag 1977, Barthes 1981, Bourdieu 1990, Berger 1980). Nevertheless, in the late 19th century photographic image making was still invested in its authority to become the real thing, or at least of being able to posses someone or something. Despite the changes in technique from pictorial to photomechanical forms of representation and the concern of the West with visualizing a non-European ‘other’, there were arguably profound discursive continuities between the pre-photographic age and a post-photographic age (Lister 1995, Tagg 1988, Alvarado 2000).

The ground-breaking study published by Margarita Alvarado et al. in 2001 marks the first serious anthropological attempt to deal with the construction of a Mapuche imaginary through photographic records. The authors in this edited book offer what is perhaps the only general theoretical discussion of the use of photography in the construction of a Mapuche imaginary (Alvarado 2000, Alvarado et al. 2001).

Alvarado for example has noted how the photographic portrait in the mid 19th century was an important feature amongst the nascent Latin American republics. In studying the Chilean case, she observes for example the existence of discursive continuities between pre-photographic pictorial practices of representing the ‘other’, and the beginnings of ethnographic photography. In these the photographer was
actively intervening in staging up the scene of the portrait and bringing into it its own aesthetic values through objects that allowed an identification with the subjects by focusing on their exoticism.35

What is interesting about Alvarado’s position is that the dynamics of photographic objectification become apparent not only by the mechanical eye of the camera (as suggested long ago by Sontag) but more importantly from the photographers themselves, who are actually the ones rendering the Mapuche subjects into objects of representation. This is the case of Odber Heffer Bisett (1860-1945), an important photographer who in the 1890’s produced a series of "Cartes de Visite" for the Carvajal and Valck society. Alvarado (2001) demonstrates through an analysis of the photographs how the Mapuche ‘models’ are mounted under a series of staging techniques with the aim of creating an aura of specificity and authenticity, inspired in the idea that the savage was captured in his natural environment. More importantly, Alvarado notes that this pictorial assertion becomes even more evident in the fact that these snapshots were commercialised as a unique and authentic image of the Mapuche ‘Indians’, and that many of them were included in the centenary of independence commemoration albums published in 1910 (Alvarado 2000).

Other similar cases include the photographs of Gustavo Millet, a contemporary of Heffer Bisett whose techniques also included the selection and manipulation of objects that carried very specific connotations of ‘indigenousness’ according to the Eurocentric constructions of the time. In Chile, the indigenist representations in political and academic discourses during a large part of the 19th and 20th centuries have been critical in the construction of the indigenous as a male mythic hero. This hero appears consistently in literature and Chilean society. As Millaman suggests (2001), the dead Indian is revived while the living one is petrified, allowing for the gestation of two complementary views from the official indigenist politics. On the one hand, the preservation of culture, on the other, the integration of the indigenous in the national system (Millaman 2001).

Looking at several photographs of the time it is possible to argue that these images are a sight that has been created and reproduced after having been already detached from the place and time in which they first made their appearance. We are looking at something which-has-been (c.f Barthes 1981) where the image becomes an aspect of culture, not nature, and one that embodies a particular way of seeing (Berger 1980). The paradox lies in the fact that what is present in these photographs is the appearance of a subject being objectified; what is absent is the ‘real’ subject. In the process of objectification, the images are embedded in symbolic capital through which the dominant society – through the photographer’s intervention - assigns symbolic value. Therefore, these photographs are never a record of reality, but a means of reproduction of the dominant regimes of truth (c.f. Foucault).

An interesting aspect of these early staged photographs is that they reveal more of the “visual inscriptions of Western scientific practice” (Banks and Morphy 1997:19; Born 1997:142). On a similar note, Deborrah Battaglia’s (1997) analysis of trobriand axe-blades as cultural practice suggests that the ambiguity of early ethnographic photography may be seen as a kind of false concreteness where the absence or invisibility of an element is as crucial as the presence of it in a process of interpretation. Mapuche subjects are displaced from their original context and placed against a series of elements (nature, objects) that enhance their exoticism. What is absent in these photographs is more revealing for the process of their interpretation.

Related to what Born calls visual inscriptions and Battaglia invisible foregrounding, Chilean scholar Magaly Mella demonstrates through ethnographic and empirical research how contemporary Mapuche observers (mostly in rural areas) decodify and resignify these and other photographs of the early 20th century as a form of ethnic identification. On a similar note, Pedro Mege (1997) has been one of the few anthropologists that has examined the historical constructions of a Mapuche imagination covering photography and graphic design, yet unfortunately not covering televisual media. In regards to these iconic images, Mege (2001) discusses what he terms the ‘flat faces of ethnicity’ to refer to both early ethnographic photography and contemporary graphic art in posters and graffiti. In relation to these early ethnographic photographs in sepia, Mege argues they would have offered a feeling of comfort in the sense that the image of an ‘othered’ subject fixed in time is inoffensive in the same way as a colour photograph of the same subject could have been seen as disturbing for its proximity and currency.

On another level, Patricio Toledo takes these images shot during the process referred to as the Pacification of the Araucania (1880’s and 1890’s) and juxtaposes them with photographs of the current phase of Mapuche mobilisations. As a result, he considers that both instances should be regarded as a visual expression of the relation between the Mapuche and the state as a kind of “symbolic frontier” (Toledo 2001). Moreover, Toledo analyses how in the current process of cultural uprising, a series of discrete images have been reproduced over and over again, particularly in the context of processes of ethnic revitalisation in urban contexts. The effect for Toledo is a symbolic continuum in Mapuche culture where the idea of an extinct ‘other’ fixed in time is transformed and given life again in the context of the current conflicts.

A similar case occurs with the photographs taken by Martin Gusinde among the Selknam and Yamana (Yaghan) people between 1919 and 1924. Gusinde was an Austrian priest and ethnographer who travelled and lived among diverse indigenous groups in places such as Patagonia, New Guinea and Japan. For many scholars in Chile (and also Argentina), the thousands of photographs that he took in Tierra del Fuego have come to constitute part of a sort of “collective cognoscitive heritage” (Quiroz

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2001). It is known today (Quiroz 2001, Chapman 1990) that Gusinde, like many amateur photographers, anthropologists and travellers of the time recording cultures on the brink of extinction, staged many of the photographs and even manipulated them after they were taken.

The Selknam called Gusinde “mankacen, or shadow catcher” understanding that shadows is what they were in a long gone past (Quiroz 2001). As Quiroz claims, today they exist in the public imagination thanks largely to Gusinde’s photographs. Gusinde made them get rid of their Western clothes and wear traditional costumes and objects to immortalise them through his mechanical eye37.

Indigenous people and cinematic invisibility

Apart from photography, the first quarter of the 20th century was also marked by the beginnings of film production in Chile. During this period, a series of Italian missionaries took hundreds of photographs of the Fueguino Indians, among them Father Alberto Agostini, who stands out for recording on film the daily activities of some families. In regard to early cinema, it is striking to note the absolute absence of the indigenous subject in cinematic representations. It could be argued that the size of the Chilean film industry during the silent era was relatively small compared to other Latin American countries like Brazil, Mexico or Argentina, but considering that cinema became rapidly the best suited apparatus for projecting narratives of nationhood from Paris to New York, and from Shanghai to Buenos Aires, it’s clear that indigenous peoples in Chile were missing in the new imagined community being built at the turn of the century. Films like Alma Chilena (Chilean Soul) in 1917, Todo por la Patria (Everything for the Fatherland) of 1918, Manuel Rodriguez (1920) and El Empuje de una Raza (1922) (The Force of a Race) are clear examples of the power of early silent cinema in articulating an imaginary of nationhood that was critical after the borders of the country had been so dramatically altered 30 years before.

Ernesto Muñoz and Dario Burotto (1995) divide the history of Chilean cinema into seven consecutive stages, from the early pioneers through to what they call the ‘cinema of transition’ in regards to the process of re-democratization (1987-1995). Although Muñoz and Burotto do not make any reference to the representation of indigenous peoples on film, it is striking to note a “structuring absence” (Stam and Shohat 1994:242) of indigenous peoples in Chilean cinema. A similar situation is noted by Ramirez Berg in relation to Mexican cinema. “Los indios”, Ramirez Berg suggests, “are Mexican cinema’s structured absence” (Ramirez Berg 1997: 77).

Symptomatic of the continuous invisibility of indigenous peoples on the Chilean screen, the cinematic representations of indigenous people in Chilean film history are restricted to a handful of feature films and docudramas with theatrical release. In the Chilean case, a national identity was forged on the bias of

37 There is a striking resonance to the work of Edward Curtis in the United States. See for example Prins 2002: 61.
a largely mestizo population mixed with those of European descent. There is no film addressing the “indigenous question” and indigenous people were never made part of the nascent national imaginary. This becomes a critical issue if we consider that cinema is a strong force in the building of national identity.

Only two fiction films that incorporated an indigenous theme were shot in Chile during the silent period. Gabriela Bussenius’ La Agonía de Arauco (1917) (The Agony of Arauco) and Roberto Idiaquez’s Noblesa Araucana (1925) (Araucanian Nobleness). Bussenius’ film is not only one of the first Chilean feature films. It is also the very first to be shot on location and the first directed by a female director. Structured around a tormented love affair, the film is a naïve tribute to the Mapuche people38 that attempts to pay tribute to the ‘nobility of the savage’. No copies of either of these silent films exists today.

In their erudite work on multiculturalism and the media Robert Stam and Ella Shohat (1994) point out that the film histories of Brazil and the U.S for example, are similar in one respect. The scores of films devoted to Native Americans and Native Brazilians in the early years of industrial production, were mostly adaptations of 19th century ‘Indianist’ novels. This is clearly not the case in Chile. Yet quantity does not make quality and, as Stam (1997) points out, this emphasis in Brazilian cinema of depicting the ‘native’ as a brave warrior or a healthy and pure hero does not indicate a more ‘progressive’ imagination (Stam 1997: 339).

Another three of these handful of films representing the ‘indigenous question’ were shot during the brief period referred to as ‘New Chilean Cinema’ (1968-1973). Two of them were produced during the first year of the Allende Government (1970-1973), yet were financed outside the state production unit, Chile Films39. These films were Julio Coll’s La Araucana, a Spanish, Italian and Chilean co-production from 1971, and the experimental documentary by Raúl Ruiz, Ahora te vamos llamar Hermano (Now we’ll call you Brother) released the same year. Finally, the docudrama A la Sombra del Sol (In the Shade of the Sun) directed by Silvio Caozzi and Pablo Perelman shot in 1973 was released the following year. The film was shot in the village of Caspana, one of the largest Likanantay villages in the high Andes where a serious of community-based indigenous video makers have started to use video as a political tool of cultural resistance. The film is set in the 1940’s and is based on a true story of two prisoners that escape from the Calama jail and flee to Bolivia, raping two Likanantay women in Caspana. The whole community reacts and shoots dead the two escapees. The film was the first feature to include the

38 As it’s implied in the title The Agony of Arauco, the ancestral region of the Mapuche that had only been recently incorporated to the Chilean State in 1883.
39 Paradoxically, no films were completed by Chile Films during the Popular Unity Government.
participation of an indigenous community in the making and is highly regarded today among the Caspaneños (Claudio Mercado, personal communication, June 2002).

From that moment onwards, there were no more indigenous representations on the big screen, with the exception of Pablo Perelman’s Archipiélago (1995) and Cristian Sanchez’s Cautiverio Feliz, released in 1998. Yet Cautiverio Feliz, has had limited distribution in academic and minor commercial circuits. Sanchez’s film has received strong resistance from both indigenous groups and film critics and only had a very limited period of theatrical exhibition. Despite being a fictional narrative, the film is based on historical texts of events that took place in the 16th century⁴⁰.

What is critical in contemporary Chilean cinema is that there has been no attempt to develop stories involving indigenous issues. There is nothing like an indigenous cinema for either indigenous or non-indigenous audiences. In a recent article on Indigenous Cinema for Latin America, Castells i Tallens poses the question of how many indigenous taxi drivers, journalists, policemen, lawyers, drug dealers, students, prostitutes or teachers have been seen in Latin American cinema. As the author suggests, it seems that indigenous characters in cinema are locked in the conquest and the colonial periods, but not in the 21st century (Castells i Tallens 2003). I have already referred to the use of melodrama as a political strategy of cultural resistance in diverse cinematic movements.

The case of video media has been slightly different. Since the film industry was reoriented mainly towards the production of commercial TV ads, and the television industry quickly became the preferred media institution of the state after 1974 until its privatisation in the mid 1980’s, the development of portable video and its introduction in the country in the early 1980’s has had profound differences.

I have already discussed that video technology has a completely different cultural logic than cinema and television. In the Chilean case this is a crucial point to take into consideration. The most notorious case is that of Grupo Proceso, an underground collective of activist media makers who, using a single borrowed video camera and recorder, began documenting in 1982 the process of pro-democratic mobilisations, acting “against the regime as a way of combating the military's “project based on atomizing, destroying, taking apart and pulverizing the social fabric” (Roncagliolo 1991). In different circles⁴¹, the political video movement in Chile has been widely recognised and in a sense continues the tradition of social documentarians which began with Sergio Bravo in 1959 at the Centro Experimental de Cine of the University of Chile. As Patricio Guzmán remarks in his introduction to the first retrospective of Chilean documentary film held in Santiago in 1997, a country without documentary film

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⁴⁰ As has been noted, Cautiverio Feliz is based on the story by Spanish conquistador Francisco Nuñez Pineda y Bascuñan.
⁴¹ For an example in English of grass-roots video in Chile see the edited volume Video the Changing World by Nancy Theade and Alain Ambros, Montreal, 1991.
production is like a family without a family photo album. In this sense, documentary film and video in Chile has had the burden of keeping the family album up to date. From Jorge Di Lauro’s 1958 film *Andacollo*, Rafael Sanchez’s *Las Callampas* (1957) and Sergio Bravo’s *Laminas de Almahue* of 1961, documentary film was crucial in the documenting of the social unrest leading to the election of the Popular Unity coalition led by Allende in late 1970. Other classic 16mm. political short-documentaries of the time, such as Douglas Hubner’s 1969 film *Herminda de La Victoria*, exploring the complexity of an illegal land seizure by a group of marginal *pobladores* (shanty town dwellers), or Pedro Chaskel and Hector Rios’ *Venceremos* (1970), a visual montage of the violence and contradictions of everyday life in Chile in the early 1970’s, are just two of many documentaries that show the power of the genre in documenting recent Chilean political history.\(^{42}\)

**Video, democratisation and indigenous peoples.**

The underground video movement initiated by *Grupo Proceso* in 1982 revives in part this tradition, which was smashed by the military after 1973. With the film industry dismantled and the rise in production costs, video was clearly the way to go. This not only offered cheaper access and real time recording/viewing, but also implied a completely different concept of circulation: home video systems. This allowed for intricate networks of underground circulation of films and videos on Betamax and VHS. Among this new wave of political video makers, several stand out for both their political courage in challenging the military authorities and their attempt to find new languages outside the ideological imperatives of the New Latin American cinema.\(^{43}\) In fact, parts of the manifesto by video makers was an direct attack to the ‘brotherhood’ of the ‘fathers’ of Latin American cinema where cinema, along with television is positioned as ‘dominant’ media, whereas video is the new medium for achieving qualitative changes in the situation of the oppressed and marginalised sectors of Latin America. It is important to acknowledge the rich legacy of political Latin American cinema collectives such as *Grupo Cine Liberación* in Argentina, *Grupo Ukamau* in Bolivia, the *Filmoteca del Tercer Mundo* in Uruguay, the *Cineastas de la Unidad Popular* in Chile, *Cine Urgente* in Venezuela, *Cinema Novo Group* from Rio, Brazil or the *Taller Cine Octubre* in México, among others.\(^{44}\)

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\(^{42}\) Other key short experiments in documentary film of this period are *Campamentos Sol Naciente* (Ignacio Aliaga 1972), *Reportaje a Lota* (Jose Roman 1970) and the already mentioned *Ahora te vamos llamar hermano* shot by Raul Ruiz in 1971.

\(^{43}\) This self-separation from the NLAC by video makers, not only in Chile but also in many other Latin American countries was brought to critical light during the 1987 Festival of the New Latin American Cinema held in Havanna, Cuba, where a bitter debate between filmmakers and videomakers led to a manifesto of videomakers searching for an alternative to the dominance of filmmakers in regards to counter hegemonic media practices.

\(^{44}\) In Chile, it is possible to distinguish five generations of filmmakers currently active (Aliaga 2000). The founding filmmakers of the New Chilean cinema in the late 1960’s and early 70’s like Patricio Guzman, Raul Ruiz; those working in Chile and in exile under the dictatorship; the video movement in the 1980’s, the new filmmakers of the transition to democracy in the 1990’s and a new generation of young filmmakers emerging from different film and media schools around the country.
During the 1980’s, together with an increase in domestic consumption of video and the liberalization of the Latin American economies, video technology and practice become intrinsic mechanisms of social activism. The video boom of the 1980’s saw the creation of over 500 video institutions and organizations and more than 300 specialised bulletins and publications on video as a social and cultural tool.

Like Grupo Proceso since 1982, another Chilean collective, Teleanálisis, also began constructing video as a useful tool for counter information and the fight against Pinochet’s regime. What’s more interesting about the work of Teleanálisis since its inception in 1984, is their re-use of existing footage taken by mainstream media, which is in turn mixed with their own footage and circulated through an intricate underground network of workers, pobladores, peasants and, most importantly within the framework of this thesis, indigenous organizations that were starting to regroup after 1978. In this regard, and probably unlike the work of other collectives like Ictus (working on theatre) or Ceneca (in literature and humanities), Teleanálisis’ originality lies in the making of “pantallazos” (radical screenings) in public spaces and community channels which became serious counter hegemonic messages to those being circulated in the mainstream media. These public screenings are an early expression of what Geert Lovink refers to as ‘tactical media’ in the sense of what he calls ‘temporary actions of subversion’ aimed at provoking and contesting dominant codes. The difference from Lovink’s theorisation of impermanence as a condition of tactical media, is that Teleanálisis’ work was definitely aimed at consolidating a long-term strategy of resistance to the military dictatorship. In 1988, Teleanálisis played a pivotal role in the ‘NO Campaign’ leading to the plebiscite of October that year that rejected Pinochet’s aims to remain in power. In my view, the work of these collectives is also a key example of what Rafael Roncagliolo has called ‘alterative media’ in contrast to alternative media. Roncagliolo suggests we move from alternative media, defined as basically reacting to dominant hegemonic orders, to a concept of alterative media, one that is proactive in organising its own space, creating its identity and constructing action strategies (see Ambrosi 1991:17). The notion of alterative media as proposed by Rafael Roncagliolo (1991) is pertinent to the examination of the Mapuche engagements with audiovisual communication/information media, and the way in which these media are culturally constructed as effective tools for celebrating cultural survival, mobilising and calling for political action as well as powerful poetic weapons for redefining identities. Roncagliolo’s conceptualisation of alterative media differs from more general approaches to alternative media in the fact that it stresses the proactive engagement with media for social change. It offers a possibility to engage with the transformative power

45 Octavio Getino Cine y Televisión en América Latina: Producción y Mercados, Santiago: LOM Ediciones. 1998. In his analysis of the new Latin American audiovisual scapes, Getino refers to the key impact that the formation of the Brazilian Association of Popular Video (ABVP) in 1984 and the first showcases of video militante had on the creation of the Video nas Aldeias project organised by Vincent Carelli at the CTI which opened the door for the development of indigenous media in Brazil.

46 Many critics have analysed the immense impact of the “NO” television campaign in the results.

of media in the community and not a mere alternative running in parallel to mainstream corporate communication infrastructures.

After the return to democracy in 1990, video collectives needed to reposition themselves in relation the new democratic context. Teleanálisis was revamped as Nueva Imagen, a professional production company inserted in the mainstream film and television market.48

Contemporary to the underground work of Grupo Proceso and Teleanálisis, the first political videos documenting the social reality of a decade of military oppression probably began with a series of politically engaged and intimate accounts of popular resistance. Ignacio Aguero’s No Olvidar (1982), Pablo Salas’s Protestas 83 Hasta Vencer (1983) and Somos + (1987)49, Gastón Aancelovici’s Memorias de una Guerra Cotidiana (1985-1986) or Andres Racz’s Dulce Patria (1984-1985) and No me amenaces (1989) are some examples of a lively movement of documentarians fighting for democracy. In these cases, video media is not a neutral recording device, but a socially constructed tactical weapon of resistance. Nearly all the films were shot in U-Matic system and describe, analyse and critically engage with different aspects of human right abuses in Chile. In many cases, like Racz’s Dulce Patria, the video makers risk their own lives in their fight to denounce the Pinochet regime. An original perspective, different to the upfront oppositional discourse of the films mentioned, is David Benavente’s 1983 film El Willy y la Miriam. The first video to be shot in Betacam, the film is based on a real series of events and narrated by its own ‘protagonists’, who describe the complexities of unemployment, rural migration to the cities, poverty and lack of opportunities of a couple who can hardly communicate with one another50. The video is, to use Michael Renov’s terms, a “domestic ethnography” (1999) of the social political situation of the Chilean underclass where the relationship breakdown of the couple works as a metaphor for the failure of the neoliberal policies of the military regime after the financial crisis of 1982.

In another documentary, Blanca Azucena of 1985, Benavente presents a series of indigenous and peasant educators in southern Chile discussing the importance of participatory rural education. There is no reference to the indigenous question, but the video shows a different interest to those videos focusing on the predominantly urban pro-democracy movement.

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48 Today, the Red Nacional de Video Popular y TV Comunitaria in Santiago is the most important grass roots video organization acting as an umbrella for over 100 members community organisations.

49 During the 1998 version of the Santiago International Documentary Festival, Pablo Salas presented a seminar in the section Unfinished Documentaries: fragment and reality of documentary cinema. This section - organised by Patricio Guzman - focused on looking at the process of documentary film/video practice and what happens to the footage of those films that, for different reasons, never get completed. Salas was able to discuss the immense number of hours shot during the 1980’s popular pro-democracy movements, most of which served international TV networks showing the events taking in place in Chile in those years. It is important to note that he was the cinematographer for Jeanette Paillan’s award winning documentary Punalka.

50 Another original video of those years was Gonzalo Justiniano’s Los Guerreros Pacifistas (1984) narrating the social alienation of a large part of the Chilean youth through the eyes of members of the marginal Punk movement in Chile.
The almost absolute invisibility of indigenous peoples in Chilean film and video during most of the dictatorship, but also throughout the history of Chilean cinema is a clear indication that the “easiest and most natural form of racism in representation is the act of making the other invisible” (Langton 1993: 24).

The tendency begins to be reversed towards the final years of the military rule with the works of Francisco Gedda, one of the most prominent Chilean documentary makers during the past decade. Interestingly, Gedda launches his career in the early 80’s with three films that do not refer to the political dimension of the democracy movement or the documentation of human rights abuses, but on cultural ecology. These are El Altiplano: Las Alturas Vivas de los Andes in 1985, and two films from 1987: El Litoral de los Changos, and Los Últimos Pehuenches. This last film is one of the first ones to tackle the arising conflict in the Bio Bio region.

In a sense, Gedda’s films indicate a turn in Chilean documentary where political video activism starts giving way to social and cultural accounts of the Chilean reality after the dictatorship. Other early ‘ethnographic’ videos of this period are the short documentaries (all under 20 minutes) Las Aguas del Desierto (Marcelo Ferrari 1988); Camino a Usmagama (Cristian Galaz & Rodrigo Moreno, 1988); Toconao: El Agua Bajo del Cielo (Claudio Marchant and Rodrigo Moreno, 1988); Palin, Juego de Chile, (Claudio Marchant, 1988); and Mate Ote Maea: Ojos de Piedra (Marcelo Ferrari 1990)51.

Despite the increasing production of documentaries on indigenous themes since the early 1990’s compared with previous decades, it is important to note that most of these were produced by non-indigenous documentary makers, some of them already working in the 1980’s, others as part of a new post-dictatorship generation of film and video makers. Most of these films were produced with the assistance of the Fondo Nacional para el Desarrollo de las Artes (FONDART), the Chilean government’s National Arts Fund52.

The indigenous question has been one among many other topics explored in what has become a real revival of Chilean documentary. For the purpose of categorising these productions, I observe four different, yet sometimes overlapping perspectives in post-dictatorship Chilean documentaries that deal with indigenous issues as subject matter.

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51 Galaz and Ferrari have directed the two top Chilean films in terms of box-office records to date (2003). It is also important to note that all these short documentaries, none of them over 20 minutes, were among the first programs produced by Nueva Imagen, the new corporate version of Teleanalisis, showing that the indigenous question was an interesting topic once that the struggle for democracy had ended.

52 In 1999, FONDART provided 750,000 U.S. dollars in funding for audiovisual projects (Aliaga 2000 :6) and since 1992 has financed 400 documentaries, art videos and short fictions (Aliaga 2003:16)
The first group of films focus on the destruction of indigenous traditions and knowledge, and the impact of modern life on indigenous cosmologies. A second grouping is formed by films focusing on the recovering and reclaiming of indigenous cultural traditions, with an interest in documenting and representing a traditional indigenous subject. A third set may be seen in those films that explore the issue of cultural and ethnic extinction and the disappearance of indigenous cultures. One last grouping is an incipient set of videos recently made by anthropologists from different institutions; mostly universities and research centres.

In some films within the first category, it is possible to detect a latent political criticism of the impact of decades of Chilean colonialism. Not surprisingly, several of these films were produced by documentarians of the previous generations. Among the first case, a couple of films stand out. One is Raiz de Chile: Mapuche-Aymara, produced in 1992 by David Benavente (to whom I have already made reference). The documentary, re-edited in 1997, marks a different trajectory within documentary film/video practice in Chile. The film was praised for its methodological approach in constructing cultural knowledge about the indigenous ‘roots’ of Chilean society and it is the first one to tackle the complex case of the clash between traditional knowledge and modern ways of life. The 26-minute video is also a meditation on the hidden, often invisible reality of interculturalism and bilingualism. The release of the film coincides with the population census of 1992 and the debate it originated, as was discussed in previous sections of this chapter. The film reflects on the politics of the everyday life for groups of indigenous Mapuche and Aymara in a context of cultural change and immersion in modern life at the end of the 20th century. It successfully overcomes an objectifying representation of an indigenous other by bringing the indigenous subject so close that the experiences of the characters become universal. In my view, the film strongly criticises embedded discourses of integration and assimilation in official school history books and educational centres around the country, and calls for the urgent need of bi-cultural and bi-lingual education.

En Nombre del Progreso, by Claudio Sapiain53 is the first documentary to examine the consequences of the construction of hydroelectrical dams in Pehuenche communities in the Bio Bio River. Shot in 1993, the video is a 28-minute exposition of different comments and views on the real benefits of such projects and the environmental and cultural consequences. The film coincided with the passing of the new Indigenous Act of 1993.

Other political video commentaries on a similar line are Fabiola Severin’s short documentary Huilli Mapu, and Daniel Evans’ and Marcela Muñoz’s La Isla despues del Tiempo, both of 1994, which examine the nature of indigenous knowledge, the impact of logging companies, and the over-

53 Claudio Sapiain is a political filmmaker formed in exile an is part of what Aliaga terms the "second generation" of Chilean documentarians.
exploitation of marine and agricultural resources on indigenous communities. A similar approach is also taken in Claudia Iglesias’ *Fe Grande* (1997) and Daniel Evans’ *Heredades* (1998). The first one, which has had extensive circulation at international festivals, is a reflexion on the issue of water in Likanantatay communities in northern Chile and the continuous emigration from ancestral territories. As many indigenous scholars would put it, this and other films present politically correct versions of the destruction of indigenous life-worlds yet with a ‘petrified’ image of the indigenous subjects (Mariman 2001) who are locked in their fate to disappear. The promotional logline for *Fe Grande* for example, reads “at the end of 1994, the inhabitants of the Alto Loa region in Atacama predict the contamination of their solely source of life, the Loa river, and therefore the end to their existence in that area” (Guzman 1999). Evans’ *Heredades* is a delicate meditation on the juxtaposition of three different worlds. An indigenous Hulliche luthier, an indigenous leader and a non-indigenous national park’s ranger who all have different views on the environment and preservation. Both films take a poetic and somewhat minimalist turn to represent a kind of ‘clash of civilizations’ perspective, which is also the case of Francisco Gallardo’s self-reflexive postmodernism in *En El Silencio del Sol* (1999) who comments on the transitory nature of the modern colonisation of the Atacama desert compared to the permanence of its ‘ancestral’ inhabitants.

*Licancu: Niños en la Red* (1996) by Paola Coll is perhaps the only documentary to explore cultural impacts of new technologies on indigenous societies. The 25-minute Chilean-Canadian co-production (produced by Nueva Imagen in Chile) looks at a group of Mapuche primary school students in a rural school near Temuco who have access to the Internet through the government sponsored ENLACES project. The access to the ‘outer’ world and the impact on the children is explored. Nevertheless, and despite being perhaps the only film addressing directly the issue of indigenous communications, the account is quite superficial with an off-screen omniscient narrator who provides a journalistic type of account of the positives and the negatives of new technology.

Finally, the film *Ralco*, made by Esteban Larrain in 1999 is not just the only full-length documentary among the ones just enumerated, but it is also one that situates itself in the middle of a political struggle between the Pehuenche Quintreman sisters and their community against the onslaught of energy transnational company ENDESA and the Chilean State. The view in the film is the promotion of cultural resistance and the delay in the construction of the dams due to the active opposition of several organizations. While Larrain worked with a visual anthropologist (Claudio Lezama) as consultant in *Ralco*, he decided to invite Mapuche video maker Jeannette Paillan for his second part *El Velo de Berta* (completed in 2004) in which he follows on the epic resistance of the Quintreman sisters, the only remaining people of a community of about 90 families who were consistently pushed to sell their lands.
and relocate to other properties provided through an arrangement between ENDESA and the Chilean government\textsuperscript{54}.

A second line of documentaries during the 1990’s may be identified by an interest in documenting and reconstructing traditional indigenous cultures from a non-indigenous perspective. An early example is Pablo Rosenblatt’s Sueños del Kultrun (1990), which explores Mapuche iconography and the learning process of a Machi, the Mapuche shaman. Also important is Felipe Laredo’s ‘Mapuche’ trilogy, La Manta de Juan Carlos (1988); Machi Eugenia (1992); and Palín Bolílloco Mapu Meu (1994). In Machi Eugenia, there is yet again another interest in the machi, the Mapuche shaman figure as a fixed icon of Mapuche authenticity. The narrative structure of the documentary is based on a traditional Mapuche trance chant, which is juxtaposed with conventional documentary interviews. On one side, the film attempts to recover ancestral Mapuche forms of storytelling through shamanic chants, yet on the other, the film conforms to the conventions of television documentaries.

An important film within this attempt to represent, recover and reconstruct Mapuche culture is Wichan, a fictional documentary spoken in Mapuzungun (the Mapuche language) and played by members of the Mapuche community of Lago Budi in southern Chile. Although the communities had some degree of participation in the film, the final product was the work of a non-indigenous filmmaker. Anthropologist Gastón Carreño, director and founder of the Chilean Journal of Visual Anthropology has discussed the construction of a Mapuche image in film and video (Carreño 2000) by comparing these two films, among others, in terms of their historical representation of the Mapuche. Carreño tells how in a public screening of Wichan, Meneses referred to some of the problems in having the community participating in the film. In one of the film’s scenes, two longkos (chiefs) are greeting each other. The community wanted to have a half an hour scene to show the associated ceremony when her film was supposed to be not longer than 30 minutes. The impasse was resolved by the decision of the director to stick to the original project (Carreño 2000). Despite being a film produced within the conventions of the industry, Wichan is a strong representation of traditional Mapuche systems of knowledge and justice. On a completely different level, Sanchez’s Cautiverio Feliz is full of the stereotypical images of the Mapuche and insists in showing the same “iconic images” (Mege 2001) that have come to summarise the image of the Mapuche. Its primitivistic envisioning recalls what Rony has labelled a “cinema of romanic preservationism” (Rony 1996:102).

\textsuperscript{54} As is discussed in more detail in the following chapter and as it is shown on my documentary, Jeannette Paillan’s latest and still unfinished project is Los Relocalizados. In this work, Paillan is interested in showing the conditions in which these relocated families are currently living, and the unmet promises of the agreement they signed with Endesa (National Energy Enterprise) and the Chilean government. In my documentary, Paillan discussed in detail the importance of making this situation an issue of public interest and debate. In several sequences in the film, I show Paillan’s attempts to use video as a political instrument and get the community of relocated Pehuenche families on her side to protest against Endesa.
Other recent films that may be included within this general categorisation are for example Los Moai caminantes de Rapa Nui by Leopoldo Correa 1996; Quinquen, Tierra del Refugio by Margarita Campos, 1998; El Viaje en el Uro Aruma: El Dia Aymara by Hernan Dinamarca 1999 and Historia de Blanca y su mágica Tierra de Agua, by Angeles Nuño, 2003.

**Ethnographic video and Indigenous People in Chile.**

A third category may be distinguished by those films that focus on the cultural and physical extinction of indigenous groups, particularly in reference to the indigenous peoples of the far south of the country. Both Saltaxar (Ivan Sanhueza 1995) and La Ultima Huella (Paola Castillo 2001) focus on the theme of extinction of the Yaghan people by having the Calderon sisters narrate the stories of their people and their ultimate disappearance. Saltaxar was made by a filmmaker trained in advertising film production, had anthropologist Daniel Quiroz as a consultant and had a minor impact and circulation. La Ultima Huella on the contrary had full support by FONDART, the Documentary Filmmakers Guild and received a prize at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2002. Similar approaches can be seen in Christian Aylwin’s film on the Selk’nam Yikwa ni Selk’nam (2000), a film grounded in literary existentialism and anthropological self-reflexivity. More recently, Lucia Salinas’ The Last Kaweshkar (2004), a dramatic account of an indigenous Kaweshkar, Carlos Eden, living in New York during the last 25 years, who travels back to the remote south of Chile to meet his relatives, living on the brink of cultural and physical extinction. Like Castillo’s film, Salinas’ The Last Kaweshkar is a historical testimony marked by the interest to record the dying voices of a handful of indigenous people fighting for survival.

In relation to anthropologists taking into account indigenous realities as a subject of analysis there is no work that systematically and ethnographically examines the conflictive relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people in the construction of an indigenous imaginary, which is a topic that I was interested in exploring in my film De la Tierra a la Pantalla which accompanies this thesis.

Unlike the case of other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Mexico or Bolivia where it is possible to see a convergence between popular video and anthropological video, the case in Chile seems to me much more marginal. As I have said, Indigenous video in Mexico for example may be traced back to a 1983 publication by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) in Mexico on indigenous video, which was elaborated by a series of anthropologists working on community communications. The role of anthropologists is important in the formation of CLACPI in Mexico in 1985 as well. In Brazil video

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55 On a similar note another film that may be looked at in an analogous way is French anthropologist Anne Chapman’s film Homenaje a los Yaganes produced in 1990 in which she follows on topics explored in her earlier films produced together with Jorge Preloran in the late 1970's, such as Los Onas: Vida y Muerte en Tierra del Fuego.
collectives like TVDO working within the framework of ‘social video’ were crucial in the work done since 1985 in indigenous communities (Aufderheide 1995)

In my opinion, the legacy of Chilean anthropologists on indigenous media in Chile is nil. The general lack of interest in ‘applied visual anthropology’ (Pink 2004) is reflected in the passive engagement by Chilean anthropologists with film, video and new media as valid forms of cultural analysis. Some debate has been generated in terms of the validity of photography and video as methodological techniques of data collection (Foerster et al. 1993, Maturana 1998, 2002), but a more critical examination of the dynamics of cultural production through media remains to be articulated. This criticism is demonstrated by looking at the articles published in the catalogue of the retrospective “Documentary and Anthropology in Chile”, organised by the Chilean Museum of Precolumbian Art in October 2002. The three articles that make up this document are written by anthropologists interested in visual anthropology and documentary film, and they accompany the videos that were shown on that occasion. It seems to me that the event was a naïve move to ‘institutionalise’ visual anthropology in Chile by overstating the quality and impact of a handful of videos made by anthropologists and another few in which anthropologists have acted as consultants.

The first article by Francisco Gallardo is a vague history of visual anthropology and ethnographic film that looks more like a weary translation to Spanish of relevant literature in the topic, yet with significant omissions. There is no critical analysis of the main debates in visual anthropology in the last decade.

The second article by Juan Pablo Silva is similar but is grounded in a general understanding of technologies of representation and the impact in ethnographic films and videos. Like the first article, it reads like a series of worn-out and out-of-date commentaries on the impact of different technologies in the production of anthropological visual representations.

The third and last article of the document is Felipe Maturana’s analysis of the emerging field of visual anthropology in Chile. This is definitely the most original of all three yet fails because of the same problems as the other two. Acknowledging anthropology’s lack of concern with visual representations through media, Maturana seems obsessed with covering this desolate landscape with a series of student works, experimental films and television documentaries in which anthropologists have been invited as either consultants, or just for political correctness. He celebrates Rony Goldschmied’s 1987 short documentary Santiago: Pueblo Grande de Huincas as the first ethnographic documentary made by an anthropologist. There is no critical analysis of the video itself, but it seems more important for Maturana that it was made by an anthropologist. He goes on citing a series of works of uneven quality, some of

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56 The few exceptions are Claudio Mercado and Gerardo Silva’s project of implementing a video workshop for Likanantay people, or Estaban Villarroel’s documentary By Pass Temuco (2001).
which I was involved as a student of anthropology, which become the basis for his argument of an
implosion of a young generation of visual anthropologists. Being part of that circle myself, I don’t see
these experiments as too relevant.

Maturana poses, consciously or unconsciously, two important questions. Both can be seen as two sides
of the same coin. On the one hand, the fact that most video representations of indigenous people by non-
indigenous film and video makers come from outside anthropology. On the other hand, the fact that
this new generation of students and young anthropologists have shown more concern with themes
outside of the representation of indigenous issues. One exception is Maturana’s own video collective
Yekusimaala and their documentation of Mapuche community activities in a suburb of Santiago.

Despite the specific differences and similarities of the approaches, they are all aimed at mapping the
politics of cultural identity in Chile, and all basically attend to the new models of cultural agency –
production, reception, consumption - in contemporary Chilean society. Nevertheless, most if not all of
these texts have failed to consider adequately the indigenous variable in their accounts. There is clearly a
need for critical theory to counter the racist representations in the public arena as well as the indifference
towards indigenous demands. In this regard, and despite using certain worn-out categories for analysing
different documentaries subgenres that account for Mapuche themes, Carreño’s interest in establishing
common strategies in the representation of the Mapuche marks a good starting point.

Most significant is the work of Sergio Bravo among the ‘old’ vanguard of political filmmakers. As was
pointed out earlier, Bravo is considered one of the founders of Chilean documentary in the late 1950’s
and throughout the 1960’s and early 1970’s. As is discussed in more detail in the following chapter,
Bravo was responsible for organising the first showcase of Mapuche cinema in late 1999. The Kiñe-
Trawyn-Kine-Mapuche was first presented at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, where Bravo relocated
after the coup of 1973. The showcase was organised by the Centro Intercomunitario para la Cultura
Audiovisual Independiente (CICAI) that Bravo founded in Paris in the late 1980’s. The film event then
travelled through several Mapuche rural communities in southern Chile as part of a common project
with the municipality of Tirua, and more detail is provided in following chapters. For the moment it
suffices to say that this event stands out as the only initiative so far to convene a Mapuche or indigenous
cinema in Chile.

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57 Maturana’s bases his argument on the fact that out of the forty three videos on indigenous peoples in Chile that form the
collection of the Museum of Precolumbian Art in Santiago, only four have been made by anthropologists and the remaining
thirty nine by professional production companies, NGO’s or individual videomakers with no training in anthropology.
58 Carreño’s analysis is based on his examination of the 32 films and documentaries from the audiovisual archive of the
Chilean Musem of Pre-Columbian Art, which account or deal in one way or another with Mapuche themes.
In comparison, while indigenously produced media have become visible elements in the national imaginaries of Canada, New Zealand or Australia, the case in Chile is quite different, as the Chilean national imaginary has been constructed essentially through the familiar stereotypes and constant stereotyping, iconising and mythologising of indigenous people by the non-indigenous society since the 19th century. Of the 43 fictional feature films with theatrical release between 1997 and 2003, none has any reference to indigenous peoples even though they coincide with the peak of the Mapuche conflict and its media coverage. In terms of the 64 full-length documentaries (over 52 minutes) produced between 2000 and 2004, only eight are based on indigenous themes and only one was produced by an indigenous maker, Jeannette Paillan’s, Wallmapu in 2001.

Indigenous productions have never been broadcast on Chilean television; there are no indigenous presenters, or programs in which indigenous people are working59. The only case where indigenous peoples have been represented to a degree, is on the recently screened Ioarana, a telenovela set in Easter Island. Ioarana, which in Rapa Nui language means Hello, was a telenovela of 100 chapters of 55 minutes each produced by TVN (Televisión Nacional de Chile) and broadcasted during the first semester of 1998. The series was promoted as “a sensual love story of exotic characters in the wonderful setting of Easter Island” (TVN promotional campaign, available on www.tvn.cl).

No indigenous Rapa Nui was invited to participate in any role and the Rapa Nui characters were played out by the same known faces of Chilean TV soaps. However, in a bold move by television standards, many actors had to learn some Rapa Nui language as several sections of dialogue required to be spoken in Rapa, with Spanish subtitles. In the end, despite claims in the public opinion that the production of the series had a positive impact on the Island’s culture by putting Rapa Nui language and traditional customs on the ’small screen’, the subtext was always an exploitation of the ’exotic’ nature of the island, which made it appealing for viewers. I return to this case in the following chapter.

So far in this chapter I have summarised the strategies by which indigenous people in Chile have been excluded, made absent and invisible, not only from their right to ethnic citizenship and existence within the juridical order of the state, but also through the mechanisms by which they have been represented in different media, from early photographic commodifications of a Mapuche image, through the representation and violence of comprehension in documentary and ethnographic films and video. In the next chapter, I have examined the beginnings and development of indigenous media in Chile. It is noteworthy to mention that the Mapuche image was masterfully employed as a symbol of political resistance by the so-called communications experts opposed to the dictatorship. But the victory at the elections in 1989 resulted in a drastic change in the corporate image of the elected government. The new government had to change its confrontational image, and therefore the Mapuche were once again subtly

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59 This claim is explored by Alfredo Seguel as presented in my video.
displaced from the Chilean political iconography (Calbucura 2001). In this section, I will discuss the third background element for understanding the emergence of Mapuche media. That is, the social construction of a Mapuche conflict in the Chilean media and the public sphere.

4.3. The ‘Mapuche conflict’: cultural politics in the age of media globalisation.

The conflict that today confronts several Mapuche organizations – and symbolically the whole Mapuche nation – with corporate interests and the Chilean government, materialized in the media in October of 1998, when several trucks carrying logs were burnt down. The actions were attributed to Mapuche persons and from there on a ‘Mapuche conflict’ was constructed in the media and public opinions.

But the conflict had been silently emerging since pretty much the end of the dictatorship. The first problems started in the early 1990’s with the construction of dams in the Bio Bio River and the relocation of several Pehuenche indigenous communities. December of 1997 saw the beginnings of a massive uprising by the Mapuche. Underlying this new wave of indigenous mobilisation was the attempt to confront the corporate expansionism in their territories (primarily forestry, mining and hydro-electric dams), the passive attitude of the government (which has reacted by repressing the indigenous movement), the unfulfilled promises of the 1993 Indigenous Act, and the general indifference of the Chilean society at large.

When examining the origins of the current phase of Mapuche activism referred to as Mapuche conflict, most analysts and journalists have focused on socio economic aspects of extreme poverty and lack of land as the starting point of the Mapuche discontent. However, as several Mapuche analysts have contended the search for an origin of the current conflict lies in the juxtaposition of several variables.

I have already mention the assimilationist policies through which Mapuche people were recognized as Chileans (inclusion) but never as Mapuche (exclusion) and the process of agricultural colonization through which a large part of the indigenous population was eradicated into closed reservations. The exclusion also refered to the fact that Indigenous peoples in Chile have had no presence on television at all and have been given no chance to access the mass media through their own means — either audiovisual or print-based — despite the promises incorporated in the Indigenous Act introduced in 1993. Article 28 (C) of the legal text declares, for example, that respect and protection of indigenous cultures and languages would be assured through the promotion of indigenous programs in indigenous languages on regional radio and television stations, and the creation of indigenous radio networks and communication media. Almost a decade later none of these promises have been implemented. The right to communicate has therefore been important to the Mapuche movement and has taken a key place in the political agenda of different organisations, as evidenced by the numerous well-researched articles
appearing in many websites. However, the uptake has been slow. As some Mapuche media practitioners argue, the implications and full potential of self-controlled media outlets have not been fully understood by indigenous organizations (Jeannette Paillán, personal communication, Santiago, Chile, July 2002). Yet the struggle over the control of information has clearly become integral to the elaboration of a new Mapuche imaginary, in an attempt to challenge the general ignorance and indifference of the public sphere.

During the first years of conflict (1998-1999) the Chilean press constructed a notion of “ethnic rebellion” to address the Mapuche movement. At the start of 1999, El Mercurio newspaper, included an extensive report on the situation “affecting innocent land owners in the South” titled “Our own little Chiapas” (El Mercurio 28.2.199).

The view of the newspaper, the most influential and widely read Chilean print medium, was that the country was witnessing a rebellion by an organized separatist movement with international links to other terrorist organizations (Vergara and Aravena 1999).

The emergence of indigenous media practice in Chile, particularly the increasing importance of digital media in the agenda of the Mapuche movement over the last five years, needs to be understood in the context of the so-called ‘Mapuche conflict’. The media have stereotyped the indigenous mobilisation by focussing solely on the violent features and civil disobedience of the Mapuche actions. The Mapuche uprising is portrayed as an ‘indigenous conflict’, with the Mapuche as sole originators of the crisis, while in fact it has largely been constructed as a strategy by the government and private interests in the area to discredit the legitimacy of the Mapuche struggle (Marimán 2000).

In general terms, the conflict has been constructed in the mass media, and in large parts of public opinion, as a dispute masterminded by radical indigenous groups with international funding and support. Newspapers and television networks have repeatedly observed that this ‘unjustifiable’ cause for land rights and self-determination is not only absurd but also threatens to destabilise the country’s democratic status quo and contravenes the Chilean constitution. Moreover, there is a clear tendency to make this conflict a criminal matter and exempt the logging companies from any responsibility. For Foerster and Lavanchy (1999), ‘in its most extreme version, this style of information reproduces a symbolic pattern of understanding of the indigenous reality that is characterised for centring its attention in the acts of violence, the uprising and the projection of the Mapuche as a community up in arms’.

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60 I have already referred to the fact that the Chilean public and media spheres are characterised as being one of the less pluralist within the region, due primarily to the embarrassing level of property concentration of the media and the lack of appropriate regulation on this issue. The main particularity of the Chilean case, as has been pointed out already, is that this concentration is visible both at the economic level as well as in the ideological level. This rigid ideological monopoly annuls any political and cultural diversity of the media sphere (Sunkel and Geoffroy 2001).
The coverage of the Mapuche conflict in the print and televisual media since 1998 raises serious questions about core values and processes in the Chilean society at large. A similar case has happened more recently with the bilateral political impasse with Bolivia and the way the Chilean press has reacted.

John Hartley and Alan McKee’s study of what they call ‘an Indigenous public sphere in Australia’ may be illuminating for the Chilean case, particularly in reference to the way the ‘indigenous question’ in Chile is “made to stand for major conflicts in the symbolic domain of national identity-building” (Hartley and McKee 2000:8). As an example, in a seriously irresponsible article published in 2001 by Diario La Tercera the second most read national newspaper, journalist Guillermo Espinoza claimed that ‘Europe’ was financing the most radical of Mapuche groups (the Council of All the Lands and the LaFkenche territorial identity), allowing them to form a “strong international network to receive political support and financial aid”.

Without any facts to support this claim, this is exactly the kind of public opinion that is not needed. Another serious problem arises from the fact that the two largest economic groups who control the forestry industry in the south of Chile today, are heavily entrenched in conflicts with Mapuche communities and organizations. Both groups, the Matte and the Angelini have carried out an effective communicational strategy that has prompted the state to apply all the force of the law on Mapuche ‘civil disobedience’. On many occasions, successive governments of the ruling coalition have applied the antiterrorist laws designed to fight the marxist guerillas during the Pinochet years.

A study conducted by the right-wing oriented Instituto Libertad y Desarrollo concluded that in 2001 Chilean television tended to support the role of the government over the other actors involved (namely the landowners and farmers) (Gaete 2002). Yet the most unequivocal example of this distorted misrepresentation of cultural struggle by the mainstream media is a recent article published by the daily newspaper, El Mercurio. As the most pervasive and influential of national daily newspapers, and also the one with largest circulation, it has been the key force behind the rise of animosity towards the Mapuche demands and actions. The particular article appeared on December 22, 2002 and was entitled Cybernetic Terrorism.

The title of the article besides, showing the journalist’s obvious misunderstanding of the concept of cybernetics, is an open invocation to intensify the repressive policies and actions against the Mapuche activities. This repression has already taken the life of the first ‘Mapuche martyr’ (as 17-year old Edmundo Lemun, shot by Police in late 2002, is referred to in the Mapuche websites analysed in the following chapter).
The report refers to an investigation carried out by an organization of lawyers directed by Senator Alberto Espina, which ‘followed’ 22 Mapuche websites during a period of one month and concluded that the websites were an excuse for propagating and inciting the armed struggle. It also claimed that the more radical Mapuche organisations had financial and logistical links with other ‘terrorist’ groups such as ETA, IRA, FARC and the EZLN. This claim is not new. Two weeks after the September 11 events in the U.S., the same newspaper published an article claiming a link between Kolectivo Lientur - a Mapuche organisation from Temuco - and al-Qaeda. These are just a few of a series of irresponsible accusations that have appeared repeatedly in the mainstream media. The message filtering to the public opinion is that radical Mapuche organisations receive thousands of dollars in aid from European NGO’s and government agencies that are used for ‘licit’ and ‘illicit’ activities.

In summary, the Chilean mediascape has changed considerably in the last 20 years, particularly television. Following deregulation and full commercialisation of the industry, the restructuring of public media (notably TVN the public television broadcaster), increased foreign ownership (Grupo Cisneros in Chilevision) and the introduction of Pay TV there has been a dramatic increase in local content production and broadcasting. Television in Chile has today a penetration into over 95% of homes. Market research commissioned by the Municipality of Santiago in 1995, for example, determined that the most popular recreational activity among Santiaguinos was Cable TV with 45%, followed by sports (35%). In 1995, the total penetration of Cable television in the country was less than 20%. It would be interesting to see how these numbers vary when a variant such as “indigenous consumer” is added to the matrix.

On average, 64.1% of television programming is locally produced, and so were the ten most watched programs during 2003. The top five television programs in terms of audience (rating) were; two reality shows, two local telenovelas and a broadcast of a soccer match of the national team. The 34.9% of foreign programming is divided into foreign films - mostly Hollywood blockbusters -, other Latin American telenovelas, cartoons and sitcoms. Advertising accounts for almost 25% of the total broadcasting time on all the seven free-to-air television stations. (Consejo Nacional de Televisión, Resumen Estadístico 2003). Most of these figures account for socio economic data, yet there are no empirical or social indicators to determine the level of penetration of communication media in Mapuche.

61 The recent report conducted by special United Nations envoy Rodolfo Stavengahen after his visit to Chile in July 2003, was that the Chilean media, particularly television and print journalism needed to account for a more balanced coverage of the events taking place in the areas of dispute. The criticism was aimed directly at El Mercurio and its network of 14 regional newspapers and certain television stations such as Megavision.

62 Media globalisation and transnational TV formats have inundated the Chilean screens with local and imported reality TV marking the highest increase. However, within the 30 most watched programs, only four were foreign (CNTV Television Report 2003).
homes, or what kind of programs they watch on television or hear on radio. The same can be said for other indigenous peoples in the rest of the country.

Chile today has the highest level of connectivity (digital networks, internet, intranets) in Latin America yet the digital divide remains high. The excessive concentration in the Chilean media makes it urgent to establish new mechanisms for transforming the established mediascape. This is precisely the topic of the last chapter in this thesis. Having provided an overview of the Chilean mediascape and the conditions that up until recently have impeded a stronger development of indigenous communication, I examine the emergence of Mapuche media in the context of a renewed movement for cultural autonomy.

As I noted at the beginning of this thesis, a genealogy of indigenous media in Chile first needs to unveil the silencing, exclusion and violence, which are always the condition of possibility of the origin. A genealogy of indigenous media needs to inquire into “its ruptures and breaches, its moments of non-coincidence with itself” (Avelar n.d), while looking at the discontinuous social spaces where media reception, consumption and practice take place. Therefore this chapter has been concerned with how and through what processes the Chilean public and media sphere has created a historical field of inclusions and exclusions where indigenous subjects have been always imagined and constructed in terms of radical alterity (cf. Taussig 1993). The chapter that follows looks at the other side of this genealogy; the emergence, development and future prospects of indigenous communication, and Mapuche media in particular.
CHAPTER 5

EMERGENCE OF INDIGENOUS MEDIA IN CHILE:

Genealogy and future prospects of Mapuche Media

The strengthening of a Mapuche ‘movement’ in the past ten years does not imply a consolidated political stance. On the contrary, the movement is exceptionally heterogeneous. There are common grounds in the demands on major issues regarding political autonomy, land restitution, ethnic recognition, cultural self-determination, or information rights issues, but there is no cohesive position. There is no single or unified ‘Mapuche perspective’ on how the ‘Mapuche conflict’ may be resolved. On the contrary, there is a vast array of differences in the proposals being put forward on a daily basis. Most of these share a critical standpoint towards the State and the interests of national and transnational conglomerates currently in legal litigations with Mapuche communities. Nevertheless, the common grounds are strong enough to allow for a mounting self-conscious force pushing for a collective movement for self-determination.

While a large number of Mapuche live in rural areas and are among the most disadvantaged population in the country, over 70% of the total Mapuche population lives in the major cities. There is also a growing number of Mapuche intellectuals and scholars who have graduated from prestigious universities in Chile and abroad. There are those who as the result of political exile in the 1970’s have established research centres and websites overseas. There are a number of young activists working in media, in communications for change and in political journalism. While a sector of the Mapuche promotes a monarchical legacy, there are also several Mapuche professionals working in different government

1 The CASEN Report conducted by several Chilean government agencies in 1996 revealed changes experienced in the lives of rural Mapuche during the last years. Mapuche families living in rural communities have become older, increasing from an average of 28.9 years old in 1982 to 31.05 years in 1995. The number of domestic workers with less than four years of school in the same year (1995) reached to 79.2 percent of the total. Among youngsters ranging from 20 to 24 years old, only 73.22 percent have finished elementary education. 20 per cent of Mapuche households have no radio or electronic equipment at all. Due to migration, the number of women living in these communities had decreased, meanwhile the proportion of men had increased (by 1995 women represented 38 percent of the community members; meanwhile men represented 62 percent). Finally, in terms of employment, according to the 1992 census, 43.53 percent of the active population are subsistence farmers, meanwhile 31.43 percent are hired as labourers, mostly outside of their communities. Although less information regarding the condition of urban Mapuche is available, there is evidence that they are among the poorest of the poor, living in shanty towns in the margins of cities such as Santiago, Temuco and Concepcion, unemployed or employed in activities such as bakeries or construction, receiving minimum wages and lacking employment stability as well as social security services. These socio-economic indicators have been consistently taken up by several Mapuche communicators and journalists. Alfredo Seguel, editor and founder of online news service MapuExpress Net has conducted several reports of spatial discrimination in the Araucania region. His investigative team of journalists have revealed and made public through the network of Mapuche websites that, for example, 70 percent of waste deposits in the Araucania region are located on Mapuche communal land (Alfredo Seguel, 2003).
agencies, while others have been elected mayors in several towns. There is an incipient field of Mapuche artists, poets and media makers whose work has started to be recognised internationally, while others advocate armed struggle as the only possibility to consolidate an autonomous Mapuche nation. Several organizations and individuals have been using different media, primarily radio, video and the Internet as tools of political advocacy and cultural revival. Nevertheless, communication media also remain uncanny foreign technologies for a large proportion of the Mapuche population.

The emphasis of this chapter is on the cultural construction of video media and the Internet and their role in the formation of new counter-publics. As is demonstrated, the aim of tracing a genealogy is performed through an analysis of the contemporary Chilean mediascape; the social space where media practice takes place. These complex sites of cultural production and social action include the state, the media industries and indigenous individuals and organizations that negotiate cultural and social bases of power, representation and identity. The background information for this chapter has been largely provided in chapters two and three, particularly having set out the context of the cultural history of indigenous nations in Chile and having explained the recent emergence of new mediated indigenous discourses amid political unrest and cultural mobilisation. The complex historical relations between indigenous nations and the Chilean State and current pushes for cultural autonomy and political self-determination are the key elements to understanding the mediated construction of a national imaginary being built on the use, misuse and abuse of indigenous – mainly Mapuche - icons.

Consequently, in this chapter I describe the processes and fields of cultural production and interpretation from which Mapuche media has surfaced and consolidated. Having addressed the ways in which representations of “the indigenous” have been constructed in the Chilean national imaginary we are in position to look at the genealogy of Mapuche media in Chile and examine the challenges it poses to mainstream modes of representation and the Chilean public sphere at large.

In this regard, as Ginsburg has indicated - in reference to Inuit media in Canada and Aboriginal media practice in Australia - the retelling of stories through audiovisual media requires a reshaping, “not only within new aesthetic structures but also in negotiation with the political economy of state-controlled as well as commercial media” (Ginsburg 2002). What is needed is what Marc Augé (1996) calls a “new regime of fiction” (Augé 1999:6) that explains the conditions of circulation of images between the individual imagination (what he calls the dream realm), the collective imagination (the realm of myth) and the national imagination that is constituted through artistic, literary or media practice.

Given the nature of the Mapuche struggle for autonomy and self-determination as well as Likanantay (Atacamenian) and Rapa Nui movements for ethnic recognition, the right to communicate has begun to take a key place in the political agenda of indigenous organizations. Audiovisual and new digital media
have become a new site of struggle and are increasingly being embraced as valuable forms of expression. Although slow in their uptake, the right to information and communication has become an integral part in the elaboration of new indigenous cultural imaginaries and political discourses.

Much has changed in the last decade, since García Canclini’s desperate call for more sociological and empirical research on cultural consumption in Latin America (García Canclini 1992). As has been already stated in previous chapters, and despite considerable new work on cultural consumption and production being done in Chile in recent years (Sunkel 2002; Catalán y Sunkel 1990; Fuenzalida 1997), the indigenous factor has remained largely unattended by cultural and social scholars of communication, media and culture.

The Chilean government agency for indigenous issues is the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (CONADI), established in 1992 within the Ministry of Development and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN). In May 1999, after a violent summer of Mapuche mobilisations, land seizures and political offensives, particularly in the Alto Bio Bio region, MIDEPLAN designated an Assessment Commission on Issues of Indigenous Development, with the aim of elaborating a diagnosis of the current situation of indigenous peoples, and to design future policies and proposals for “improving the quality of life of people belonging to ethnic nationalities”. The Commission was constituted by indigenous (mostly Mapuche) and non-indigenous members who gathered quantitative and qualitative data during six months of investigation in the field.

In terms of communication and media, the MIDEPLAN Report concluded that there was a misrepresentation and caricaturization of the “indigenous element” (Ibid) in the mass media, together with a serious lack of sensitivity in public opinion in regards to the indigenous reality of the country. The report also showed that there was a lack of opportunities of encounters between indigenous sectors and other sectors in the broader society, and that there are few communication possibilities to promote and understand the indigenous realities of the country. My interpretation of the report is that it provides no new information on the lack of a grounded articulation for a long due indigenous public sphere and little has changed since the publication of the document in 1999.

In terms of cultural expression, for example, the report illustrates the need for more public spaces for carrying and performing traditional expressions, particularly in urban settings. More importantly, the document proves the lack of any formal policy of promotion and protection of indigenous cultural expression, and the need for the integration of indigenous cultural expression in the ‘national everyday life’ spheres.

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In my opinion, the report is also noticeably superficial and provides little insight on specific areas. It does not go beyond an obvious account of the overwhelming lack of interest by the state and the public opinion in relation to indigenous culture, media and communications. What is even more striking in this general diagnostic is the deficient “strategic proposal” for the development of an indigenous policy in the short term (2000-2010). In terms of communications for example, the report proposes “access to mass media, such as radio and television for the diffusion of indigenous realities and cultures” and the need for “having publications and programs devoted to indigenous issues” (MIDEPLAN Report 1999:47). However, there is no indication whatsoever of how this could be achieved, what actors and institutions should be involved or which policies will be developed to support these initiatives. There is no indication of the amount of funding needed and where the resources will come from. Moreover, it delegates responsibilities to every government agency, but there is no reference to non-governmental organizations, the media industries, training institutions and in general those relevant actors existing outside the government (e.g. visual anthropologists).

What is also missing in the recommendations is any reference to ownership of media outlets and editorial autonomy in the production of indigenous programs. There is no indication of how the major media conglomerates (in print, radio and television) will take part of this new environment of promoting indigenous cultures and languages. The report also recommends the creation of a special funding scheme to support an indigenous cinema and a special fund for indigenous arts and culture, both under the already strained FONDART scheme. Five years on, there is no clear indication that we are moving towards the goal of setting up specific policies for indigenous communications for the year 2010 and the recommendations have pretty much fallen on deaf ears.

The MIDEPLAN report proposes to include the indigenous variable in future socioeconomic studies yet fails to consider the need to include indigenous audiences and media producers in studies, of media reception and cultural participation and consumption. As I have already stated, there is no empirical information of this kind in relation to media consumption or cultural participation.

In my view, it is indispensable to look at the context of cultural production and consumption – that is the production and consumption of material cultural goods and media texts alike - in order to have a more comprehensive view of indigenous media in Chile. This in my opinion is a serious deficiency in critical cultural research in Chile today. It is not possible to separate Mapuche media and artistic practices from

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3 Among the recommendations for further research listed in the following chapter, I include the need for more empirical studies of media use and consumption by indigenous peoples, as well as long-term critical ethnographic studies that may open up better possibilities for building long-term media policies regarding access, control and reception of mass media programs and outlets. In this regard, I see this investigation as opening up the discussion in that direction, or what Ginsburg (1996) has called the “opening of discursive spaces” of practice and debate.
the socio-economic and political context of uprising and mobilisation. This is proven by the kind of
media and artistic work being done by Mapuche individuals and organizations today.

Given this extremely volatile cultural environment, where media is being understood as either one
among other recent forms of cultural domination, or instead constructed as a viable means of expression
and representation, I do not see the point of narrating the continuity or the evolution of indigenous media
in Chile. In these early stages of development, where a more general program of communications is
needed, there is not much point in tracing the first time that Mapudungun was heard on the airways, or
the first ever image of a Mapuche recorded on cinema.

As was summarised in the previous chapter, the ‘Mapuche conflict’ is a very complex political and
cultural situation that predates the ongoing uprising begun on December 1, 1997. In this sense, the
emergence of Mapuche audiovisual media is intimately linked to the current attempts for cultural
recognition, recovering and recuperation being deployed since the end of military rule. The context of
Mapuche media practice and debate can be better identified as an intricate network of individuals and
organizations, working inside and outside the state, inside and outside the physical boundaries of the
country and coming from the most varied array of disciplines, social backgrounds and political
adherences. It is definitely not a concrete and unified process with actors providing a cohesive and
integrated position. On the contrary, the emergence of indigenous media can be characterised by a
constant disjuncture, even among indigenous organizations. In the struggle for information and
communication rights, a large part of the indigenous sector conceives media activism as an important
variable among many others in the overall picture. The process of appropriating and creating new media
channels is grounded in conflicts that not only affect indigenous media production but also media
production in a broad sense. Looking at the global emergence of indigenous communications it is clear
that there are particular variables that take place at different levels. The combination of these factors in
different forms explains the diversity of practices and approaches to indigenous media development in
various countries.

One crucial variable is the political context. In some countries, such as the U.S., Australia or Canada
indigenous peoples are a numerical minority, while in others they are not (like in Bolivia for example).
In some countries, indigenous communications have been favoured by political commitments from
liberal and socialist governments such as the Whitlam Labor Government in Australia between 1972 and
1975. On other occasions, indigenous communications development has been impossible due to military
dictatorships that have not only had an impact on their cultures but also in the mediasphere in general.
Nevertheless, this political context includes not only the governments of any particular time, but also the
role that public funding and programs coming out of state policies have in general in promoting and
developing local and regional communications. For example, government initiatives that have played an
important role may be seen in Canada, Mexico and Australia. In other cases, it is the state’s inadequate responses to the urgent need for indigenous communication what has been the driving force behind the building of indigenous communications. In these cases, indigenous communication has developed more likely as a product of struggle and opposition (c.f Molnar 1994) by indigenous organizations and individuals.

On yet another level, international cooperation programs are also a key variable in the overall picture, either in terms of national and international non-governmental organizations, or in terms of specific government agencies for international cooperation. This has been the case in the building of indigenous media programs in several Latin American countries, where the Spanish Agency for Cooperation (in the case of CEFREC in Bolivia), or the Norwegian Cooperation agency (in the case of the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI) in Brazil) have been crucial. For Mapuche video maker Jeannette Paillan, this is a key element that explains the fragile situation of indigenous media in Chile. Paillan claims that the images of rural Mapuche living within a politically and economically stable country is in effect the reason for the decline of foreign aid for audiovisual development. “They [the foreign aid agencies] have a stereotyped image of what the Mapuche are and that’s what they want to support. Those of us who deal much better in an urban context and who don’t speak fluent Mapudungun do not interest them” (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, June 2002, my translation). Paillan goes on further to point out that the Chilean economic ‘miracle’ of the last fifteen years has meant that the country is seen by foreign aid agencies in terms of statistics and who prefer to fund programs in other Latin American countries where indigenous peoples live in supposedly far worse conditions. Paillan’s claims should be contrasted with statistics showing the decline of foreign aid in Chile in terms of indigenous and audiovisual programs.

Another critical variable in the equation is the role played by the media industries at different levels: communal, national, regional and global. In this scenario, indigenous media in Chile has not had a character in its own right. The issue has been addressed within a broader landscape of media policies, funding, levels of technological capacity, training, channels of distribution and networking that deal with community and local communications in general.

As is shown in the documentary video I produced for this project, the ongoing efforts being made to understand how indigenous media in Chile is slowly becoming a key aspect of current transformations in indigenous consciousness. Perhaps the main feature of this transformation is the rearticulation of the Wallmapu, a complex concept that embraces the notion of nation (pueblo) not only in terms of cultural identity, but also in certain cases, the demand of political and territorial autonomy. These transformations need to be conceptualised in the grounded social movements for indigenous empowerment, cultural autonomy and claims to land. Therefore, they set up the precise framework to
situate the current situation of indigenous radio and the birth of indigenous video and the Internet in Chile, as well as a wider re-vitalisation of indigenous cultural politics. This in turn is the key focus of the documentary video; to show some of the key actors making this possible.

5.1. From Land To Screen: media and the re-articulation of the Wallmapu.

As has been explained already, De la Tierra a la Pantalla (From Land to Screen) is the title of the documentary video that supports this investigation into Mapuche media. The title refers to the new symbolic fields of struggle posed by communication media and networks, and the increasing appropriation of digital media by indigenous activists. In recent years there has been a robust increase in Mapuche media, most of which makes allusion to a Mapuche ‘nation’, the Wallmapu, that historically spreaded across the south of Chile and Argentina. This territory of around 150,000 square kilometres is divided into four main regions; the Gulumapu, Pikunmapu and Huillimapu (Chile) and the Puelmapu (Argentina).

In the last five years, there has been considerable debate in Chilean academic circles on the question of Mapuche ethnic nationalism. It is not a unique case in the Americas, as it has also become a sensitive issue in Bolivia with the rise of Aymara nationalism. In Chile, both indigenous and non-indigenous scholars have been entangled in a productive debate around the features of the different Mapuche perspectives on political autonomy (Foerster 2002). Historian Gonzalo Vial is among a series of Chilean scholars who have argued that modern Mapuche social history and the Mapuche political movements may be divided into three tendencies: traditionalists, integrationists and revolutionaries. According to Vial, the traditional or conservative trend is framed by a sector within the Mapuche who support traditional Mapuche culture and want a state whose role is in the protection and promotion of their culture, not in their assimilation. Nor do they promote change. They are for the protection of communal and collective land and moderate local autonomy. Vial assumes - rather gratuitously in my view - that the Mapuche “are traditionalists by nature” and that they have consistently adhered to Right wing parties throughout the 20th century, including voting for General Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite and for the right wing opposition parties throughout the 1990’s.

The integrationist position is framed by a sector of the Mapuche historically pushing for the Chilenization of the ethnic group, that is, for the full involvement and assimilation of the Mapuche within the Chilean nation-state, without differences, or special treatments. They support land division into private properties on which they can have legal entitlements. For Vial, the proponents of this view see the integration of their culture into the Chilean society as a real liberation for their people. The perfect instrument for integration was the schooling of children who were prohibited to speak in their language. Several Mapuche organizations were formed in the early part of the 20th century to promote
their quick assimilation to Chilean society, including the *Union Araucana* (founded in 1916) and the *Sociedad Caupolican* (founded in 1911), both of which had ties with conservative national parties.

The third tendency suggested by Vial is the one pushing for political, cultural and religious autonomy, and the formation of an independent Mapuche nation. The current phase of Mapuche nationalism and fight for political autonomy is not new if we look at early forms of the Mapuche political movement, such as Manuel Aburto Panguilef’s founding of the *Federacion Araucana* in 1917 and later on the *Indigenous Republic* in 1931 with strong links to the Socialist and Communist parties (Bengoa 1985, Vial 2002). His proposals were anti-Chilean, anti-Christian and anti-Capitalist and the only thing Chilean he accepted was politics (Vial 2002:iv).

One key debate has been the question of ethnic citizenship and ethnic nationalism. In this regard, there have been claims by some scholars that we could be witnessing the birth of a nation or at least the beginnings of a Mapuche national consciousness that could carry tremendous consequences in terms of a movement for political autonomy. A key Mapuche scholar in this area has been Jose Ancan, a Mapuche art theorist, intellectual and activist, who founded the Liwen Mapuche Research Group based in Temuco. Ancan is one of the most prominent Mapuche scholars advocating for a more radical perspective on autonomy; one that involves re-building what he calls the “Mapuche country”. He talks about an “ineludible construction of a legitimate and self-conscious fin de siecle utopia: the return and repopulation of the historical Mapuche country”; the Wallmapu (Ancan and Calfío 2002:3; my translation).

Interestingly, Ancan’s conceptualization of the Wallmapu has a historical foundation in the semi autonomous Mapuche territory of 120 years ago, but more importantly it incorporates a conceptual and discursive ‘country’ to be re-conquered. Ancan goes beyond the common distinction between rural and urban Mapuche to establish a distinction between the Mapuche population living in the historical Mapuche country (the Wallmapu), which account for roughly 40% of the Mapuche population (INE, Population Census, 2003), and those Mapuche living outside this ‘country’, which Ancan has called sujetos de la diáspora, or diasporic subjects (Ancan and Calfío 2002: 6; see also Gaston Carreño’s comments in the video *De la Tierra la Pantalla*). Ancan is at the forefront of a strong, yet not always popular, political undercurrent at the core of the Mapuche movement that is pushing for the constitution of the Mapuche nation. I say not always popular as it is often a nationalist position set in motion only in the last decade, and some have argued it has been constructed in opposition to the other two major undercurrents; the campesina (peasant) and the ethnic (Foerster 2003). The opposition is raised primarily in relation to a concept of a unified nation-state, but not necessarily if we put it within the project of a “postnational state” (cf. Appadurai 1996; see also Foerster 2002:21).
The re-conquering of a discursive, conceptual and imaginary Mapuche country that Ancan has put forward may be linked to George Marcus’ concept of an “activist imaginary” (Marcus 1996, Ginsburg 1999). For Marcus, media making technologies such as film or video have been used by different ‘subaltern groups’ not just to "pursue traditional goals of broad based social change through a politics of identity and representation". They also represent a utopian desire for "emancipatory projects ... raising fresh issues about citizenship and the shape of public spheres within the frame and terms of traditional discourse on polity and civil society" (Marcus 1996: 6; see also Ginsburg 1999, and Ginsburg et al. 2002: 7-11). This is precisely the kind of emancipatory project that several Mapuche cultural activists and intellectuals, including Jose Ancan and Jose Mariman, have raised.

Another key example of this attempt to construct a sense of nation, in this case more specifically related to the appropriation and use of mass media, or what Molnar and Meadows call ‘indigenizing of media’, is the recently founded Mapuche newspaper *Azkintuwe*.

Put together by Pedro Cayuqueo and other young Mapuche activists and journalists from Temuco, the newspaper was launched in late 2003 in both print and online versions. The first thing that stands out from this publication is the editor’s emphasis on its ‘nationality’. Its principal aim is to reconstruct “that old utopia of the Mapuche country” (Cayuqueo 2003) in direct reference to Ancan’s position. This first declaration of principles guides the editorial views of the newspaper. With a printed circulation spanning most of southern Chile and Argentina, including Santiago and Buenos Aires, the paper covers relevant issues in both countries.

“From the Wallmapu, to the Wallmapu” is the motto of a venture that demonstrates a serious and solid attempt to build a Mapuche idea of nationhood that transcends the geographical boundaries imposed by the Chilean and Argentinean States in the last two centuries. It is also an important criticism of Chilean investigative print journalism and may become an important element of political intervention in the national mediaspheres by placing a Mapuche ‘national’ discourse on the table.

As a printed newspaper and an online news service, *Azkintuwe* is a continuation of the editors’ previous experience in the Kollectivo Lientur group of counter-information created in Temuco in 1999. It is one among many other newspapers recently developed in different places of the ‘Wallmapu’, but perhaps the only one with an aspiration to address a ‘national’ Mapuche audience. For Cayuqueo, the aim is also to...

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4 Other recent examples include *El Kimvn* a printed local newspaper in Neuquen, Argentina and *Wajmapu* an email bulletin service also originating in Neuquen. In Bariloche a group of students has created Mapurbe, a local newspaper for urban Mapuche in the city of Bariloche, Argentina. In Chile, apart from the more established Mapuche online media, a series of local newspapers has also be developed such as *El Toki* by the Asociación Ñancucheo in Lumaco as well as *Rakiduam* by the Asociación Poyenhue from Villarrica. A special Mapuche informational bulletin was also created in Boyeco, in the outskirts of Temuco where Mapuche families have been seriously affected by the crisis of waste deposits in the area.
construct a ‘national’ Mapuche audience or readership that feels represented as a Nation, not just as an ethnic group (Pedro Cayuqueo, email communication March 2003). Printed Mapuche media does not have a long history and none have had the endeavour to decidedly work towards the building of a new Mapuche imaginary that services the Mapuche people as a nation within an ancestral territory.

The question of “Mapuche ethnonationalism” (Foerster and Lavanchy 1999, Foerster 2003, Lavanchy personal communication June 2003) has also been raised in regards to the radio program Wixage Anay (Mapuche for Rise Up), currently produced and conducted by Mapuche social communicator Elias Paillan, who also directs the Jvken Mapu Mapuche Documentation Centre. Mapuche involvement in radio is not new and is far from autonomous, yet Wixage Anay is a clear indication of the cultural construction of radio as a means of fostering Mapuche nationalism.

Mapuche involvement in radio may be traced back to 1967 with the creation of the Foundation of School Radios for Rural Development (FREDER). A non-profit private institution created by Dutch Catholic missionaries, FREDER began operating in Osorno, 800 kilometres south of Santiago with a project of community radio for popular education dedicated to the religious, cultural, and social development of the peasant population (FREDER 1978, in Colle 1992: 132).

FREDER, as was the case with several other radio projects in Latin America between 1950 and 1970, was initially financed through European and North American cooperation funds. In my opinion, the experience of FREDER is important if we want to look at the history of Mapuches in the media. However, it tells nothing of Mapuche participation in radio broadcasting. It is not an example of inclusion but one of exclusion. For the first time, radio programs were available in Mapudungun, but the primary objective was educational and religious colonisation, concurrent with the ‘development’ and ‘modernisation’ paradigms of the time. Despite attempts by the military regime to shut it down, FREDER was still operating at the end of the dictatorship in 1990. Radio Baha’i, established in 1994, today serves a similar process. As Gumucio-Dagrón suggests in reference to other experiences in radio

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5 Elias Paillan has been one of the key collaborators in this investigation. I interviewed him twice in the winters of 2002 and 2003. We travelled together to the meeting of indigenous peoples with Special U.N Envoy Rodolfo Stavenhagen in the south of Chile in July 2003. He also interviewed me for his program Wixage Anay on July 8, 2003 to tell the Mapuche audience the reasons why a wingka (“white” or “foreigner”) like me was interested in promoting Mapuche communication rights.

6 For an example of the relationship between the Catholic church and the development of citizens media, see Clemencia Rodriguez’ case study of a community radio in southern Chile. (Coudry and Curran (ed), 2003, in bibliography).

7 The development of Indigenous radio stations and programs in Latin America is a gradual process that starts in the early 1950’s mainly through protestant and catholic groups targeting education, literacy and evangelisation within the movement of radio schools (FREDER). One of the first indigenous radios in the continent was La Voz de los Andes in Ecuador created after 1952. The introduction of the transistor in the 1960’s was also a key technological innovation that shaped considerably the expansion of radio as a mass medium, although the impact on indigenous broadcasting was quite low. In an attempt to move away from a religious context, yet after two decades of supporting religious radio schools, the Mexican government was the first in Latin America to develop a public scheme for indigenous radio broadcasting during the early 1970’s.
in Latin America, these radio stations have remained active because of their status of religious “and the protection they receive from religious institutions above them, in circumstances where other community media has been wiped out, either violently or with the force of a legislation that favors private sector interests and government censorship” (Gumucio-Dragón 2001).

Jvken Mapu Documentation Centre emerged in March 1993 as a collective of Mapuche social communicators decided to occupy spaces in the Chilean mediasphere (Elias Paillan, personal communication, 2002). Founded by Clara Antinao, Fresia Paillal, Jose Paillal and Ramon Curivil with funding from a Christian congregation, the collective began broadcasting programs on Radio Nacional in June 1993, only months after the passing of the new Indigenous Law. Wixage Anay is perhaps the longest running Mapuche radio program in the country, probably the most listened to, and recently celebrated ten years of service in June 2003. Wigage Anay runs seven hours of programming a week, in both Spanish and Mapudungun, and may be regarded as a crucial medium in the construction of a Mapuche audience. Unfortunately, there are no studies or research available in Chile to understand the way indigenous radio constructs indigenous audiences. In a similar way, there is the case of Azkintuwe newspaper, which has a clear aspiration of delivering messages to a Mapuche audience.

During 1994 and 1998, Jvken Mapu produced several other programs for different radio stations in Santiago and rural communities in the south. Nevertheless, as is the case of other Mapuche radio services such as the Xeg Xeg Corporation mentioned below, they haven’t been able to get a private license to have their own radio station but still provide a series of educational and documentation services. Jvken Mapu has created an important database of audiovisual footage that has been used on many occasions to denounce police abuse, revitalise traditional celebrations in the cities and other activities.

During the years of military regime in the 1980’s, there were no real possibilities for the development of indigenous radio in Chile. The tight control of independent media never really allowed for the possibilities of self-managed indigenous media outlets. The tight constraints on broadcasting imposed by the military regime, as was also the case with video, meant that much of the alternative media resources were channelled to the pro-democracy movement. With the few exceptions of religious programs funded by Christian organizations ‘narrowcasting’ in indigenous languages in the south of the country, it wasn’t until the mid 1990’s that more serious initiatives started to be developed. Since then, self-managed Mapuche radio programs in partially owned or private radio stations have sprung up with relative

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1 I was invited to the celebrations and was given the chance to screen a first cut of my video which generated quite a lot of interest in the mostly Mapuche audience.

2 Both experiences have been illustrated in the video component.

3 This point is also taken up by Elias Paillan in the documentary video.
impact. Some of them are located in rural communities and target local issues. Others are located in the big cities and concentrate on local, national and global affairs.

Important examples of Mapuche radio in terms of their achievements and effects on indigenous sectors are the Mapuche community radio Nueva Tirua, coordinated by the Mapuche Audiovisual Center of Arauco and largely motivated by the Identidad Lafkenche movement and the Mapuche Xeg Xeg Corporation from Licán Ray, Araucanía Region. Both have made comprehensive attempts to develop Mapuche radio broadcasting during the past decade. Xeg Xeg was founded in March 1990, coinciding with the beginning of the Aylwin government, the first democratic government in sixteen years. Although the Xeg Xeg Corporation does not own a radio station, their members have managed to produce several programs for several radio stations. Xeg Xeg produces today bilingual programs transmitted by over 10 local radio stations and is funded by local community support, local foundations and international cooperation funding, such as Fons Catala (Council of the City of Barcelona, Spain) or the Dutch Cooperation Agency. Successive applications by Xeg Xeg members to state concessions of radio frequencies have all been rejected, which demonstrates the lack of real initiative by the Chilean state to develop indigenous broadcasting. As Curihuentro claims, “the state doesn’t want us to have a radio, because having a radio is having power (Rosa del Carmen Curihuentro, 2000:54).

At the time of writing this thesis, the first Mapuche owned radio stations were just beginning to be set up in several rural communities in the south of the country, like Radio Lautaro for example, or the case of the rural town of Boyeco, 40 kilometres southwest of Temuco, which on a small scale has become a hub of Mapuche media activism. Besides the local newspaper, the small town of Boyeco has one of the few Mapuche owned radio broadcasting facilities. Radio Inche tati has a small-power local frequency that has been set up to promote an important alternative channel for numerous Mapuche communities in the area. Other examples of buoyant Mapuche experiences in radio broadcasting are Wvñoj Kuifikenewen (Breaking the Ancestral Silence) transmitting since 1999 in Spanish, Mapudungun and English from community radio station El Encuentro in the suburb of Peñalolen, Santiago.

The cases of the print journal Azkintuwe and the radio program Wixage Anay as examples of the birth of a Mapuche nationalism, or a renewed sense of national belonging in the 21st century is in my view a real focus of further critical study. Moreover, the sentiment transcends print and radio media as may be seen in Jeannette Paillan’s latest documentary video Wallmapu (2002). Paillan’s documentary, shot on digital video, is the first attempt to produce what Erica Wortham following Faye Ginsburg calls “television identities” (Wortham 2002) as it is discussed in the pages that follow. The documentary was recently awarded a prize for best historical documentation at the 2003 Buenos Aires Human Rights Film Festival, which is an indication of Paillan’s attempt to reconstruct the historical roots of the Mapuche nation, the
Wallmapu. Therefore, in the following pages I discuss the role of Mapuche video media as poetic tools of cultural survival and political advocacy.

5.2. Mapuche video: between cultural survival and political advocacy.

The role of video in the Mapuche movement has been quite marginal in terms of numbers of productions, but has been fervently embraced as a tool of documentation and media activism. I have already referred to films and documentaries on indigenous themes produced by non-indigenous filmmakers or academics, in relation to the constructions of an imagined sense of nationhood, where the indigenous subject has been represented within these complex dialectics of absence/presence (c.f Shohat and Stam 1994). Therefore, in this section, I have focused only on video productions made by or with Mapuche participants.

In comparison to other countries, indigenous video in Chile is a relative newcomer. If indigenous video was already being produced in the early 1980’s, in countries such as Mexico, Brazil, Australia or the United States, Mapuche video in Chile starts-off as recently as 1994, primarily through the work of José Ancán, from Temuco, and Jeannette Paillan, a video maker and journalist from Santiago11.

When looking at the origins of Mapuche video, José Ancán is a key figure because, in my view, he paves the way for the building of Mapuche video practice with an article published in 199412, which in a sense opens the discursive field of Mapuche video practice. In this article, Ancan also tackles the problems and potentialities of audiovisual media in cultural recovery and survival. Moreover, he discusses the need for a cultural construction of video media as a way of appropriating the technology in such a way that Mapuche people could not only contest images of the broader society, but also, and more importantly, look at themselves in the mirror of history. In the same year, Ancan also shot his first video, Wiñometun Ni Mapu (Return to the Land), which may be regarded as the first directed by an indigenous person. The idea of the return to the Mapuche country is a motif in much of Ancan’s work, not only on video but also in literary and cultural criticism.

In this 25-minute video, and despite working with a non-indigenous crew, Ancan is able to represent the problematic of the urban Mapuche, which in fact account for three quarters of the total Mapuche population of Chile. The film is constructed as a collective testimony by several young Mapuche students in Santiago, the conflicts arising from their permanent negotiation between two cultural identities, and the frequent need to suppress one of them, or the fact of recognizing a Mapuche heritage,

11It is important to note the production of Gerónima, an Argentinian film shot in 1986 about a Mapuche woman leader.
without even speaking the language. The video was produced by community communication organization El Canelo, and Ancan was assisted by Hernan Dinamarca who has had a long involvement with indigenous and community media. The video was released in 1994 when the public opinion and academic circles were still debating the impact of the results of the 1992 population census, according to which there were almost a million people who identified with indigenous people\textsuperscript{13}.

The major impact of the video was its attempt to discuss the issue of indigenous Mapuche, who account for more than half of the total Mapuche population of the country\textsuperscript{14}. The focus was not so much on the film making process of the in this case, but on creating an object that could visualise the problematic, a good example of what Miller calls technologies of cultural objectification (1995). In Miller’s terms, as has already been discussed video plays the crucial role of making a given cultural reality visible (urban Mapuche in this case). At the same time, the debate on urban indigenous identities kicked off strongly (Ancan 1997; Valdes 1999).

In 1992, the National Energy Enterprise (ENDESA), then a Chilean company but today a Spanish transnational corporation, opened up the first of seven projected hydroelectric dams in the Bio Bio River. The most important river in the country, the Bio Bio is definitely the most important river in the Chilean imaginary, as it was for centuries the frontier between the Chilean State (and the Spanish Crown before that) and the Mapuche nation, up until the Chilean military campaigns of 1881 and 1883. The construction of the dams and the dubious studies of environmental and cultural impact approved by the Government’s environmental protection agency CONAMA sparked a series of organised mobilisations which were going to lasted for over a decade until the last indigenous families were forced to sign for their relocation in late 2003. Internet activism, particularly through Mapuche websites in Chile and abroad were crucial factors in this struggle. Moreover, the Ralco conflict as it has been popularised in the media and the public opinion was a key element in providing the basis for the emergence of a shy environmentalist movement in Chile. It was also the starting point for the revitalisation and reconstruction of a Mapuche movement in the age of globalisation.

The conflicts in the Alto Bio Bio region inspired Paillan to start recording the events with a video camera\textsuperscript{15}. Without a clear idea at the beginning, the aim was to use video as a political instrument to

\textsuperscript{13} I have already referred to the problems in this census; mainly, the question regarding ethnic adscription was “Do you identify with any ethnic group” (1992 Census), rather than “Do you identify as belonging to any ethnic group” (2002 Census); my emphasis.

\textsuperscript{14} This theme is also explored by anthropologist Gaston Carreño in my video, where he refers to Ancan's early work and his distinction among urban Mapuche, between those who live in a historical mapuche territory (Temuco) and those who live in cities that were not part of the ancestral Mapuche territory before 1880.

\textsuperscript{15} In an interview conducted in El Huachi, southern Chile in June 2002, Jeannette commented on trip she made to Australia to participate in a communications conference in Darwin organised by the World Association of Christian Communication (WACC).
denounce some irregularities which were not being covered by the mainstream print and broadcast media (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, June 2002). The impact was not felt on a large scale as these makeshift videos did not have a wide distribution, certainly not within mainstream circles and they lacked the technical quality (‘broadcasting standards’) requested by television stations. However, the Quinquen videos were clearly the starting point of Jeannette Paillan’s long commitment to video media as an intervention strategy. The video tapes were important because, in Paillan’s words, “we were able to transport the Pehuenche conflict to the city, a city that was watching the events on television, and where people did not have a clear idea of what was going on there” (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, 2002, my translation). However, also critical was the fact that Paillan was attempting to build communication networks to be able to inform a wider audience about the abuses being committed in the area. For her, the process of making the videos was as important as the final products (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, June 2002).

From there on, Jeannette Paillan’s work has always revolved around the conflict between the state, the Mapuche struggle and the corporate interests in the area. Her first fully produced video, the 27-minute documentary Punalka: The Spirit of the Biobio, was shot in 1994 after two years working with Pehuenche communities in the area. Punalka, is clearly the most successful Mapuche video to date in terms of its reception by the public, its inclusion in many retrospectives of recent Chilean documentaries and several international exhibitions in festivals and universities.

What is striking about Punalka, compared to Ancan’s earlier documentary on urban Mapuche, is the film’s narrative construction. While Ancan’s film is structured around a straightforward narrative that follows young Mapuche living in Santiago describing their cultural displacement, Punalka is structured around traditional Mapuche storytelling forms, like fables and tales. Punalka is a good example of what I referred to as a cultural construction of technology in previous chapters. As Paillan explains in the video documentary that supports this thesis, during the long periods of involvement with the people in the locations where the film was shot, she was told of the story of Punalka, the spirit of the waters of the Bio Bio River. According to an elder (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, June 2002) the spirit had appeared some years earlier in the form of a big wind swirl to announce that something bad was about to happen in the area. The elder told how Punalka was inside the Kayaki volcano waiting to come again and help the people. Paillan then tells of how when she got back to Santiago to edit the film she began feeling the presence of Punalka, and she realised the spirit had been present during the shooting.

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in 1990, where she was impressed by examples of Aboriginal video making. Jeannette Paillan is known abroad as the first Mapuche filmmaker, a title that makes her laugh as she never expected to become a filmmaker.

16 Such as the Margaret Mead Festival in New York in 1997, or festivals in Montreal, Vancouver, Sweden and several in Spain. Her most recent documentary, Wallmapu, has been awarded several prizes in Chile and Argentina, and has also been exhibited in the U.S, Mexico, Cuba, Spain and Canada.
This is of course a completely different way of producing films, more informed by cultural shaping of the process of filmmaking.

In my view, *Punalka* is a permanent negotiation, or a form of “cultural bargaining” (Batty 1993) between Western documentary conventions and forms that have more to do with traditional ways of Mapuche oral communication. There are no formal interviews (a classic convention in Western documentary), as seen for example in the already mentioned *En Nombre del Progreso*, produced roughly around the same time as Paillan’s film, and on the same topic: the impact of the Ralco dam on Pehuenche families. Whereas director Claudio Sapiain structured the narrative of his documentary around a series of interviews with different sectors involved in the conflict; indigenous people affected, government officials, Endesa employees, and environmental activists, *Punalka* on the contrary is structured around the spirit of the waters of the river, who made itself present during the shooting and postproduction of the video (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication 2002). There is no omniscient narrator in the film and the story is told as a poem, as an *Epew*, the language of dreams according to Mapuche cosmology. The poems were written by Mapuche poet Leonel Lienlaf who also provided the off-screen narration in Mapudungun.

Strictly speaking, *Punalka* was not a political video, although it denounced the negative impacts of constructing a second dam in the area. As Paillan points out, the video was, in a sense, predominantly a “spontaneous and unconscious attempt to produce a film about Mapuche culture, from a Mapuche point of view, in mapudungun and by Mapuche makers” (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, 2002).

Nevertheless, there is still a political aspect to this approach. The favourable context provided by the end of military dictatorship, the indigenous ‘emergence’ in the population census of 1992, the promises incorporated in the indigenous law of 1993, and new government funding for video productions, were all important in the small ‘boom’ in productions of indigenous themes around the time Paillan released *Punalka*. In this regard, and despite that this documentary was not a direct political intervention in these affairs, it was an eloquent critique on appropriation. Its underlying message was a response to non-indigenous produced videos on Mapuche culture and the imminent beginning of what today is referred as the ‘Mapuche conflict’.

Paillan’s video shows that appropriation works both ways and in doing so, sets up the question of what is Mapuche video? How can it be identified and categorised? More importantly, *Punalka*, as is the case with hundreds of other films and videos produced by indigenous media makers worldwide, is an example of how indigenous media practice is grounded in social relations and is not an invention of

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17 In the previous chapter I outlined some of the documentaries on indigenous issues that became quite popular among Chilean documentary filmmakers. Most of them were concerned with traditional ceremonies or the question of extinction.
‘televisual anthropologists’ (Weiner 1997). On another level, Punalka may also be seen as a response to the relative boom of documentaries on indigenous themes at the beginnings of the 1990’s. In this regard, the main challenge posed by Punalka was its claim to move away from the traditional icons of Mapuche culture (the Kultrun, the Machi, the Araucaria) all of which were appropriated by mainstream cultural codes. Paillan’s Punalka was in this way, an attempt to ‘look’ at other forms of Mapuche cultural identity, which may also be representative of modern Mapuche culture18; a culture that is often multitemporal and hybrid (c.f Garcia Canclini 1989).

In her next video, Wirarun (The Cry) shot in 1998, Paillan goes back to a more radical view of the ‘invasion’ of logging companies and the consequences for rural Mapuche communities. In this video, Paillan works with a team of mostly Mapuche activists and openly denounces the negative impact of the neo-liberal frenzy sweeping across the south of the country and the passive role of the state. If Punalka was more likely a reflection about the possibilities of a ‘Mapuche gaze’, Wirarun is definitely about putting out a ‘Mapuche voice’.

On one occasion Paillan was invited to record how Forestal Arauco, one of the two large logging companies operating in the area was not complying with the law, after a local court had ruled in favour of that particular Mapuche community, and against the continuation of the logging. During the shooting of this litigation, the police arrested Jeannette Paillan while she was filming and she was charged with participating in the previous day's assault, as she notes in my video (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, June 2002).

Wirarun is an important example of the attempt being made by several Mapuche artists, poets and media makers to elaborate an activist imaginary. Moreover, it is a clear example of what I have termed imperfect video. Wirarun is a strong criticism of how videos are planned, funded, produced and circulated, a move to ‘unthink’ the logocentrism of Chilean commercial media. Wirarun is also a search for alternative techniques of producing videos outside the constraints (or freedom, depending how we see it) of the industry. It is a critique on methodology, which from an indigenous framework, is concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous media activism. Many of the ideas included in Wirarun are spelled out in Paillan’s later documentary, Wallmapu, shot in 2001-2002.

Her latest documentary, Wallmapu, is also Paillan’s attempt at rethinking Mapuche identity as a self-conscious contestation to official history. The film also works as a call to the visualisation of a national

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18 In relation to Paillan’s attempt to contest the work of non-indigenous filmmakers it is interesting to note the case of the first Mapuche website, Net Mapu, established in 1996. As is discussed in more detail later on in this chapter, Mapuche scholar Ruben Sanchez has pointed out how he was prompted to buy the domain Mapuche.cl without a clear idea of what the Internet was, or without having a precise project in mind, only to counteract a “wave of cultural appropriation” of Mapuche symbols, images and words during the mid 1990’s. (Ruben Sanchez, personal communication, Temuco, June 2002).
consciousness rooted in history, yet very current and actual. *Wallmapu* is to date the strongest Mapuche televisual text to tangle with video media as a space of negotiation within broader domains of difference (Bhabha 1994) within Chilean society. The notion of the *Wallmapu*\(^{19}\) becomes in Paillan’s work a clear metaphor for locating a Mapuche identity, where the Mapuche struggle is consistently tied to the social solidarities in which it is grounded. The video not only documents and visualises a history according to the Mapuche – or a certain sector within the Mapuche *intelligentsia* – but more importantly, works as a (media/tion) practice of imagining a Mapuche nation, not just within the Chilean nation but more likely, adjacent to it. *Wallmapu* is a text that therefore acts as a kind of televisual practice of location (Wortham 2002), providing a sense of place rooted in a different imaginary; an activist imaginary. On another level, Paillan’s video is also a product, a technological artifact, an object. The individual agency of the media maker becomes therefore a practice of cultural objectification, whereby there is a process of reflection that involves the representation of the filmmakers’ own collective (urban Mapuche) and individual (woman, videomaker) identity on video media\(^{20}\).

On a similar level, we may turn our attention to Maori researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith who has suggested twenty-five projects for articulating an indigenous research agenda (Smith, 1999: 142-161). If we transfer her articulation of indigenous research to indigenous media in Chile, it is possible to argue that *Punalka* is about cultural survival, storytelling and revitalizing of the language, while *Wirarun* is about testimonies of oppression, the restoring of ancestral knowledge, the return of land and rivers and foremost an intervention in national politics and a call to action.

*Wallmapu*, is in this sense the most ambitious of all of Paillan’s films, as it looks at reframing the Mapuche conflict in the media, about envisioning strategies of political autonomy, and more importantly of visualising and representing a political project of Mapuche nationhood.

Jeannette Paillan is perhaps the most prominent Mapuche video maker, but not the only one. There is important work coming out of several other instances of media practice and activism. An important example is the work of Sofia Painequeo a reputed Mapuche folklorist, singer and activist who has been drawn into videomaking as a strategy of cultural activism. Her video *Chemu Am Mapuche Pigeiñ* (Why we are Mapuche) shot in 2001, is a clear attempt to celebrate Mapuche culture, yet from a rather revisionist perspective. It goes beyond the question of cultural survival to pursue a quest for remembering not only a painful past of cultural destruction, but more an idealised past of cultural construction. Painequeo’s film is an interesting attempt at making what David MacDougall has called

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\(^{19}\) I have already referred to the notion of *Wallmapu* in previous chapters as a controversial concept of a Mapuche nation based on politics of location and narratives of identity, which has increasingly been used among Mapuche intellectuals, academics and activists alike.

\(^{20}\) Erica Wortham (2002) has explored similar issues in her investigation of indigenous televisual media practices in Mexico as social practices of narration and location.
“films of memory” (MacDougall 1994) in the sense that it works as a form of translating memory into video, a kind of cultural objectification of an ideal Mapuche past. Painequeo’s intentions were to make a product through which “Mapuche people could see their past … how important we were, and that we don’t need the school or the whiteboard to know who we are” (Sofía Painequeo, personal communication, Santiago, June 2002. My translation and emphasis)²¹.

_Chemu Am Mapuche Pigeiñ_ uses several techniques of conventional documentaries to tackle the issue of visualising memory. It resorts to the reconstruction of an ancient lifestyle where traditional physical objects and costumes become a touchstone for the retrieval or reconstruction of memory, or what MacDougall calls “signs of memory” (MacDougall 1994: 261). MacDougall distinguishes signs of memory into signs of survival, images of objects that work as proof, evidence or record of that which has been (c.f. Barthes 1981); signs of replacement, basically referring to the technique of reconstruction and re-enactment; and signs of absence which “provide a way of confronting the problems of forgetting and wilful distortion as well as the larger abyss between experience and memory” (MacDougall 1994: 264). In Painequeo’s film, the only one she has produced so far, there is no use of archival footage or interviews. Rather, Painequeo chooses to enact a Mapuche past. MacDougall, following Horowitz’s work on image formation and cognition (Horowitz 1970 in MacDougall 1994: 265), defines the enactive mode as “neither image nor word, but gesture – experience recalled… in the muscles” (Ibid). This is precisely what Painequeo achieves in her video. To enact a pre-colonial Mapuche experience of everyday life and myth, even exploring them through the use of computer generated animations of mythological beings taken from the Mapuche cultural repertoire.

Another example is the work of Eduardo Rapiman, a young Mapuche painter and visual artist, born in the small rural locality of Williø and currently living in the town of Pitrufquen, in Southern Chile. Rapiman is relatively well-known in Chile for his work in painting, although his art also spans theatre, sculpture, and audiovisual art. He is part of a group of Mapuche artists who have become visible in the Chilean literary and artistic scene, especially in poetry and painting. Their art supports the struggle of their people. What is interesting about Rapiman’s work for example is his concern for political art as may be seen in the video _Profetas en su Tierra_ (Prophets in their Land) recently screened at the popular Valdivia International Film Festival in southern Chile. This video was made by another young Mapuche video artist, Luis Pinoleo. Pinoleo’s political and conceptual video is informed by Rapiman’s concern with the repositioning and reclamation of the Wallmapu. _Profetas en su Tierra_ is yet another clear allusion to Jose Ancan’s utopianism of a return to the ‘Mapuche country’ and another clear example of the formation of activist imaginaries across a wide spectrum of the Mapuche movement. In 2003, Pinoleo received funding from the CNTV, the national Television Council to produce four 30-minute documentaries on the Nutram, the art of Mapuche conversation.

²¹ This section is also included in my video _De la Tierra a la Pantalla_.

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The work of non-indigenous filmmakers and social activists has also been important in the building of an incipient Mapuche televisual sphere. I am referring to the first ever, and up to date only festival of Mapuche film and video, *Kiñe-Trawun-Kiñe-Mapuche* organised by filmmaker Sergio Bravo in 1999-2000 under the auspices of CICAI, the Centre for Independent Media Culture in Paris. The CICAI has been a key organization in the archiving of audiovisual material about the Mapuche and has produced several screenings and exhibitions in Europe since 1989. This project for lifting a Mapuche cinema is a clear indication that more initiatives of this kind are needed.

Similarly, and also in 2000, the Audiovisual Laboratory of Universidad Bolivariana, in collaboration with the Mapuche Collective “Kurruf Newentuañ” (Voice of the earth that speaks in the wind) for the Mapuche organization “Mapu Rakiduam” conducted a series of half-hour television programs for community television Gran Santiago TV that were presented twice a week during three months. Part of the series was converted into a 30-minute video produced by Mapuche media makers Freddy Treuquil and Pablo Villagra, which was recently screened at the Indigenous Film and Video Festival organised by the Smithsonian Institute in the United States. Treuquil is an example of a new generation of urban Mapuche mediamakers and video artists who have the immense challenge to confront the continuing non-indigenous representations emphasising rurality and tradition from a hegemonic and folklorist perspective. A second wave, moving away from documentary as the preferred or available mode of representation, is in my opinion the next step in Mapuche video making.

An example may be *Pewma Jadkulu, el conflicto en el sueño Mapuche* (2003) by Jaime García. There are currently several other Mapuche media projects in production, like the recent work by Jose Ancan, who is working on testimonies by Mapuche elders, (*Kimeltu Kimunyn: tres ancianos sabios mapuches* in production as at February 2004) or *Muerte de los Cementerios Mapuches*, a collective video by the Agrupación Mapuche We Likanko (also in production). There is also *Impresiones Fugases* by Luis Pinoleo, experimenting with documentary and video art forms or the more ‘traditionalist’ documentary *Baile en Ceremonias Mapuches* by Raúl Huenchullán.

Going beyond a textual analysis of these Mapuche videos, and before we move onto an analysis of Mapuche online activism, it is important to look at these productions from a more relational or contextual framework, or what Ginsburg calls the social space of media.

With the exception of *Wirarun* for example, both of Paillán’s other videos, as well as Painequeo’s one, were financed by FONDART, the government’s cultural and arts fund. The fact that these videos were made through government auspices poses a serious question about the possibilities for autonomous indigenous production, as has been briefly tackled in the supporting video component.
The first question has to do with the theme of cultural mediation - already discussed in chapter three - and the role of media, or video, in this case. A distinctive aspect of Mapuche video, when compared to other examples or experiences of indigenous films and videos is that all of them have been produced by individuals that have been born or have grown up in the big cities. Most of them have become videomakers as a self-conscious choice of cultural activism, not as the outcome of ‘cultural facilitation’ by external organizations, anthropologists or filmmakers coming into a closed community to ‘facilitate’ video production (Turner, 1991, 1995a, 2002: 79).

Many, if not all Mapuche media practitioners have taken advantage of video media as a poetic tool of collective self-representation in their own means. This does not imply a substantial difference with other experiences worldwide in terms of media ownership or control but it does mark a significant difference in regards to what some critics have termed ‘televisual anthropology’ (Weiner 1997). In this view the ‘introduction’ of ‘Western’ media into non-Western social spaces is seen as disrupting ‘traditional’ knowledge and culture, and also as potentially disabling “spontaneous, culturally specific, and ‘authentic’ modes of visual organization” (Turner 2002: 79; cf. Weiner 1997).

In the case of Mapuche video, or the Internet as will be shown in the section that follows, there is no such issue of an ‘introduction’ of foreign technology by outsiders. In the case of both Mapuche video and the Internet, there are individual or collective choices behind the decision to take up video as a mediating instrument of cultural mobilisation. Mapuche media makers have taken up video media as a sign of envisaging a sense of a Mapuche project of nation that goes beyond themselves as individuals (cf. Bhabha 1994). As the outcome of knowing some of the Mapuche mediamakers for years, I can decidedly say that their interest in video is not just a representational one, but clearly, and most importantly, an embrace of a technology for its “practico-transformative effects” (Weiner 1997). As Jeannette Paillan puts it; “I do not make films to show what is happening… I make films to change the situation of the Mapuche people…” (Paillan 2004 in De la Tierra a la Pantalla video).

The video programs described above pose an interesting and radical challenge to commercial/industrial modes of image production, with the blurring of the often strict boundary between media producers and media consumer/receivers. The sharp distinction between who produces and who consumes in ‘perfect’ media is one of the most important aspects of Mapuche media making. If we take into account that much of the first wave of Mapuche video was a response to mainstream media’s constructions of a Mapuche conflict, and a way of contesting cultural imperialism in the Chilean media environment, then the social space in which these practices take place need to be critically addressed.
Let us look at the case of Jeannette Paillan for a moment. Born in the small rural town of Aguas Blancas in the south of Chile, she migrated with her parents to Santiago just after the military coup of 1973, when she was five years old. Her parents decided not to teach her the Mapuche language so she wouldn’t be discriminated against at school. She has been trained in media production in Spain and Cuba thanks to particular indigenous training schemes, which has not been possible in Chile as such schemes don’t exist. She has been re learning Mapudungun with Sofia Painequeo at her Follicle Institute of Mapuche Culture and she collaborates with her cousin Elias Paillan providing video footage for his Jvken Mapu documentation centre. She also provides video footage to international networks and television stations. Through Mapuche and non-indigenous contacts and networks overseas, she has been able to travel to Europe and North America to show her films and acquaint herself with indigenous media experiences in other countries. A trip to Darwin Australia in 1992 when she was in her early twenties was very inspiring and determining in her decision to become a video maker. She has won several international awards and recognitions for her videos Punalka and Wallmapu, yet has never received one in Chile. As a student during the 1980’s she was involved in the left-wing pro-democracy movement to oust General Pinochet, without joining any established political party. Today she works as an independent mediamaker, lives in a flat with her sister and struggles to make films at any cost.

The only reason to provide some details about Jeannette Paillan’s personal life is to make the point that her work in media activism does not happen in a neutral space of creation, production and dissemination. It takes place in a complex social space, where she needs to negotiate her indigenous identity on a daily basis. This negotiation is made with the broader society (as a Mapuche woman), with the documentary film establishment (as a professional Mapuche filmmaker, and as a woman), with the government’s funding agencies, and with other indigenous people in rural areas, who speak the language and dress differently (as an urban Mapuche). We could also mention her negotiation as a Mapuche woman with other indigenous groups in Latin America as co-ordinator of the forthcoming CLACPI festival in Santiago in June 2004. She also needs to negotiate her political affiliations with different sectors, including all of the above.

In my second research/production trip to Chile in the winter of 2003, I asked Jeannette how the Mapudungun lessons with Sofia (Painequeo) were going. She replied that the relationship was a bit ‘tight’, as Sofia had recently taken part in the annual military parade, which she thought was unacceptable. For Sofia Painequeo, who for example teaches Mapudungun to the Santiago Police, the military parade was just among many public events and spaces that she could use to promote Mapuche traditional culture, like dances, clothing and music. For her, video making is a form of cultural empowerment, especially for Mapuche viewers in the city. In an interview in June 2002, she mentioned several times the importance of “dressing and eating as Mapuche”, which in an urban context like Santiago is impossible (Sofia Paniqueo personal communication, June 2002). In her video, Painequeo
worked with several Mapuche collaborators, including Elias Paillan, cousin of Jeannette. Elias Paillan is finishing a degree in social communication and journalism at the University of Santiago. Like his cousin, he has been actively involved in left-wing politics, yet without affiliation to any established political party. He was an ‘actor’ and ‘narrator’ in Sofia Painequeo’s first video *Chemù Am Mapuche Pigeiñ* and was a key founding member of the first Mapuche website established in Chile in 1996, Net Mapu. He conducts one of the most popular Mapuche radio programs in the country and organised the Mapuche delegation from Santiago that attended the meeting between indigenous organizations and United Nations special envoy Rodolfo Stavenhagen in July 2003. I travelled with him by car from Temuco to the rural village of Chanquin where the meeting was taking place, and that was the main reason why I was allowed to shoot the encounter. The car in which we were travelling got stuck in the mud after three days of torrential rain. The road we were travelling on was in a very bad condition as it was being transformed into a ‘superhighway’ that will cross through the middle of many Mapuche communities. Mapuche and Lafakenche communities from the area have strongly opposed this megaproject supported by the Government. Being stuck in the mud for a couple of hours was a good time to talk with Elias about the social space on which Mapuche media is being produced.

All these apparently anecdotal facts are in effect examples of the cultural mediations that support media work. As Wortham argues in reference to indigenous media in Oaxaca, Mexico, “…the process of locating oneself – constantly moving or being moved from place (community, minority, traditional) to place (national, dominant, modern) - is another aspect of cultural mediation…” (Wortham 2002:5). Moreover, these relationships are more than anecdotes as they give insight into the formation of new subjectivities in the case of Mapuche urban media makers. As McClure (1992 in Rodriguez 2001) claims,

subjectivities are socially located, temporally specific and potentially riven within a series of other relational differences. And where social subjects are complexly constituted not only through categories of gender, but of race and sexuality, ethnicity and class, and perhaps of religion and nationality as well, a position of privilege within one frame may be simultaneously and contradictory constructed within a position of oppression within another (122).

Mapuche media makers in Santiago or elsewhere are not part of specific "interest groups" with specific needs and demands. As Rodriguez has shown in relation to the work of Chantal Mouffe, each social subject may experience the fact of "being indigenous" in different ways in relation to other relevant social dimensions, such as bilingualism, gender, social class, age, or political affiliation. As Rodriguez puts it “as political subjects we emerge out of all this; we are located in differentiated power positions,
but we are not fixed in these positions; they are historical, meaning, our location on a power continuum can be altered from within or without” (Rodriguez 2001).

Cultural mediation and technological mediation are elements of the same matrix, or what some have called a “socio-technical ensemble” (Bijker and Law 1992:291) incorporating facts, artefacts and societies. Technologies always embody compromise. They reproduce, or ‘mirror’ “the complex interplay of professional, technical, economic and political factors… [and]…are shaped by the complex trade-offs that make up our societies (Bijker and Law 1992:3). They are interpretatively flexible (Pinch and Bijker 1987). This is the reason why the social space where indigenous media are produced is so important: to understand how users themselves reshape their technologies, or in other terms, how indigenous users “de-script technological objects” (Akrich 1992:208) (like a video camera for example) in order to negotiate form and meaning.

As Bijker and Law (1992) suggest, “the processes that shape our technologies go right to the heart of the way we live and organize our societies” (Ibid:4). In the case of Sofia Painequeo’s video for example, it goes directly into the way Mapuche mediamakers have started to organise traditional knowledge in audiovisual terms, not so much because they pose in theory a radically different system of visual organization to that of Western media, but because they may offer, in practice, the practico-transformative effects. Daniel Miller’s eloquent assertion that the contradiction of whether media is really empowering for indigenous people or not will not be resolved only in theory, as we need to observe how people sometimes resolve or more commonly live out these contradictions in local practice (Miller 1995:18).

I will come back to some of the issues presented in this section in the following one, where I look at the cultural construction of the Internet and the impact on the Chilean media sphere, particularly in to the ‘dynamics of objectification’ (Ibid 1995) through which Mapuche activists in Chile are using the Internet as a form of “counter public sphere” (Fraser 1993). In doing so, Mapuche online activists have set up a renewed discourse with effective transnational links, which has started to challenge the views of the mainstream media and the assumptions of the public opinion.

5.3. Activating Imaginaries: online media in the construction of counter public spheres

The public sphere has been shaken; the mainstream media has been put in a delicate position and the Chilean mediascape as a whole has been targeted by the efficacy of the Mapuche strategy of making a

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22 A version of this section was published as an article in Media International Australia, incorporating Culture and Policy. Number 107, May 2003, Griffith University, Australia.
national conflict a matter of transnational interest. Although the Mapuche case has not made such a strong impact, it is similar in many respects to these Latin American cases of indigenous cyberactivism, in the use of Internet as a political vehicle for constructing an activist imaginary. The Mapuche use of the Internet contrasts sharply, for example, with how Aboriginal organizations in Australia have made use of the Internet, where, in general, the Internet has been predominantly used for the promotion of aboriginal arts and culture, but not particularly as a political instrument of cultural intervention. I’m not implying there is no Aboriginal political activism being done through the internet in Australia. What I’m saying is that I don’t see an organized, interrelated Aboriginal movement in cyberspace, grounded in tight local solidarities, using the internet as radical media to call for cultural uprising and political mobilisation. The new Mapuche activist imaginary for example, reinvented through communications media, has been constructed as a source of political assets and values, not only at the base level of internal mobilisation and solidarity, but also in terms of transnational communication and cross-cultural communication.

For Mapuche activists and intellectuals, the Internet has been conceived as an active instrument of intervention in Chilean national cultural politics. It has been embraced as an attempt to reconstruct the Mapuche discourse and knowledge in order to mediate across discontinuities in time and space and fight prejudice.

As I have shown later on this section, through the Internet, Mapuche organisations and individuals around the world have been linked and a different horizon of expectations has been created, directly challenging the stereotypes and assumptions that underlie the public sphere in Chile. In this sense, as it has been shown throughout the whole thesis, indigenously produced media concentrating on cultural issues “are totally misunderstood if divorced from their context, in which cultural survival is a desperate political priority” (Seubert 1987 in Downing 2001: 81).

As I have already suggested, the assumption of a ‘Mapuche conflict’ originating from minority radical indigenous groups is how the Chilean media and the public sphere in general have constructed the situation. The conflict has been constructed in the mass media, and generally in the public sphere, as a dispute masterminded by radical indigenous groups with international funding and support. Many newspapers and television networks have repeatedly observed that this unjustifiable cause for land rights and self-determination is not only absurd but also threatens to destabilise the country’s democratic status quo and contravenes the Chilean constitution. In some extreme cases, Indigenous groups have been linked to terrorist groups who supposedly have infiltrated the more radical Mapuche organizations such as the “Council for All the Lands” coordinated by Aucán Huilcamán and the Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco (CAM) coordinated first by Victor Ancalaf and then by José Huenchunao. Both leaders are jailed at present and awaiting trial, together with another 300 Mapuche political prisoners in several
detention centres in the south of Chile. On several occasions during the past two years, right-wing congressmen and chief executives from logging companies affected by Mapuche land seizures, have asked the government to apply the law of national security. The enforcement of this law can only be called by the President and only under extremely dangerous circumstances, such as when the national security is being threatened. This is how the Chilean media has covered this delicate issue; as a criminal attack on national security and sovereignty. While it is also frequent to observe the media’s coverage of those indigenous development initiatives – basically about traditional culture - that are mediated by government agencies and NGO’s the perspective does not escape a folkloric, picturesque and ethnocentric point of view.

I have already addressed the role of mainstream media and the invention of a Mapuche terrorist subject and how there has been a clear tendency to make of this conflict a criminal case and exempt the logging companies from any responsibility. For Foerster and Lavanchy (1999) for example “in its most extreme version, this style of information reproduces a symbolic pattern of understanding of the indigenous reality that is characterised for centring its attention in the acts of violence, the uprising and the projection of the Mapuche as a community up in arms” (Foerster and Lavanchy 1999:12). In a recent editorial article for MapuExpress (www.mapuexpress.net), a Mapuche online news service, Mapuche activist Alfredo Seguel (2003) has written a well-informed and controversial accusation of the ‘invisible’ powers of the logging companies and the intimate relationships between the executives of these companies and those of the main media conglomerates and government authorities. Again, the social space where Internet activism takes place is critical. In effect, what this informed example of investigative journalism is proving is the conservatism of the Chilean public sphere and the need to have counter spheres of opinion.23

The notion of oppositional public spheres is not new of course. In their critique of Habermas’ idea of a public sphere, for example, Negt and Kluge (1993 [1972]) suggested that Habermas’ bourgeois public sphere, although supposedly representing all of a society did not represent every “context of living”. Habermas’ ideas about the public sphere have never been very specific concerning the ways in which participation in it might be facilitated. He makes general references to the mass media as relevant agents, but pays far more attention to face-to-face spoken communication as a customary vehicle for dialogue among individuals and within/between groups. He also appears to regard the public sphere as functioning primarily at the national level, at least in terms of the sorts of topics and concerns that might be discussed or debated within its confines.

23 There is an important body of work on the Internet as an alternative public sphere. For a good overview of existing literature see Sara Bentivegna, “Politics and New Media”, in Leah Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone (eds) Handbook of New Media: social consequences of ICT’s, Sage, 2002. For a recent compilation of public sphere theories and community media research on ICT’s, see N.W Jankowski (ed), Community Media in the Information Age: Perspectives and Prospects, Hampton, 2001.
Following this idea, the Chilean public sphere, including the mainstream media, is supported by a façade of legitimization whereby certain social discourses are privileged over others and where public opinion is dominated by a sense of ignorance and arrogance. Negt and Kluge use the notion of ‘oppositional public sphere’ to refer to those who are not part of the bourgeois public sphere, and to a space that acts as a forum for new ideas. In this sense, Mapuche communities and organizations have had a counterpublic as their social basis for resistance for quite some time now. This counterpublic has been able to be objectified and mediated through the Internet and in this process, Mapuche perspectives on self-determination, history, access to communication, land rights, language, and especially the ‘conflict’ against the state and the private companies are circulating and being accessed by more people. Internet has facilitated the building of an online community to support the Mapuche struggle and redefine their position within the national imaginary. An autonomous dissident voice is definitely possible today through the Internet. This counter-information refers to the know-how of appropriating tools that will allow for horizontal flows of information and to ways of breaking the monopoly in the production of social discourses to intervene in the illusion of an informed and free public sphere.

The Mapuche activist imaginary is a self-conscious process of objectification in which different media, particularly radio, video and the Internet are being used to seek social change through a politics of identity and representation. It has become what Ginsburg in reference to Raymond Williams calls a “resource of hope” (Ginsburg 1999) in the desire for emancipation, “bringing about fresh issues about citizenship and the shape of public spheres within the frame and terms of traditional discourse on polity and civil society” (Ginsburg 1999). This new Mapuche activist imaginary, reinvented through communications media, has been constructed as a source of political assets and values, not only at the base level of internal mobilisation and solidarity, but also in terms of transnational and cross-cultural communication.

What Mapuche activists have been seeking since 1997 is the opening of new discursive spaces of information and representation of their reality in an attempt to construct a ‘truly transformative communication’ (Fraser 1993) by facilitating the emergence of an arena of discursive interaction for the production and circulation of a variety of Mapuche points of view. These are all in principle critical of the neoliberal practices of the state and corporate enterprises.

As an ‘imagined community’ (cf. Anderson 1983), the social and political interactions within different Mapuche spheres are mediated and facilitated by the Internet. However, as a virtual community these social and political interactions are being performed both within the medium and outside of it. In this sense, the Internet is a vehicle of expression for rebellious communication processes and mobilisation originating at the community level. This interaction within the medium allows for the Internet to be
appropriated differently from broadcast and print media where interactivity is less possible. Through the Mapuche web network, people are compelled to interact and disagree. Mapuche intellectuals have been able to challenge the mainstream Chilean intellectual and academic classes. The Internet, as Miller and Slater suggest in their ethnographic study in Trinidad, “is not a monolithic or placeless cyberspace” (Miller and Slater 2000). An adequate notion of the public sphere needs to take into account the existence of multiple spheres in an attempt to eliminate cultural/racial inequalities in the access and use of this space. The existence of a Mapuche identity on the Internet proves that the notion of cyberspace is not always “a place apart from off-line life… [where] participants are abstracted and distanced from local and embodied social relations” (Miller and Slater 2000). On the contrary, the reinvention of a Mapuche identity in cyberspace is grounded in the social solidarities and the cultural materialities of the everyday.

Apart from journalistic accounts of the use of the Internet by Mapuche groups, and a descriptive statistical reference in the work of Chilean anthropologist Rolf Foerster (Foerster and Vergara 2001), there has been little critical analysis of the rise of the Mapuche media, even in Mapuche circles. There has been considerable new work by Mapuche social scientists and cultural theorists on the cultural histories and political futures of the Mapuche situation. Yet, there has been little work on how Mapuche audiences consume and receive mainstream media, or how incipient Mapuche media programs have been received as symbolic fields of political struggle by the broader society. Nicolas Sternsdorf’s (2000) superficial examination of how the Mapuche have engaged with the Internet, both utilising and making sense of it, is one of the few. However, the conscious limitation of Sternsdorf’s textual study is that it focuses only on particular web pages, as the author wanted to study the representation of the Mapuche on the Internet as “a separated reality from their everyday lives” (Ibid).

This arbitrary separation between everyday life and virtual representation in cyberspace is only valid as a theoretical exercise, since Mapuche sites in cyberspace must be regarded as discursive artefacts that construct a reality as much as they mediate it. They exist because there is a strong reality that grounds the necessity for communicating this reality. These new social spaces, through which indigenous media makers are attempting to build a counter public sphere, are crucial to rethinking the role of the local in the context of global cultural economies. The existence of a Mapuche identity on the Internet is fundamentally grounded in the social solidarities and the cultural materialities of local and transnational organizations, and would be completely misunderstood if divorced from their context. What Sternsdorf has failed to question is the degree to which aspects of community structure, individual characteristics and media landscapes relate to the use of and involvement in digital community networks by Mapuche media activists.
Today, there are at least twenty-five distinctive Mapuche websites, some hosted in Chile, many others in countries like Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium and Spain. Most of these sites have been used as vehicles of expression for processes of “rebellious communication” (Downing 2001) and mobilisation originating at the community level. To support the argument that one of the primordial uses of the internet for the Mapuche has been to develop an oppositional public sphere, I have chosen to focus on all the cases that I believe have played a key role.

The websites studied are Ñuke Mapu (www.soc.uu.se/mapuche), a site developed by Mapuche sociologist Jorge Calbucura at the University of Uppsala, Sweden; Kollectivo Lientur (www.nodo50.org/kolektivolientur), a collective of Mapuche journalists and activists from Temuco, Chile; MapuExpress (www.mapuexpress.net), another collective of Mapuche journalists and activists, also from Temuco; Mapuche International Link (www.mapuche-nation.org), formed by Mapuche sociologist Reinaldo Mariqueo in Bristol, United Kingdom; NetMapu (www.mapuche.cl), created by Mapuche researcher Ruben Sánchez; and Mapuche Foundation Follí (www.mapuche.nl), a group of Mapuche expatriates in Amsterdam.

What these sites have in common is the effort to open new discursive spaces of information and representation of the Mapuche reality, in an attempt to construct a 'truly transformative communication' (Fraser, 1993) through the production and circulation of a variety of Mapuche discussions and images. They are all in principle critical of the neoliberal practices of the state and corporate interests. The underlying feature of all the websites considered here is the performative character of a Mapuche discourse. Common to all these sites is also the idea that the Internet works differently from broadcast and print media where interactivity is nonexistent. As was pointed out earlier in this thesis, Jesús Martín-Barbero’s early work on culture and hegemony made it explicit that communication practices need to be understood within processes of sociocultural mobilisation. In this way, it is possible to determine the negated forms of everyday participation whereby many sectors of society are, and remain, excluded. His proposal to move from the media to the mediations therefore emphasises the socio-cultural negotiations that emerge from the use and practice of media, rather than the technologies themselves. This is important for an understanding of the Mapuche use of the Internet, as the technology in itself is not being questioned or theorised. What has been relevant so far is the potential of the Internet to foster mobilisation and global communications and information. Like many other indigenous groups who today rely on information technologies to voice their struggles, the communication strategy of the Mapuche from the very outset has been to take actions that secure immediate national and international attention, including reports of their demands through print, broadcast and electronic media24.

24 There are several recent studies on the implications of NICT for Indigenous peoples in Latin America. For more detail see examples listed in the bibliography: Bonilla Urvina 2000, Hernandez and Calcagno 2003, Monasterios 2003, Pilco 1999.
Evidence of this impact is demonstrated by the huge support that the movement has had in different European countries and within international foundations. The Internet has clearly been an important factor in making the Mapuche cause a popular one. For the editors of the Mapuche International Link (MIL) website for example, the use of the Internet is crucial to inform the international community, develop links between Mapuche and European organizations, link indigenous schools in Chile, Argentina and other countries, and encourage Europeans to get involved in indigenous issues. This large website is produced from Bristol, U.K. and Temuco, Chile by a collective of Mapuche expatriates in the U.K. as well as Mapuche intellectuals in Chile, including historians and sociologists. The director of the project is Reinaldo Mariqueo, a Mapuche-Lafkenche political exile. The project, relaunched on a new self-managed and owned server in 2001, was first launched in 1996 by a group of Mapuche and Europeans concerned with the fate of the indigenous peoples and nations of the Americas. This new organization replaced the Comité Exterior Mapuche (CEM), a political organization that operated internationally since 1978 from their office in Bristol.

The use of the Internet is conceived as an instrument for raising awareness of indigenous peoples and their struggle for survival. Their aim is to use modern communications to inform the international community, develop links between Mapuche and European organisations, link indigenous schools in Chile, Argentina and other countries; encourage Europeans to get involved in indigenous issues; help indigenous peoples put forward projects to development and aid agencies; and to encourage sustainable tourism by providing up to date information on the culture, politics and economics of the Mapuche people. MIL also strives to promote public awareness of recognised international treaties and conventions adopted by the United Nations. According to information on their home page, the site was receiving 200,000 hits annually at the time of writing.

Most websites address common issues such as the negative consequences of indigenous migration to the cities; the loss of cultural identity; the ineffectiveness of state policies towards land, health and development; assimilation and racism; or the lack of indigenous participation in issues involving their self-determination and autonomy. Another significant debate on several websites is the question of what Mapuche autonomy is or should be and what its possible consequences are. The existence of this Mapuche network has also been important as a dissident voice against the development of projects with dubious socio-environmental consequences, such as dams or highways that affect and destroy traditional indigenous lands. Some emphasis has also been placed on discussing the impact of globalisation on Mapuche communities and what Mapuche expatriate sociologist José Calbucura claims is a lack of compromise from Chilean politicians (Calbucura, 2001).

Despite the fact that Mapuche cyberactivism has not been fully effective in preventing the recent imprisonment of the two most important leaders of the Mapuche organisation Aukin Wallmapu Ngulam,
there is evidence to support the claim that the Mapuche Internet campaigns have at least intervened in
the national public sphere. This is confirmed by the fierce reaction to claims circulated in several
Mapuche websites, particularly in Kolectivo Lientur’s website during 2001 and 2002, about opening up
the debate around the implications and legitimacy of an armed struggle. Kolectivo Mapuche Lientur is a
project started by Mapuche journalism students from Temuco in late 2000 as a news service. Formerly
known as 'Resistencia Mapuche' (Mapuche Resistance), the aim of the collective is to provide counter-
information regarding events and conflicts in the Mapuche communities.

The members of the collective take advantage of free or alternative servers and software through the
creation of alliances and partnerships with other net activists around the world. They define themselves
as “militants for the economic independence and information subversion in response to the
commodification of information and communication technologies” (Kolectivo Lientur website, 2002).
The website is hosted on the Spanish server Nodo5O, one of the most important examples of subversive
communication and part of the European based Global Network of Counter Information. Through this
network, every report, article or document produced by the collective is distributed immediately to more
than 600 social organizations and global resistance activists worldwide. The Mapuche collective defines
their organization as an,

autonomous counterinformation Mapuche project on the web aimed at providing
information and communication to autonomous Mapuche organisations,
communities in conflict, student collectives, and ‘antisystemic’ organizations… We
are and want to be a point of encounter and counter-information for all those
Mapuche people without a voice, dissidents, subversive, utopic and disenchanted.
No more and no less… (Kolectivo Lientur website, 2002, my translation).

Lientur is perhaps the less formal and more radical of Mapuche websites. It relies strongly on the use of
images and an edgy design. It is clearly made by young people and is less conventional than any of the
other Websites. On their homepage they invite people to debate

from the traditional Mapuche to the misunderstood Mapuche anarchopunks, from intellectuals to
fanatics calling for armed struggle, from globalists to those involved in anti-globalisation. We want to
overcome sectarism and fragmentation of the Mapuche movement in order to construct an
interconnected archipelago of resistances and collective actions which at the end benefits us much more
against the common enemy of all our efforts (Kolectivo Lientur homepage 2002, my translation).

They chose to work on the Internet because they consider that informatics should not be a domain for
experts and those in power but for all with necessary competence to take advantage of the possibilities of
net use (Pedro Cayuqueo, personal communication, Temuco, June 2002). *Kolectivo Lientur* is an important attempt to answer those criticisms towards the importance of their virtual work and they have pushed the limits by promoting that the legitimacy of political and social movements today is based on being credible producers of information. “Just as other subversive collectives of information, counter-information is for us the work to legitimise the insurgent discourses of our people against the fascist opinion of the press” (*Kolectivo Lientur* Home Page).

I have followed the development of the website for a period of eighteen months. During 2002 and much of 2003, the editorials of the website have been calling for debate regarding the use of violence. As has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, the right wing-oriented *El Mercurio* newspaper, the most influential of the national daily newspapers in Chile, has been the key force behind the rise of animosity towards the Mapuche demands and actions. I have already mentioned the example of the much publicised article on 'Cybernetic Terrorism' published by *Diario El Mercurio* in 2002.

During this period, it has been interesting to note how Mapuche intellectuals have started to have a public voice and to ‘talk’ to each other through public debates online. In this sense, the Internet has been a useful social space for the growth of a Mapuche intellectualism. This is also demonstrated by the increasing number of well-informed and radically critical articles written by Mapuche scholars, communicators, activists and academics who otherwise have little chance of being published in mainstream publications.

A crucial case in this regard has been *Nuke Mapu* (Motherland) developed as an outcome of a large interdisciplinary research program entitled Development Sociology Seminar. This website and its associated ring of websites is perhaps the largest and best-known Mapuche website. One of the interesting features of this portal is the immediacy with which news is updated and posted. As soon as a press release or public communiqué from a Mapuche organization is delivered in Chile, the information is uploaded to the website. According to Calbucura (2001), the website received over 200,000 hits in 2000, and its URL has been integrated into academic programs in Spanish, sociology and anthropology at several universities in Chile, the United States, Canada and Australia. For Calbucura the question of interactivity is clearly the most important of the democratic potentials of the Internet as it concerns the relationship of the users with other users (Mapuche or non-Mapuche) and also with the communication supply.

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25 As a relevant anecdote, I can mention that during the fieldwork in Chile in June 2002 there was a confusing incident where a Pehuenche family in the Alto Bio Bio region was murdered, apparently by members of a radical separatists Mapuche organization. I asked Sofia Painequeo what she thought and if she had watched the news on television. She replied she hadn’t, but that she had been reading the Nuke Mapu website all morning to get informed.
Mapuche is the most academic of all Mapuche websites in its approach, with a strong emphasis on intercultural communication and research. The effectiveness of the website lies in the efficient transfer of information from different press agencies, as well as being a discussion forum and means of publication for the production and circulation of research by Mapuche scholars. The collection and critical quality of articles is impressive. Mapuche has an extensive archive of online publications of over one hundred and fifty articles written in Spanish, English, Swedish and French. The same goes for all other Mapuche websites hosted in Europe; the Mapuche International Link (MIL) website offers a bilingual English-Spanish website whereas FOLIL offers a bilingual Dutch and Spanish site. These articles demonstrate the importance of co-presence of horizontal and vertical communication flows (Bentivegna 2002) in the Mapuche websites.

Based in the Netherlands, the Mapuche Foundation FOLIL ('Roots') was founded on March 17, 2000 and prompted by the complex situation of Mapuche uprisings in Chile and the negative portrayal in the mainstream media. The producers of FOLIL are mainly Mapuche who left Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship. In the Netherlands, they have continued to support the Mapuche struggle in Chile. Their main objective is to provide information about the Mapuche people. FOLIL also organises exhibitions and lectures, and supports initiatives of Mapuche individuals or organisations involved with Mapuche issues. It provides over sixty original articles in Dutch, English and Spanish, information on campaigns, news and updates on the Mapuche political prisoners in Chile, as well as cultural events, traditional knowledge and an extensive Mapuche-Spanish dictionary.

Another key way in which Mapuche activists have used the Internet is by providing the possibility for the supposed 'terrorists' to have a voice. In the last three years there have been over three hundred Mapuche imprisoned, most of them for pre-emptive reasons; others are accused of infringing on the national security Antiterrorist Law after being detained in riots and mobilisations in the south of the country. None of the mainstream national or regional newspapers has allowed Mapuche leaders to voice their claims for themselves.

Websites such as Kolectivo Lientur and MapuExpress have published interviews in Spanish with Mapuche leaders directly from the places of seclusion, while they await trial. Together with Kolectivo Lientur and Mapu, MapuExpress relies strongly on the use of images of the communities in conflict. It provides graphic material on the militarisation of the areas in conflict, the abuse of power by the police and the logging activities, and has well-informed editorial articles on issues of national interest.
Together with Lientur, it is one of the most critical of all Mapuche websites. It has a good list of related links, an excellent email news service, and a group of sharp journalists reporting from locations. The MapuExpress website is a good example of how the network of Mapuche websites has become an important counter space for the circulation of images pertaining to the conflict, especially when these pictures are excluded from the mainstream print and broadcast media. Developed in 1999 by Alfredo Seguel and Konapewman, a collective of young Mapuche activists from Temuco, MapuExpress is presented on the web as a regularly updated political information service directly from Mapuche territory. The website is sponsored by the FOLIL foundation in the Netherlands and contains an impressive list of articles and online publications as well as a Mapuche online library. It is very well designed and the information is easy to access and well organised into authors, dates and topics. From the homepage, visitors are able to access the full text of the Indigenous Act of 1993 as well as convention 169 of the ILO. It is indicated that the Chilean government has not ratified this convention.

The extensive use of photographs used in this website as arguments against the “enclosures of information” (Boal, 1995) has had an important impact on the construction of an activist imagination. These enclosures refer to the way in which images are pigeonholed, manipulated and circulated within certain boundaries. Through the Mapuche websites, the civil society is able to ‘see’ the events from a Mapuche perspective. Many of the photographs that appear in Mapuche websites have never made it to the mainstream print press.

Net Mapu, for example, was originally developed as a way of countering the increasing wave of Chilean appropriation of Mapuche images and symbols during the 1990s (Ruben Sánchez, personal communication). Kolectivo Lientur is also a good example of how Mapuche journalists are reporting for the website from the field and generating independent archives of images with no mainstream media filtering.

Images are also part of a strategy to promote dissident views on the neoliberal policies adopted by the government to support investment projects within several indigenous and rural communities. Important examples can be seen in MapuExpress, for example, where there is a permanent section oriented to emphasising the fact that Chile has not yet ratified Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization. In the same way, campaigns to oppose the Chilean-European Union free trade agreement have appeared on Mapuche International Link. This is not only a clear example of the use of the Internet as a call for action; it also demonstrates how Mapuche organizations are using the Internet as a way of proposing a fragmented and heterogeneous public sphere that must remain open to oppositional cultural and political activity.
Finally, at a deeper level, a key element has been the widespread use of the notion of Wallmapu (Mapuche nation/territory), a place with distinct borders of about 150,000 square kilometres. This concept is gaining increasing recognition among Mapuche people, and the Internet and other communication media are playing a pivotal role in the circulation and imagination of this concept.

5.4. The impact of Mapuche media Mapping the Indigenous media sphere.

I have already discussed the reception and reporting of the ‘Mapuche conflict’ in the Chilean media and have offered an overview of the implicitly racist and dangerously irresponsible constructions in the media of the Mapuche as a community up in arms. In this section, I have summarized the impact of an incipient Mapuche media sphere. Particularly important is the fact that the Internet has shown the potential to be constructed as a virtual counter public sphere through which it is possible to reject the views that Mapuche organizations receive constant material and symbolic assistance from abroad to support a separatist movement of self-determination that jeopardizes internal sovereignty of the Chilean national state.

In doing so I have referred to the work of Hartley and McKee (2000) in regards to their interdisciplinary approach to map an indigenous mediasphere in Australia. This work refers more to the reporting of Aboriginal issues in Australian media and in that sense its usefulness to the Chilean context is limited. However, some of the concepts introduced in this work may be relevant to help conceptualise a framework of analysis. Following the theoretical work of Yuri M. Lotman (1990) in relation to a ‘semiotic theory of culture’, Hartley and McKee define ‘indigenous public sphere’ as a “highly mediated public ‘space’” for developing notions of Indigeneity, and putting them to work in organizing and governing the unpredictable immediacy of everyday events” (Hartley and Mackee 2000:3). What is interesting about this approach is the dialogism (c.f. Bakhtin) that is established between Indigeneity and the media. One might think of this as a parallax effect to use Faye Ginsburg’s argument regarding the illuminating impact that indigenous media can have on revitalizing the field of ethnographic film. In this case, I’m referring to the impact that an indigenous public or media sphere in Chile may have on a public sphere that today is defined by its lack of plurality, and excessive property and ideological concentration. Hartley and McKee situate the mediasphere in a liminal space between the public sphere (the political level) and the semiosphere (the cultural level) and suggest that the mediasphere is this very ‘medium’ that connects the world of political and public dialogue with the larger universe of culture (Hartley and McKee 2000:210). In the Mapuche case however, and contrary to Hartley and McKee’s conceptualization of a mediasphere, the Mapuche mediasphere is constructed in opposition to the broader Chilean public and media spheres. I think Hartley and McKee’s conceptualization is a bit too limited to reporting and reception and fails to consider more radical or alternative uses of media. A key element to be taken into consideration for future media reception studies in Chile is that indigenous
audiences, like any other, are more than passive recipients of media representations about themselves and the broader society in which they live. Indigenous peoples in Chile must also be accounted for as media producers and, as Hartley and Mckee claim, “active participants in the process of media production, dissemination, regulation, reception, and innovation” (6).

What is particularly interesting about the Mapuche Internet network, also in comparison with other indigenous uses of the medium, is that there is both a clear and well-defended attack against the racism and bias of mainstream national and regional media, but also a serious attempt to move beyond the complaint and into the field of intercultural communication and community building, as is shown in the video component through the interviews with Alfredo Seguel and Elias Paillan. In many instances, the Mapuche Internet sites and the online news services they provide are a critical response to the disaffection of mainstream media representation.  

I think it is appropriate to go back to Nancy Fraser’s Gramscian approach to communication hegemony already mentioned earlier in this chapter, as a framework for understanding the attempt by Mapuche activists to create a “an additional, more comprehensive arena in which members of different, more limited publics talk across lines of cultural diversity” (Fraser 1993: 126). Unfortunately, in the Chilean case the lack of dissent in the civil society has not allowed for the emergence of an “informally mobilized body of nongovernmental discursive opinion that could serve as a counterweight to the state” (134) as has been the case with the Zapatista communities in Mexico, for example (Villarreal & Gil in Downing 1998).

The key point here is that independently of the impact so far that Mapuche media has had or hasn’t had on Chilean society and cultural politics, the Indigenous media sector in Chile has become a new and increasing cultural resource (Ignacio Aliaga, personal communication, July 2003).

Moreover, and also independent of the impact so far, it is clear that the Mapuche media may be seen as a fissure in the Chilean mediascape (c.f Clemencia Rodriguez 2000) that has set up an unavoidable challenge to the regimes of truth imposed by national and commercial media. In general, the Mapuche online network is a locus without a centre and without vertical control with the potential to host a “free and influential public space, a sphere of social action not separate but fully linked to and a protagonist in conflicts and antagonisms” (Carlini 1996: 21 in Bentivegna 2002: 59).

In order to conceptualize the impact of an incipient Mapuche public sphere mediated by the Internet it is crucial to think of the ways the Internet may offer a new model of democracy, one with no reference to a

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26 This point is also made by Molnar and Meadows (2001:xiii) in regards to indigenous media in Australia.
centre, no longer equivalent to the form of the nation-state and no longer equivalent to global forms of decision-making (Bentivegna 2002:59).

The first level of impact has to do with expanding, even subverting national public opinion and a historical national imaginary. Subversion is understood as those actions, activities or discourses promoted and disseminated through the Mapuche online networks aimed at undermining or challenging a given discourse of power. In this case, the Mapuche Internet networks have in effect began subverting and deconstructing the historical image of the “Araucano” warrior rooted in the national consciousness for the past 150 years. Because Mapuche organizations have a great deal of control of the websites that they either own or use, the use of images has become a key tactic for cultural activism. Harald Prins has written extensively about what he calls the “primitivist perplex” or the dilemma of primitivism (Prins 1997; 2002:72). The primitivist formula, already discussed in relation to early Mapuche photographs, is a form of internal colonization where visual media plays an ambiguous role in commodifying culture or as a form of liberation. For Prins, the primitivist formula –by which indigenous people choose to use historical images of their cultures- has been used as a counter-hegemonic construct and is widely appealing in the indigenous decolonization movement (Prins 2002:72). Margarita Alvarado has also referred to this perplex as the power of ‘Indian fashion” to promote native rights.

Many Mapuche websites are caught in this dilemma in their recurring use of historical or ethnographic images, which are deconstructed and re-signified for a completely different purpose. The Mapuche websites have been important in deconstructing the notion of ethnic “minority” by emphasizing and disseminating the information from the 1992 and 2002 population Census. In this regard, the online network of Mapuche sites has been able to open up new discursive space to debate and acknowledge the construction of an ‘urban Mapuche’.

These are just some examples that allow us to situate the emergence of a new political subject. We are talking about a new Mapuche political subject concerned with activating a new imaginary through technologies of cultural objectification. Moreover, this new political subjectivity is a direct challenge to the concept of a unified and homogeneous identity and may be understood along the lines of Chantal Mouffe’s multiple and heterogeneous identities, or what Garcia Canclini (1995) calls multitemporal heterogeneity. As Mouffe (1992c) suggests,

[w]e can then conceive the social agent as constituted by an ensemble of ‘subject positions’ that can never be totally fixed in a closed system of differences, constructed by a diversity of discourses among which there is no necessary relation, but a constant movement of over-determination and displacement (Mouffe 1992c: 372 in Rodriguez 2001).
Departing from Mouffe’s work, Clemencia Rodriguez’s call to move from alternative to citizen’s media reworks the theory of radical democracy to understand how communication technologies mediate social subjects that are constituted not by an essence, but by their historical location. In this case paradoxically, the virtual space of the World Wide Web offers a narrative of location in an imagined country with a real past; the Wallmapu.

The Mapuche Internet network, providing a virtual space of debate and horizontal flow of information has had another crucial impact in the broader public sphere. It has allowed for the embodiment of an idea of nationhood: the Wallmapu or Mapuche country. This concept is gaining increasing recognition among Mapuche people and the Internet and other communication media are playing a pivotal role in the circulation and imagination of this concept. Therefore, the network of Mapuche websites, and also the media and artistic practices mentioned earlier are grounded in narratives of location where these new political subjectivities are spatialized in a set of social relationships. The social space of indigenous media in Chile may be therefore thought along the lines of Henri Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of the antechamber, a space of negotiation between what he calls the “absolutist royal power” and those of lesser status who are petitioning it (Lefebvre 1991: 314; Rogoff 2000:23). In this case, the Chilean State as the ‘absolutist royal power’ stands metaphorically in opposition to the petitioners; Mapuche activists in particular and the Mapuche society at large in general. The antechamber is the Internet. The Internet, and more precisely the network of Mapuche websites becomes then the antechamber space where the petitioners “become more empowered since they are representing others outside of the space, while the absolute monarch diminishes in power, as his space has been infiltrated by commoners” (Rogoff 2000:23).

The call for multi-subjectivity coming out of feminist and postcolonial theory intersects with Lefebvre’s conceptualization of the multi-inhabitation of spaces, which in turn lies at the heart of the Mapuche demands of autonomy as I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter. A Mapuche ethnonationalist undercurrent – as perceived by Foerster, Lavanchy and other Chilean non-indigenous academics - is never possible under the modern notion of a unified national state, because the pragmatic result of spatial multi-inhabitation will always be armed conflict. Experience speaks for itself if we consider the violent annexation of the Mapuche territories between 1881 and 1883 when the Chilean State decided multi-inhabitation was impossible, or if we consider the current treatment of the Mapuche conflict and the Mapuche demands for autonomy in the media. Lefebvre suggests a spatial analysis - in the context of what Appadurai (1996) conceives as a postnational state and Mouffe (1988) a radical democracy - in which dialectical system of opposing claims are positioned in relation to one another without conflict. This is precisely the kind of debate to look forward to in a future Mapuche public sphere.
There are already moves towards this goal in this incipient Mapuche counter public sphere as is demonstrated by the emphasis of most websites on a discreet number of relevant information. Through the Mapuche Internet sphere, Mapuche actors are placed in a position of relative equality in terms of access to the arena of debate. This is definitely not the case with any other medium. Reputed scholars, historians, lawyers or politicians have had to respond to messages coming out of the Mapuche websites which indicates a certain degree of pervasiveness. One key example is the Ralco campaign against the construction of the dam in the Bio-Bio River, which has been delayed for almost four years. In this sense, the Mapuche counter public sphere offers a diversity of opinions and topics relevant to particular debates, which is often lacking in mainstream print and broadcasting media. The criticisms to the expansion of forestry companies in Mapuche areas are a key example.

In May 2003 for example, the national El Mercurio newspaper published an interview with Agustin Figueroa, ex-Minister of Agriculture during the Aylwin Government (1990-1994). In it, Figueroa proposed that the solution to the Mapuche conflict was to ‘recycle the Mapuche’. The commentary triggered a series of sharp responses in several Mapuche websites, particularly from Pedro Cayuqueo to whom I have already referred. Cayuqueo, who today edits the Azkintuwe newspaper from Temuco has been involved in a series of harsh debates with Chilean scholars, including the much publicized confrontation with Sergio Villalobos, a key figure and historian. In both cases, Mapuche websites have been crucial in providing a social space from which Mapuche can respond to and contest assertions made of them in the public sphere. Villalobos claims had to do with dismissing the fact that urban Mapuches could be considered indigenous people.

Once again the concept of “ethnic citizenship” (De la Peña 1997) is thrown on to the discussion table. In this regard the Cayuqueo-Villalobos debate is an important case study to bear in mind as it is a confrontation between one of the forefathers of Chilean historiography, generally affiliated with the political right and speaking through the conservative and important El Mercurio Newspaper, and a young Mapuche from Temuco, a newcomer speaking through a radical communication medium such as the Kolectivo Linetur website.

At the core of the debate is the fact that different sectors within the Mapuche movement, especially the more radical organizations pushing for self-determination and political autonomy, see ‘citizenship’ not only as a legal status but also as a form of identification. As Chantal Mouffe puts it “a type of political identity: something to be constructed, not empirically given” (Mouffe 1992b, 231). Citizens have to enact their citizenship on a day-to-day basis, through their participation in everyday political practices and in this sense the Internet may be conceived as a new form of “citizens media” (Rodriguez 2001). What is extremely interesting about Rodriguez ‘s concept of citizen’s media is the way this multitemporal, historically situated, political subjects are able to make fissures in the national
mediascapes. Given its active nature, citizenship has to do with empowerment as citizens actively participate in actions (make videos or hosting a website for example) that reshape their own identities and the identities of others (Rodriguez 2001).

On other fronts, activists like Alfredo Seguel have been able to get increasing attention by incorporating quality and relevant information into the public debate. Seguel’s (2002) in-depth studies of the relationships between the media and forestry conglomerates, or the waste deposits in Mapuche communities in Temuco are examples of this. Equality, diversity and quality of information are key aspects of a public sphere.

In other areas, the Mapuche websites have contributed to demonstrating the legacy of the military dictatorship, even after fifteen years of democratic governments. Examples of this are the neo-liberal policies affecting indigenous peoples and the environment, and the infliction of the anti-terrorist law of 1979 on Mapuche peasants and activists. The Mapuche websites have been crucial in showing images of police abuse, the action of paramilitary groups and the militarisation of rural communities in the south. They have raised fresh claims over the control, production and circulation of images and the ownership of media and communications outlets.

The Mapuche movement is currently at a crossroads (Cayuqueo 2003). Many of the leaders of the more radical organizations have been imprisoned and the organizations disarticulated. The last Pehuenche families were forced to sign the agreement for the Ralco dam and the inundation is imminent. The visit by U.N. special envoy Rodolfo Stavengahen in July 2003 and his recently released report (Stavenhagen 2004), does not imply radical changes to the situation of the Mapuche. The Mapuche movement is as fractured as it has ever been. Many achievements have been accomplished in terms of lands rights and access to media. Nevertheless, the road ahead is even tougher and demands the collective effort of a series of actors working together to assist in the much needed and long due indigenous communications program. Some recommendations are presented in the following section and the conclusions to this thesis.

**Ethnic Citizens’ Media: mapping the future of Indigenous communication in Chile.**

The importance of community media is that they play an important cultural role “by ‘imagining’ the notions of culture and citizenship through shared meanings, values, and ideals” (Meadows et al. 2002:3). In this sense, indigenous media in Chile need to be embraced as a core element of community participation. As Ewart (2000) suggests “local media both produce and maintain the culture of a community and in doing so, play a central role in creating a community public sphere” (Ewart 2000 in Morris and Meadows 2003:3). Like every country in the world, the hegemony of the Chilean
commercial media does not allow for open participation. Therefore community media is a key resource in the building of “multiple and complex media and cultural literacies through participation on a localised and personalised scale” (Morris and Meadows 2003:3).

Based on discussions presented in previous chapters, such as Giorgio Agamben’s constructions of sovereignty or Chantal Mouffe’s notions of radical democracy and citizenship, I suggest we adopt Clemencia Rodriguez’s (2001) call to move from a concept of alternative to a concept of citizen’s media. The reason is simple. If we conceive indigenous media as alternative media, we assume they are in essence alternative or marginal to something else.

As Rodriguez (2001) puts it, the label alternative media “predetermines the type of oppositional thinking that limits the potential of these media to their ability to resist the alienating power of mainstream media. This approach blinds our understanding of all other instances of change and transformation brought about by these media” (Ibid.) In understanding indigenous media as citizens media, it is implied that indigenous groups are enacting their ethnic citizenships “by actively intervening and transforming the established mediascape…[and by]…contesting social codes, legitimized identities, and institutionalized social relations” (Ibid).

If indigenous productions have made it to national and international festivals, they have been completely absent from television broadcasting. If we take into account that the seven free-to-air television networks are as a whole the most important exhibitor, producer and buyer of audiovisual or televisual productions in Chile, then the invisibility of indigenous productions is quite serious. In total the seven networks offer over one hundred thousand hours of programming each year (Aliaga 2000: 18-19) none of which is produced or specifically aimed at indigenous groups. The broadcasting law states that a minimum of 40% of the total programming offered by a television network must be produced locally and at the moment there isn’t much of a problem in this regard, What is striking though is that the law states that channels need to broadcast a minimum of one hour a week of cultural programming (21). It is stunning to observe that cultural programming accounts for less than 1% of the total yearly programming of several television stations.

The role of the state

The state has a major role to play in the future developments of an indigenous mediasphere in Chile, especially in the absence of appropriate commercial conditions. The media industries and training bodies in Chile do not offer any particular programs directed at indigenous media. In this case, the Chilean State has the responsibility to open up new models of participation in the media environment. The first area has to do with a more appropriate policy environment to deal with the consistent lack of
communication between government agencies concerned with community and local communication programs (Ignacio Aliaga, personal communication, July 2003). I concur with Morris and Meadows (2003) when they suggest that communication should be seen as a “major organizing element of Indigenous society (sic) – a framework for the past, the present and the future” (77). In this sense, the state has yet to design and implement a consistent policy on indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, including what Cohen terms “moral copyright” (2003: 313)27.

A second problem is that indigenous media remain at the margins of public funding agendas28. A future indigenous mediasphere in Chile should be sceptical of depending absolutely on public funding. Canadian sociologist Harold Riggins has described the often hidden interests of states in the promotion of apparently multicultural communication policies as strategies to “enlist” (Batty 2001) the indigenous populations into the mechanisms of inclusion designed by the state. This is also a point raised by Browne (1996: 191-221). There needs to be a critical assessment of the current politics of broadcasting in Chile to clear speculations that indigenous media is publically funded to improve the image of the state and consolidate the ‘integration’ of the indigenous populations to the dominant society (Jeannette Paillan, personal communication, June 2002). In this sense, there needs to be more consultation with indigenous organizations apart from the government’s indigenous agency, CONADI29.

Similar cases can also be observed in Mexico where the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) developed a project called Transferencia de Medios Audiovisuales a Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas (Transference of Audiovisual Media to Indigenous Communities and Organizations)30. A direct outcome of the foundational booklet “Towards an Indigenous Video in Mexico” (INI, 1983), the project began as

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28 The CONADI (the Chilean State Agency for Indigenous Affairs) had a total estimated budget in 2000 of US$ 25 million. 90% of this budget is aimed at the acquisition of land. About US$ 1 million of the budget of CONADI has been assigned to a Education and Culture Fund. The recently formed National Arts and Culture Council has re-engineered the FONDART funding program to include a special section for indigenous cultural and artistic production. This is a positive move that continues the efforts by the Division of Culture of the Ministry of Education in terms of its Programs for Development of Regional Media (Aliaga 2000:6). In 2002 FONDART had a total budget of US$ 1 million and is still one of the few public funding opportunities for the whole population. The new special indigenous program within FONDART will assign around US$100,000 in 2004 (CNC website 2004). CORFO, the government agency for industrial development has a film development fund of around US$500,000 (in 2000) aimed primarily at development and distribution of Chilean films. There are no special grants for indigenous media. Finally, the CNTV, the Chilean Television Council has a budget of US$ 750,000 out of which 10% is oriented at the production of local and community media. There are no special guidelines for indigenous media.
29 Lorna Roth and Gail Valaskakis talk about this in relation to Native media in Canada in their article ‘Aboriginal broadcasting in Canada: a case study in democratization’, in Marc Raboy and Peter A. Bruck (eds) Communication for and against Democracy, Montreal, Black Rose Books, pp. 221-234.
30 Asen Balikci was anthropological advisor in the project during the early 1990's.
a series of national workshops which offered training and equipment to many indigenous organizations\textsuperscript{31}.

The point in question for inserting indigenous programming on Chilean media such as film or has to do with the right format or type of program. Furthermore, future prospects of an indigenous mediasphere in Chile will have to take into account other indigenous groups beside the Mapuche. In this regard, there are two experiences worth mentioning. One is Likanantay video in Atacama, and the other one is Rapa Nui community television in Easter Island/Rapa Nui.

**Mediated ethnogenesis: future challenges in making culture visible through media**

Reputed anthropologist and historian José Bengoa has written for over two decades on the history and politics of indigenous people in Chile and Latin America. His book *La Emergencia Indígena en América Latina* (2000) is a groundbreaking analysis of the new cultural and political reality of indigenous people in Latin America. An interesting aspect of Bengoa’s historical and anthropological overview of the resurgence of indigenous movements in the region is his conceptualisation of the processes of ethnogenesis to refer to the cultural and mediated forms of reinventing identity in the age of globalisation. Bengoa briefly mentions two examples of cultural ethnogenesis in Chile. Firstly, the ‘appearance’ of the Likanantay people, who until the census of 1992 has been included as Aymaras; and secondly, the ‘reinvention’ of Rapa Nui ethnic consciousness (Bengoa 2000: 69, 144). In the case of the Likanantay or Atacameño communities in the area of the Salar de Atacama, the process of “re-ethnification” (70) has been intimately linked to the emergence of a enviromentalist discourse due to the conflicts that this communities currently maintain with the mining companies. For the Mapuche the conflict arises from land and the operations of logging companies. For the Likanantay, it arises from the issue of water and the operations of mining companies.

Likanantay community video has been reclusive so far but the first steps have already been taken to develop video as an alternative political tool. In 1998 the Atacameño organization Asociación de Costumbres y Tradiciones in Calama, approached Claudio Mercado at the Chilean Museum of Precolombian Art in Santiago to design a program of video training for the communities. The project titled *Implementación y capacitación en el manejo de equipos audiovisuales a comunidades atacameñas*, was carried out in 1999 with the training of 14 people from seven Likanantay communities.

\textsuperscript{31} Many video works developed through this initiative showed how indigenous videomaking is not only hindered by lack of resources, but there are also other obstacles as well, which have to do with the acceptance of video within the community itself, since sometimes the function of the technology is ignored. However, it is being used as a tool for preserving culture and autonomy. At present, there are three major centers for indigenous video in Mexico. The first opened in Oaxaca in 1994, the next was initiated in Morelia during 1997, and the most recent one operating in Hermosillo since 2001. The idea behind these centers is to give a continuous training to the indigenous videomakers -there are also post-production studios with combined formats- and create an independent network of diffusion and distribution.
Equipment was purchased with funding from CONADI and the ANDES Foundation and a two-week workshop was conducted on documentary video. The first video produced coming out of this experience was an untitled informational video that denounced the creation of a national park or nature reserve in territories of the Caspana community, a town of about 500 people in the high Andes. The video was actively circulated among the people of the community and the situation was appropriately “socialized” and debated (Mercado 2000). The video was then circulated among the other Atacameño communities and a meeting was called with the regional director of CONAF, the government agency that administers parks and wildlife. The community rejected the plan as it had been designed without any previous consultation with the Likanantay communities involved. Gerónimo Ansa, one of the leaders that had attended the video workshop months before recorded the whole meeting. The project was delayed and the Caspana community was invited to participate in the re-design of the project. This episode is an example of what Jay Ruby has called the opening up of a particular “appetite for acquiring certain technologies” (Ruby 2000).

On another level, Bengoa also refers to new movement for Rapa Nui political autonomy in Easter Island. I have already referred to the production in 1998 of the soap opera Ioarana in the island. However, Bengoa refers to the film Rapa Nui, produced by Kevin Costner in 1994, as an example of cultural ethnogenesis. In the film, the main roles were played by Hollywood actors, such as Esai Morales, of Mexican origin and Rapa Nui people complained of “bullying” on the part of the film crew. Bengoa claims, without any supporting evidence, that the film had a profoundly positive effect in the Rapa Nui population as it assisted in the “reconstruction of their ethnic self-identification” (Bengoa 2000:132). As Bengoa puts it, “… after the film, many Rapa Nui are more Rapa Nui, dress in Rapa Nui fashion, and use ‘traditional’ body tattoos… it helped the re-affirmation of a pastiche identity” (132). Unfortunately, there is no empirical evidence to support these claims and further work on the reception of Rapa Nui images by Rapa Nui people is needed.

I want to conclude this section by paying attention to the potential of telenovelas for indigenous media in Latin America. Firstly, because indigenous telenovelas could have the potential of inserting indigenous narratives in the global television market, where indigenous people are under-represented. An example may be the work being produced for some time by Inuit media maker Zacharias Kunuk in Canada32.

Secondly, because telenovelas generate important degrees of social identification and empathy and this could be a viable way of naturalising and normalising indigenous stories and languages on mainstream media; a kind of “colour balancing”.

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32 For more detail see Ginsburg 2002.
As Browne (1996) has shown in his comprehensive comparative work on indigenous electronic media, broadcasting and the Internet have the potential to “rescue” indigenous languages from oblivion while increasing a sense of self-esteem on the part of the indigenous population, both in their historical traditions and in their achievements in contemporary society. In appropriating a mainstream genre like soap operas, indigenous producers could fight the negative images of indigenous peoples held by the majority population, in ways in which visible and audible symbols of indigenous society are provided through an empathetic medium (59).

The model developed by TVNZ (Television New Zealand) may also serve as a benchmark to evaluate the possibilities of “small television” (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1997) for Rapa Nui (Easter Island). The low cost television model developed over a decade ago by TVNZ has been adopted by four Pacific countries (Niue, the Cook Islands, Nauru and Samoa) (Molnar and Meadows 2001:122). As Molnar and Meadows claim, “the smallness and flexibility of low-cost television has encouraged the development of Indigenous production” (122). Today the only network broadcasting to Easter Island is Televisión Nacional, the Chilean public national broadcaster and given the geographical isolation of Easter Island an its cultural proximity with Polynesia it seems appropriate to evaluate this experience in more detail. The “small media” model (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994:19) would definitely be an interesting possibility for Rapa Nui people to build cultural solidarities that strengthen their culture. The main problem may be the extremely low size of the market composed of just few several thousands. Nevertheless a basic community television set up has already been functioning on an irregular basis in the island for the last couple of years, providing local content for a few hours a week and using the spectrum of Televisión Nacional. Besides the possibility to encourage indigenous production, a serious feasibility study should also consider the associated possibilities of constraining it and becoming another station like Television Nacional, which broadcasts programming that is not culturally specific to the island. No audience research has been carried on Rapa Nui to measure and understand the kind of programming preferred or required by indigenous Rapa Nui people33.

In my opinion, Molnar and Meadows’ comparative study of indigenous communications in Australia, Canada and the South Pacific is a remarkable example of the usefulness of such approaches. Before concluding, it is important to stress that in order to support the building of indigenous communications in Chile, the need for more critical comparative studies is crucial, particularly in reference to other models and experiences being made in other parts of Latin America.

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33 An interesting case of audience feedback in the Cook Islands is provided by a study conducted by American scholar Duane Varan, cited in Molnar and Meadows 2001:134. Having spent several weeks in Easter Island during the past ten years, I have been able to witness complaints in regards to the dated nature of the programs broadcast by Televisión Nacional, which is also a point raised by Molnar and Meadows’ study of broadcasting in the South Pacific in regards to TVNZ.
CONCLUSION:
The poetics of building Indigenous Communications in Chile

It is not easy to conclude a work when it seems that so much remains to be done in the field, and specifically in the area of Indigenous communications in Chile. I began this investigation stating that this investigation was exploratory research intended to get more research going; to open up discursive avenues through which to think the possibilities of a truly multicultural and participatory media environment in Chile. Indigenous media is an important cultural resource, and in Chile, it has been significantly overlooked. The Chilean mediascape has changed considerably in recent years, and will keep on changing. Therefore, it is time to reverse this situation and bring indigenous media to the surface. That is the most important contribution of this thesis.

At the end of this four yearlong project, I feel I was able to put Mapuche media on the academic map of media anthropology, and more importantly, put this project on the map of indigenous media in Chile. As two decades of scholarship on the topic have demonstrated, indigenous media practice “marks a turning point in the opportunities for media participation”(Cohen 1996:1). In this thesis, I have recognized the opportunities for indigenous media in Chile and have identified this discourse in the making.

The multi-sited nature of the research proved to be of significant importance as I was able to observe the problem of study from both the inside and outside. Now I am not sure if this is the end or the beginning of something, but one thing is certain; I was able to do more than ‘observe the problem’; I was able to take part in the building of Mapuche media in Chile. The results are presented in this written exegesis and in the video project that goes with it. The video production adds something special; it acts as a strategic objectification to make Mapuche media visible within the Chilean mediasphere.

From the outset, I wanted to emphasize the notion of poetics as a way of paying attention to the indigenous processes of making culture visible through media practice. For this reason, I chose a cultural constructivist approach to understanding technology and human agency on an equal level of analysis. By looking at indigenous media as socio-technical ensembles of social relationships, I was able to propose a theoretical framework for understanding indigenous media in the context of the paradox of media power (Couldry and Curran 2003). Indigenous cultures worldwide are today confronted with the vast challenge posed by increased media globalisation, and the penetration of their cultures of technologies of information and communication that they rarely control or own. The big task ahead for people working towards building alternative media will be to be able to confront this challenge face to face and understand the paradox of a Faustian dilemma. As Aboriginal lawyer Noel Pearson has noted in
reference to Indigenous communications in Australia; “it is likely that the long term survival of our traditional knowledge will depend upon our ability to exploit the new information and communication technology. The new information technology has the real potential to help our people maintain our traditions – we need to grapple with it and devise strategies for exploring its potential” (Pearson 2000a: 64 in Morris and Meadows 2003:71). This is exactly the point made by Jeannette Paillan as presented in my video. The task ahead will be how to reverse the negative impact of hegemonic media on local cultures and how to use media to elaborate new political and cultural subjectivities that empower their users. More importantly, further ethnographic work needs to be done in relation to the mechanisms through which indigenous media may co-exist simultaneously alongside mainstream media. In this regard, this research has contributed to the understanding of the social space where indigenous media in Chile is being produced.

With the aim of underscoring the oppositional logic underlying Mapuche media production I reworked the notion of imperfect cinema formulated over thirty years ago by Cuban filmmaker Julio Garcia Espinosa, to propose the way we may think of indigenous media as a kind of imperfect media, oriented towards specific political and cultural goals defined by specific cultural formations. The notion of “imperfect” does not necessarily reject the opportunities that indigenous media practitioners may get within the mainstream media industries. It refers to the way indigenous media practitioners may be able to work outside the constraints imposed by hegemonic and industrial modes of media production, circulation and consumption. The technological, aesthetic, and formal ‘perfection’ of the mainstream media industries is often not useful in indigenous cultural contexts.

As I have shown, the current Chilean mediasphere is a legacy of the military dictatorship and the neoliberal frenzy of media privatisation during the 1980’s. The presence of indigenous voices or images in this media environment is nil, especially considering for example that the Broadcasting Act requires that television networks have to transmit a minimum of one hour of cultural programming a week.

Rethinking national identities today supposes a questioning of the ways the states represent these multiple identities. Therefore, it is indispensable to challenge the current Chilean media sphere. In the words of Garcia-Canelini (1997) we need to,

refute the neoliberals’ swift transfer of the responsibility of narrating history and identity to enterprising monopolies and reducing the circulation of those narratives to consumption in homes. The weakening of the nation-state should open up the possibility for diverse voices and images – both local and transnational – to create many public scenarios in order to discuss the ways in which we wish to change and the directions for achieving that: radio stations, television channels, and independent
video circuits that are able to compete for public funding, with the only conditions being the quality and collective interest or aesthetic experimentation of their programming (261).

There has been considerable new work by Mapuche social scientists and cultural theorists on the cultural histories and political futures of the Mapuche situation, and I have tried to reflect their position in my work. The question posed by indigenous research is of critical importance as it opens fresh views on the decolonisation of media and cultural studies.

Mapuche scholars have placed questions of ethnic citizenship and political autonomy at the centre of a new multivocal discourse. Some sectors from the government, the media conglomerates or the general public opinion have responded by repressing and criminalising the Mapuche movement, at least in its more radical version. The national public sphere has evidently been shaken by Mapuche media and cultural activism, as is confirmed by the fierce reaction against it circulating in mainstream media outlets.

Non-indigenous scholars of media and culture in Chile on the contrary have yet to integrate a critical analysis of Mapuche media within their studies. In the short term, it will be crucial to have empirical and ethnographic work on the ways Mapuche audiences consume and receive mainstream media, and how emergent Mapuche media productions have been received by the broader society. The question of indigenous control of cultural production is in this regard at the core of this work that remains to be done. The new social spaces, through which indigenous media makers are attempting to build a counter public sphere, enables us to rethink the role of the local in the context of global cultural economies. We cannot forget that the existence of a Mapuche identity on the Internet is fundamentally grounded in the social solidarities and the cultural materialities of local as well as transnational networks, and would be totally misunderstood if divorced from this context.

Despite the fact that Mapuche cyber activism has not been fully effective in preventing the recent imprisonment of the two most important leaders of the Mapuche organization Aukín Wallmapu Ngulam, there is evidence to support the claim that the Mapuche Internet campaigns have at least created a strong awareness of the situation of one million people fighting for basic civil rights. The development of a Mapuche ‘activist imaginary’ through the use of the Internet has become a ‘resource of hope’ (Ginsburg 2000) in the desire for emancipation, ‘bringing about fresh issues about citizenship and the shape of public spheres within the frame and terms of a traditional discourse on polity and civil society’ (Ginsburg 2000). As Clemencia Rodriguez (2001) argues after years of working with community media

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1 In this regard it will be useful to discuss work being done by indigenous scholars in Australia regarding protocols for measuring indigenous audience research. See for example the work of Christine Morris 2003 in the bibliography.
groups in Latin America, alternative media work as environments that facilitate the surfacing of identities and power positions and at the same time they spin “transformative processes that alter people’s sense of self, their subjective positioning, and therefore their access to power”.

Understanding the way Mapuche activists use and appropriate media technologies is one way of comprehending the new political subjectivities arising within the Mapuche movement. Until now, the flows of the Chilean cultural economy in the context of global media transformation have made digital information and communication media an instrument of inequality. However, given the nature of the Mapuche struggle, the right to communicate has taken a key place in the Mapuche agenda. Different media have been understood as alternative forms of expression. This right to communicate is an integral part in the elaboration of a new imaginary. This new Mapuche activist imaginary reinvented through communications media has been constructed as a source of political assets and values. Not only at the base level of internal mobilisation and solidarity, but also in terms of transnational communication and cross-cultural communication., and in this sense, I have shown how significant the Mapuche diaspora around the world is.

For Mapuche activists and intellectuals, media like video and the Internet have begun to be been conceived as active instruments of intervention in Chilean national politics. They have been embraced as an attempt to reconstruct Mapuche discourse and knowledge in order to mediate across discontinuities in time and space and to fight prejudice. The network has made possible the circulation of images not available anywhere else (like the children in Boyeco). The analysis of Mapuche media presented in this thesis has shown that technology (i.e. the Internet) has not replaced traditional forms of communication for the Mapuche; on the contrary, it has opened up another alternative of communication. It has allowed for the consolidation of new political subjectivities and re-defined cultural identities. Most importantly, new media technologies, including digital video and the Internet have strengthened the social solidarities that have refurbished a new ethnic and national consciousness embedded in the notion of Wallmapu. In most cases, it is possible to observe the constructions of an activist imaginary, including some websites that have implicitly called for a debate on the use of violent armed struggle.

In my opinion, the social spaces created by Mapuche organizations working on communications, video activists, and online networks is increasingly becoming a counter public sphere at a small scale. Information, messages, texts, music and images circulate among an intricate network of indigenous and non-indigenous organizations and individuals. Mapuche communities are at the centre of a very particular historical moment, and media activists are part of this moment with the responsibility to help create new Mapuche social formations at the public level. As I have demonstrated through examples, fieldwork and theoretical analysis, this counter public sphere not only offers alternative views on the way the national imaginary is shaped, but more importantly, offers new ways of narrating and
constructing a new indigenous imaginary. It should be regarded as the first step towards a radical change in media participation in Chile.

A technologically mediated Mapuche imaginary, as shown not only by videos such as Jeanette Paillan’s Wallmapu, the newspaper Azkintuwe, or the writings of Jose Ancan, but also in the video component of this research, draws attention to the ways in which Mapuche cultural resistance and desire for a better society are projected onto media technologies. The fieldwork conducted as part of this research confirms that the appropriation of technologies of imagination and information is a self-conscious process of political action. As Mapuche filmmaker Jeanette Paillan expresses at the end of the video submitted with this dissertation: “I do not make films only to show what is going on here… I make them to change the situation of the Mapuche… I prefer to make less videos and see the Mapuche reality change” (Jeannette Paillan, video interview, June 2003).

The road ahead is complex and requires the collective effort of different people. The starting point is to establish a national indigenous media organization that can bring together several smaller organizations working in communications and media. This re-modelling of organizations will be critical in future attempts to continue building indigenous communications in Chile. Understanding the particularities of indigenous media within current trends, programs and developments of community media in Chile is also essential and this thesis has erected the foundations towards that goal. In this regard, more critical and empirical research is needed to map out community media in Chile today, in order to know what the differences and similarities with indigenous media are. This will allow for more efficient policy design for framing indigenous media work in the future. Communications media are not just a commercial phenomena, or simply sites of ideological manipulation. The task of mapping community media in Chile will need to identify grassroots, rural and marginal-urban indigenous organizations, which are capable of self-managing community micro-enterprises involved in communications and media production and distribution. Having mapped the context of community, alternative or citizens media in Chile, the creation or establishment of this national indigenous communication and media organization should quickly follow. This organization would be an independent non-for-profit organization servicing other indigenous organizations and dealing with other social and corporate actors and institutions along the lines of CIDOB in Bolivia or NIMAA in Australia. By stimulating indigenous self-management of the new technologies and the production of contents we will be fostering the process of appropriation and training of the indigenous users in ways that are pre-defined as useful or relevant.

On yet another level, more work needs to be done in building networks of media practice and participation between the state, the media industries, the training bodies, as well as national and international NGO’s, and indigenous organizations working in the field of media and communications. Of enormous importance will be the design of public policies for indigenous communications that
include development, training, programming and intellectual rights. As is stated in Article 29 of the
United Nations 1993 Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People", “Indigenous People are
entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual
property. They have the right to special measures to control, develop and protect their sciences,
technologies and cultural manifestations, including human and other genetic resources, seeds, medicines,
knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs and visual and
performing arts” (UNESCO website).

At the moment there is no specific policy for indigenous communications, considering that a proposal
for an Audiovisual Law is still sitting in Congress and awaiting approval. This long overdue law defines
the Chilean audiovisual space and is an important step forwards. However, the project, in its current
form, does not contain any specific reference to indigenous communications.

In my view, what is lacking in this proposed law is the design of consensual policies and actions that
correspond to concrete means of reduction of the social phenomenon of information exclusion in the
country. This should be done in permanent consultation with indigenous organizations. As it stands now,
the proposed law does not refer whatsoever to the principle of indigenous self-determination, intimately
related to the issue of self-representation where indigenous communities and groups should play an
active role. There is an urgent need to discuss the role of state-licensed electronic media outlets
specifically oriented for indigenous people as well as preference policies that assist indigenous
minorities in acquiring or sharing licensed outlets, access to funding and special training programs. The
projected law should also include regulations about minimum amounts of airtime for indigenous content
and encourage the formulation of new national editorial policies for the creation of special publishing
houses focusing on indigenous issues or managed by indigenous groups. This is particularly important
given the importance of Mapuche literature in recent years and the large amount of Mapuche poets
generating strong and creative work.

Another key area for future research is the digital divide, cultural inclusion and universal access to
information. Research is needed that specifically targets the developing of programs for the creation of
indigenous telecenters with shared access in rural and urban areas. It is indispensable to conceive the
design of medium and long-range public policies intended to facilitate the movement of the native
communities towards involvement in the digitalization process. The digital divide is becoming a serious
challenge with the serious risk of leaving indigenous peoples marginal to the information society. As I
have consistently demonstrated throughout this thesis and the video component, this is one of the most
important reasons why Mapuche websites are crucial in the mapping of an indigenous media sphere.
This research should also be open to considering the forms of appropriation, access, modes of use,
objectives and projections of the current participation of the indigenous groups and individuals in the
information society, while focusing in depth on paradigmatic and representative case studies (Hernandez and Calcagno 2003). The design of such participative research, will guide intra-community exploration to decide in which way the ICT’s will be incorporated. This will occur on the premise that the indigenous communities can decide to use the ICT’s in a different form than other groups of the national societies (Ibid).

The question of language also posits important challenges for future work. Bilingual education must be placed at the centre of any discussion on media development, as official recognition, normalization and dissemination of the writing of the indigenous languages, is a way to open intercultural spaces of media production/reception. In such social spaces, each indigenous community can express itself in its own linguistic code, which will encourage the production of a non-traditional media space for native languages. I have already referred to the role of indigenous languages in previous chapters and the need to look at the role of telenovelas as popular genres where indigenous values, stories and images can circulate within broader – even global – social spaces of media production and practice.

The importance of critical and empirical comparative studies of indigenous communications practices, policies and models in several countries is important as well. This is an important contribution of this research. Being in Australia, I have been able to learn and incorporate the Aboriginal experiences with media. The next logical step is to do a comparative study between Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Latin America. In this way, it will be possible to compare the Chilean case with similar and/or dissimilar cases in order to design policies and programs that reflect the reality of indigenous communications in Chile. Of pivotal importance will be the creation of strategies of regional alliances among indigenous media organizations working towards the revitalization of the ethnic and cultural identity of the indigenous peoples. Considering the current phase or process of ethnic resistance and cultural activism in Latin America, it seems like a key aspect to stimulate the capacity for individuals and communities to appropriate the new technologies. As I have noted in previous chapters, the work of Michael Meadows in Australia (Meadows 1995, 1996, Molnar and Meadows 2001) is a benchmark in this regard. Comparative studies are important because they inform stories of success and failure. They are also important to chart what other governments, non-governmental organizations and indigenous groups are working in different contexts. An area of particular interest for comparative studies has to do with establishing an ethical charter for research, publishing and exhibitions of indigenous works. In the Chilean context for example, it will be of extreme importance to develop an inventory of the key ethical codes, charters and protocols developed by research centres and indigenous organizations, along the lines of the list produced by the Canberra-based Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) for example.
In conclusion, I believe I have been able to accomplish the objectives set out at the beginning of this thesis in terms of opening up discursive fields of theorisation and debate for the design and development of indigenous media in Chile. Secondly, I was able to establish a genealogy of the development of indigenous media in Chile and critically analyse how Indigenous groups have been marginalised by an inappropriate access to media participation and control. Thirdly, I was able to locate and analyse the work of Mapuche media production organizations and/or individuals and identify their strategies for appropriation and use of audiovisual and digital media. I have offered a comprehensive critical analysis of the role of electronic media and communications in the indigenous agendas, by proposing a cultural constructivist approach that looks at technology and human agency within a socio-technical ensemble of relationships that forms the social space where media is produced and debated. I was also able to incorporate indigenous scholarship into this analysis and have concluded by proposing lines for future research and indigenous communications program development. In the end, I cannot finish without saying that this research and its extension in the form of a documentary video production have been a most rewarding experience.
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