- Marici Weu, Marici Weu, Marici Weu -

We will win ten times over!

The Mapuce in Neuquén:

Claiming spaces of resistance through complex and diverse struggles for indigenous citizenship rights

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Master Thesis: Mphil in Development Studies – Specializing in Geography

NTNU Trondheim, May 2011

Dedicatoria

Esta tesina se la dedico al pueblo Mapuce, específicamente a los integrantes de *Lof Newen Mapu* y *Lof Puel Pvjv* en Newken, Puel Mapu. La tarea de realizar la tesina no sería posible sin su participación, apoyo y amabilidad. Les agradezco por compartir sus historias, conocimientos y pensamientos. Estoy siempre con admiración por su lucha.

¡Que sigan luchando por sus derechos y que gane la justicia!

Caqeltu piafiñ tañi pu lamgen, wenxugey zomogey

¡Marici weu!

"Ayer salvajes hoy nos dicen terroristas

siempre justificando su violencia con mentiras

medios masivos de comunicación

mercenarios de la información

mentirán a todo el que los escuche

hablaran de la problemática Mapuce

Pero el problema no somos nosotros no!

EL PROBLEMA ES EL ESTADO Y SU RACISMO

Grita el volcán su mensaje en lave ardiente

Parar la explotación es el mandato urgente

Pu Mapuce no pueden estar ausentes

Escucha su llamado y solevanta nuestra gente"

- We Wl -

Puel Kona

Newken, Puel Mapu

(Translation to English: Appendix 2)

Abstract

The broader context of this study constitutes the continuous pressure and strain the dominant society often put on the culture, livelihood and self-determination of indigenous peoples, but also on the increased international recognition and formalisation of indigenous rights emerging the last few decades. The Mapuce reality is no exception. This thesis focuses on the Mapuce right-claimers as possible change makers in a context of many constraints through exploring different processes of claiming spaces of resistance in a quest for realising indigenous citizenship rights. More specifically, this thesis aims to explore the challenges, strategies of resistance and possibilities for change in the course of a diverse and complex struggle for rights.

The research is based on a two and a half month qualitative fieldwork in Neuquén, Argentina from June to August 2010. During this period, I established a close relationship with many of the research participants conducting in-depth interviews, innumerable informal conversations and participant observation. Based on the information acquired, I found that one of the most profound challenges facing the Mapuce is the discriminative social structure on which the Argentine state has been established. A lack of will prevents real implementation of the rights concerning indigenous peoples recognised in federal and provincial constitutions. The study furthermore shows that despite of these obstacles, the Mapuce right-claimers have found ways to wiggle around them. In the absence of effective participation in invited spaces, they practise a variety of strategies in order to claim their own spaces of resistance. Recuperation of land and large demonstration constitute parts of this political engagement, but more long-term strategies such as organisation, collaboration and capacity building is the crucial foundation on which their struggle depends. By combining individual and generational knowledgeabilities, in addition to drawing on those of others, I suggest that the Mapuce position themselves better in terms of their possibilities for acquiring change.

Key words: Mapuce, Argentina, indigenous peoples, rights, knowledgeabilities, spaces of resistance, discourse, representation.

Acknowledgements

Caqeltu piafiñ tañi pu lamgen, wenxugey zomogey

Les agradezco a mis hermanos, hombres y mujeres existentes

My brothers, sisters I thank you

The journey towards finishing this thesis has been a process characterised by both joy and resignation. On one hand, I have faced difficult decisions, doubt and struggled to understand and to be understood, but along the way I have also experienced beautiful encounters and important epiphanies. Step by step, the thesis came into being, through hours and hours of putting the pieces together. However, one thing is certain: The goal, and the journey to reach it would not have been the same if it had not been for all the support received from others.

There are many who deserve my gratitude, but I would like to begin with honouring the members of Lof Newen Mapu and Puel Pvjv for the warmth and support they provided for me during the fieldwork in Neuquén. Without the collaboration and willingness to share thoughts and experiences concerning both joyful and difficult aspects of the reality in which they live, this thesis would be incomplete. I am grateful for being welcomed as a sister and forever thankful for the time, conversations and experiences that we shared. Each and every one of you will therefore always have a special place in my heart.

Other important supportive actors have been the employees at the ODHPI, especially as they made a great effort in terms of explaining the complex place of indigenous peoples´ rights in the Argentine context. I would also like to thank the professors at Universidad de Comahue for their input, advice and language support, and not to mention Ragnhild Lund, my supervisor, for interesting discussions, constructive inputs, and not least for encouraging me to follow through my ideas. Her academic considerations have helped me to grasp the broader context and to understand the value added to my study.

Though in a more indirect way, family, friends and colleagues have constituted invaluable support in the process. Sometimes it is just helpful to speak your heart and mind empty of doubt and concern, and refill it with positive energy.

I would like to express a final thanks to *Fritt Ord* and *NTNU`s Globalisation Program*, as I am very grateful for having received grants for my work with this thesis. It has truly made my life as a master student much easier.

Eva Maria B. Fjellheim, April 2011.

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Mini dictionary: Mapuzugun – English

Ce	People / Persons
Gulu Mapu	Land in the west (Chile)
Kona	Activist / warrior
Kvme Felem	Well-being
Lof	Family / Community
Lonko	Head (political leader)
Mapu	Land / Territory
Mapuce	People of the land
Mapuzugun	Language of the land (Mapuce language)
Marici Weu	We will win ten times over
Newen	Life and forces of the nature
Newen Mapu	The forces of the land (Mapuce community)
Ñojkiñ	Horn (instrument)
Pewen	Fruit growing in the Andes
Pifvjka	Flute
Puel Mapu	Land in the east (Argentina)
Puel Pvjv	The spirit of the east (Mapuce community)
Ruka	House (political and cultural centre)
Toki	War leader
Waj Mapu	Mapuce territory / universe
Werken	Messenger
We Wl	Song without title
Wigka	New Inka (white/western)
Wiñoy Xipantv	Mapuce new-year

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CPI	Consejo Plurinacional Indígena
CCI	Consejo de Coordinación Indígena
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CMN	Confederación Mapuce de Neuquén
EMRIP	The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INAI	Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
LTRs	Lands, Territories and Resources.
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ODHPI	Observatorio Derechos Humanso de Pueblos Indígenas
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNPFII	The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
WGIP	Working Group for Indigenous Populations

Introduction

On the 20th of May 2010, thousands of colourful, proud and determined participants of all ages gather in the streets of Buenos Aires to demonstrate for the realisation of their rights. They carry traditional costumes, instruments and banners, dance and shout slogans, only interrupted by sequences of battle cries. 200 years after the new European/Creole settlers institutionalised white and monocultural dominance through the establishment of the Argentine state, more than thirty indigenous peoples representing the multicultural reality of the country raise their voices and strike back. To them, the official bicentennial celebration marking 200 years of independence, is a fraud. The war has ended, but struggles for justice continue as indigenous peoples still experience severe and multiple rights deprivation. The 20th of May was therefore a unique opportunity for these actors to add new meaning to the bicentennial marking through the motto of the Indigenous March: `*Walking for the truth – towards a multicultural state*`.

On one hand, the description above draws a picture of a empowered set of actors who are tired of the state's ignorance of the indigenous reality and therefore ready to fight for increased multicultural inclusion and recognition. On the other hand, the image of a crowd of discontented indigenous activists protesting against suppression on the street is the ultimate cliché. Although clichés often represent the reality of indigenous peoples, rupture, particularity and exception also characterise their situation. Through exploring the contemporary spectrum of politics in China, Hsing and Lee (2010) suggest that there is more to the socio-political sphere than resistance carried out through social obedience and massive uprisings. In today`s advanced world of information technology, new arenas on which material and social interests can be negotiated and shared across localities have emerged. As an example, media, film, art etc. have become powerful tools, which actors can utilise in order to contest or reconstruct dominating discourses and representations of themselves.

This thesis aims to explore the dynamics and diversity of the indigenous rights struggle, exemplified through the Mapuce reality in Neuquén. Large demonstrations, though a cliché, is a part of their strategic mobilisation, but it is far from the whole picture. They also engage in long-term collaboration, capacitate through education and take advantage of alternative

creative spaces to demonstrate and communicate political claims. This thesis will thus look beyond the stereotypes and discover the diverse and creative means of the struggle.

The context of the study

The research topic concerns the many challenges facing indigenous peoples today, but also the way in which they mobilise and strategise for entitled rights and recognition. Indigenous peoples are often situated in unique development contexts within which their distinctive identities and livelihoods are being challenged, among other things, by the forces of colonisation, modernisation and globalisation (Blaser, Feit, & McRae 2004). In Argentina, neo-liberal politics have prolonged the colonial expansion, and are one of the more recent globalisation processes leading to exploitation, displacement and marginalisation of the people who originally lived of and managed the resources within these territories (Ray 2007).

With that being said, the story of colonisation, marginalisation and suppression depicts only one side of the indigenous reality. In the last decades of the 20th century, many organisations concerning the promotion of indigenous rights operating on the local, regional as well as on the international arena, have emerged. This has lead to an international collaborative network of indigenous politics that negotiate and promote alternative views on environmental issues, development trajectories and the relationship between people and their states (Wæhle 2002). In 1982, the Working Group of Indigenous Populations (WGIP) was established with the objective of developing an international legal framework aiming to articulate the rights of indigenous peoples (Briones & Lanata 2002; Minde 2007). Today there are three specific UN bodies with mandates concerning the rights of indigenous peoples: The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), and The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples (UN 2006).

As a consequence of the rising interest in indigenous affairs, two main international legal frameworks specifically concerning indigenous rights have emerged. In 1989, the International Labour Organisation adopted Convention No. 169, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO 169), and in 2007 the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). These processes have been historical, especially since their adoption has expanded the understanding of human rights to include collective entitlements. In this context, indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination regarding

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own economic, socio-cultural and political development, and the state is to be held accountable for securing that these rights are being realised (ILO 1989; UNDRIP 2007). 1994 initiated the International Decade of the World`s Indigenous Peoples, and in the following years indigenous issues have in general grown in political importance.

The new rise of the indigenous rights movement has also reached the Mapuce in Argentina. In 2000, the National Congress ratified ILO 169, for the first time formally recognising indigenous citizenship rights in the country. Both federal and provincial constitutions have undergone significant reforms in terms of including indigenous peoples´ rights. However, if these ideals had been implemented in practice there would be no point in writing this thesis. As implied initially, the experienced gap between policy and realisation is still of great concern of the Mapuce people who still face problems of poverty, cultural suppression and a general deprivation of their rights. As Blaser, Feit and McRae (2004:1) comment on the recent situation for many indigenous peoples around the world today: `*Much has changed. But much has not changed*`.

It is within this context of rights deprivation and the rise of the indigenous movement that my objectives of research are located. In my thesis I do not solely wish to focus on the suppressing effects dominant structures have had, and still have on the lives of indigenous peoples. In the midst of suppression and constraints, a counter-narrative is being built. People are not only victims; they also have the ability to be active agents of change. The broader objective of this study is thus to investigate the possibilities of agency and explore how people negotiate and claim the entitled right to govern their own futures.

Choosing a topic for a thesis is not an easy task. For me it has been a combination of academic and personal interests. As a student of development studies I wanted to explore the relationship between development and rights. As a student with a Sami background it has been important for me to include an indigenous perspective. Bringing my personal experiences and knowledge into this research project has been a great strength, especially during the actual fieldwork where I was welcomed as a sister by my research participants.

Objectives

- To explore the relationship between policy and indigenous peoples´ rights, and identify the main challenges for realising rights.

- Find out how different age groups strategise and claim spaces of resistance in various ways.

- Reflect on the possibilities for change as a consequence of the rights struggle.

Research questions

Challenges: *What are the main challenges related to the realisation of indigenous citizenship rights in Neuquén?*

- What causes a gap between policy and realisation?

Strategies: *How do the Mapuce in Neuquén strategise in order to realise rights?*

- What varieties and combinations of strategies are practised in the course of claiming spaces of resistance?

- In what way are different individuals and age groups engaging in the rights struggle?

Change: *To what extent does the rights struggle lead to desired change?*

I would like to emphasise that this study aims to reflect the political realities of the Mapuce in Neuquén who organise through the *Confederación Mapuce de Neuquén*[1] (CMN)*,* without claiming that it is the only representation of Mapuce politics. I also acknowledge internal differences and disputes among the research participants, but to emphasise all would be impossible. This thesis therefore emphasises collective mobilisation for a common cause.

I would also like to stress that though my fieldwork and research participants were located in the Neuquén Capital, this thesis concerns issues related to the whole province of Neuquén.

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[1] The Mapuce Confederation of Neuquén.

Conceptual clarifications: Indigenous peoples and rights

One of the most central terms in my thesis is the concept of *indigenous peoples* (IPs). There is no universal agreement on a single definition, much due to the difficulty of balancing the unity and heterogeneity encompassing all the different characteristics which the peoples of concern possess. However, there are several widely accepted definitions attempting to cover the great variety characterising the world's IPs (Henriksen 2008). Article 1(b) in ILO 169 (1989) states that IPs are:

> *"Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions".*

Henriksen (2008) furthermore points out that self-identification and acceptance as such by the group of concern is important, but in order to be able to claim *indigenous citizenship rights* it is also necessary that the respective states recognises them formally as such. This clarifies the importance of defining IPs, as the recognition of this status comes with special legal entitlements which many states unfortunately often refuse to bestow on their indigenous citizens.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: *The Mapuce in Neuquén / Argentina*, has the intention of briefly presenting the geographical, historical and socio-cultural geographies of the Mapuce in Neuquén in order to introduce important background information to the reader.

Chapter 2: *Methodology and the research process*, addresses the circumstances in which my fieldwork took place, in addition to reflecting on the research process as a whole. Among other things, reflections on my role as a researcher with a Sami background will be addressed more thoroughly.

Chapter 3: *Theoretical base and analytical approach*, concerns relevant theories and concepts related to the broader frameworks within which my topic can be placed, but also defines key concepts and presents my analytical approach.

The 25-26th of October 2010, the annual Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples Conference of 2010 was held in Tromsø, Norway. The conference title `*Indigenous Participation in Policy-making: Ideals, Realities and Possibilities*` reflected many of the aspects of this thesis, and thus inspired the way in which I have chosen to structure chapter 4 - 7.

Chapter 4: *Indigenous Peoples´ rights*, concerns the *Ideals*, and introduces the reader to the main international legal frameworks concerning IPs` rights, the way in which they are incorporated in Argentine constitutions, and finally the way in which these rights are understood and prioritised by the Mapuce in Neuquén.

In contrast to the ideals, the analytical chapters address the *Reality* in which the Mapuce live and claim spaces of resistance. Chapter 5: *Challenges in the Mapuce struggle for rights*, concerns the main challenges related to the implementation of Indigenous Rights in Neuquén, while chapter 6: *Claiming spaces of resistance: Strategies for change*, continues to address the various ways in which the Mapuce strategise in order to fight these challenges.

In the last part of the analysis, the *possibilities* will be explored. It presents three more specific examples to illustrate how the different challenges and strategies coincide, but also to demonstrate the diversity and complexity of the Mapuce struggle for rights. *The Indigenous March* (7.1), concerns one of the most important events taking place in the history of indigenous activism in Argentina, symbolically taking place in the context of the bicentennial year of 2010. *Communication with identity: The strategy of the young activist* (7.2), illustrates how the younger generation contribute to the rights struggle through engaging in struggles over discourse and representation within medias of communication. *Kurrumil: A story of recuperation, repression and struggles over truth* (7.3), focuses on struggles over lands, but also reflects on many central issues addressed throughout the whole thesis.

The last chapter: *The Reality of the Mapuce Rights Struggle*, aims to give a summary of the main issues addressed throughout this thesis in a way that presents final conclusions to the main questions asked in this introduction, the overall key words being: Challenges, strategies and possibilities for change.

1. The Mapuce in Neuquén / Argentina

The purpose of this chapter is to give a geographical, socio-cultural and historical overview of the research field. As a way of introducing the reader to the forthcoming analysis, I will briefly present Mapuce culture and central historical events connected to the creation and development of the Argentine state, as it is crucial for understanding the political reality and rights context within which their contemporary struggles are fought.

Who and where are the Mapuce?

The Mapuce are one out of approximately thirty IPs in Argentina, and is a people transgressing the border to neighbouring Chile in the west. On the Argentine side of the Andean mountain range, the ancestral territory of the Mapuce constitutes the provinces of Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut, La Pampa and Buenos Aires. Most of the Mapuce in Argentina live in the province of Neuquén, north in perhaps the more known land area Patagonia. By the Mapuce, this territory is termed *Puel Mapu*, the land in east, while Mapuce territory in Chile goes under the name *Gulu Mapu*, the land in west. Mapuce territory as a whole is termed *Waj Mapu*. The total Mapuce population is difficult to determine precisely due to lack of adequate rendition of censuses, but it is estimated that they are about 1,5 – 2 million all together, where about 250 000 – 300 000 live in Argentina and 70 000 - 100 000 in the province of Neuquén (CMN 2010; Ray 2007).

As *mapu* means land and *ce* means people in the Mapuce language Mapuzugun, the Mapuce consider themselves to be `*the people of the land*`. Many have lost their mother tongue due to processes of assimilation politics, and consequently Spanish has become the main language for the majority. However, Mapuzugun is in a revitalisation process as educational opportunities have improved, and as young people increasingly take interest in learning and using their ancestral tongue (Ray 2007).

The Mapuce were traditionally hunters and gatherers, and later became small-scale farmers occupied with gardening and extensive animal husbandry. However, due to population growth, eviction from, or reduced access to land caused by long processes of colonisation, migration to cities has been the only opportunity for many. Due to the loss of the foundation on which their rural livelihoods depended, many have sought education and work in the cities. Today it is estimated that approximately 100 000 Mapuce live in urban areas (Ray 2007).
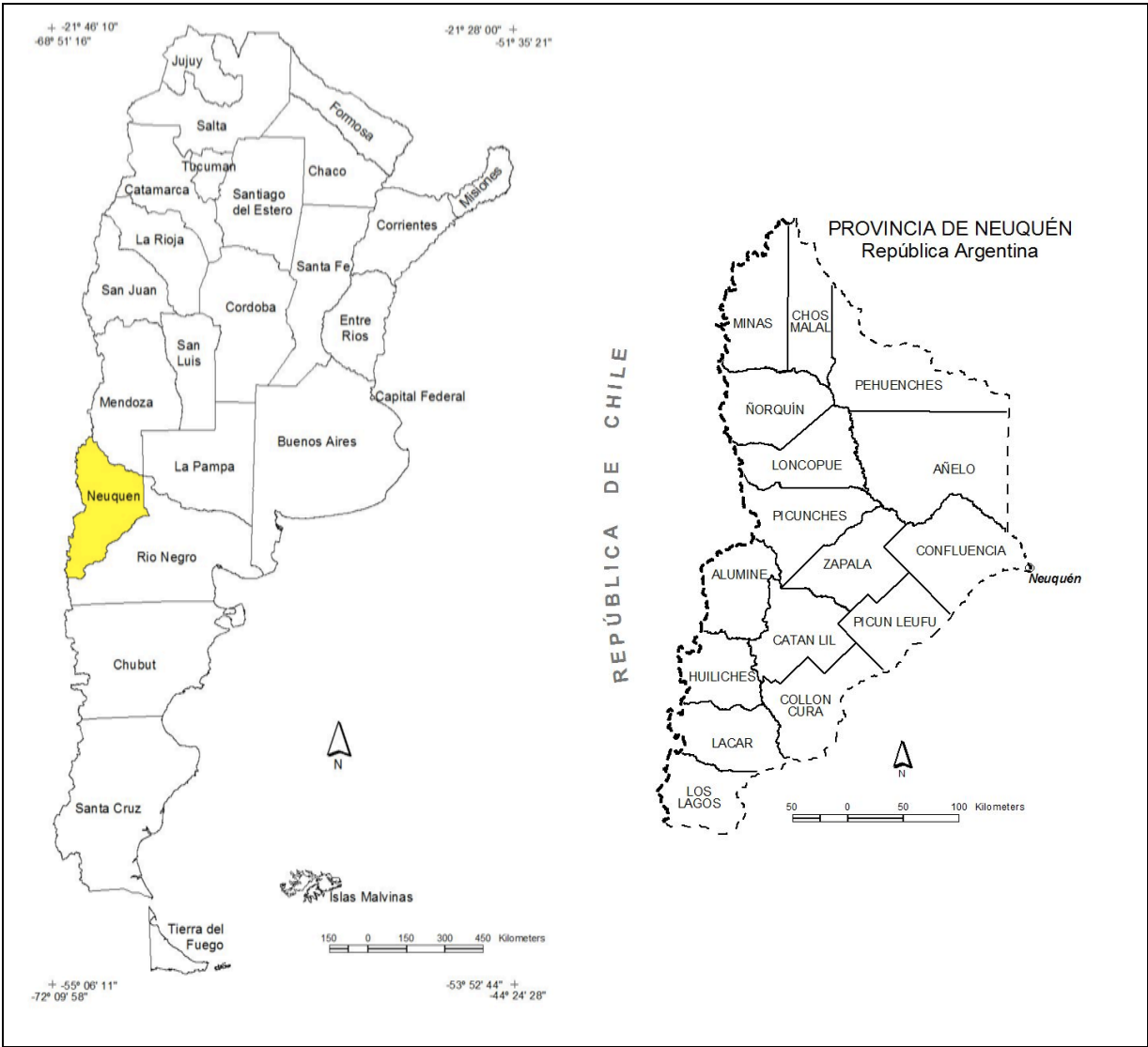
Figure 1. Maps of Argentina and the province of Neuquén. Neuquén Capital is located in the most eastern part of Confluencia (source: Universidad de Comahue, Neuquén)

Religion and worldview

The Mapuce have a distinct religion, worldview and philosophy of life, even though missionary and cultural imperialism has led to processes of assimilation in various degrees and forms. In Neuquén, the Mapuce research participants of my study feel strongly about their spiritual heritage, and therefore also about conserving, practicing and transmitting this knowledge to following generations.

The Mapuce have a strong connection to the forces of the nature. They believe that humans and all living elements are embedded in a whole which needs to be kept in equilibrium. This whole is referred to as *Waj Mapu*, a concept that is difficult to translate, but my research participants informed me that it corresponds with an extended understanding of *territory*, or better *univer*se. As such, its signification is not reduced to concern only material aspects such as land. It also includes a spiritual dimension and defines the very identity of the Mapuce. Therefore, it is said that territory can not be purchased or transferred from one owner to another. Each element constituting a part of Waj Mapu has its own force and assigned role. Both diversity and unity is therefore highly respected, as all individuals have specific roles to fulfil in order to achieve stability among people, and between people and nature. This diversity is reflected in duality, respecting and acknowledging that men/women and youth/elders etc. are different, but equally important. However, it is also reflected in individuality, as it is thought that each person has been given specific abilities (philosophical, political, spiritual etc.) by *newen*, the forces and life of nature. These abilities that different individuals possess can be developed and become crucial in the course of contributing to a well functioning Mapuce society. This view on the relationship between individuality and community is based on a holistic thought concerned with the importance of all particularities. However, all my research participants emphasised that *we* is always more important than *I*.

Kvme Felem is another central Mapuce term that literally translates into *well-being*. A more profound explanation of the concept suggests that it is an alternative development strategy and system of life, a system that differs substantially from that of the dominant structures of the Argentine (and Chilean) state. According to the research participants this implies living in accordance with the norms and values which guide human relations with the other elements of nature. That is to say, *Kvme Felem* means to act in a way that maintains harmony between people and *newen*. As it is a way of conceptualising and promoting Mapuce identity, culture and development it is part of a larger political project that aim to recuperate the right to self-

determination, a right that has been deprived from them since the first Europeans entered their lands (CMN 2010).

500 years of dominance and resistance

In addition to introducing the Mapuce culture, religion and worldview, I find it crucial to account for some central historical events related to the Argentine nation-building process in order to better understand the context of the Mapuce rights struggle of today. 500 years have passed since the first Spanish colonisers entered the territory today constituting Argentina, with the first Europeans entering Patagonia in 1520 (Ray 2007). Since then, the interaction between the Spanish/Creole and the indigenous peoples of Argentina has been economic, diplomatic and belligerent (Briones & Lanata 2002). In 1810, almost 300 years later, Argentina declared its independence.

The beginning of Argentina as a nation was especially manifested by the first elected government in 1810 which also marked the beginning of a period of further invasions and warfare against the pre-existing peoples who were present prior to colonisation. In order to expand and grow economically, it was necessary to conquer and control vast territories and the peoples that had not yet been successfully overthrown and put under national control. The Mapuce were known for their strength in warfare and resisted many attempts of invasion, but towards the end of the 19th century they suffered from increased military pressure. From 1878 −1884, General Julio A. Roca led what was later known to be the most brutal military campaign in the history of the Argentine nation-building process, namely the so-called *Conquista del Desierto*[2]. The campaign got this name because the area of concern was perceived by the invaders to be an unproductive desert filled with uncivilised barbarians, a notion legitimising military invasion and `white` domination and control (Briones & Lanata 2002; Ray 2007). For the Mapuce, this campaign has especially become a symbol of lost autonomy and independence, as the bloodiest battles took place in the province of Neuquén (Ray 2007). The objective of General Roca and his army was to defeat Mapuce territory and exterminate their culture once and for all (Briones & Lanata 2002).

Since the brutal conquest led by General Roca, Mapuce territory has faced new invasions, abuse and general economic, socio-cultural and political rights violations in different forms. Even though killings declined, there were other ways in which the new masters of the land

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[2] The conquest of the desert.

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could pressure its prior inhabitants to *the edge of extinction,* as Briones and Lanata (2002:6) put it. After the conquest, immigrants from Europe were encouraged to populate and dominate the regions and some of them became powerful landowners (Briones & Lanata 2002; Ray 2007). The expropriation of land was supported by a legislation declaring all lands, not directly occupied by someone, fiscal or passed on to private holders. Many Mapuce who had managed to escape the bloody war, returned only to find their ancestral lands occupied by, and forever lost to soldiers, pioneers, gringos, priests, traders, speculators or other newly arrived immigrants (Ray 2007). The loss of land did not only put pressure on livelihoods. The Mapuce culture and identity, which is closely attached to the territory, was also at stake.

Economic, social and cultural suppression continued throughout the 20th century. The Mapuce were literally pushed to the margins. They were allocated to reserves or to areas with poor land quality, and suffered from social exclusion, as their ´race` was considered inferior. Severe assimilation politics were therefore promoted and legitimised through the aspiration of civilising the uncivilised and saving unsaved souls. This implied an active mission of Catholicism and enforcement of European/Creole culture and Spanish language (Briones & Lanata 2002; Ray 2007).

Some optimism concerning IPs` rights followed the establishment of the government of Juán Domingo Perón in 1946 (-1955), as he was termed by many as *the president of the dispossessed.* For the IPs of the country, this meant that they for the first time could participate in national elections. Despite a small step forward through increased citizenship inclusion, the reality was more filled with promises and hope than with direct improvements. However, the 1970s and 1980s was to become the worst period of human rights violations in modern times. Not only for the country's IPs, but the whole Argentine population suffered from a severe deprivation of rights during seven years of persecution, abduction and torture rendering execution of any citizen that opposed the dictatorship that initiated with a military coup in 1976 (Ray 2007). This period also marked an important constrain on the work of all social movements, the general freedom of speech and for radical politics to flourish.

The 1990s was to become a new decade of imperialism, as neo-liberal politics put further pressure on Mapuce land. In the rural areas of the Neuquén province this implied increased privatisation and commercialisation of land through industrial development (mainly oil and mineral extraction/production) and tourism, causing new tensions between indigenous, state and private actors. This process escalated after the financial crisis in 2001, due to a state

strategy of selling `state` land in order to obtain revenue for debt repayment. Few foreign commercial actors thus now own vast areas of land and dominate the region in both economic and political terms (Ray 2007).

Political organisation

Despite centuries of repression and severe loss of territory, the Mapuce have been able to maintain their identity, dignity and pride. However, it was not until the 1970s that they began to join forces through a strengthened and systematic political project. Since 1970, the Mapuce in the province of Neuquén have been organised through the *Confederación Mapuce de Neuquén* (CMN). The Confederation was established with the objective of strengthening political participation and representation of the Mapuce in both state and civil society. Since the 1990s, the political authorities from the different *lofs* began to meet for parliament and elections. *Lof* is a term referring to the traditional political, philosophical and cultural organisation of a community of families with specific territorial affiliation. Mapuce lofs were originally rural, but due to colonisation, social change and subsequent migration to urban areas, several lofs have been reconstructed by Mapuce migrants in different cities of Neuquén today. In total, there are 57 lofs in Neuquén, each geographically and organisationally distributed between five zones (CMN 2010).

I conducted my fieldwork in the capital city of Neuquén, which is the largest city of the Neuquén province with just over 200 000 inhabitants (Guiafe *year unknown*). The lofs *Newen Mapu*[3] and *Puel Pvjv*[4] were established in Neuquén Capital by immigrants from the countryside of the Neuquén Province in the 1970/80s. More specifically the *Organización Mapuce Newen Mapu*[5] was established as a coalition between the two the 1st of May in 1983. My fieldwork is based on the information given by representatives from this organisation, but their general politics are carried out through, and reflect, the principles and objectives of the Confederation.

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[3] The forces of the land.
[4] The spirit of the east.
[5] The Organisation of the Mapuce of Newen Mapu.

2. Methodology and the research process

This chapter addresses the methodological aspects of the thesis, and is largely based on experiences from my fieldwork in Argentina and the subsequent research process. Reflecting on different aspects of the research process is an important part of presenting an academic thesis, because it explains the circumstances within which the knowledge has been constructed. The importance of methodological reflexivity as an essential part of knowledge production is especially affiliated with post-modern theories that gained influence in the 1980s/90s. Since then, most social scientists view research more or less as a social process. Knowledge production has therefore become to be understood as partial, situated and power laden processes, consequently constructing constantly negotiable truths (Panelli 2004).

The analysis is based on fieldwork conducted in Neuquén, Argentina from the 2nd of June to the 17th of August in 2010. During this period I performed interviews, observations, and collected and analysed various secondary data. In this chapter I will especially reflect on the challenges and possibilities I encountered during the actual fieldwork, but also account for aspects of the subsequent research process.

Qualitative methodological approach

The first decision the researcher has to make is often to choose between quantitative and qualitative approaches. While the former is more suitable for mapping general tendencies within a more extended area of research, the latter is concerned with interpreting human behaviour and experiences within a smaller research unit. The issue of concern is not whether one is better or more valid than the other, but rather to acknowledge that different methodological approaches and techniques provide the researcher with different findings and subsequent results (Kitchin & Tate 2000; Winchester & Rof 2010).

The choice of methodology for my own data construction was self-evident due to my general interests, project objectives, research questions, and the fact that all my previous methodology courses have been exclusively within qualitative approaches. Because my topic is related to indigenous peoples and agency, choosing qualitative methods and techniques was natural, as they are considered to be the approaches best suited to illuminate human environments, relations and lived experiences. Using the most common qualitative techniques of

interviewing and participant observation was thus favourable means through which I could acquire a better understanding of people's thoughts and motivations behind their experiences, choices and actions.

Research participants: Contact, ´selection` and significance

The participants of the study have been the most important sources of information during the data collection. It is through their participation and willingness to share experiences and opinions that I have been able to acquire a better understanding of my research objectives. I have chosen to use the term *participants* rather than *informants* because a central part of my fieldwork has been about exchanging knowledge and experiences. It has not only been about a one-way flow of information, an approach I consider to be a part of the responsibility of being a representative from another indigenous population.

As with choosing methodology, the selection of participants is related to the research topic, objectives and questions. According to Cook and Crang (2007), the access to informants is furthermore often initiated through personal networks and a membership of a specific social group or network, possibly making `distant` people and places less remote. This was very true in relation to my own process of initiating contact. The arising presence of indigenous collaborative networks the last decades has enabled increased possibilities for exchange of indigenous experiences and affiliation across international boarders. It was through such a personal network that I was able to initiate contact with the Mapuce community.

During my fieldwork there has been many helpful collaborative partners. In addition to interviews with various members of the lofs *Newen Mapu* and Puel *Pvjv*, I have also sought advice and other sources of information from *Universidad de Comahue* and lawyers specialising in IPs´ rights. However, there is one person that I would like to emphasise as especially important, even though all of the participants played significant roles. Xalkan was my first contact from the Mapuce community, and played a crucial role in terms of introducing me to the community and to possible research participants. She was furthermore a Mapuce student of geography and therefore a natural link to the university and an important partner for academic discussion, as she knew both the context of her culture and my field of study. She was currently living in another town, but came to Neuquén four times during my stay, each time staying for about four to five days.

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¿Qué? Communication, language and translation

Communication is a crucial part of doing qualitative research, especially during the actual fieldwork. In this sense, understanding the spoken words of the research participants is essential in order to be able to interpret and convey their feelings, experiences and opinions. Working within cross-cultural/lingual research contexts where the spoken language is different from that of the first tongue, will most likely require some extra effort or assistance (Crang & Cook 2007; Smith 2010). However, Crang and Cook (2007) stress that challenges related to language and communication in the field are more or less likely to occur regardless of whether you undertake research in your first, second and/or other languages, or if you choose to work with or without an interpreter. The main point is that the choices you make will somehow influence the course of the research, and regardless of thorough preparation you will most likely have to do some language learning in the field.

The Mapuce have their own language called Mapuzugun, but because of impacts of colonisation and the subsequent forced migration to urban areas, Spanish has to a large extent become the dominant language (Ray 2007). Even though all of my research participants spoke Spanish as their first language, they had a colloquial language which integrated many concepts and single words in Mapuzugun. To me, this meant that in addition to work with Spanish as my third language, I also had to relate to a fourth.

Working in a cross-linguistic field: Challenges and possibilities

As my Spanish skills were basic on arrival, I decided to do three weeks of private classes in Buenos Aires before moving further to Neuquén. In this way I could freshen up previous knowledge, advance to a higher level and not least start practicing the language that I had not been speaking for a while. In order to make the lessons as relevant for the subsequent interviews as possible, I arranged with my teachers to work with topic-related texts and vocabulary. At this point I had not yet decided whether I would work with an interpreter or not, but regardless I was determined to focus more on how I could make the most out of my abilities, rather than worry about my limitations. This strong motivation encouraged a determined will to improve and to learn more.

When arriving Neuquén I was initially searching for someone to assist me during interviews. I had no problem with socialising and communicating in everyday activities, but I worried that my language skills would be insufficient in a focused research setting. However, as time

passed, I became more and more confident during conversations and started doing the interviews on my own. I also started reflecting on the practical challenges of bringing a translator into many of the circumstances within which my observations and conversations took place. Some of my interviews were difficult to plan and took place in private homes. Participation in meetings, ceremonies and social events also provided me with valuable information. `Dragging` an interpreter or assistant along in many of these settings would have been unnatural and might also have made my research participants less willing to share sensitive information. At some point I just gave up looking for help and decided it would be best to draw on my own resources as best as I could.

Choosing to work without an interpreter or language assistant provided me with both challenges and possibilities. During my stay there were times when I felt frustrated, discouraged and clueless when language restricted me from expressing myself fully or from understanding everything. In interview situations I had to keep the conversations `simpler` and be extremely concentrated in order to avoid misunderstandings. Being dependent on audio recordings left me with subsequent time consuming transcribes. To sum up: It has been hard work!

From another perspective, it may be equally interesting to reflect on the opportunities that can be related to my independent research work. Smith (2010) emphasises that even though the researcher does not speak a foreign language fluently, the effort made to communicate in the first language of the participants can be perceived as showing a strong interest in their culture. Despite the challenges I encountered, my efforts to make use of, and to develop independent language skills helped me establish valuable relationships with the research participants. I got a lot of respect for learning and using their language, and that boosted my confidence and made me want to become even better. In addition to communicating in Spanish, I also needed to learn and adopt the most important concepts in Mapuzugun to my vocabulary. This effort was also highly appreciated and for this I was also awarded credit and praise.

Qualitative techniques

There are several ways of conducting a qualitative research, but there are especially three main techniques that have been important during my own fieldwork. These can roughly be placed within the techniques of *interviewing*, performing *observation* and analysing various *secondary data.* It should be mentioned that none of these techniques could be treated as pure

and separate, because there are various ways of performing each of them, and they may end up blurring into each other in practice (Crang & Cook 2007). It is furthermore impossible to follow a perfect methodological recipe, due to the spontaneous and unpredictable nature of qualitative research. In the following I therefore briefly present some literature on different methods and techniques, but most importantly account for how my own data collection was performed.

Interviewing

Interviewing relevant informants is considered to be the most commonly used qualitative technique, because it provides the researcher with important first hand information. In contrast to a questioner, interviews allow a more thorough examination of experiences, feelings, aspirations and/or opinions. Although this technique often is considered as a more informal way of approaching informants than a survey or a questioner, thorough preparation is still important (Kitchin & Tate 2000). Although an interview can be simply defined as `*a face- to- face verbal interchange in which one person…attempts to elicit information…from another person*` (Maccoby and Maccoby in Dunn 2005:79)*,* there are various ways of structuring and performing an interview.

As the definition describes, an interview is usually carried out as an interchange between the researcher and one informant, but group discussions has lately become a popular and alternative way of replacing or complementing standard one-to-one interviews. A selection of participants with similar characteristics is discussing a defined topic under the guidance of a moderator whose task is to direct the conversation. On one hand, this technique has the ability to create a safer environment in which the feelings and experiences of the participants can be shared, and furthermore constitutes a different perspective to one-to-one interviews covering the same topic. On the other hand, some participants can be afraid or too shy to share their opinions in such environments, due to shyness or internal social power relations. It is therefore important to carefully consider the composition of the group beforehand, making sure that the participants are more or less `*on the same page*` (Kitchin & Tate 2000).

Interviewing in practice: Structure and rupture
Interviewing research participants has been an important and central technique that has provided me with valuable information. Talking with people about their engagement in, and perceptions of, their political reality was crucial in order to be able to illuminate the research objectives and questions. During the fieldwork I therefore performed in depth, semi-

structured interviews with nine key informants, representing different age groups and roles within the community or supportive institutions. In addition, I performed several unstructured/informal conversations with members of the community (including key informants) and one topic-oriented group interview with three young Mapuce working with media and communication.

In depth interviews

Different interview structures have both their strengths and weaknesses, but based on previous experiences, I had planned to use a *semi-structured* approach during in-depth interviews. I considered it as comforting to use a semi- structured interview guide with some articulated questions related to a specific topic I wanted to cover during the conversation. Due to my limited Spanish skills it was especially reassuring to have some sort of script. I usually worked out the questions on my own, but I was also lucky enough to get in touch with a professor of geography at the local university who kindly offered to read through and comment on my formulations. This was helpful in the sense that he could correct the major errors and suggest locally used translations. As an additional tool to the interview guide, I also kept a homemade dictionary alongside where I kept translations of relevant vocabulary that I collected as I read relevant literature.

I considered it important to appear prepared to show respect, especially as many of my participants were busy people. An important strength of the semi-structured approach is that it can guide the researcher in the desired direction without neglecting the possibility of being flexible. Although this was my point of departure, I still found it challenging to find the perfect balance between a structured and an unstructured approach. Despite my intention to follow a somewhat more flexible semi-structured approach, the guide often became too detailed and most of my interviews never followed it strictly. This became especially eminent when I listened to my recordings in retrospect. In these situations the order of my prepared questions did not fit the natural flow of the conversation and I had to improvise or adjust to responses.

Most of my key informants are more or less actively taking part in a strong political environment and are therefore experienced and eloquent speakers. The answer to one question could turn into a quite long dissertation or develop into a storytelling. As an interviewer you may of course be firm and politely guide the conversation back on a desired track, but in most cases I let the interviewees carry on with their digressions. This happened because I found it

hard to take strict control during interviews due to my language insecurity, but I also willingly let it happen because the digressions often revealed interesting information. I also kept in mind that one of the members said that it was considered to be impolite to interrupt the speaking part during a conversation. Though this was expressed in a rather humorous way, I kept it in mind: `*In the older days, the Mapuce parliaments and political meetings could continue for hours, even for days, in order to allow everyone to finish expressing their opinions and for allowing final agreements to be made based on consensus*`.

The structure and course of each in-depth interview varied due to a combination of coincidence and lessons learned on the way. One trend was that most of the interviews became less structured than in the beginning. I found it more convenient to make them more topic- or check-list oriented, meaning that I would introduce my objectives in the beginning and let the conversation continue without being guided by more than a few key words written down for the sake of my own memory. Some of the interviews were difficult to plan thoroughly, due to the somewhat busy schedules of some of my key participants. I therefore sometimes had to do interviews on the spot without any scriptural guidance at all.

Group interview

Initially, I was unsure of my ability to perform an interview with more than one person at the same time, but as my language skills improved I decided to give it a try. The idea was to collect some of the young communicators within the community with the objective of finding out more about the concept of `*communication with identity*`. The main reason for choosing this approach was that I wanted to initiate a discussion and not only try to draw opinions out of individuals in standard interviews.

The main challenge when realising a group interview was to coordinate and find a suitable time for everyone to be able to participate. The actual interview was carried out more like a discussion and did not become more challenging language wise than in individual interviews, as I had anticipated. I was furthermore even able to do a good recording, and could easily separate their voices in retrospect because I knew all of them well.

Informal conversations

Valuable information can also emerge out of more informal and unplanned situations, where any type of formal interview structure will be unnatural and impractical. Even though one tries to make an interview situation as comfortable as possible it is difficult to get away from

the structured format that removes the participants from the natural flows, routines and comfort of his or her everyday life (Evans in Kearns 2005). Performing informal conversations were therefore crucial means through which I could discuss different topics in more relaxed and safe environments, where and when they naturally occurred. The information obtained through these conversations has contributed to illuminating my research questions more specifically. Additionally, sharing such informality also made me more profoundly understand the context in which my research took place.

As I lived nearby, and naturally established a close relationship to many members of the Mapuce community, I was able to discuss many aspects of my research topic `off the record`. Such conversations would appear due to my curiosity, but were also based on their own desire and initiative to inform me about various aspects of their situation. These conversations fed me with additional knowledge and ideas for subsequent interviews, but they also enabled me to experience the key informants within a more informal setting. I noticed that in the more formal interview situation, their answers seemed more rehearsed and politically correct in contrast to somewhat more nuanced perspectives expressed on the bus, across the dinner table or over a cup of *mate*[6] shared on the living room couch. I do not think that this was a conscious act as such, but rather that the difference experience can be explained by the contrasting atmospheres within which the conversations took place. Another explanation may be that there is a set of formal habits that are naturally acquired by politicians in more structured interview situations.

Observation

> *"Interviews are self-reports of experiences, opinions and feelings, whereas observations rely on the observer's ability to interpret what is happening and why"* (Kitchin & Tate 2000:219 - 220).

In addition to conducting interviews, observation is another relevant technique providing the researcher with additional information relevant for illuminating research questions. Doing qualitative research is often about more than just asking questions and receiving answers, it is furthermore about being attentive to the surrounding environment. In some way most research involves what Crang and Cook (2007) term informal `off the record` observations made by the researcher while just being present in the field. However, a more formalised approach to

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[6] Traditional Argentine herbal tea is drank from an iron straw out of the characteristic mate cup. It is more than anything a social event to share a mate, as each take turns and drink out of the same cup.

observation can be to separate between *straight observation* and *participant observation* (Kitchin & Tate 2000). While performing the former type, the researcher is visible, but detached from the situation at hand (e.g. sitting in a corner watching how children interact when they play). In contrast, participant observation has the objective of acquiring a better understanding of the context of the lives of people through spontaneous events and everyday interactions and activities.

One of the major advantages of the observation technique is that the researcher has the opportunity to explore the validity of the information collected from interviews. The things people say might not always be compatible with what they do (Kitchin & Tate 2000), or there might be some information intentionally or unintentionally left out. Performing observation is therefore the only way in which compliance or inconsistency can be detected, or to put the information gathered from interviews in a meaningful context. However, using observation as a means of interpreting behaviour is not as simple as it may seem. First of all, the practice of observing people in an everyday setting requires accepted access. It may thus be a time consuming process as the ability to acquire valuable information depends on the establishment of trustful relationships between the researcher and the observed environment (Crang & Cook 2007; Kitchin & Tate 2000). One of the main challenges of this technique is that the researcher's presence may influence the actions and thoughts of the other participants, or as Kearns (2005) puts it, the researcher always has an active role in the observation process. It might furthermore be difficult to know what to look for, or to understand how your observations are relevant for the research focus.

Observation in practice
During my fieldwork I had good opportunities to perform both straight and participant observations as I was living in the *Ruka*[7] close to most of the Mapuce research participants who would meet there regularly for political, religious, educational or social events. This gave me the opportunity to establish close relationships with many, and was a privilege that enabled me to participate in many events and gatherings.

Observation is a methodological technique or state that is difficult to turn on and off. As Crang and Cook (2007) suggest, you are in some way always performing observation while you are in the field. For me it was about experiencing everyday life, paying attention to the

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[7] Means *house* in Mapuzugun, but here referred to as the cultural and political centre of Lof Newen Mapu and Lof Puel Pvjv in Neuquén.

surroundings and trying to reflect upon how particular aspects of the observed (inter-) actions and physical surroundings could add valuable information to the research. When I saw or experienced something I did not understand or that interested me specifically, I would ask questions. Observation in my case was also a means through which I could fill in some gaps or uncertainties that the interviews did not cover, or it inspired or provoked ideas about important questions that could be asked later. In a more formalised sense, I participated more or less actively in various events, such as political meetings regularly held at the Ruka. In these situations I was mostly present in a more passive sense, only listening, observing and taking notes. Among other things, this enabled me to acquire information about, and to be updated on current political issues, strategic planning, the level of participation, and the roles and responsibilities of the various members of the community etc. In addition to being valuable, the regular gatherings also provided me with a meeting place on which I could make more natural contact and appointments with individuals.

In addition to participating actively or passively in various socio-cultural/political events, I also found observations of the physical surroundings of my research context to be significant. One example is the actual embellishment of the cultural/political centre. As I was there every day it was hard not to notice how their political message was manifested through visual expressions on the walls, especially in the shape of posters and murals.

Secondary data

Undertaking interviews and observations are considered to be the most common ways of gathering qualitative data, but it is also possible to utilise secondary sources in qualitative research. Such sources can range from being textual in the form of personal or more official documents and academic writings, to visual and/or auditory expressions like art, photographs, films, radio etc. Secondary sources are especially interesting for historical research, but can also provide valuable insight into the structures and practices of contemporary life. Using the interpretation of visual data within ethnographic studies has traditionally not been very common, but this methodological technique is increasingly becoming a new means by which researchers try to interpret meaningful data (Crang & Cook 2007).

Even though I have based most of my analysis on first hand data through interviewing and observations, some secondary sources have been additionally valuable during several stages of the research process. First of all, reading various background and topic-related literature has been an important part of the planning and creative brainstorming process. Furthermore, I

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collected and analysed a variety of written information which was locally produced, such as web pages, human rights publications, juridical case papers, newspaper articles, brochures/flyers, song lyrics etc. during the actual fieldwork. In addition to literature and written material, audio-visual media, graphic and artistic production such as radio, documentary, posters and mural paintings added valuable insight into the different ways in which the Mapuce demonstrate and negotiate their rights.

Recording and transcribing research data

According to literature, there are two main ways of recording interview data; audio-recording or manual notes. Both techniques have their advantages and disadvantages, and are chosen according to preference or the specific research situation. On one hand, the audio-recording technique is exposed to technical failure, may be perceived as stressful or intimidating by the interviewee, and is subsequently followed by time-consuming transcribing. On the other hand, it enables the researcher to be an attentive and critical participant of the conversation, helps record details and provides the researcher with the opportunity to crosscheck for information in the post-fieldwork process (Crang & Cook 2007; Dunn 2005). If possible, a common strategy to avoid the disadvantages of both techniques is to combine them and take advantage of their complementary abilities (Dunn 2005). Observational data is most commonly recorded through notes that are gathered in a field diary (Crang & Cook 2007).

Except from one, all of my in-depth interviews and group discussion were audio recorded using my computer as a device. I chose this technique because I found it more convenient to concentrate fully on the conversations without interrupting the process through taking notes. This was furthermore crucial since I was using a language that required extra effort on my part, but also because I was working without a research assistant or translator. Even though I did not take many notes during the actual conversations, I wrote down the main ideas in my field diary in the evenings, including observations. In the following months after returning from the field, I did the more thorough transcribing work in a more relaxed and quiet environment. This enabled me to identify details, translate words and keep in constant touch with my materials. On one hand, the transcribing process has been time consuming, but on the other, it has also been highly necessary and valuable.

The information acquired from informal conversations was not recorded on tape due to the unexpected and informal circumstances in which they took place. As these situations were

informal and characterised as `off the record`, it was furthermore not always appropriate or natural to bring a recording device into the conversation. I would always carry pen and paper in my purse, but sometimes I even considered taking notes to be inappropriate or threatening to a comfortable and safe environment for sharing certain opinions and feelings. In these cases, I had to transcribe from my own memory in retrospect.

Analysing qualitative data

After planning and conducting a fieldwork, a third stage of the research process succeeds. This is a process acquiring reconfiguration and systematisation of research materials. The researcher has to sit down and focus on the research objectives, critically review the findings and make important theoretical choices in order to be able to analyse the materials and simultaneously write a good and credible thesis. This process is also about selection, as it is common to return with too much rather than too little information. The most common technique researchers use to systematise and make the research materials lucid, is to develop various codes, sketches, matrices etc. (Crang & Cook 2007). Crang and Cook (2007) furthermore emphasise that in addition to being structured, the process of constructing a good analysis should be creative. Not everything can be coded or systematised beforehand, as inconsistency may occur, your analysis can change direction, and new ideas grow as the process proceeds.

Following the actual fieldwork, the process of data analysis has been the second most intriguing part of the thesis work, as it to some extent allowed me to disentangle from the books, and start a more creative process. After returning from Argentina, I engaged in this process of `making sense of it all` by writing a rough outline of my findings in addition to sketching a possible structure for the thesis without having reviewed the materials thoroughly. In this way I was reminded of the aspects that had made the most impression. As I still had to transcribe most of my recorded in-depth interviews, I had a subsequent period of refreshing large parts of my findings, a process I found suitable for combining with the development of an analytical framework. As such, I could draw natural links between theoretical frameworks and the empirical material. In this process I also started to do some simple coding by increasing the font of essential words, sentences or sections and jotting down ideas under the headlines, which I had made in the outline. Except from making simple categorisations according to the different analytical chapters, I did not find it necessary to develop a very

advanced coding system in my subsequent work. As my writing started to progress, I felt that I had a good overview of my material and I would fill in or delete as the ideas appeared in my mind.

The role of the researcher in the field

Because my fieldwork involved interpersonal relationships, it is inevitable not to consider the socio-cultural aspects that influenced the course of the research. According to Dowling (2005), the strong presence of social relations within such research raise the importance of critical reflection, meaning that the researcher should also analyse how his or her own position, and even personality (Moser, 2008) influence the course of the research process. Among other things, self-reflexivity can help to explain social mechanisms effecting access to certain information, the general interaction with research participants, and subsequently the way in which knowledge is produced throughout such processes (Crang & Cook 2007; Moser 2008; Panelli 2004).

In relation to the position of the researcher in the field, the strengths and weaknesses of being either an *insider* or an *outsider* has been a common debate. Insiders are researchers who have something in common with the participants of the study, while outsiders differ substantially. One position in this debate is that insiders have better possibilities for accessing information, and that they are able to make more valuable interpretations out of a fieldwork than outsiders. On the other hand, being too much of an insider may raise the question of subjectivity and related credibility of the results. However, most people are never simply either insiders or outsiders, as all humans have overlapping racial, socio-economic and ethnic characteristics (Dowling 2005).

Identification across difference: becoming an insider?

> *"It is strengthening for us that an indigenous sister from far away is interested in our struggle. Especially because, from your indigenous position, your view could be quite different from what the others before you have written!"*

The quotation above is an abstract from the first response I received after initiating contact with potential research participants. Previously I had written an e-mail of introduction, presenting myself as a Sami student from Norway who was thinking about going to Argentina for investigation purposes. From the moment I received this response from Xalkan, I knew

that my ethnic identity as a Sami could become somewhat significant, especially in terms of the ability to access and gain trust from the Mapuce community. I was to find out that the sameness experienced based on a broader indigenous identity decreased the significance of other rather obvious denominators of difference which often become significant during cross-cultural research encounters, such as gender, race/ethnicity and class etc. (Panelli 2004).

In addition to the first indicator of acceptance in the letter from Xalkan, my stay among the Mapuce in Neuquén was characterised by a continuation of such inclusion. I was considered to be some sort of insider, living close to most of them in the cultural/political centre of the community. The physical and social proximity helped me establish close relationships with many members of the community, an advantage, which enabled me to participate in political meetings, sacred ceremonies and various social gatherings. In addition to the opportunity of experiencing the socio-cultural context of my study, my insider position helped me to acquire valuable information concerning how politics was planned, produced and practised in both formal and informal settings.

I find it difficult to determine to what extent my Sami identity enabled me to access information that otherwise would have been closed for *outsiders*, but in some situations the direct impact was rather obvious. Already the first day in Neuquén I was invited to celebrate *Wiñoy Xipantv*[8], one of the most important and sacred events of the year. In a speech during a preparation meeting the night before, a woman emphasised the exclusive presence of Mapuce during the first ceremony taking place the following morning. She said that it would be open for journalists, tourists and general visitors during the rest of the day, but this would not be allowed during the initiating ceremony at sunrise.

> *"It is important not to reveal all aspects of our culture and religion to the Wigka[9]. We are not a closed community. We are not trying to create a ghetto, but it is important to keep in mind that some parts need to be carefully protected. This way, some aspects of our culture can never be taken away from us".*

The woman obviously felt very strongly about what she had just proposed, and this made me feel a little bit insecure. Where did I fit in this picture? My unrest quickly calmed towards the end of the meeting when Xalkan announced that she had the honour of introducing an

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[8] Mapuce New Year.
[9] Term in Mapuzugun referring to non-mapuce, white people or Europeans, and is in its most extreme sense synonymous with enemy.

important visitor. After presenting myself further with a shaking voice, I was greeted by the Mapuce battle cry while they raised their right fists into the air: `*Marici weu, marici weu, marici weu!*`[10]. The women that had expressed the fear of letting `others` participate in the private ceremony emphasised that my visit was an exception.

By presenting my experience of a strong presence of identification and inclusion, it is not my intention to exaggerate, nor to romanticise the relationship between IPs. I neither aim to claim that my Sami identity facilitated the inclusive research encounter alone. These reflections are rather meant to show that my background as Sami became a significant and influential resource in several stages of the research process, especially in terms of establishing contact, trust and access in the field. Although it equipped me with a unique set of opportunities, it did not automatically provide me with the ability to establish good relations with people. First of all, I consider the initial introduction done by others as crucial. It has furthermore been important that some of the members of the community had good experiences from previous meetings with Sami representatives in international forums like the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). If no one had had any knowledge or experiences to associate with my presence, it might have been more difficult to place me within an indigenous context, especially because white skin usually is considered to contrast *indigenousness*.

A final aspect which I consider to influence research encounters is *personality*. I agree with Moser (2008), as she suggests that the behaviour and ability of the researcher to read social situations might be just as influential on research encounters as his or her gendered, racial, class or ethnic identities. The main point I aim to stress is that my position as a Sami would not have facilitated a successful research encounter if I had been acting impolitely or in general been a disliked person.

With trust and inclusion comes responsibility

Above we have seen that inclusion into a research field relies heavily on trust and positive evaluations of the motives of the researcher. In such contexts, the researcher is responsible for living up to the confidence acquired by assuring that the interventions he or she makes are carefully thought through and discussed with the research participants. Within literature on methodology, the idea of `doing the right thing` in a research context is commonly discussed

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[10] Expression in Mapuzugun, meaning *we will win ten times over*. It is often used as a means of showing and/or transferring strength.

in relation to ethical guidelines and conduct. Among other things, these discussions concern free and informed consent, confidentiality, safety and representation (Crang & Cook 2007; Dowling 2005). In other words, researchers have the obligation to be honest and provide the research participants with sufficient information about the circumstances and possible consequences of the study, make sure that no harm is involved and that desired anonymity is respected. However, as Crang and Cook (2007) suggest it is not as easy and straightforward to implement guidelines into real life. The ethical challenges that the researcher experience in everyday encounters can be unique and complex and rely on situated decisions and/or on compromises.

The issue of ethics related to my own research has been of great concern from the beginning. As most researchers surly do, I have tried to `do the right thing` according to general guidelines in my approach to the participants during the actual fieldwork, but also through the subsequent representations of their contributions in the final thesis. I have especially emphasised honesty and tried to be as humble and gentle as possible in the social encounters with participants. Throughout the thesis, the research participants go by real names, as I was given informed consent. The main challenge in relation to ethics has been to live up to the expectations and responsibility that I consider to be extra crucial for an indigenous researcher working in an indigenous context. That is to say, being and insider comes with a price, as it often is difficult to combine the role as `friend` with that of `researcher`.

As an example, I was for a long time worried that it would be considered negatively that my thesis would be written in English, as few of the participants would be able to read it. This was an aspect which collided with my desire to return the product to those that had participated in the study, but I had no other choice than to solve this challenge with a compromise that I could live with. During the stay, I focused a lot on sharing knowledge and experiences from the Sami and our relation to the indigenous rights struggle in order to give something in return for their cooperation. I also discussed with my participants how a thesis in English could be helpful in the sense that it could convey information about their situation in other countries, and how this somehow could compensate for their inability to read it themselves. Nevertheless, I will write a summary in Spanish in order for them to get an idea of the main aspects of my results. In addition, I hope I will be able to travel back and present it for them in person.

What about the truth?

In the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned that it is indifferent to attribute some methodologies with more reliability or validity than others without contextualising the research first. Crang and Cook (2007) suggest that it is first when we compare the methods with other topic related research, consider how the researcher has accounted for his or her methodological and theoretical choices, and furthermore assess and interpret the empirical materials in a logical and consistent way, that one can start speaking about truthfulness. A lot of people write about the challenges of working in a cross-cultural fieldwork context, and with good reason, especially since social difference is likely to be experienced. In this chapter however, I have also emphasised how my Sami identity provided me with a unique opportunity to access valuable information. In addition to evaluating academic choices and contexts, the question of reliability and validity may also be related to the role of the researcher as some sort of governor of the results. Thus, as a critical reader one needs to take many aspects into account in such evaluations, but at the same time acknowledge that there are many sets of truths, or as Crang and Cook (2007:149) put it: `*The process of analysis is not a matter of developing a definite account, but of trying to find a means to understand the inter-relations of multiple versions of reality.*

In this context I dear challenge the reader to consider if the information possibly `lost in translation` somehow could have been compensated with a unique inclusion into the Mapuce community. In the end, this is up to each and every reader to determinate.

3. Theoretical base and analytical approach

Theory is a way of viewing, systematising and explaining various phenomenons in the world. As such it is a way of simplifying the truth, but notwithstanding a necessary means of collecting, organising and processing research data (Sumner & Tribe 2008). Theoretical frameworks are therefore important and crucial tools and foundations on which research depends, but as with methodology, the theoretical position of a researcher is accompanied with choices excluding and including certain factors which subsequently influence the final results of a study. As knowledge production is partial, I acknowledge that by choosing to include certain theories and analytical concepts, I am omitting alternative ways of viewing my data.

This chapter concerns the theoretical base on which my analysis depends. I have based my choices on contemporary perspectives within my academic field and on theories and concepts which I consider relevant for my topic. For structural reasons, the chapter is divided in two main parts. In the first part, I will address relevant theories and concepts that concern the broader frameworks within which my topic can be placed. I aim to draw these mainly from development studies and political geography as I find contributions from both disciplines highly relevant and appropriate for my analysis. In the second part, I aim to combine my discussions from the first part with the objective of defining key concepts and presenting the analytical approach for my study.

Theories and concepts: contextualising the study

Structures, actors and agency

The interconnected relationship between actors and structures has been widely debated within various disciplines of social sciences. Within development studies the focus of discussion has mainly been related to *agency*, understood as the ability actors have to resist, rework or consolidate social structures on one hand, and the extent to which different structural frameworks determine human behaviour and development trajectories within society on the other (Benjaminsen & Svarstad 2002; Long 2001; Rigg 2007). Actors in this regard, refer to individuals, organisations, companies or state institutions, while structures constitute the social, cultural, political economic and technological contexts within which the everyday lives and actions of people take place (Benjaminsen & Svarstad 2002; Rigg 2007). The attempts of

different scholars to understand and explain the negotiating relationship between agency and structures have resulted in various analytical approaches. Structurally oriented viewpoints are mainly concerned with the constraints structures put on human behaviour, thus also devaluing the possibility of agency, while agency-oriented perspectives focus on the degree of control over, and influence that actors have on important aspects of their lives (Rigg 2007).

Anthony Giddens` structuration theory (1984) is one of the most known attempts to move beyond the structure and agency dichotomy, towards a greater reconciliation of the concepts. Instead of dealing with structure and agency as competing terms, he proposes to explore the interaction between them and the extent to which their relationship is mutually constituted. According to Giddens, actors can be active agents of change, even though the structural frameworks within which human action is located sometimes constitute a constraining context of human manoeuvre. The relationship between structures and agency is furthermore understood as intertwined in the sense that they dependent on each other's existence. On one hand, actors cannot act without such frameworks, regardless of the constraining or enabling effect of structures. On the other hand, social structures are created, reworked, resisted or upheld by actors through active and influential engagement.

Influenced by Giddens, Norman Long is one of the scholars who have had the most significant influence on analyses that have an actor-oriented focus within development studies (Benjaminsen & Svarstad 2002). *The actor-oriented approach* of Long (2001) is first of all a critique of the deterministic character of structuralist approaches which are mainly drawn from the modernisation theories dominating the post war period, but it also questions the viability of all meta narratives. According to Long (2001) the focus of inquiry should be on everyday experiences and the ability of actors to be active agents of change, rather than simplifying the complexities of lived realities through universal theoretical frameworks. People react or adapt to similar influences in very different ways. It is therefore crucial to understand the underlying mechanisms facilitating heterogeneous social life of actors, even under seemingly homogeneous circumstances.

Because the actor oriented approach of Long focuses on the lived experience of actors, it needs to incorporate *agency* as a central analytical concept. It explains the ability of individual actors to be active agents of change due to the capacity to process social experiences and finding ways to cope with life, even under extreme coercive constraints. Such

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constraints can be related to larger political, social or economic structures, or just be a matter of limited access to information.

By suggesting this, Long (2001) is not claiming that the ability to consolidate, resist or rework dominant structures is equally attributed to all human beings. Instead he argues that the extent to which agency may occur relies on the *knowledgeabilities* of actors, that is the `knowledge` and `ability` to interpret experiences and desires, command certain skills, and the opportunity actors have to access certain resources and/or engage in particular organising practices. This implies that agency to a large extent is contextually determined because it depends on various ways in which actors relate to, and interact with, their social and physical surroundings. Furthermore, the social context within which agency operates, is not fixed. Power and knowledge is constantly being negotiated among various social actors. The social context within which actors and their knowledgeabilities work needs to be taken into consideration in order to understand how agency and power depend on a network of actors entangled in each other's projects.

According to Long (2001:20), a main task for analyses concerning agency is `...*to identify and characterise differing actor practices, strategies and rationales, the conditions under which they arise, how they interlock, their viability or effectiveness for solving specific problems*`. Because my thesis concerns the Mapuce and their possibilities and limitations in terms of realising rights through active strategic engagement, the choice of an actor-oriented approach and a focus on agency is evident. Long (2001) furthermore emphasise that agency through social practice can be pursued by a collective set of actors. However, collective actors in this regard should not be understood as fixed social categories based on class, ethnicity, gender etc, but rather as the coalition of actors who organise and strategise according to similar goals, interest and/or values. This means that an organisation grounded in ethno/indigenous politics may unite to advocate for a common cause, but this does not automatically mean that the articulated claims are representative for all those who belong to the same ethnic group.

From participation to active citizenship
As my topic more specifically concerns political engagement of the Mapuce, I find it necessary to account for how the concepts of *participation* and *citizenship* have been defined in the past and redefined in the present to be understood as a process through which agency may take effect.

The concept of *participation* has a longer history within social sciences, but became especially significant within development studies in the 1970s in relation to the alternative development paradigm which primarily emerged as a critique against the mainstream development theories dominating the post war period. Mainstream development thinking at that time can in short be described as a focus on economic and industrial progress as indication of the desired outcome of modernisation and thus development. The goal, and the corresponding way to reach it, implied that all societies should follow the `western` recipe of success. The alternative movement was first of all a critique against the top-down and universal focus which characterised the development strategies of the state and the market, because it ignored the significance of local diversity, thus undermining the ability of people to be active participants in their own development processes (Nederveen Pieterse 2001).

The focus on increased local participation as a means of achieving individual and collective empowerment is one of the most important aspects of alternative development thinking. As such, *empowerment* can be defined as a process that helps marginalised and oppressed to become aware of, and exercise their agency (Cornwall 2004). Previously failing top-down development theories, policies and practices made it necessary to change towards a more people centred focus, implying increased participation and decision-making on the local level. The main idea of this shift was to empower people through participation and capacity building in order for actors to be able to access power and control over different aspects concerning their own life (Nederveen Pieterse 2001). Since its emergence as an alternative approach in the 1970s, the concept of *participatory development* has been a mainstream way in which theories and policies of development have been discussed (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). This trend can be exemplified through the World Bank´s adaptation and definition of participation as `*a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them*´ (Rigg 2007:151).

Despite the aim to create a space within which marginalised people could become active and significant stakeholders in their own lives, the mainstreaming of participation has especially received critique for its little consideration of politics and the power dimension embedded therein. The critique has especially been exemplified through the traps of *participatory exclusion* through the reinforcement of persistent power structures, and the *tyranny of participation* through enforced local consent to projects emerging and controlled from outside. The critiques were mainly based on the notion that the marginalised often are

structurally obstructed from participating due to unequal power relations in the first place (Hickey & Mohan 2004; Rigg 2007).

Participation as active and inclusive citizenship: Towards transformation?
The failure of participatory strategies to actually empower marginalised groups and individuals has necessarily provoked more diverse analytical understandings of the concept within development studies. Contemporary contributions are in the process of redefining participation towards an increased focus on politics and the notion of citizenship as practised. Despite of conceptual variations, the new approaches are viewing citizens as more than passive members of society with assigned entitlements and responsibilities bestowed by the state (Gaventa 2004; Hickey & Mohan 2004). Lister argues that the active engagement of citizens in political processes is fundamental in order to facilitate agency and subsequent desired transformations (Gaventa 2004).

Gaventa (2004) suggests that the contemporary contributions intending to link participation to politics and practiced citizenship, can be brought together under the concept of *participatory citizenship*. These approaches focus on political capacities as a means of empowering marginalised groups who are especially vulnerable to participatory tyranny and exclusion in political processes. The main objective is to promote inclusion and engagement of ethnic minorities, youth, women, senior citizens, and other social groups who are perceived as marginalised. Hickey and Mohan (2004) further argue that a radical and political notion of citizenship might promote transformative participation and empower the marginalised to become change makers. Williams et al. (in Hickey & Mohan 2004) further suggest that transformation not necessarily needs to involve a complete reversal of the power relations and structures often obstructing inclusion. Participatory transformation may just as much be to strengthen the negotiating power the marginalised have in relation to the more powerful.

Multiple citizenships and IPs
The idea of promoting and analysing a more active citizenship aiming to include and empower the marginalised and deprived in democratic processes, can not be done without assessing the challenges and contradictions that go along. One of the major challenges of participatory citizenship as both discourse and framework of action is to balance homogeneity and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. Since participatory citizenship is a framework that addresses democracy, it is first of all concerned with inclusion promoted by the principle of equality. Homogeneity is thus crucial in order to include, rather than exclude based on

difference (Mohanty & Rajesh 2006). In this context, the increased multinational and multiethnic reality of many states today challenge the notion of a homogenous state citizenship, and raise the question of *positive discrimination* in favour of minorities (Heater 1999). In other words, it challenges the fundamental principle of equality on which citizenship initially was based, namely that all citizens within the same nation state should be able to enjoy the same rights.

As an analytical concept, *citizenship* has become redefined, much due to globalisation processes. A general trend is that it is to a larger degree becoming connected to the multiple aspects of individual identities rather than the emphasis put on narrow territorial appraisals, as did earlier understandings. Different practices of citizenship based on gender, age, ability, sexual identity, ethnicity and race are more of interest to scholars today than simply the place of birth or relation to a single nation state (Mountz 2009). Referring to citizenship as *multiple* is one attempt to redefine and adapt its notion to the changing realities of contemporary states. This reality is increasingly characterised by the need for citizens to engage in a complex web of municipal, provincial, state and even global frameworks of rights and obligations (Heater 1999). Global citizenship has especially become a way in which it is possible to explain how individuals and groups find themselves belonging to a larger political community transcending state borders, especially since the establishment of the UN (Imber 2002).

Yashar (2005) explores the specific relationship between IPs and citizenship within the context of democracy, and explains how and why the relatively new rise of indigenous peoples movements in Latin America is contesting prevailing and somewhat static understandings of citizenship. The increased political mobilisation based on ethnicity, more specifically *indigeneity* and the corresponding emergence of international declarations and conventions concerning IPs` rights, challenge the prevailing understanding of the boundaries and experience of citizenship. In my view, this especially concerns the principle of *self-determination* which indicates a right to establish own political, legal and social institutions without having to waive state rights and obligations.

Development and rights
Because the thesis particularly concerns the Mapuce and their quest for realising indigenous citizenship rights, new contributions to the debate around participation and development as linked to rights within development studies, are important to address. Increased attention to the realisation of rights as a crucial mean of defining and achieving development, can be seen

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as a way of reframing participation, active citizenship and agency. Realising rights through active citizenship as a means of empowering the marginalised to participate as active agents in their own development processes, has increasingly become a core means of approaching development theory, policy and practice. In addition to the focus on the mobilisation process of agents, the rights-based approaches (RBAs) are also addressing the necessity to place and strengthen the areas of responsibility of important stakeholders in order to prevent human rights violations from occurring. The main agenda of the RBAs is therefore to realise human rights by both strengthening accountability and empowering actors to claim legal and moral entitlements, a view that is closely related to Amartya Sen and his understanding of development as freedom (Ljungman 2005).

The rights-based approaches

The increased focus on rights within development theory and practice has resulted in the emergence of several rights-based approaches which are based on international human rights standards operating strategically to articulate and protect human rights. Even thought there is no single RBA, it is possible to identify some conceptual characteristics and commonalities of the approaches that specifically aim to link human rights to development. The most essential feature of the RBAs is the legal base from which their legitimacy derives, as internationally recognised legal principles articulate both rights and obligations of the various stakeholders who take part in development processes. Another recognisable commonality of the RBAs is that they all apply to a normative framework, which aims to enhance the right to participate in decision-making processes through the core principles of equality and non-discrimination. In this regard it emphasises vulnerable groups, those who often suffer the most from both political exclusion and human rights violations. The RBAs further encompass a common notion of participation and active citizenship as directed towards rights mobilisation, therefore implying that the process of realising rights is a right in itself (Ljungman 2005; Tsikata 2007).

In addition to the RBAs` consensus on the importance of rights, these approaches also define and conceptualise the roles of the actors involved in the development process. In this regard, it is crucial to assess the entitlements and obligations of *right holders, duty-bearers* and *moral duty-bearers*. In relation to the human rights principles, the former group of actors represent all people, because all humans possess and are entitled to claim a set of universal rights. The latter two are individual actors, companies, organisations or institutions held accountable for raising awareness of existing rights, securing their application and further enabling the former

to claim them. It is in particular the state who becomes the principle duty bearer when it signs human rights treaties. However, the surrounding (international) community represented by the general public, donors, NGOs and commercial companies are also held accountable as moral duty-bearers to prevent human rights violations from occurring (Ljungman 2005).

While rights-based approaches to development policy and practice in many ways share a common understanding and normative means of securing accountability and implementation of human rights, rights-based analyses (RBA) aim to identify root causes of rights deprivation in relation to patterns of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination through theoretical means. RBA as an analytical framework is first of all useful in the sense that it can identify which and whose rights are not being realised, for example, in order to explain the context of rights mobilisation. It further has the ability to explore the structural obstacles that prevent the realisation of rights in a certain case by examining various socio-cultural, legal and administrational frameworks sustaining the marginalisation of certain vulnerable groups within society. It may also be a tool with which it is possible to investigate the negotiating relationship between the various actors involved in the process of rights struggles. In order to explore the possibilities of right-holders to claim rights on one hand, and the duty-bearers to fulfil their assigned responsibilities on the other, it is crucial to assess the capacities and resources that both rights-holders and duty-bearers respectively possess (Ljungman 2005)

Power, discourse and representation

As implied earlier in this chapter, the issue of power is central in relation to limitations and possibilities of development processes. Early understandings of *power* within political geography generally emphasised the state as primary possessor exercising power, and that political strength could be measured in terms of the occupation, domination and control of territories and resources. In contrast, contemporary perspectives have in general moved away from the earlier static focus, and begun approaching the notion of power as diverse, relational and dynamic (Painter 2008; Panelli 2004; Pile 1997; Sharp 2000).

The shifting focus on power is highly influenced by many social science disciplines and scholars, but the work of Foucault has been one of the most fundamental contributions to post-structural understandings of power. In his work, power is treated as something that circulates and that takes effect when it becomes part of a chain. Within this chain, or relationship of actors, power is a function, not a possession that is deterministically localised in the hands of someone, leaving others doomed forever powerless. In his understanding,

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power is rather something which passes through and which can be both exercised and experienced by all individuals in complex, dynamic and multiple ways. Power becomes an imminent aspect of everything, as all social relations and tactics are bound up in power relationships, working as dominance, resistance and other less dualistic constructions and performances of power (Painter 2008; Panelli 2004). A central aspect of Foucault´s understanding of power is the concept of *discourse*, as it is the way in which constructed and partial knowledge is expressed and practiced in powerful ways, shaping the very boundaries of agency. Multiple truths exist within a hierarchy where some discourses dominate, while others are marginalised and considered less valuable representations of reality (Panelli 2004).

Struggles over discourse and representation are often essentially inherent in most political realities. According to Apthorpe in (Nuijten 1992) discursive practice can be understood as the way in which power is captured and exercised by some people through specific activities on particular arenas. Understood as such, a discourse can be a story about whatever issue or phenomenon, some becoming more important for political struggles, as they take more crucial part in shaping people`s lives. Panelli (2004) suggests that such discourses can be a government construction and expression of repressing stories about certain groups such as women, youth, disabled people etc, through for example policy-making. However, competing discourses always have the potential of shifting positions, as individuals and groups always attempt to reconstruct, or even challenge hegemonic discourses with alternative stories of claimed truths. Discursive struggles are often pursued as appropriate strategies, where different actors actively construct favourable truths, and/or subvert or reconstruct the more established knowledge constituting obstacles in terms of realising desired change (Foucault in Panelli 2004).

In a context of discursive struggles, *representation* is a related concept. Earlier understandings were narrowly concerned with elected representatives in local, provincial or state governments. According to Rose in Shirlow (2009), representation is increasingly becoming understood as processes of links between discourse, value, gender, class, ethnicity, culture and politics etc, due to increased influence from post-structural and cultural theory. In this view, representation can for instance be the construction of meaning and the selective communication of specific discourses through various media such as television, advertising, murals, speech, music, newspapers, paintings, photographs etc. (Holloway & Hubbard 2001; Shirlow 2009). The way in which information is represented is thus not value free, as it

constitutes ideas, beliefs and images which are socially constructed more or less intentionally, by and for specific social groups (Shirlow 2009). Important questions to keep in mind in this regard are: Who created the discourse, for what reasons, and how is it represented? As Shirlow (2009) puts it, representations communicate the very nature of power relationships.

Spaces for change?

Within geography, the significance of space is essential for understanding the world. Political geographers are therefore obviously concerned with the spatial context within which political activities take place. The notion of space has also become more significant within development studies. As discussed earlier in this chapter, collective or individual actors have the ability to realise agency, even within a context of highly constraining circumstances. Hickey and Mohan (2004) stress that the earlier participatory approaches have neglected the heterogeneous dimensions of spaces where participatory practice occurs, whereas Cornwall (2004) emphasises that the various spaces within which participation, practiced citizenship and rights mobilisation take place are nothing but neutral sites. In Cornwall (2004), Foucault more narrowly argues that power is exercised by making available, claiming and taking up spaces, and Massey (1993:156) explicitly conveys that `*space is by its very nature full of power and symbolism…*`.

One way of differentiating various political spaces is to categorise them as *closed*, *invited* or *claimed*. Despite the contemporary focus on increased inclusion and participation of citizens in important decision-making processes as part of a larger democratisation process, there are still many important decisions being made by a few actors behind closed doors (Gaventa 2004). The general circumstances of *closed spaces* are thus precluding the possibilities of active citizenship and agency to occur for actors excluded from these spaces. *Invited spaces* on the other hand, represent the emerging initiative of government institutions, supra national agencies and various NGOs to decentralise decision-making to the local community level. These new spaces are results of the reopening of previously closed spaces, or the creation of new ones, with the intention of providing citizens with a greater opportunity to participate more actively in political life (Cornwall 2004; Gaventa 2004).

However, despite of new possibilities for a broader set of citizens to participate, everyone is not included, or participation may not be politically effective. Such spaces can unfortunately be a way in which those in power legitimise their already made decisions (Cornwall, 2004). *Claimed* or *created space* is therefore the last category suggested by Gaventa (2004), and can

be seen in relation to a lack of existing spaces within which particularly marginalised citizens may engage in transformative ways. Claimed spaces are thus created more independently, or demanded from powerful actors, by the less powerful in the political sphere (Cornwall, 2004; Gaventa, 2004). Sharp (2000), similarly refer to spaces, places or ´sites` of resistance which are created, claimed, defended and used in strategic or tactical ways in order to enforce desired change.

Some important questions which may be helpful in an attempt to explore the influence of power in this regard are: *who created the space, what terms of access and action apply, and whose interests and intentions are being represented?* The different spaces should furthermore not be treated as separate, as they emerge and exist in dynamic relationship to one another (Gaventa 2004). Many invited spaces may be the result of grassroots pressure and claims for such, and various actors may move between both invited and claimed spaces, taking on shifting roles in terms of practicing transformative power within them. Furthermore, the acquisition of new skills, capacities and experiences in one space can be transferred to, and practiced in another (Cornwall 2004; Gaventa 2004).

I furthermore find it relevant to include the concept *spaces of resistance* as referring to all the spaces within which the political activities of the Mapuce take place, thus both within invited and claimed spaces, within state and civil society. In this regard it is important to stress that the term *resistance* means protest against what is suppressive and/or obstructive for desired change, not necessarily everything that has to do with globalisation, modernisation processes or western ideas in general, e.g. as suggested by Escobar in his theories of anti-globalisation movements (Rigg 2007). On the contrary, Pile (1997) refers to *resistance* as an attempt to create alternative spatialities outside oppression and exploitation. According to Rigg (2007), resistance can therefore in some cases be just as much resistance to exclusion from certain aspects of globalisation, as it can be resistance *to* processes of globalisation.

The analytical approach: Applying theory to context

The discussion of different theories and concepts above constitutes the theoretical and conceptual foundation on which the analytical approach for this study is based. In this section, I return more specifically to my research objectives presented in the introduction and clarify how I shall use theories and key concepts to interpret my empirical findings.

The Mapuce rights struggle: An actor-oriented approach

As presented in the introduction, my main research questions concern the challenges and possibilities that the Mapuce in Neuquén experience through various rights struggles. Because my focus is on a specific group of actors, a natural theoretical point of departure is therefore the actor-oriented approach of Long. More specifically, my focus will be on agency*,* understood as the possibility of a collective set of actors to resist or rework unfavourable structures, or take advantage of those that favour their ends. In this regard I necessarily also need to account for the broader structures (social, legal, political etc.) which either enable or constrain the realisation of rights. I would like to emphasise that my aim is to explore how structures work as constraining or enabling in specific contexts, without attempting to identify some structures as either exclusively good or bad.

The Mapuce right-claimers

Even though the actor-oriented approach concerns the possibility of actors to influence transformative processes, it does not specifically concern engagement in struggles over rights. As my study specifically focuses on rights, I find it necessary to incorporate the notion of participation understood as practising citizenship through a radical political project. In this context, citizenship is understood as active and multiple and the political engagement of the Mapuce is an endeavour for realising indigenous citizenship rights. As suggested in the RBAs, the conceptualisation of actors becomes important when accountability and entitlements are to be placed. Instead of confining the Mapuce to denominating them as a collective set of right-holders, I find it more suitable to term them *right-claimers*, as it better indicates that citizenship needs to be practiced actively rather than simply possessed in order to enable change. Even though the focus is on right-claimers, I still find it important to investigate how they relate, and negotiate their claims, to the primary- and moral duty-bearers, and how the latter two fulfil their responsibilities in relation to the first.

In relation to the agency of the Mapuce right-claimers, I find Long`s concept of *knowledgeability* useful in terms of exploring the influence that resources (political, legal, economical etc.) and the capabilities (skills) to use these resources have on the ability to realise rights. In order to find out how, and to what extent different knowledgeabilities become a precondition for agency and correspondingly for desired change, I want to explore if and how e.g. the more educated, economically, politically strong or supported, or even creatively gifted may be better equipped to engage in rights struggles and to achieve

transformation. It is furthermore not necessarily only about possessing certain recourses or skills. It may equally, or even more important to consider who can make the best out of them.

The spatialities of the rights struggle

In order to better understand both challenges and possibilities related to the rights struggles of the Mapuce, I find it crucial to include a spatial dimension. This is important for understand the circumstances influencing the possibilities and limitations of transformation, but also why, how and in what way different strategic actions are practiced in certain spaces at specific times. The Mapuce have been given a greater opportunity to participate in new invited state spaces, but these new democratic spaces do not necessarily provide opportunities for transformative politics. In order to explore the possibilities and limitations of these invited spaces, one necessarily has to account for how power operates within them. As I understand it, created or claimed spaces emerge as consequent reactions of poor access to closed and invited spaces, which exclude Mapuce participation or prevent significant and effective political influence. In order to be able to promote an alternative voice, a space or arena on which transformative politics can take place needs to be created/claimed if not present or provided. Nevertheless, both invited and self-created spaces can be spaces of opportunity and limitation depending on how power works within and between them. That is why I choose to emphasise the term *spaces of resistance* as a way of referring to the spaces that the Mapuce claim, regardless of it being self-created or invited. As one of the main research questions expresses, I would like to explore how the Mapuce claim spaces of resistance through various strategies in both formal and informal settings.

Power through discourse and representation

In the course of explaining the political context, actions and relations the Mapuce engage in, I find it crucial to address how power operates through discourse and representation. As both concepts are highly relevant for most political struggles, I find them to be correspondingly operational within the diverse rights struggles of the Mapuce. In this thesis, *discourse* is understood as both construction of, and struggle for truth, which can consequently be constraining or enabling for the specific rights struggles of the Mapuce. The concept of *representation* is closely related, as it refers to the communication of these imagined and conflicting realities. In addition to referring to citizenship representation in both formal and informal spaces, the concept also explores how specific groups are represented and represent themselves, e.g. through different media of communication.

Throughout the analysis I will not go further in terms of discussing the concept of *power*. Not only because it is too `all encompassing` and complex, but also because I found it difficult to confine to a single analytical category for the purpose of this thesis. However, I would like to emphasise that I consider it as central in relation to all the concepts mentioned above, and thus also in terms of understanding how it can be both experienced and exercised by the Mapuce in diverse and non-fixed ways, and how dynamic power-relations influence every step of the rights struggle. As both marginalised actors and agents of change, the Mapuce relate to power in multiple ways in their quest for realising agency and rights.

Ideals

4. Indigenous peoples` rights

The purpose of this chapter is to present some *ideals* which relate to IPs` rights in Neuquén and Argentina, in order to be able to compare them to the *reality* in which the Mapuce live. Thus, before engaging in the analysis, I will address more thoroughly the internationally recognised IPs` rights only superficially mentioned up until now. In order to be able to investigate the process of rights struggles that the Mapuce engage in, it is crucial to account for the rights articulated in international declarations and conventions, but as the rights-based analysis suggests, it is additionally important to consider the way in which they are incorporated in the Argentine state and provincial constitutions (Ljungman 2005). This chapter also presents ideals in terms of invited spaces for indigenous politics and participation created by the Argentine state, due to pressure for increased democratisation and inclusion of marginalised groups. As my study emphasises an actor-oriented approach to human rights, the importance of exploring how rights are prioritised, understood and articulated by the Mapuce is furthermore explored.

International recognition of IPs´ rights

There are several international treaties and declarations that incorporate IPs` rights in their frameworks. However, this thesis only refers to the International Labour Organisation´s Convention No. 169 (ILO 169), concerning the rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, and the relatively newly adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as they are the most comprehensive international frameworks that specifically address IPs´ rights.

ILO 169 is an international treaty adopted by ILO in 1989. During the process, ILO had come to an agreement that the world's IPs needed special protection due to the general lack of realisation of fundamental human rights. In order to realise full enjoyment of these rights, it was necessary to develop an international framework that would address many of the common challenges facing IPs. In operational terms, the ILO 169 is an international instrument open for ratification, becoming legally binding after one year of aligning corresponding legislation, policies and programmes (ILO 1999). Today 20 countries have ratified, whereas Argentina signed it in 2000 (ILO 2006).

The UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007. In contrast to ILO 169, it is like any other international declaration not open for ratification and does thus not have a legally binding status. It is rather a document reflecting the collective views of the UN regarding IPs` rights. However, with the adoption of the Declaration, the UN has taken a major step forward in terms of recognising and securing IPs` rights on an international scale. Although it does not possess a legally binding status, it still has legal relevance, and as any UN Declarations, it has to be taken into account by all member states in all affairs that concern the IPs residing within respective countries (ILO 1999).

As far as the content is concerned, the principles of the ILO 169 and the UNDRIP are compatible and mutually reinforcing. The UNDRIP covers the same areas as ILO 169, but due to its later adoption, it adds new topics which ILO 169 does not concern. Nevertheless, what both the UNDRIP and the ILO 169 cover are the main principles of IPs´ rights that are the results of decades of indigenous struggles for legal recognition. The ILO 169 and the UNDRIP includes an extended set of socio-cultural, economical and political rights, but I consider the principles that follow to cover the overall objective of the frameworks;

The principle of *non-discrimination* implies that IPs are often subjects of discrimination in terms of the realisation of fundamental human rights. The emphasis on this principle is thus promoted as a way of better securing that IPs can enjoy these rights to the same degree as do the rest of the population of the states within which they live. It is furthermore an encouragement for increased respect for cultural diversity, as IPs share distinct laws, values and customs from that of the dominant culture.

Participation in decision-making relates to that above, as it addresses the need to secure effective indigenous participation and decision-making power regarding all issues that affect

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their lives. As such, this includes for example the right to have an influential say in policy-making.

The principle of *self-determination* indicates the very essence of the indigenous claim, mainly the right to freely determine own political, economic and socio-cultural development. This includes the right to maintain and manage own institutions, such as political, educational, legal etc. without losing the right to participate fully in the political, economic and cultural life of the state (ILO 1989). The right to self-determination over lands, territories and natural resources (LTRs) is considered to be the most central and controversial of the areas within IPs´ rights, as it often conflicts with economical interests of state and private actors (Åhrén 2007)

IPs`s rights in Argentina and Neuquén

The first Argentine constitution from 1853 states that it is the responsibility of the congress to provide for the security of the frontiers, to preserve the peaceful treatment of the `Indians` and promote their conversion to Catholicism (Ray 2007). Although this reference to the country's IPs suggests that they should be treated peacefully, it does indicate that they should be forcibly converted to the religion of the dominant culture in power. In addition to using the condescending term *Indian*, the constitution violated the fundamental human right of IPs to self-determination.

1994: Constitutional reform

It was not until almost 150 years later, that Argentina recognised IPs` rights. After the constitutional revision in 1994, article 75.17 included for the first time the ethnic and cultural pre-existence of IPs in Argentina, guaranteeing the respect of their identity and promoting bilingual and intercultural education. It furthermore recognises the legal systems of the respective communities, the common property rights of the lands that they traditionally occupied, and the right to receive other suitable lands for human development without being alienable, transmittable or susceptible to gravely foreclosures. The same text states that the right to participate in the management of natural resources and other interests that affect them should be secured (CMN 2010).

Although Argentina is a federal state in which the provinces enjoy some kind of independence, the provincial constitutions and legal frameworks ideally need to correspond to

that of the national. However, provincial constitutional revisions have not occurred with rapid progression. As with the national constitutional breakthrough, it was a result of an intense struggle for transformation, but it took the province of Neuquén more than ten years to make the revisions which among other things formalised the rights of the Mapuce as the only IPs in the province. In the 2006 provincial constitution, article 53 identically reflects article 75.17 concerning IPs` rights in the national constitution (CMN 2010).

The revised national and provincial constitutions do not only recognise the rights mentioned above. The respective governments are furthermore responsible for doing everything they can for these rights to be respected and guaranteed, and to always promote positive actions that favour IPs. That is to say, they have become *primary duty-bearers* in terms of implementing the principles that the Argentine congress ratified in 2000. The Supreme Court of Justice, which is the highest juridical body in Argentina, oblige all state officials, especially the judges, to recognise, follow and apply its recommendations put forward by ILO (CMN 2010).

Legal hierarchy and federal structures

In order to better understand the place and effect of IPs´ rights in Argentina, it is important to emphasise that the country has three levels of government: federal, provincial, and municipal. This division is reflected in the legal structure, as each province has its own constitution and legislation. The provinces enjoy some independence by electing its own governor and juridical officials, enabling them to appoint own judges without interference from the federal government. However, Mica, a lawyer specialising in IPs´ rights, informed me that the federal constitution is at the top of the hierarchy and should therefore be respected, and thus reflected in the articulations and practices of the constitutions of the provinces. She emphasised that the federal constitution `*is the principle and fundamental source of Argentine law*`. When explaining this to me, she drew a pyramid (figure 2) to present the legal structure in Argentina and the way in which international treaties ratified by the congress are acquired different statuses in the legislative hierarchy. In relation to this thesis it is important to notice that of all the ratified treaties. Only eleven have been granted constitutional status, and ILO 169 is not one of these, as it placed between the federal constitution and the national laws.
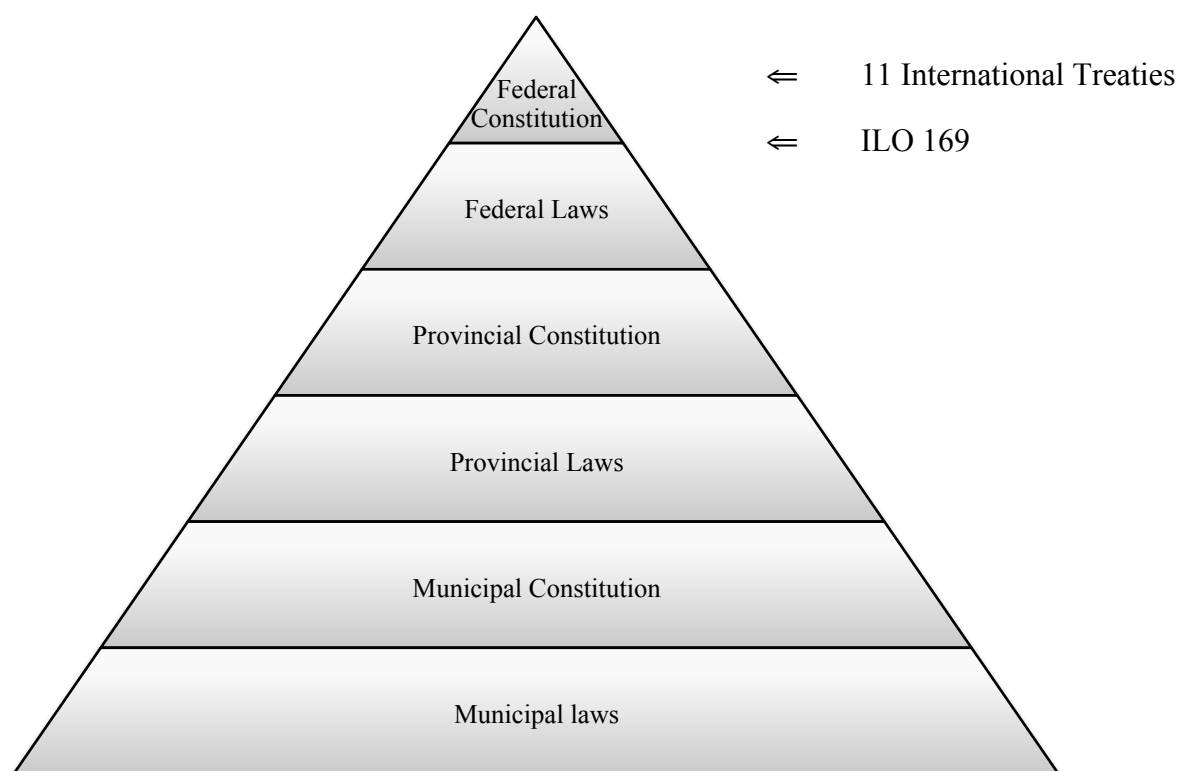
Figure 2: Projection of the legislative hierarchy and the place of international treaties within the legal system of Argentina.

State spaces for indigenous participation

The first national law concerning the rights of IPs can be dated back to 1985, before the ILO 169 was ratified in Argentina. The creation of *Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas*[11] (INAI), succeeded as an application of the new law 23.302. The INAI is a federal agency specifically designed for the federal state treatment of indigenous affairs, appointed under the *Ministerio de Desarrollo Social*[12]. The function of the agency is like any other state sector, as it mainly focuses on the management of public services. It does not contain indigenous political participation, as no seats are particularly reserved for indigenous authorities (ODHPI 2009).

Consejo de Participación Indígena[13] (CPI) was established by the INAI in 2004. The council ideally has the objective of increasing indigenous consultation, participation and influence in

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[11] National Institute of Indigenous Affairs.
[12] The Ministery of Social Development.
[13] Council for Indigenous Participation.

decision-making on a national level. That is to say, to respond to the mandate of article 75 in the federal constitution. The new council was a result of discontent with the lack of indigenous representation within the INAI and similar shortage of effective participation and transformative politics of the previous *Consejo de Coordinación Indígena*[14] (CCI), whose members were appointed by the INAI instead of being democratically elected by the indigenous peoples themselves. Today, CPI consists of about 85 indigenous representatives and 27 state officials (ODHPI 2009).

The Mapuce understanding of rights

> *"We do not have superior, neither inferior, but different rights".*

According to Nyamu-Musembi (2002), a central part of addressing an actor-oriented perspective on rights, is to account for the way in which rights are understood, articulated and prioritised by the actors in question. The statement above reflects the general understanding the Mapuce research participants have in relation to IPs´ rights. It indicates that the Mapuce identify as different from the dominant Argentine population, and that their rights should correspond to this uniqueness. The Mapuce ideals naturally reflect the internationally recognised principles, as the Mapuce identify themselves as IPs, but their conception of rights is first of all based on the values and norms related to their distinct worldview.

Pety, one of the philosophical authorities of both Lof Newen Mapu and the Confederation told me that the concept of *rights,* in its simplest form, could be explained as the right to practice Kvme Felem in Waj Mapu. That is to say the right to well-being according to their worldview. She continues explaining that a more nuanced explanation of the Mapuce´s perception of rights is represented through the three main concepts: *territory*, *people* and *autonomy*, but emphasises that even though these concepts correspond to the original significations in Mapuzugun, an accurate translations is difficult to make. She furthermore stresses that the concepts are interlinked and therefore always connected to each other: `*We cannot be a people without territory. We cannot speak about autonomy if we do not have territory. Without territory we cannot exercise our right as people*`.

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[14] Indigenous Coordination Council.

Reality

5. Challenges of the Mapuce struggle for rights

> *"Contrasting the validity of all these norms, the resistance of the government to recognise and apply them demonstrates the magnitude of illegality concerning official indigenous politics in Neuquén and Argentina"* (ODHPI 2010:12).

In the previous chapter I briefly presented some of the most important ideals concerning indigenous citizenship rights as articulated in UNDRIP and ILO 169, and the establishment of state spaces concerned with indigenous affairs. I furthermore accounted for how IPs` rights are reflected in the federal and provincial constitutions of Argentina, and finally showed how these ideals are articulated and understood by the Mapuce. The constitutional revisions and the establishment of INAI and CPI had the intention of repairing and preventing the maintenance of the multidimensional abuse that the Mapuce people have suffered for centuries, especially during, and since, the desert campaign in the late 19th century. However, as the citation above indicates, the lived reality of the Mapuce is still characterised by a constant struggle for rights. Returning the focus to one of the main research questions proposed in the introduction: *What are the main challenges related to the realisation of IPs´ rights in Neuquèn? What causes a gap between policy and realisation?*

Argentina: A state in denial of its multicultural reality

> *"Our country has not yet accomplished to manage the coexistence with other identities and cultures: it continues to view itself as a monocultural nation, without an ability to recognise itself as multicultural and multilingual, consequently devaluating indigenous cultures"* (ODHPI 2010:44 – 45).

The above citation is an extract from an annual report published by the *Observatorio de Derechos Humanos de Pueblos Indígenas*[15] (ODHPI), and concerns the human rights situation of IPs in Neuquén. The report addresses directly the situation of the Mapuce, as it is the only IP pre-existent to colonial settlements within the territory now constituting the province of Neuquén. The report expresses a clear concern for a failed implementation of indigenous human rights, and emphasises that processes connected to the Argentine nation building have played an essential role in discriminating Mapuce rights in the region in past and present times. The formal and informal societal structures and norms dominating and dictating development processes in Argentina reflect only the dominant colonising European/Creole

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[15] The Observatory for Indigenous Human Rights.

culture, in stark contrast to the ideals articulated in the IPs´ rights frameworks. The government formally recognises a multicultural citizenry representing more than 30 different pre-existing nations (IPs), but an effective recognition and realisation lack presence.

Formal structural constraints

It is possible to identify some formal structural constraint impeding the realisation of IPs` rights in Argentina. One of these constraints concerns the way in which IPs´ rights have been incorporated into the Argentine legal hierarchy. Despite the fact that the ILO 169 ranks higher than the national laws, the same legislative framework reflects it vaguely**.** According to the Mapuce research participants and one lawyer who is an expert on IPs rights, this lack of legal reflection can partly be explained by the hierarchal position of the convention. When taking another look at figure 1 (pg. 49) illustrating the legislative hierarchy in Argentina, it is possible to notice that the ILO Convention 169 holds a lower formal position than the federal constitution. Today, only 11 international treaties and conventions have been given this status through their ratification. One of the claims of the Mapuce, and other IPs in Argentina, is therefore that the Congress should move the ILO 169 up the hierarchy, as they believe it will contribute to improved reflection of IPs rights in national and provincial legislative frameworks if it is given federal constitutional status.

Another structural constraint for the realisation of IPs` rights in Argentina is evident in the area of politics and decision-making forums. As introduced in the previous chapter, the INAI was established to address the indigenous question through a separate organ. Since then, there have been few structural changes, as the law on which it was founded has remained unrevised, despite the fact that the ILO 169 was ratified after the law was approved in 1985. One of the major concerns of the Mapuce in this regard is first of all the very idea of reducing IPs` rights claims to constitute just another sector of society. As such, the INAI was thought to be the organ addressing and solving the `indigenous problem`. Instead of permeating and crosscutting all sectors that affect the multiple development prospects of IPs, the indigenous becomes compartmentalised and treated as any other administrative sector of society.

Although an attempt to politicise the indigenous voice within federal politics was made through the establishment of CPI, the Mapuce do not consider it to provide such ideal opportunities. The council was established based on the main objective of securing a more effective indigenous participation and improved decision-making power on a national level. As such, it is a typical example of a formally recognised invited space that has been created

based on grassroots and international pressure for increased democratisation and inclusion of marginalised groups. However, as Gaventa (2004) and Cornwall (2004) suggest, profound and influential changes are not necessarily introduced directly through the creation of such spaces. This implies that the changes perceived to be crucial in order to realise a better implementation of indigenous rights in Argentina, are not by any means pre given.

The CPI on the other hand, has gone through some structural adjustments by introducing indigenous elections of indigenous representatives, but the transformative possibilities within this space are nevertheless perceived to be limited. Pety, one of the philosophical authorities of Lof Newen Mapu and a representative for the Mapuce in CPI, clearly expresses her resignation towards the situation: `The CPI is not a space for transformation, because it lacks possibilities for effective indigenous politics`. In an e-mail recently received from Pety, she expressed that she was so disappointed with the progress of the CPI in terms of addressing fundamental right issues that she had decided to no longer sit as a representative:

> "I feel that it is a waste of time. The split-and –rule technique of the state functions in their favour, as they succeed in their attempts to disarticulate our struggle. This way they can dominate us with a clear conscience. They can continue to give away our territories to their friends like they have always done".

Mica, one of the lawyers working at the ODHPI, confirms this concern and emphasises that:

> "The Government has not advanced regarding its obligation to secure the implementation of indigenous rights. The establishment of INAI and CPI only reduces indigenous peoples to just another sector of society. It is not crosscutting, as it should be. In order to transform the existing structures that are repressing the rights of indigenous peoples, it is necessary to infiltrate and adjust all sectors within society with effective indigenous politics".

As proposed in the theoretical chapter, it is important to consider the circumstances within which INAI and CPI have been created, and understand how power operates within them in order to understand the possibilities and limitations of indigenous agency. According to the research participants, the state representatives in INAI and CPI seem to be attempting to maintain power and decision-making where it always has been. That is, in the hands of the coloniser, the dominant culture.

Informal structural constraints: A lack of will

Formal structural shortcomings, such as the ILO 169`s lack of federal constitutional status, and inadequate legislation securing IPs` rights, in addition to the concern for a depoliticised INAI and CPI, are considered to be central challenges for the Mapuce in their course of realising indigenous political agency in Argentina. However, an even greater challenge rather seems to be related to a more profound social discrimination. According to my research participants, the racist ideology on which the state was founded in the 19th century continues to permeate all sectors of society. The European/Creole societal system dominates, while cultural diversity is devalued. In this context, a formal recognition of a multicultural state is insufficient and useless if state officials fail to make it effective.

A fundamental challenge for realising indigenous citizenship rights in Argentina is thus experienced as closely linked to an informal structural discrimination, a discrimination deeply embedded and integrated in state institution and practice. This experienced discrimination is continually being referred to by the research participants as the dominating way in which indigenous affairs are approached. The ODHPI report of 2010 suggests that formal constitutional, legal and institutional changes necessarily need to be followed by a change of thought: `…*profound mental transformation on the part of state political, administrative and juridical officials is equally important, a change that is extremely difficult to realise when interests are identifiable with the dominant white ethnic group*` (ODHPI 2010:9). This demand is also clearly expressed by Jorge, *Lonko*[16] of Lof Newen Mapu, and *Werkén*[17] for the Confederation: `*For us, there is no solution as long as the state does not advance in terms of recognising itself as multicultural*`.

The ODHPI report of 2010 has furthermore chosen to place the situation of the Mapuce in the extreme context of racial discrimination, argued to be the root of all forms of Mapuce rights deprivation. To most people, such strong words are associated with extreme and explicit historical events such as the apartheid regime in South Africa or the segregation politics in the US. In contrast, what appears to be the case of discrimination in Argentina takes shape in more hidden forms, making it more difficult to grasp if not experiencing it directly in one's own life. The report states that: `…*official education, history, and the medias of*

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[16] Means head in Mapuzugun, and is a political status and role.
[17] Means messenger in Mapuzugun, and is a political status and role.

communication hide or make invisible discrimination…it is more a case of discrimination through omission than through affirmation` (ODHPI 2010:5).

To me, this refers to racial discrimination in one of its most dangerous forms, as integrated and normalised within powerful institutions that have significant impact on how indigenous affairs are perceived and dealt with. Discrimination appears in all sectors of society, whereas some have more fundamental implications than others. Educational, political and juridical institutions have particular power in terms of shaping and dictating people's thoughts and future prospects. The mass media stands in its own position to influence and discriminate in terms of its ability to create, manipulate and communicate specific discourses (truths).

Conflicting interests and provincial resistance in Neuquén

Even though the federal state of Argentina in many ways has failed to fulfil its role as primary duty-bearer in terms of securing indigenous citizenship rights on a national level, the province of Neuquén is considered to be the principle challenge for the Mapuce in the course of their rights struggle. In the ODHPI report it is argued that: `*The province of Neuquén maintains the same structures and objectives of cultural uniformity on which it was established in the late 19th century, even more so than the federal state*` (ODHPI 2010:24). In the province of Neuquén, there are no spaces exclusively dedicated to indigenous politics, and the Confederation is not recognised as an official political institution. Nevertheless, despite the lack of adequate legislation and provincial spaces exclusively set aside for Mapuce participation, the provinces are obliged to reflect federal politics and implement the few national laws that concern IPs` rights. Despite this obligation however, powerful provincial actors seem to hesitate to obey it, especially in terms of recognising and securing Mapuce rights to ancestral territories.

The land dispute

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Mapuce articulate and prioritise their rights as IP through the main concepts of *territory*, *people* and *autonomy*. The Mapuce (*people*) view themselves as an inseparable part of their ancestral territories, reflected through their self-identification as *ce* belonging to (Waj) *Mapu*, the English translation being: `*the people of the land*`. Investigating the struggle for territorial rights is thus crucial in order to understand the Mapuce rights struggle as a whole. This is first of all true, because their identity derives from, and depends on their ancestral lands, but also because deprivation of ancestral land is a

particularly severe problem for the Mapuce in Neuquén. Land disputes dominate the conflicting relation between state, commercial and Mapuce actors. On one hand, the local economy is highly dependent on key resources such as oil, mining, gas- and hydropower, soya and meat production and tourism, and on the other, the constitutional revision simultaneously obliges the government to secure IPs` rights to the same lands that provide for state revenues.

According to Åhrén (2007), such territorial conflicts are common and illustrate perfectly why indigenous rights to lands, territories and resources (LTRs) belong to the most complicated and controversial area within IPs` rights. This is argued, first of all, because collective ownership contradicts individuality, the very principle on which the human rights were established. Secondly, it is possible to imagine that increased indigenous self-determination over LTRs implies radical structural changes with severe political and economical implications. Åhrén (2007) furthermore points out that most countries with corresponding obligations lack the will to develop adequate legislation reflecting IPs` rights to LTRs. In this regard, Argentina is no exception. Rights to LTRs are poorly integrated into federal and provincial legislation. There are yet no laws securing Mapuce self-determination over ancestral territories within the province of Neuquén.

Criminalisation of the Mapuce right-claimer

Due to the absence of proper legal recognition of IPs` rights to LTRs, the Mapuce have become the marginalised part in land disputes. Mapuce communities have been evicted from their dwellings, pastures have been reduced and the gathering of wood, fruits/berries, medicine etc. is put under restriction. Conflicts over LTRs in Neuquén escalated in the beginning of the 21st century, much due to the disastrous effects of the 2001 financial crisis in Argentina. Fiscal land was sold off to domestic and foreign companies in order to be able to reduce deficits. A corresponding factor contributing to the intensification was an increased Mapuce awareness of international recognition of IPs` rights. In the beginning of this decade, many communities decided to resist evictions, recuperate deprived territories and to engage more intensely in social activism against the repression they had suffered for centuries. In this context of increased pressure and emergence of a new wave of resistance, the Mapuce face new challenges. Instead of being recognised and respected as right-holders, the actions of the Mapuce right-claimers have been criminalised. Today, hundreds of Mapuce authorities are

being processed and accused for violations of the civil code, for trespassing private property and for creating social unrest.

In 2006, a historical legal advance regarding IPs` rights to LTRs in Argentina took place. The emergence of the new law 26.160: *Ley de Emergencia en materia de posesión y propiedad de las tierras*[18], was a result of a long process of indigenous activism and had the objective of protecting IPs from being subjects of violence and eviction until further assessment of land titling had been conducted. The law was created directly as an attempt to address the undeniable demand of justice in terms of historical reparation of the treatment of IPs who have suffered from violent evictions from their ancestral lands in past and present times. It specifically prohibits such misdemeanour before a thorough property rights survey has been conducted. Following the new law, the Congress furthermore created a fund from which a three-year project with the objective of implementing such technical/juridical surveys in all areas indigenous communities occupy, would be financed. The program is called *Programa Nacional Relevamiento Territorial de Comunidades Indígenas*[19], and was designed by INAI in cooperation with CPI (ODHPI 2009).

Law 26.160 directly addresses the unfavourable situation of the Mapuce, but despite of the legal advance, an application of the law in Neuquén has been absent. Instead of enforcing the law, it is ignored and even counteracted by state officials, especially by politicians, judges and entrepreneurs in the province, a coalition of powerful actors with common interests in the lands at stake. Not much has changed, as recuperation of ancestral land and Mapuce activism is still being criminalised by provincial courts. Evictions, now illegal, continue to be authorised by judges and carried out by the police in violent acts of repression. In the ODHPI report (2010), a UN representative argues that there is no other area of rights where there is a bigger gap between what the legal texts say and the way in which the judges of court interpret them, than within the area of indigenous rights in Neuquén.

Networks of power

With such grave violations of law 26.160, it is no longer possible to blame exclusively the absence of state invited spaces and lack of legal correspondence with constitutional norms for the poor realisation of IPs` rights in Neuquén and Argentina. Law 26.160 ideally provides a small step towards improved implementation of Mapuce rights to LTRs, but as the research

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[18] Emergency Law concerning possession and ownership of land.
[19] National Program for Territorial Surveys of Indigenous Communities.

participants desperately exclaim, state officials and other powerful actors in the province refuse by all means to apply it. On the contrary, this network of power is making its strongest efforts to counteract its application. This `provincial resistance` has caused a severe delay of the survey program that should have been initiated four years ago. If initiated, the survey would have been in the process of scrutinising and documenting Mapuce historical use of, and ownership rights to LTRs within the disputed areas. The ODHPI report (2010:28) points out this provincial ignorance and resistance as follows:

> "*The practices of the powers of everyday life ignore constitutional requirements and international treaties that oblige them to respect and protect indigenous culture, institutions, economical practices and political organisation. For the state officials, including the judges, such norms are implicitly considered as announcements of `good intentions`...that is to say, they become effective only if the officials wish to put them into effect, and that is hardly ever*".

The same report furthermore emphasises that the lack of application of the national law is linked to the fact that knowledge of, and adequate training provided for these state officials (especially juridical), is generally poor. Regardless, a lack of knowledge of IPs and their entitled rights does not explain well enough why, for example judges choose to authorise evictions instead of securing the implementation of a law that dictates the opposite. An additional explanation to the failed application of the law simply seems to be related to a dominating lack of will to enforce it, especially because its application threats the personal interests of a set of powerful actors. As such, the challenge of implementing IPs` rights cannot only be explained by shortcomings related to formal institutional structures (political/juridical). In Neuquén, political and economical interests protected by powerful networks consisting of politicians, legal authorities and entrepreneurs, stand in direct opposition to the Mapuce claim for territorial rights.

Discursive weapons

As a way of legitimating the reluctant approach to the application of IPs` rights in the province, the provincial actors in question draw support from specific discourses that intentionally aim to undermine Mapuce entitlement to LTRs. One of the most controversial and debated of these, is the `Araucanisation theory` concerning Mapuce origin and historical presence in Argentina. According to this discourse, the Mapuce were not the original inhabitants of Patagonia when the colonial conquest took place in the late 19th century. Those who support this theory, claim that the Mapuce came from an area of Chile called Araucanía

during the same century and dominated the people that originally populated the land now constituting Neuquén. It is claimed that the culture of this people succumbed through processes of transculturation, as the Mapuce overpowered them culturally and politically (Ray 2007).

What makes this discourse a particularly powerful weapon for those counterworking the Mapuce rights struggle in the province, is its implicit attempt to legitimate European domination over the Mapuce, by claiming that the European colonisers had only done what the Mapuce had done before them. Instead of recognising the Mapuce´s indigenous status, they consciously address them with other terms, such as *Araucans*, *community*, *ethnic minority*, *Indians* etc, terms that lack reference to IPs` rights.

Even though many academics question the validity of the Araucanisation theory, the official prevailing stance in Neuquén is to promote it as a historical fact. This became evident when Xalkan took me to the local museum to demonstrate how Mapuce culture and origin is represented and communicated to the general public. The wall posters and display cases romantically depict a story of Mapuce presence in Neuquén through folkloric tails and artefacts. However, no matter how idyllically told, the story has a temporal beginning and end which denies a Mapuce´s pre-existent status with corresponding rights. It can even be interpreted as an attempt to deny Mapuce presence in modern times. To me, the display intends to communicate that the Mapuce came from Chile to Neuquén in the 19th century and dominated the peoples inhabiting the area at the time. A few decades later, the European/Creole colonisers came to dominate the area in similar ways. In the museum the visitor can learn about Mapuce arrival to Neuquén, see traces of their livelihood and witness their defeat, but according to this projection, the Mapuce no longer exist, and if they claim to do so, they have no pre-existing rights in Neuquén.

An attempt to misinterpret the claim and struggle for self-determination is another discourse sharing the same objective of undermining Mapuce indigenous status as addressed above. A prevailing strategy for impeding the application of Mapuce rights to LTRs is to juxtapose the claim for territorial autonomy with a separatist ideology. As a way of feeding into the idea of the criminal Mapuce right-claimers, the opposing actors argue that what the Mapuce perceive to be acts of recuperation are `usurpations of land`. It has furthermore been claimed that the Mapuce collaborate with armed separatist movements in other countries and that their territorial struggle therefore is a threat to national security. By accusing of separatism and

violence, the objective is to spread fear of a Mapuce invasion of Argentina. The main argument of these actors is thus that if the law is enforced, Mapuce terrorists will threaten and dominate the area.

As the federal agency responsible for indigenous affairs, one of the main tasks of the INAI is to make sure that the provinces apply national laws concerning the rights of Argentina's indigenous citizens. Even though the INAI have been granted earmarked resources from the national budget, and are obliged to secure the application law 26.160, the land survey program is constantly being postponed, and sanctions against those violating the eviction prohibition remain absent. The ODHPI report (2010) claims that this has to do with an ignorance based on a fear of harming the relationship with certain provinces. The provincial resistance and lack of federal interference has lead to a reality in which illegal evictions of Mapuce communities continue, and their practise of indigenous citizenship is being criminalised by provincial courts.

Conclusion

In this first analytical chapter, I have addressed some of the main challenges impeding the Mapuce rights struggle. I have proposed that both formal and informal institutions and structures are shaped by, and therefore also benefitting the dominant culture. The ILO 169 has been ratified, but has not yet been assigned federal constitutional status. There is a lack of legislation reflecting international and constitutional recognition of IPs` rights, especially the rights to LTRs and collective rights in general. CPI, the main state invited space for indigenous participation has in addition failed to promote effective indigenous decision-making, and in Neuquén there are no spaces exclusively dedicated to indigenous affairs at all.

Even though there is a lack of adequate legislation and official state spaces for indigenous representation and effective political participation, a more profound challenge is embedded in a social structure which discriminates difference. Resistance to the recognition of a multicultural Argentina has shown to be especially prevailing in the province of Neuquén, especially as the interest of powerful landowners, commercial- and political actors collide with the territorial claims of the Mapuce. In the process of protecting own interests, they have therefore been using their economical and political power to create and spread *discourses,* which *represent* the Mapuce as extinct or as criminals, instead of recognising them as indigenous *right-claimers* of present time.

6. Claiming spaces of resistance: Strategies for change

In the previous chapter I have explored some of the main challenges the Mapuce in Neuquén face in their struggle for rights. However, despite five hundred years of colonisation, repression and discrimination, they have found ways to resist, rise and recuperate their culture and rights. The most common image of indigenous resistance is probably that of the indigenous activist blocking roads or shouting slogans on the streets. Although short-term acts such as demonstrations constitute an important and central part of the Mapuce political reality, this chapter emphasises on the more long-term and diverse ways in which they strategise in order to counteract the many challenges they face. In the following, I thus explore how they claim spaces of resistance in their quest for realising rights: *What strategies are practised, and in what way are different individuals and age groups engaged in the rights struggle?*

Organisation, collaboration and alliances

A central strategy of the Mapuce rights struggle in Neuquén is the engagement in collaborative relationships with individuals and organisations sharing similar aspirations and goals. Mapuce organisation and collaboration begins in the local community, but stretches out to include international affiliation, thus constituting a multi-scalar web involving a variety of individuals and organisations. By drawing on own resources and skills, or on those of others, they engage in a more effective strategic mobilisation against injustice.

Lof Newen Mapu

As mentioned in chapter 1, the current Lof Newen Mapu consists of a coalition of the two lofs *Newen Mapu* and *Puel Pvjv*. In the beginning of the 1970s, these two lofs organised as separate communities and did not pursue the same political trajectory. Lof Newen Mapu concentrated on the development and practise of political capabilities as their strength, while Puel Pvjv dedicated more time and effort to strengthen philosophical knowledge, that is to say Mapuce cultural traditions and practices. However, in the late 1970s the two lofs began to engage in closer dialogue with each other and finally decided to join forces. Since then, they have been carrying out a common political and cultural project under a united organisation. It was Xalkan who first informed me about the crucial change that took place a couple of decades ago. She emphasised that it was extremely important that the two lofs finally decided to work together: `*Before they were divided, but later they realised the potential of each other's knowledge and strength. It is a complementary work, and a necessary one*`.

What Xalkan indicates, is that the coalition was strategically motivated. In the context of the Mapuce rights struggle, culture and politics are mutually dependent factors. The future survival of the Mapuce culture requires a radical transformation of official indigenous politics, and the Mapuce political project loses its very essence without its cultural foundation. By acknowledging the strengths of combining each other's knowledgeabilities, they saw the beginning of a complementary collaboration through a united quest for the realisation of indigenous citizenship rights.

In addition to the coalition between the two lofs, individual and diverse contributions from the different members is an essential part of the Mapuce collaborative project. I continued to discuss with Xalkan how different individuals engage in the rights struggle. She emphasised what I perceive to be a general reflection of the Mapuce holistic worldview, namely that different individuals have different roles and responsibilities to fulfil in order to maintain equilibrium of Waj Mapu, the universe. The collective is at the centre of attention, but in order for the collective to maintain its balance and perform its best for the realisation of common goals, each individual needs to contribute with its unique prerequisites. Both generational and individual capabilities and resources guide these roles.

As a young active member of a Mapuce lof, you are entitled to the role as *Kona*[20], whose responsibility is to fight for the Mapuce cause. At the individual level, the Kona can assume their responsibilities through drawing on the knowledgeabilities they possess, acquire and perform best. Diverse individual knowledgeabilities are also reflected in the contributions from the elder generations, but due to more life experience, they are considered to be better equipped for assuming official political and philosophical roles. There are many different named and unnamed roles, but two of the most important political figures representing the lof and the Confederation outwards are the Lonko and the Werken. The *Lonko* is the leading figure responsible for all political issues concerning the community, whereas the responsibility of the *Werken* is to act as the main messenger of the Mapuce political project. These two roles require wisdom and eloquence, and are therefore appointed through processes of formation and selection. Others may be better equipped to be historians or medical advisers etc.

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[20] Warrior or activist.

Lof Newen Mapu is one out of 57 lofs that are organised under the Confederation. On the provincial scale, the Confederation constitutes the main arena on which Mapuce collaboration takes place within the province of Neuquén. It is the main political organisation representing collective concerns and claims of the Mapuce in the province of Neuquén. According to Veronica, one of the Werkens, the function of the Confederation is to outline the collective political demands as the only representative and voice of the Mapuce nation.

Multiscalar networks of collaboration

Apart from internal collaboration amongst Mapuce actors within Lof Newen Mapu and the Confederation, other `external` actors and organisations sharing common political interests contribute to the Mapuce rights struggle. The most significant actors include local, national and international indigenous and human rights organisations, but others concerned with social justice (e.g. workers organisations) are also important civil society allies. Expanded collaboration as a strategy is an essential part of the local Mapuce rights struggle, or as Jorge so eloquently puts it: `We have not made the mistake of fighting this battle alone`.

In Neuquén and Argentina, the Mapuce have important allies within a variety of so-called new social movements, but Jorge emphasises that the emergence of international spaces for indigenous collaboration has particularly changed the circumstances of their struggle. Recent technological advances and international recognition of IPs` rights have paved the way for international indigenous politics to flourish, implying new possibilities for the Mapuce to improve their conditions locally, especially by drawing on international expert help and on experiences from other IPs in other parts of the world. According to Jorge, who has been representing the Mapuce in many international forums, the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is the most important arena for indigenous politics. Pety supported this argument by emphasising that:

> *"The indigenous peoples have a strong international participation today, whereas new institutions and units, with the objective of monitoring the activities of the state regarding its realisation of human rights, are frequently being established. This puts increased pressure on the state and the president to act".*

Jorge said that progress made by other IPs in different parts of the world are particularly inspiring for their own struggle, because it provides hope for improvement in Argentina as well. The Bolivian, Ecuadorean and Guatemalan governments have all reformed their

legislations and recognised IPs` right to include multicultural education and territorial autonomy and restitution. Evo Morales is a particular role model, as he was the first indigenous president to be elected in history. His popularity among the Mapuce in Neuquén is evident, as his posters adorn the walls of the Ruka alongside other political pamphlets and manifestations.

However, Jorge emphasised that experiences from other parts of the world take place within a hierarchy. Examples from the global North are taken more seriously, than examples e.g. from other countries in Latin America. He says that if the Mapuce use examples of improved recognition of IPs` rights in other Latin American countries as a way of arguing for similar changes in Argentina, state officials tend to respond to these incidents in a condescending way. Jorge explains:

> *"This is exactly why we often choose to draw on the situation of IPs in the North, because then they listen more seriously. Argentina is copying everything that is going on in the first world. They view Europe as superior due to the European heritage of the Argentine state. That is why we often illustrate our quest for self-determination through the experiences of the Sami, Inuit, Catalan or Basque people".*

What Jorge illustrates show the importance collaboration as a strategy, the importance of drawing on the resources and capabilities of others as a way of strengthening the negotiating power of the Mapuce in terms of realising their indigenous citizenship rights in Argentina.

Technical/juridical support

In addition to engaging in collaborative networks sharing a common objective of achieving radical political changes, the Mapuce rights struggle furthermore depends on technical resources and capabilities. In this regard, the most proximate and significant allied in Neuquén is the recently established *Observatorio Derechos Humanos de Pueblos Indígenas* (ODHPI). The ODHPI is an NGO that was established in March 2009, on initiative from the Confederation and other individuals and organisations providing legal counselling services for the Mapuce prior. Due to centuries of discrimination and rights deprivation these actors saw the necessity of establishing a specific space for addressing juridical questions related to indigenous human rights in the province of Neuquén.

The ODHPI is mainly internationally financed by contributions from Navarra[21], the FORD foundation and the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). Other contributors finance specific projects. As an example, the Argentine government economically supports a two-year project of financing all legal defence processes for Mapuce on trial. The headquarters is located in Neuquén Capital and is employed by both lawyers and Mapuce authorities. It constitutes an important technical supplement to the political project of the Mapuce, as it specialises in juridical aspects with the main objectives of defending and promoting the human rights of IPs. In order to achieve these objectives the organisation works in close cooperation with the Confederation and respective lofs, specifying within four main areas; the guarantee and exercise of rights (implies technical support in trials and monitoring state actors comply with IPs` rights), communication and diffusion of information concerning the human rights situation of the Mapuce through different medias (publishing annual reports etc.), capacity building through training, workshops, internships etc, and research on topics concerning IPs` rights.

The technical support acquired through the ODHPI is crucial, as more and more Mapuce authorities are being prosecuted for recuperations of land and social protest. The ODHPI does not only provide the Mapuce with direct legal assistance, it also engages in long term strategies that intend to provide the Mapuce with a more profound legal protection through monitoring the state and its responsibility to implement IPs` rights in the province. As such, the ODHPI has become a important space of legal resistance, or in other words, a space where the experienced illegality is resisted and counterworked through technical means.

Capacity building

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, capacity building is perceived to be crucial in order to empower marginalised individuals and groups in terms of achieving a greater say in their own prospects. Even though the Mapuce consider strategic collaboration with external actors to be extremely important, capacitating own actors is perceived as fundamental for the ability to play a central role in their own rights struggle. As much as their agency depends on the knowledgeabilities of others, drawing on inherent, and acquiring new capabilities or skills, is crucial for further advancement of the Mapuce political project. An important part of Mapuce capacity building processes take place within both formal (state) and autonomous (Mapuce)

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[21] Autonomous province of the Basque in Spain.

spaces of education, but also through specific collaborative projects that have the objective of providing Mapuce actors with tools and knowledge that may equip them better in the course of the rights struggle.

Education

The Kona consider higher education to be an important way of capacitating themselves, preferably through specialisations in areas which can benefit the Mapuce rights struggle in one way or the other. During my stay, I got to know several youth who study different subjects at the local university. When asking about educational choices, their responses clearly indicated that their motivation was related to the Mapuce rights struggle. Lefxaru, a law student currently practicing an internship at the ODHPI, made a clear statement on this behalf: `*My choice of career was not about realising personal desires. It was rather a way of acquiring a tool by which I could be able to contribute to the struggle of our people*`. Umawtufe, Xalkan and Piren, respectively studying social communication, geography and sociology, gave corresponding answers. It was obvious that they saw it as their duty to capacitate for the sake of the future of their people.

The response from Lefxaru and the others, illustrate how the role of the Kona has become redefined in concordance with present time circumstances. From being warriors engaging in physical battle in the 19th century, the Kona now aspire to attend the rights struggle through acquiring useful technical skills and knowledge. By engaging in `western` higher education, they enter a powerful space within which knowledge is produced and communicated. Through entering this arena, they have the aspiration of changing it from being a space of domination and exclusion into a space of resistance and inclusion. Xalkan, a Mapuce student of Geography is particularly concerned with the need to change the very structures of the state educational system. According to her, one way of contributing to such change is to educate Mapuce scholars:

> *"Our brothers and sisters that receive titles at the university achieve prestige and have the ability to tell stories from our point of view, through the eyes of Mapuce lawyers, geographers or historians… It would be very interesting to write a thesis on the place of Mapuce knowledge in education, because it is the university that legitimates knowledge. It is a space in which the minds of people are formed. Many state representatives have titles from the university, and they are those who organise the society in which we live".*

One of the most fundamental stories that the Mapuce urge to challenge is the Auracanisation theory previously discussed in this analysis, a discourse which to a large degree is used to legitimate the lack of recognition of Mapuce rights to LTRs in Neuquén. A counter discourse suggests that the Mapuce have been present since the first coloniser set foot on the American continent in the early 16th century. In the same way that the Auracanisation discourse is used as an important strategy to undermine Mapuce entitlements to indigenous citizenship rights, the counter discourse is an attempt to defend the indigenous status and the rights attached. Thus the Mapuce exclaim: `*We are not only a `community` or an `ethnic minority`. Nor are we `Indians`. We do not have superior, neither inferior rights. We are an indigenous people with different rights`*.

Fundamental structural changes of the state education system is also what concerns the Mapuce philosophical authorities. For the last few years they have been working on a project concerning the introduction of intercultural education in Argentina, implying that formal education needs to include intercultural perspectives beyond what Pety argues has been reduced to an act of `*teaching the children in primary school the name of the colours in Mapuzugun`*. A more profound application of intercultural education critiques the current bilingual education politics of the government, as it demands an incorporation, and juxtaposition of Mapuce philosophy, academic methodology and terminology, and pedagogic with the so-called western system of education. In addition, the project includes a proposal for the establishment and official recognition of a *Universidad Mapuce Intercultural*[22] as the Mapuce´s own educational institution, a right they are entitled to according to article 27.3 in ILO 169 (1989) and article 14.1 in UNDRIP (2007).

Even though Lefxaru, Xalkan, Piren and the other Kona of Lof Newen Mapu, have chosen to focus on capacitating through formal education, they emphasise that autonomous education holds an equally important position. For now, the older generation fulfil the role as philosophical authorities, but in order to fulfil these roles in the future, the Kona are burdened with a double responsibility. This is not an easy task, as they need to work hard to maintain their cultural knowledge, due to increased need and pressure to prioritise state education. Again this challenge relates to the idea of finding the perfect balance, or as Xalkan expresses: `*It is important that we obtain complementary knowledge and skills in order to maintain equilibrium`*.

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[22] Intercultural Mapuce University.

Capacity building through collaborative projects

Capacity building as a strategy of resistance and transformation is closely related to that of collaboration. In addition to capacitating through state and autonomous education, the Mapuce engage in other capacitating projects in collaboration with other individuals and organisations. In this regard, ODHPI plays a significant role, especially as fundraiser for projects which intend to improve the juridical position of the Mapuce in the province. Capacitating activities and events range from meetings and workshops on rights, to technical training and internships offered to Mapuce students.

When I was in Neuquén, Xalkan brought me to a seminar with a study group established through one of ODHPI´s capacity building programs. The group is furthermore part of the larger project concerning a proposal for intercultural education and consists of anthropologists from the local university, Mapuce and non-Mapuce students and other Mapuce who have taken interest in academia without being matriculated. The group meets once a week and discuss academic texts relating to indigenous research, whereas the focus is on redefinitions and critical assessments of western-rooted research methodologies, concepts and practices. Different texts/topics are distributed among the participants and are presented and discussed in following seminars. This is both an invited and a claimed space, because it is a forum created in cooperation between western scholars and Mapuce right-claimers. Regardless, it is a *space of resistance* within which *alternative discourses* can be debated and developed, and where intercultural exchange can grow and set the scene for increased recognition of, and respect for multicultural education.

In the absence of state action and accountability, and corresponding delay in terms of initiating the Land survey Program, the Confederation has taken matters into their own hands. Mapping past and present use, expansion and conception of Mapuce territories is an important act of marking and documenting historical rights to LTRs in the province. In the last couple of years the ODHPI, an NGO called Pro Patagonia consisting of anthropologists, geographers, agronomists, historians, forest veterinaries and sociologist etc, and Mapuce communities in the province, have engaged in a self-initiated (non-state) collaborative land survey project. Acting on what in reality is the responsibility of the state, they have arranged workshops and training programs with the objective of mapping and documenting Mapuce use, knowledge of the territories they perceive to be ancestral.

The mapping of Mapuce territorial competence is combined with the use of `western` academic knowledge, technical tools and remedies, such as GPS and GIS. The documentation of both academic and cultural knowledge is an important strategy in the course of claiming rights to LTRs and has for example been used as profound evidence in trials. The goal of this project is to capacitate Mapuce communities through professionalisation whereas Mapuce professionals eventually will work independently with similar projects which may help secure them a better implementation of rights to LTRs in the future. However, despite the fact that a central objective is to capacitate Mapuce communities to gain stronger negotiating power in land disputes, Raul, one of the anthropologists participating in the project, emphasises that it is all in all a mutually benefitting collaboration. He insists that: `academics need to learn about the Mapuce and their understanding of territory, and the Mapuce about our technical and academic tools`.

Recuperation of territory and identity

> "Our main strategy is to exercise our rights. We say that we have to enforce them and not wait until they are recognised. We have waited decades for the state to recognise our rights to territories. We have waited decades for the state to prevent mining and oil companies from entering our territories and exploit our resources. At one point we got tired of waiting and decided to recuperate our territory, to occupy land that we consider to be ours based on historical rights. We prevent companies from entering the territory, because we are tired of waiting for the state to act".

In the citation above, Jorge reflects one of the most fundamental and controversial strategies of the Mapuce rights struggle. The Mapuce are tired of inaction as response to claims and constant promises of change, and have therefore taken a collective decision to act as `agents of their own right`. According to Veronica, a Mapuce employed at the ODHPI and a political authority of the Confederation, territorial recuperation is a part of a larger political project with the objective of realising indigenous citizenship rights through autonomous territorial control (self-determination). Since 2001, about 73.000 hectares of land have been recuperated by Mapuce lofs in Neuquén as a result of long-term land survey projects. After thorough investigations, many Mapuce communities decided to engage in a process of recuperation, by occupying or resisting eviction from the lands that had been confiscated from them and converted into fiscal or private property since the late 19th century.

The act of recuperation is not only an act of reclaiming physical space. Claiming territory through recuperation, more than anything implies an act of reclaiming Mapuce identity, as it is inseparable from their ancestral lands. It is furthermore an attempt to revise the official history refusing to recognise Mapuce historical presence and use of the disputed territories. While powerful provincial actors chose to see it as an act of crime, the Mapuce claim that it is an act of right. By practising their citizenship in the absence of official recognition of the same, they express a clear message: `*We are a people, we are still alive, and we claim our right as such*`.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that despite many constraints, the Mapuce in Neuquén have not succumbed. On the contrary, in the absence of formal indigenous spaces in the province and effective participation in CPI, the Mapuce *right-claimers* have found ways to claim alternative *spaces of resistance* in their quest for realising indigenous citizenship rights. Power is not only experienced by the Mapuce through both formal and informal suppressive structures, it is also exercised through political agency acquired through the mobilisation of capabilities and resources, by drawing on own *knowledgeabilities* and those of others. Through determination and creativity they propose alternative *counter discourses*, and engage in strategic collaboration, capacity-building projects, recuperation of land and demonstrations. What ultimately drives the Mapuce rights struggle forward is the ability to combine individual contributions with collective strength through distributing tasks and responsibilities amongst each other. The main idea is that all individuals and age groups have important and complimentary knowledge and capabilities, which can contribute to the rights struggle in different ways.

Up until now I have given an introduction to the main challenges and counter strategies in terms of realising IPs` rights in Neuquén, constituting the reality of the rights struggle. In the last part of the analyses, I present three specific examples to illustrate how these challenges and strategies of resistance coincide. The cases of *The Indigenous March* (7.1), *Communication with identity: The strategy of the young activist* (7.2), and *Kurrumil: A story of repression, recuperation and struggles over truth* (7.3) respectively say something factual about the struggle, but together they also say something about the diverse and complex reality of the Mapuce struggle for rights. In these chapters I will also explore *possibilities* for change: *To what extent do different processes of claiming spaces of resistance lead to desired change?*

Possibilities

7.1 The Indigenous March

The year 2010 was characterised by many challenges for the Mapuce in Neuquén, but due to their engagement in a variety of strategies of resistance it was furthermore a year of achievements. The Confederation emphasised that the Indigenous March arranged between the 12th and the 20th of May was not only the biggest event of 2010, it was also `*the most overwhelming political event in the 200 yearlong history of the Argentine state*`. The political authorities continue to describe the event as an `*irrepressible celebration and emotional thrill, a political expression of a reality that can no longer be hidden*`. This chapter addresses how the Mapuce claimed spaces of resistance through the bicentennial Indigenous March, and explores why it constituted such an important strategic manifestation for the Mapuce and other IPs in Argentina.

A time and place for everything

Even though a large manifestation like the Indigenous March can be powerful regardless of date and location, the time and place for this particular event was carefully chosen. In 2010, Argentina celebrated 200 years as a nation under the nationalist motto: `*200 años de independencia*`[23], referring to the year of liberation from the Spanish crown and subsequent formation of a new nation state. The Argentine bicentennial was therefore characterised by a variety of markings, whereas the 25th of May, the day of formation of the first independent Argentine government, constituted the centre of the celebration.

The bicentennial had a strong symbolic signification for the country's IPs, though with a different focus. As a way of demonstrating their version of the Argentine nation-building process, the Mapuce in Neuquén organised an alternative marking together with other indigenous and social movements. The Confederation referred to the bicentennial celebration as `*a powerful moment that will never repeat itself*´. This reflection expresses that the bicentennial was a unique opportunity for the IPs to manifest an alternative discourse. Instead of glorifying the nation-building process, the alternative voice suggests that the bicentennial reflects `*200 years of colonisation, domination and repression*`. What other year than the bicentennial could then possibly constitute a better opportunity for demonstrating the claim for multicultural respect and recognition?

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[23] 200 years of independence.

The choice of time for the demonstration was thus strategically planned. In order to avoid shadowing the main celebration, the date for the Indigenous March was set to precede the 25th of May. This was done, namely because one of the main objectives of the March was to shed light on the ignored past and present abuse IPs have suffered as a consequence of the establishment and growth of the argentine state. The arrangement of such a massive manifestation on the 20th of May enabled the IPs to draw attention to a story previously neglected by state officials and the mass media. Jorge, a central figure in the planning committee, explained that if they had arranged the March on the 25th, they would most likely have disappeared in the crowd, drowned in the ego of the nation and probably been refused to disrupt the celebration with such a contradictive message. By arranging the March close to the main celebration, but not on the actual date, they managed to take advantage of the attention that the bicentennial attracted instead of drowning in its commotion.

Just as much as the time of the march was carefully chosen, so were the locations for the events that took place during the March. Buenos Aires is of course a given scene for the display of indigenous claims, as it is the federal capital and thus the city where all the important institutions of power are seated. As far as the route of the March was concerned, it began outside of *Casa Rosada*[24], the building holding the presidential offices. Close by lies *Plaza de Mayo*[25], one of the most central squares in the history of Argentine civil society. The square is particularly known as the square on which *Madres/Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*[26] weekly march in circles to demonstrate their right to know what happened to their children and grandchildren who disappeared during the dictatorship. As it additionally is colloquially known as *plaza de protestas*[27], it was a suitable place on which the Indigenous March could end its journey. The March that began outside a location representing the very symbol of state power and decision-making, continued through the streets of Buenos Aires, and ended up on a square representing one of the most powerful sites in modern history of the Argentine civil society.

Por qué marchamos? Why did we march?

The main objective of the Indigenous March was to demonstrate an affirmative stand regarding IPs´ rights in Argentina. As implied above, one of the strategies practised in order

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[24] The pink house.
[25] The May square.
[26] The mothers and grand mothers of the May square.
[27] The square of protest.

to achieve this objective was to draw attention to the media and the general public. In the course of the March, this message was made visible on the streets of Buenos Aires through a peaceful and pronounced indigenous invasion of the federal capital. In addition to communicating the alternative indigenous discourse to as many spectators as possible by flashing banners, shouting slogans and giving speeches, the indigenous demonstrators managed to claim a space of resistance through their very presence. It is estimated that around twenty five thousand participants contributed to making visible the very existence and diversity of Argentina's IPs. Jorge emphasised that a strong visual impression was crucial in terms of challenging the ignorance characterising the dominant discourse concerning IPs in Argentina:

> *"The problem with the Argentine state is that many of the state officials say that there are no indigenous peoples in the country. In Buenos Aires, there are many white European decedents, but if you take a look at the rest of the country you see indigenous territories and indigenous peoples. We are 30 all together. We therefore needed to make a strong expression in order to affirm to everyone that indigenous peoples are not only what you find in Bolivia, Paraguay, Ecuador, Peru etc."*

An extract from one of the flyers made in relation to the March confirms this necessity to educate or remind Argentina of its multicultural heritage:

> *"Argentina is multinational and multicultural. This we say, this we claim and this is one of the reasons for marching towards Plaza de Mayo. We wanted to demonstrate that we do not belong to history. We exist and we have resisted more than 500 years, and continue resisting for our right as peoples"*.

This statement indicates further that the alternative indigenous discourse also includes a positive dimension. The IPs of Argentina do not solely want to illuminate that they have suffered centuries of suppression. What is even more emphasised by my participants is their ability to resist and persist as distinct peoples and cultures, a powerful driving force in the continuation of the rights struggle of the Mapuce.

Although the act of making a strong visual appearance on the streets of Buenos Aires for spectators and the media was an important part of the Indigenous March, an equally important objective was to present a list of concrete claims and to meet with the president. As such, it was not only an event characterised by protest and complaint on the streets of Buenos Aires.

It was also about dialogue with state officials and the presentation of concrete proposals for the improvement of current official indigenous politics. The latter was first proposed in an appeal made in front of a crowd of spectators at Plaza de Mayo, and later discussed in a closed meeting with the president. In the course of claiming the realisation of multiple citizenship rights through the affirmation of Argentina as multicultural, the indigenous political authorities had made a list of urgent proposals, whereas some of them suggested: recognition and restitution of the IPs and their entitlements to the lands which are now in the hands of the state, enforcement of law 26.160 concerning the `Land Survey Program`, economic reparation in order to generate politics of development with identity, recuperation of indigenous history and culture, and protection of the environment and natural resources.

Shifting space, shifting power!

Due to the time and place chosen for the final appeal, the president could not by any means make up an excuse and refuse to respond. A crowd of twenty five thousand indigenous right-claimers demanding answers in front of the press outside the presidential offices, could hardly be ignored. The president had no other choice but to listen to the appeals, and give answers to the claims. On Plaza de Mayo, the indigenous right-claimers had claimed a space of resistance within which they had set the scene, written the script and acted out the play. In that moment, they were able to take control and exercise power through dictating the circumstances of negotiation. There was no other way: the president had to give a positive response. According to several newspapers covering the event, the appeal was received with promising words. La Jornada[28] cites the president: `*I say this in order to suggest that we reduce our arrogance, and enter the humble state necessary for respecting liberty, equality and equity regarding rights, cultures and identities*` (Calloni 2010).

Through several statements, the president indicated that both rights and cultures should be respected, thus implying that IPs` rights should be protected. However, succeeding the official encounter at Plaza de Mayo, did a less positive encounter with the president at Casa Rosada. When the actors in dialogue changed the stage on which the negotiation took place, the tone of negotiation correspondingly shifted. As they entered the presidential office, the power-relationship shifted in favour of the state official. In contrast to the open appeal, the second meeting was closed. The president had only invited about thirty indigenous political

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[28] Nationwide newspaper.

authorities for dialogue, and no press were granted access. As the space of negotiation shifted, so did the attitude of the president. In contrast to the humble performance she did for the press, the closed meeting reflected more sincerely the contradictory official state politics of indigenous affairs I have addressed earlier in this analysis. This is how Pety, described the two very different meetings with the president:

> "There was one official and one closed meeting between the president and the IPs. In these two different spaces, the president responded very differently to our claims. In the open audience held in public on the street, she made a glory speech for the press. You know, saying only what the public wanted to hear. In the closed meeting, only a few people attended, just [our] political authorities and the president. In this environment the president responded with bad words. For example, she said that the state necessarily needs to govern the country's natural resources in order to develop the country".

Jorge gave a similar judgement of the closed meeting with the president. He said that her way of responding to the list of demands was poor:

> "She promised that the human remains from our warfare leaders conserved in museums would be returned to the Mapuce. But this is not enough. It means little if the state ignores to recognise the persons that were responsible for the genocide, especially general Roca who is represented as a hero in several official buildings, main streets and squares".

Jorge continued to explain that this is a typical example of how the president, and other state officials attempt to avoid addressing the more profound political issues concerning IPs` rights. The two contrasting meetings with the president illustrate well how agency depends on the way in which power works and shifts centre of gravity in different spaces. In the example above, indigenous agency, influence and control diminished as the negotiating parts relocated behind closed doors in the presidential building.

The strength of joint forces

As indicated above, the 20th of May was a historical day as far as indigenous activism is concerned. It was about making indigenous presence and strength visible on the streets and about entering into dialogue with the state. It was the ultimate highlight of the indigenous marking of the bicentennial, but the long-term objective was to strengthen indigenous collaboration and to establish a new space of nationwide indigenous politics. The

demonstration could not have reached such quantity and provoked such significant attention had it not been a mobilisation of, and collaboration between, a variety of indigenous and social movement actors. The indigenous right-claimers began their journey towards Buenos Aires already the 12th, a week before. From three different points of departure they travelled from La Quiaca in the far north, Formosa/Posadas in the northeast and Bariloche/Mendoza in the west. The group of demonstrators became larger as they travelled, and during the March on the 20th, dozens of other human rights, worker and student organisations joined and contributed to the massive representation of multicultural existence.

The very idea of arranging the bicentennial Indigenous March emerged from a meeting arranged in Jujuy in December 2009. The Confederation was among the main initiators, together with the Guaraníes, the Tobas and the Kollas. In Jujuy, their political authorities met with the workers organisation Tupac Amaru. The objective of the meeting was to plan for the manifestation, but it was also the beginning of a new and improved indigenous collaborative project. In the days following the Indigenous March in Buenos Aires, representatives from all the participating indigenous organisations, including Tupac Amaru, met to evaluate how they would precede the collaboration together. As a result, the *Organizadora Marcha Nacional*[29] established in Jujuy was renamed *Consejo Plurinacional Indígena*[30]. As such, the significant week in May was more than just a marking of an alternative truth regarding the Argentine nation-building process. It was simultaneously an important beginning of a more extensive and coordinated nationwide indigenous politics, as a new space of indigenous political participation was under formation. The need for such a space in the lack of indigenous agency in state invited spaces was only reconfirmed after the closed meeting with the president that showed such poor results.

According to Jorge and Pety, the bicentennial March and the establishment of *Consejo Plurinacional Indígena was* a huge step forward in terms of strengthening indigenous collaboration in Argentina, which has never been a self-evident fact. Pety says that there has always been a problem that some indigenous representatives accept small `bribes` offered by the state in exchange for a silent political voice:

> *"If we are strongly united they are scared that we will become too powerful. They try to put us up against each other, e.g by giving benefits to those who are only demanding basic needs. By*

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[29] The organiser of the National March.
[30] The Multinational Indigenous Council.

manipulating these groups, the state has succeeded in this agenda, to slow down the more politically focused indigenous actors".

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the 2010 Indigenous March was one of the most important events in the history of indigenous activism in Argentina. I have heard so many stories, and seen so many videos and pictures from it that I almost feel like I have participated myself. The bicentennial provided a unique and powerful opportunity for the Mapuce to illuminate an *alternative indigenous discourse* emphasising a suppressed, but resistant multicultural Argentina. Argentina has a long history of having a strong and visual civil society that has claimed the streets as its primary *space for resistance*. The Indigenous March was about making indigenous rights and presence visible on the streets of Buenos Aires, but also about engaging in formal meeting with the president. Although the president gave poor answers, it put pressure on the state to act.

The Indigenous March in Buenos Aires was successful in terms of demonstrating indigenous political agency and manifesting an alternative truth, but also in terms of establishing of a new indigenous *space for resistance* through *Consejo Plurinacional Indígena*. As such, this achievement might be understood as a result of a long-term and deliberate process of capacity building, organisation and collaboration; a process in which the *knowledgeabilities* of an extensive set of *rights-claimers* constituted preconditions in the course of reaching a common goal. While the indigenous authorities drew on their political skills in the formation of claims and in negotiations, others contributed with creative expressions on the streets with dance, music and slogans.

On one hand, large demonstrations constitute the very cliché of civil society resistance. On the other, one cannot underestimate its potential for drawing massive attention to a cause. Nevertheless, I ask myself to what extent the Indigenous March has evoked any significant change. There is no doubt that the week of demonstration constituted a well-organised and strong manifestation of indigenous claims. However, sadly, but often truly, demonstrations like these seem to be forgotten already the next day.

7.2 Communication with identity:

The strategy of the young activist

Although the Indigenous March was an event where all age groups participated in terms of making a massive visual manifestation of indigenous presence, the profound objectives depended mainly on contributions from the elder political and philosophical authorities. In this chapter however, I explore specifically how the young Mapuce engage in the rights struggle, and the way in which they fulfil and redefine their role as Kona in the new era of modern technology through claiming a spaces of resistance within media of communication.

The Kona redefined

As mentioned earlier in this analysis, the young Mapuce engage in the rights struggle through their role as Kona. According to the Mapuce worldview, youth have a unique capability to contribute with knowledge of new times and the energy of a young body and a fresh mind. The responsibility of the Kona has always been to defend the Mapuce cause through drawing on both generational and individual knowledgeabilities. Even though the circumstances of the Mapuce rights struggle have changed, the motive persists. Today, many Konas of Newen Mapu take higher education and acquire individual academic or technical skills which can be used as supportive tools for the rights struggle. Due to the massive change in technology during recent years, communication has become one of the most important areas in terms of capacity building and participation in the Mapuce rights struggle. This is how Umawtufe describes the redefined role of the Kona of Lof Newen Mapu:

> *"Before the Argentine and Chilean states existed, the role of the Kona was to be attentive to the necessities that arose, and to respond to them in practical ways. During the Spanish conquest, the Kona became warriors. We say that in some ways, the fight continues through a quest for the realisation of our rights as a people. As young people, it is important to recuperate this role, to be prepared to do what is necessary for our struggle. However, the difference today is that we have chosen to practise this responsibility as Kona through engaging in media of communication".*

Umawtufe is a student of social communication at the local university. As the other Kona in the lof, he emphasises the importance of capacity building as a way of contributing to the rights struggle. He explains that he has always taken interest in journalism, media and communication. After secondary school, it was time to make some decisions regarding future education, and he thought that an education within communication could be advantageous. The argumentation of Umawtufe shows that his choice of career is more than just a

responsibility. It is furthermore a creative way of making meaningful contributions to the Mapuce rights struggle in a contemporary context based on the particular skills and interests he possesses. Through studying Social Communication, Umawtufe acquires particular knowledgeabilities which become his individual contribution to the community when he uses the skills he learns as a tool to improve the conditions for his people.

Xalkan, commented on the way in which it has become necessary to take a greater advantage of these `modern` tools, and emphasised that this is a strategy that the Mapuce have practiced for centuries. According to her, the ability to resist and persist as a people depends on creativity and the ability to take advantage of new tools. In my understanding of the concept of *knowledgeability*, creativity and adaptability become especially important preconditions for agency to occur, especially in constraining circumstances. To illustrate her point, Xalkan maked an interesting comparison with how the horse was adopted by her ancestors in the past: *`500 years ago, our ancestors took advantage of the horse originally coming from Europe. With the horse they could defend the territory. With the tools of medias of communication it is the same. It is a very strong tool, because by using it, it is possible to reach out to a lot of people`.*

The power of the mass media in Argentina

In addition to considering medias of communication to be an important contemporary tool in the course of the Mapuce rights struggle, the research participants consider the monopolist, partial and discriminatory characteristics of the mass media in Argentina to be a further motivation for claiming a space of resistance within the area communication. The biggest challenge concerning the mass media in Argentina has been that a few large companies control the largest news transmitters in the country. This monopoly has led to corruption and manipulation, whereas truth is created, controlled and transmitted by a few economically and politically powerful actors. As such, their objective is not to inform, but rather to communicate the stories favouring the owners and investors.

In Neuquén, the media monopoly is particularly prominent and can be related to the powerful network of political and economical actors counterworking the Mapuce right struggle in the province. For these actors the media is used as an instrument for downplaying indigenous existence or representing the indigenous reality as problematic or conflict related. In other words, the Mapuce are either referred to as extinct or as a threat. In relation to the recent

increase in Mapuce recuperation of territory, the largest newspapers, radio channels and TV-stations have especially represented the Mapuce right-claimers negatively. According to Kvrvf, the power of the mass media is concentrated and undeniable: `Nobody can deny the fact that a powerful minority is controlling what we read, see and hear in this country…that is how the media manipulates the thoughts of society`.

During a press conference in relation to the presentation of the annual ODHPI report in the national Congress in August 2010, Juan Manuel, an Argentine specialist on IPs´ rights, was asked about his impression of the media coverage of the Mapuce in Neuquén. His answer points to another important aspect of how the media's representation of IPs lacks coherence with reality. According to him, the medias of communication in Argentina lack attention to the profound questions concerning IPs` rights:

> "IPs are represented in the media coverage, but it is usually about concrete events which have happened in the past. Sometimes evictions or acts of resistance are presented as either in favour of, or against the indigenous cause. The problem is that there is a lack of political discourses which critique the dominant system that historically has suppressed IPs´ rights in the country".

Claiming spaces of resistance through communication

The assertion concerning the mass media in Argentina above indicates that a central challenge for the Mapuce is related to representation through the eyes of the `other`. This is especially true, when power and control of information lies in the hands of a set of powerful actors whose interests collide with the objectives of the Mapuce rights struggle. For the Mapuce, the dominant space of communication has therefore been a space of constraint. However, as indicated initially, the Kona of Lof Newen Mapu have in the recent years began to fight the discriminating nature of the media by taking up discursive struggles and claiming a space of resistance and indigenous representation through medias of communication. As such it has become one of the most central strategies of resistance practiced by the Kona in contemporary times.

The Kona I got to know during my stay in Neuquén were all between eighteen and twenty six years old. According to Umawtufe, the interest in communication as a strategy of resistance began to take shape about eight years ago. It all began with a homemade newspaper with simple characteristics inspired by the culture of Punk. It was written by hand, copied and

distributed from hand to hand. Umawtufe explained: `*In the beginning it was meant for other young people in the city, but also to inform other people in general about our existence and about our situation. We wanted to communicate that we are alive and that we want to give news expressed by us*`.

Since then, the role of the Kona has expanded to include a variety of media in the course of communicating the Mapuce discourse. Today, the Kona of Newen Mapu take part in broadcasting a Mapuce radio program, make amateur documentaries, posters, pamphlets, booklets etc, and design websites and furthermore use the internet to diffuse information in various ways. A few years back a communication team was appointed, whose task is to communicate the official politics of the Confederation and to diffuse the work and objectives of the ODHPI through different medias of communication. In this regard different generational and individual knowledgeabilities are seen as strengths in the course of realising Mapuce political agency in Neuquén. Umawtufe explains this better through his own words:

> *"We work independently, but the elders resume what we have done. They do it to ensure that the content is coherent with the official discourse we want to communicate. This is important, because it needs to reflect our political strategy, but it also relates to our worldview – our different, but complementary roles and the responsibility that we hold to each other in terms of mutual respect. The elders are guiding us in the right direction".*

Mapu Radio: Communication with identity

The Kona have managed to claim a significant space of resistance within media of communication. As far as newscasts are concerned, Mapu Radio has been the most stable, regular and effective media of communication for the Mapuce in Neuquén since its establishment a few years back. It is not an independent radio, but rather a one hour long radio program broadcasted every Sunday through the university radio UNC CALF, which always has been a left-oriented and critical radio according to Umawtufe. This collaboration has been important, as UNC CALF provides studio, equipment and technical support without any charge.

Mapu Radio is furthermore being broadcasted through approximately thirty different provincial radios in Argentina. The Internet has without doubt revolutionised the opportunity for the Mapuce in terms of communicating their voice to a wider audience. In addition to weekly broadcasts on Sundays, daily ten-minute newsfeeds are available online for download.

Facebook, Twitter and Skype are other online arenas on witch news can be transmitted effectively throughout the indigenous and non-indigenous world. *Pagina 12* and *Diario 8300* are two local online newspapers in Neuquén, which regularly transmit news from Mapu Radio through their websites. Umawtufe, one of the main news reporters of Mapu Radio, admits to the almost unlimited power of the Internet as follows: `*I love the radio, but the Internet is more powerful, because it is difficult to control and censor. It is easily broadcasted to Singapore, Japan, and Europe etc. and it is a cheap and effective tool of diffusion*`.

According to Umawtufe and the other young reporters, Mapu Radio represents what they term `*communication with identity*`. Piren explained it as follows:

> *"Communication with identity is a way of communicating a message or idea from a different perspective. In our case, that is communication made for and by indigenous peoples. We are communicating our Mapuce identity through our way of communicating. We have to be the ones that administrate the communication, if not the objectives become different. We want to transmit more than information, data and facts. That is our culture, values and way of living".*

Communication with identity is thus a way in which the Kona claim a space of Mapuce resistance and representation, a space within which the Mapuce culture, reality and political discourse can be transmitted. While the mass media speak about the `Mapuce problem` or the `Mapuce criminal`, a counter discourse is transmitted with identity, and with the objective of presenting an alternative truth. The topics addressed in Mapu Radio are furthermore not only informing about the right attached to territorial recuperation, or the negative outcomes of conflicts with state and commercial actors. In their quest for realising communication with identity, the Kona discuss causes to these conflicts and transmit the Mapuce worldview as a way of explaining the philosophical principles on which their politics is based.

Mapu Radio was first of all established as a media for communicating Mapuce news to the Mapuce people in both Argentina and Chile. For the young communicators of Lof Newen Mapu it has therefore been crucial to collaborate with their Mapuce brothers and sisters outside of Neuquén in order to exchange news and experiences. When I was in Neuquén, the Kona were working for an extension of their collaboration by corresponding with other young indigenous reporters in Latin America. As a result, Mapu Radio is now also broadcasted through corresponding local indigenous radios in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Colombia etc. The Kona emphasised that an additional objective is to inform the rest of the Argentine and

international society about the Mapuce reality. During the broadcast, short clips concerning Mapuce culture and rights are played in order to inform those that have little or no knowledge of these issues. By using both Spanish and Mapuzugun, and directing information towards indigenous and non-indigenous readers and listeners, Mapu Radio has put the intercultural on the agenda and has succeeded in terms of transmitting the Mapuce message on their own terms.

Puel Kona: The voice of Waj Mapu

In addition to taking advantage of the more conventional medias of communication, the young Mapuce have also made their interest in music into a creative and alternative space of resistance in which the Mapuce discourse is represented and conveyed. In 2007, twelve Kona from Lof Newen Mapu formed the band *Puel Kona*, whose name means `the young warriors from the east`. Through music and political lyrics, the Kona aim to draw attention to the Mapuce reality, culture and rights struggle in alternative ways. Piren is particularly concerned with the powerful opportunities which music provide, especially when other spaces of communication and representation are difficult to access or control.

> *"For me music is also a way of communicating with identity. Communication through music and art is different and the influence is immense. It is another media of communication that carry a little bit more warmth and cheerfulness without preventing us from saying what we need to say. It is another media that we have to take advantage of in our struggle because it has the power of generating a great impact".*

According to its members, Puel Kona is a fusion band that mixes a variety of genres. When I asked about what kind of music they play, Raywe laughed and told to me that she really had no idea. Wayki explained that they try to communicate their message through playing a mix of different popular genres, such as Ska, Cumbia, Regggae, Regaeton etc. In addition, they incorporate words in Mapuzugun and traditional Mapuce instruments such as the *Ñojkiñ*[31] and the *Pifvjka*[32] to mark their identity as Mapuce. Raywe explained:

> *"We are trying to reach out to the whole world, to all that we can possibly reach out to. To tell about the reality of the Mapuce people here, and in Gulu Mapu [Chile] from the perspective of our worldview. That is why we are making different genres of music, because we are trying to think about how to reach out to as many as possible. It is not like we think*

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[31] Horn.
[32] Flute.

that people will listen to us all day, or that they become our fans [laughing], but the most important thing is that our message reaches out, that our music catches some attention because we are making something different".

While the intercultural and somewhat imprecise mixed musical expression is a strategy for attention, the lyrics are poetic, deliberate and precise. Raywe admitted to a lack musical professionalism, and emphasised that the main objective is to transmit the message. According to her, they have received very positive feedback on their lyrics. I could not agree more, especially as I have gotten to know the circumstances inspiring their work. There is one song I find particularly beautifully written, because it has a strong message and is illustrative of many of central issues addressed in this thesis. In *We Vl*[33]*,* Puel Kona has used a volcanic eruption that occurred in Chile as inspiration and analogy for the forces inherent in nature, and can be interpreted as a desperate cry for attention and justice. Raywe explained that the volcano is a sacred Mapuce site and that the injustice inflicted upon the Mapuce has provoked its eruption. The angry volcano expresses a peak of imbalance of Waj Mapu, the universe, with all its living elements. The song eloquently depicts how the Mapuce reality is misunderstood and manipulated and that it is time to start listening to the Mapuce voice, the cry of the Volcano (for English translation of lyrics, see appendix 2).

Claiming legal recognition of IPs´ right to communication

In the previous part of this chapter we have seen that the right to communication has become an increased necessity for the Mapuce in the quest for reclaiming their misrepresented reality. In article 16.2 in UNDRIP (2007), IPs´ right to communication, and the corresponding responsibility of the state to ensure it, is clearly articulated: `*States shall take effective measures to ensure that state-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity*`. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the power of the mass media in Argentina is concentrated and lack significant indigenous representation. According to my research participants, this can partly be explained due to the lack of adequate legislation concerning state regulation of audiovisual and radiophonetical media of communication, enabling a few commercial actors to own and control a vast proportion of the largest news transmitters in the country.

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[33] Song without title.

In 2009, this legal reality was radically challenged, as the Congress no longer could ignore the fact that the current legislation neglected fundamental democratic values. Due to pressure from civil society the proposition of a new law concerning communication was passed, a law with the objective of regulating, democratising and universalising new technologies of information and communication in Argentina. In the process of developing the proposition for the new law 26.522: *Ley de servicios de comunicación audiovisoual*[34], the Kona of Newen Mapu played a significant role, as they fought for the inclusion of an article specifically concerning IPs´ right to communication. According to Kvrvf, Umawtufe and Piren, this was a lingering and weary process as the initial proposition the rest of the civil society fought for only included the right to `communitarian` communication. Umawtufe made it clear that IPs lack coherence with this category:

> *"Communication of the Mapuce worldview is non existing within communitarian radios. We have a different culture, values and way of viewing the world. We are different from the organisation that is controlling the neighbourhood. A neighbourhood is a closed institution, a mix of cultures in comparison to the Mapuce that is a complete culture".*

The Kona therefore saw it necessary to fight for an indigenous right to `*communication with identity*` as an additional category with distinct rights, a concept that according to Piren was created by the Kona of Lof Newen Mapu. After discussing the concept internally, they proposed it to other indigenous reporters, and together they joined the rest of the activists campaigning for a new democratic reality within media of communication.

As law 26.522 was passed in 2009, it has not yet taken any significant effect, but the Kona have good faith that improvements will take place. In the new legal context, no one can own more than three licenses (1 AM, 1 FM and 1 Television) and it is the responsibility of the state to make sure that indigenous medias have enough financial recourses to function. Umawtufe explained that this is a legal reformation addressing fundamental economic challenges: `*If there is no money, there is no people. If there is no people, there is no radio*`. Mapu Radio in Neuquén runs due to the support from the University Radio, but not all indigenous radios have the same preconditions. Umawtufe furthermore emphasised that television is the platform of communication still lacking significant indigenous representation, because most TV productions and broadcastings are private and therefore also expensive. As mentioned earlier, a few powerful commercial actors select and control the information

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[34] Law of audiovisual communication services.

dominating the Argentine news image, an image that often collides with the indigenous discourse. Umawtufe is still optimistic: `*It is more difficult to spread the productions we make within TV than within Radio. It is not commercial enough to be interesting, but the new law may change this reality if it takes effect*`.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have addressed how the role of the Kona has been redefined to include communication as a central task in the course of contributing to the Mapuce rights struggle. Through capacity building, creativity and the creation of independent medias, the Kona of Lof Newen Mapu have taken up *discursive struggles* and claimed a *space of resistance* within the area of communication that for long has been a space of constraint. The power of the mass media has been a challenge for the Mapuce rights struggle, but the Kona have in recent years achieved a larger influence and control over the transmission of information. By practicing and fighting for a right they term `*communication with identity*`, the Mapuce *right-claimers* have recently accomplished to obtain legal recognition of IPs´ right to communication and representation in the federal legislation.

Thus, what was previously a challenge has now increasingly become a powerful tool in the quest for realising indigenous citizenship rights in Neuquén and Argentina, but it remains to see what possibilities for change the new law will initiate. Although the Kona have faith in its realisation and that it is to early to detect results, it is only realistic to doubt its ability to make significant impact when seeing how previous legal ideals have been dismissed and counteracted by powerful state officials. As the materials show, a need to make a profound change of thought among state officials need to occur before new legal accomplishments can contribute to any significant change. However, there is no doubt that the continuous struggle for *representation* through the communicative work of the Kona has expanded the Mapuce *space of resistance* and increased the possibilities of making an impact and changes in the future.

7.3 Lof Kurrumil – A story of recuperation, repression and struggles over truth

This chapter addresses a series of events that occurred in relation to a process of land disputes taking place in Lof Kurrumil, a Mapuce community located in the most western part of the province of Neuquén. Unfortunately I was not able to visit the area myself due to shortage of time and impassable conditions in the winter season, but as the research participants in Neuquén Capital had followed the case thoroughly and acted as central collaborative partners, they could give me adequate information. Even though the case of Kurrumil first of all illustrates a case of territorial deprivation and recuperation, it is furthermore in many ways an example of many of the challenges and possibilities of the Mapuce rights struggle addressed earlier in this thesis. As such, I found it particularly suitable to present at the end of this analysis by exploring in what way territorial and discursive struggles have affected Lof Kurrumil and the way in which they have claimed spaces of resistance in their quest for justice and change.

Territorial reduction and deprivation

Lof Kurrumil is one out of 57 recognised Mapuce lofs that constitutes the Confederation. Geographically it belongs to the municipal of Aluminé located in the most western part of the province of Neuquén (see figure 1. p. 8). Kurrumil is a small community that lies in a mountainous area rich on natural resources, resources that have supported Mapuce livelihoods for centuries. However, as mentioned in chapter 1, the desert campaign led by General Roca in the end of the 19th century has radically changed the circumstances in which the Mapuce live.

After the conquest, Mapuce territories became fiscal lands or were distributed to European settlers. As a consequence, Lof Kurrumil lost the right to its ancestral territories. Those that were not killed during the invasion were dispersed, relocated and lost access to many of the resources on which their livelihoods depended. In 1937 the national park *Parque Nacional Lanín* was established, and during the rest of the 20th century the state continued to sell off lands to private investors. Today the area is especially attractive for the tourist industry and natural resource exploitation.

Within the area traditionally occupied and utilised by Lof Kurrumil, two commercial companies dominate and have acquired vast areas of land, which consequently have put severe restrictions on the lof in terms of access to, and use of important resources. As illustrated in figure 3, a state timber company (Corfone) and a private real estate company

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(Tigerway) have established themselves in the middle of the summer and winter pasture of the lof. These areas have furthermore been important for seasonal and annual gathering of resources such as firewood (autumn), *pewen*[35] (autumn), strawberries (spring) and medicines (whole year), and a sacred place is also located within the restricted area of Corfone. The expansion of the restricted areas has occurred gradually, but in recent years the sanctions for `transgression` have intensified. In 2009, Tigerway put up a roadblock in order to prevent the members of the Kurrumil herders to access their winter pastures with their animals. This also impeded the possibilities for the members of Lof Kurrumil to use a local road connecting them with another lof with whom they practice intermarriage.
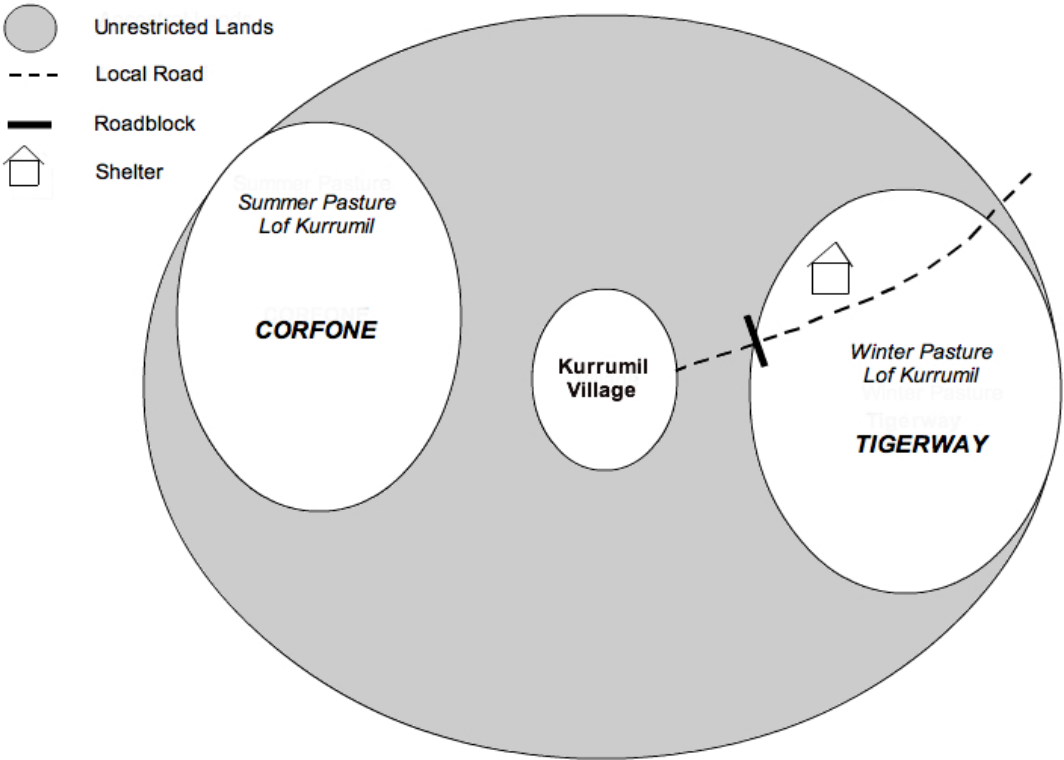
Figur 3. The researcher's illustration of the changed geography of the ancestral lands of Lof Kurrumil.

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[35] Fruit growing in the Andes.

Recuperation of knowledge, identity and territory

A century of colonisation, repression and rights deprivation described above has radically changed the lived experiences and geographies of Lof Kurrumil. As mentioned earlier, the emergence of the new law 26.160 ideally intended to impose an obligation on local governments to account for these changed geographies and corresponding entitlements to LTRs through the implementation of thorough land survey programs. However, as the provincial government and INAI have failed to enforce the law and initiate such programs, the Confederation and the ODHPI saw it as necessary to apply for private funding and implement corresponding projects on their own. Through their international connections, they managed to acquire financial support for a capacity building project in areas where Mapuce communities experience conflicts over LTRs. In 2008, Lof Kurrumil was included in the project specifically addressing communities historically using the areas today constituting parts of national parks.

The main objective of the project is to capacitate the Kona to construct maps representing the territory from a Mapuce perspective. Veronica explained: `We call them autonomous maps, because we move beyond the academic vision and propose our own perspective of the area in question`. She continued to inform that during 2008 and 2009 several Kona from Lof Kurrumil and six other lofs, participated in a number of workshops that were arranged by the project initiators. The first workshop concerned the Mapuce notion of *territory,* as one of the main objectives was to remap the area based on documentation of Mapuce knowledge, culture and identity. As the second step of the project was to document and present this knowledge through modern technologies, a team of technical experts were included in the following workshops that had the intention of capacitating these Mapuce youth with adequate technical skills to perform the task. Though the capacity building workshops were directed towards the Kona, the elders played a significant role as philosophical and historical experts in terms of documenting traditional territorial use. The roles of the different age groups were different, but equally important, as the Kona learned to use GPS and various software programs (GIS etc) to construct new maps of the area based on the knowledge of the elders.

The capacity building project was thus a strategy depending on collaboration between young and elder Mapuce participants, in addition to technical and financial support from external actors. By using new knowledge/technology to document and communicate traditional knowledge, the Kona of Lof Kurrumil acquired knowledgeabilities that made them better

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equipped for the rights struggle. The documentation resulting from the workshops constituted an alternative cartographic representation of their rights to LTRs, a documentation, which has been used as important evidence in land dispute trials.

Another significant outcome of the capacity building project was that Lof Kurrumil, with support from the Confederation, decided to enter the restricted areas with the intention of carrying out the activities and collect the resources that the elders claimed they could use in their youth. As a response, the Tigerway Company put up the roadblock, but in June 2009 the Kurrumil herders broke it down and entered the restricted area in an attempt to recuperate their winter pastures. In this act of territorial recuperation, they brought the animals and put up a small house to shelter the herders (figure 3). In addition to being a space for recuperation of Mapuce knowledge and identity, the capacity building project also had an underlying objective of preparing Lof Kurrumil for territorial recuperation. Veronica confirmed this by emphasising that `*the land survey/capacity building project is part of a larger political project that we use as a tool supporting the Mapuce territorial mobilisation process*`.

Repression, eviction and accusations

After the recuperation of the winter pastures, the herders were left undisturbed with their activities for about two and a half months. However, on the 25th of August 2009, the police entered the recuperated area, set the shelter (put up by the herders) on fire, and violently evicted and chased the herders back to the village. Armed with rubber bullets and tear gas, the police did not only attack and arrest the `trespassers` and political authorities of Lof Kurrumil. They also performed an aggressive assault on the entire village. According to Veronica, this act of both physical and psychological violence was about demonstrating power and making a statement of resistance to the land survey process. By chasing the herders all the way to the village, and entering the homes to attack and scare innocent family members with their uniforms and arms, they wanted to demonstrate that territorial recuperations would not occur without serious consequences.

In the attack against the village, five Mapuce authorities, the Lonko and four Werken, were detained and imprisoned. According to the ODHPI report (2010), sixteen members of Lof Kurrumil were eventually charged for usurpation according to the civil code, specifically for trespassing the private property of Tigerway. According to Veronica and the lawyers working at ODHPI, the repression, eviction and accusations were in clear violations of law 26.160,

which clearly articulates a prohibition of evictions of Mapuce communities until further notice. The act of violence was authorised by a judge in the city of Zappala and supported by the provincial governor. This was furthermore an illegal procedure as they had omitted to consult the members of Lof Kurrumil in the process. Neither had they informed about the judgment allowing the police to perform such an abusive attack. The decision was purely based on the request from the owner of Tigerway and the information given by their allies.

According to Veronica, the whole process was another example of a general attempt to criminalise the Mapuce right-claimers in the name of protecting the common interests of the politically and economically powerful in the province: `*What the juridical and political powers do is to prosecute the processes that we claim to be legitimate acts of right claims in order to protect their landowning friends. That is why they treat the Mapuce defending their territories as criminals*`. When alluding to the powerful actors, she especially refers to the governor and his brother who is one of the most powerful businessmen in Neuquén. The latter is involved in multiple business activities and owns vast areas of land. Among other things, she argues that he has acquired concessions and land titles for a low price through his brother, and that he has been able to illegally evict Mapuce communities residing on these lands without suffering any legal consequences. The ODHPI report (2010) informs that one of his newest activities is to organise and lead a group of powerful landowners against the land claims of the Mapuce, particularly advocating against the application of law 26.160. This group of powerful actors take advantage of their dominant economic and political position and accuse the Mapuce for having links with guerrilla/separatist movements.

Constant struggles for rights, justice and truth

In the aftermath of the Kurrumil repression, the Confederation initiated a series of acts of resistance to the unjust authorisation conducted by the provincial powers. Together with different social organisations, they asked for an audience with the governor in order to make a complaint, and to demand for the law 26.160 to be respected, but their request was ignored. Nevertheless, instead of accepting the inaction and ignorance of the state, they once again understood the necessity of claiming their own space of resistance, this time in the total absence of possibilities for dialogue. On September the 4th 2009, they entered the streets of Neuquén (capital) with the objective of making visual their story of truth to the general public, and to manifest to the state that they would not accept legal repression. Although far

less massive than the Indigenous March held in Buenos Aires, the Confederation managed to convoke a various set of social actors supporting the Mapuce cause, and together they held a demonstration under the motto: `Yes to Mapuce Rights, No to Repression!`.

In the process of claiming indemnification, and as an attempt to communicate the violent eviction and attack on Lof Kurrumil, the Mapuce right-claimers met a set of presupposed challenges. The mass media was spreading stories of concern for the cunning Mapuce land occupant and did not include other perspectives. Umawtufe said that the Kona sent several articles to respond to the accusations, but these were never published:

> *"We tried to respond to the newspapers writing these things, saying it is not like that, but they did not give us any space. They did not publish any of our responses. The ideal task of the media is to present both or several sides of a story, so that any person can draw his or her own conclusion. But what they did was to present the view of the powerful, whose interests are protected. The owners of the big newspapers have close relations with the provincial government through economic interests".*

Umawtufe continued with informing that the local TV channel was more interested in covering the conference where rich landowners from the province met to discuss how they could protect themselves from the Mapuce `terrorists`, instead of covering the demonstration held in Neuquén. The conference represented the first collective positioning of the landowner sector in terms of strengthening the political and juridical persecution of Mapuce organisations and rights struggles. During the conference they expressed their concern for the Mapuce and their acts of resistance, calling it acts of illegal usurpation of private and state land. The event had extensive media coverage, and a press conference led by the brother of the governor was held with the objective of communicating the conclusions of the event. Their side of the story was the only story that the media covered during that time (ODHPI 2010). As such, the mass media played a significant role in the course of spreading a discourse accusing the Mapuce right claimers of carrying out separatist plans in collaboration with so-called `terrorist groups` in other countries. According to Umawtufe, this was a perfect example of how the media try to control knowledge and the spread of information.

> *"La Mañana Neuquèn [provincial newspaper] publishised a map that demonstrated the extension of a supposed Mapuce plan of reclaiming territory with the objective of creating a Mapuce state. Another accusation in the article was that this was financed by narco-*

trafficking and the FARC guerilla in Columbia, and the ETA in Spain. Their source derived from a forum that they found on the Internet and it was a pure lie".

Umawtufe explained that they refer to the contact that the Confederation has had with other IPs, especially with organisations in Columbia and Spain. He laughed and exclaimed that it is incredible how they have managed to manipulate these facts to serve their cause. According to Umawtufe, the owners of one of biggest news stations in the province have common interests with commercial actors and provincial politicians, that is to say interests in land, and therefore also opposing the constitutional and legislative changes that concern IPs´ rights.

The discursive campaigning against the Mapuce rights struggle continued through national and provincial newspapers, TV- and radio channels. On the 18th of October 2009, the map Umawtufe referred to above was also printed on the front page of one of Argentina's largest newspapers *La Nación* under the article headline *El regreso de la Araucanía: Ocupaciones y reclamos en la Patagonia*[36] (Moreiro 2009). As mentioned earlier, the Araucanisation theory is one of the most controversial academic discourses still having a significant precedence in Neuquén and Argentina. By referring to the Mapuce right-claimers as *Araucans,* the article takes part in justifying both the desert campaign of General Roca and the evictions of Mapuce communities in present times. In this context, this discursive attack on the Mapuce struggle for rights aims to deny Mapuce right to the indigenous status and thus constitutional protection as such.

As the media undoubtedly sided with the landowners, the Mapuce right-claimers had to take advantage of alternative strategies in order to be able to communicate their side of the story. In addition to claiming a space of resistance on the streets of Neuquén, the Kona of Newen Mapu contributed with their communicative knowledgeabilities in an attempt to draw attention to the cause. During the violent act on the 25th of August the same year, someone had managed to record a sequence of the attack with a camera[37]. The Kona of Lof Newen Mapu decided to use this material to make a short documentary that also included clips from following demonstrations held in Neuquén. Through depicting a story of both repression and resistance, the documentary presents a twofold representation of the Mapuce discourse and rights struggle. The video begins with a chaotic scene showing how the police frighten screaming children and provoke adolescence to throw stones at the attackers, but continues to

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[36] The return from Araucanìa: Occupations and claims in Patagonia.
[37] Available on Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2zl7Yq_Tbw.

communicate the militant voices of the participants in the manifestation that succeeded. To strengthen the effect of the visual documentation, they added on a song from Puel Kona as a way of complementing the documentary with a more emotional instrument of communication. In a context of constraint, the Kona managed to meet the challenges of a partial space of representation the mass media constituted in this specific case by drawing on alternative and creative strategies.

As mentioned before, the Mapuce strategies of resistance are seldom only about social activism through in-the-moment acts of protest. They also engage in long-term processes of collaboration and formal struggles. The lawyers at the ODHPI are still working on the trials of the accused members of Lof Kurrumil, but according to Veronica, this process is also about more than just helping those who are facing legal repression. She makes an interesting remark concerning the way in which the story of conflict and victimisation can be strategically converted into a powerful tool of resistance:

> *"The trials can be used as tools for political pressure, because they are a clear violation of the federal and provincial constitution and legislation. As such we can prove the racist and discriminatory attitude that persists among those with effective power. With this we can transform defiances into better official politics which can make effective our rights which are formally recognised".*

Through the ODHPI, the Confederation managed to draw significant attention from the international community. As a direct response to the report of the repression of Lof Kurrumil, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) called for the state to `*investigate the recent events of evictions of IPs, sanction the responsible and compensate the affected*` (ODHPI 2010:43 - 44). However, in the midst of the struggles, the state did not intervene, nor did it investigate the recent events or sanction those that were responsible.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have addressed how Lof Kurrumil is an emblematic example of the Mapuce rights struggle in Neuquén. Åhrén (2007) argues that the implementation of the indigenous right to LTRs is a general indigenous challenge. The case of Kurrumil has shown that the possibility for realising Mapuce territorial rights in Neuquén has its limitations. However, the reality is complex. On one hand, Kurrumil is a community who has suffered more than a century of repression and general rights deprivation, specifically through systematic territorial

invasion and reduced access to important resources. On the other hand, this case illustrates how the Mapuce *right-claimers* have practiced indigenous citizenship and resisted formal and informal structural discrimination through strategic processes of organisation, collaboration, capacity building, communication and social activism. The actual recuperation of land was an important strategy of, but the processes of capacity-building and subsequent autonomous mapping leading to the recuperation, were equally significant. In the absence of spaces for dialogue and official political vigour, the Mapuce have claimed their own *spaces of resistance* by drawing on outside technical, economic and political support, but also by practising existing or newly acquired *knowledgeabilities* in an attempt to claim realisation of indigenous economic (territory), political (autonomy) and cultural (people) rights.

The case of Kurrumil has especially shown how the Mapuce rights struggle is a constant struggle for truth. The dominant *discourse* represented in the mass media depicts a story of a Mapuce criminal, an accusation, which in the eyes of the Mapuce *right-claimers* is a matter of exercising entitled rights. As claiming *spaces of resistance* and *representation* within the conventional mass media has shown to be particularly challenging in relation to these resent events, the Kona in Neuquén (capital) have shown their support by drawing on their creative *knowledgeabilities*, thus finding an alternative way to communicate the *counter-discourse* through making a documentary with music.

The reality of the Mapuce rights struggle

At the end of this academic and personal exploration of the reality of the Mapuce struggle for rights in Neuquén, I would like to go all the way back to the beginning, more precisely to the picture illustrating the front page. The mural painted on the wall at the entrance of the Ruka is an eye-catching piece of art in itself, but it also constitutes a visual and symbolic expression of some of the main issues addressed in this thesis. On one hand, the images on the wall sum up the indigenous cliché referred to in the introduction. The viewer is reminded that processes of colonisation, Argentine nation-building and modernisation have repressed the Mapuce through centuries of marginalisation. The text *500 años de genocidio*[38] is written in red paint on a sword shaped like a cross, referring to a violent crusade intending to introduce progress and good Christian values to an unproductive desert of savages. This image illustrates in its simplest form how historical events have set the scene for many of the challenges facing the Mapuce today. It is a history written in the blood sacrificed for the creation of a new nation at the expense of another, a history of invasion, execution and discrimination of the pre-existent Mapuce nation. The statue of General Roca stands as the ultimate symbol of repression as he represents the first severe invasion of Mapuce territory in the 19th century, whereas *Repsol*[39] represents the new economic invasion of modern times.

When taking another look at the mural, one can also see that it depicts a contrasting story. In addition to expressing suppression and provoking pity for the victims, the mural narrates a story of cultural continuity and strength. It depicts the story of a people who is still alive due to `500 years of resistance`. As Ray (2007:149) portrays: `*...the Mapuce do not like to be portrayed as the victims, the passive recipients of their fate, but rather as the protagonists of their own destiny*`. The words *500 años de genocidio* are not only written with bloody red paint. A more central part of the image is that they adore a sword penetrating a statue of General Roca. His original name Julio *Argentino* Roca is exchanged with Julio *Asesino* Roca, branding him with a status as murderer instead of glorifying him as nation-builder. Above, another figure has been given significant presence. The Toki, the ultimate leader and symbol of strength and resistance during wartime, thrones in the background with his characteristic stone axe. With similarities to a superhero, his muscles are exaggerated and his fist as big as the whole statue of Roca, that in addition has been given the face of a pig. To the right, a

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[38] 500 years of genocide.
[39] Chemical company.

Kona is blowing the *ñojkiñ*, the traditional Mapcue horn. The words entering together constitute the Mapuce battle cry `*Marici Weu, Marici Weu, Marici Weu*`, meaning we will win ten times over. That is to say, for each evicted, repressed or killed person, ten more will raise their fists and fight, a strong reminder that the Mapuce are still alive, resisting and fighting for their rights.

Challenges, strategies and possibilities for change

While the mural eloquently sums up the context of my study, I will now return the focus to the main research questions asked in the introduction: *What are the main challenges related to the realisation of indigenous citizenship rights in Neuquén, in what way do the Mapuce strategise and claim spaces for resistance, and what are the possibilities for change in the course of the rights struggle?*

In this thesis we have seen that the Mapuce in Neuquén face many challenges. There is a vast set of rights articulated and recognised in international, national and provincial legal frameworks, but they are poorly enforced. We have seen that this gap between policy and realisation can partly be explained by the way in which these international ideals have been incorporated into the Argentine legal context. The ILO 169 was ratified in 2000, but the lack of federal constitutional status, adequate legislation reflecting its main principles and official spaces for effective indigenous participation, impede its realisation.

Formal structural shortcomings explain some of the challenges facing the Mapuce, but not how politicians and juridical officials, especially in the province of Neuquén, ignore the laws actually recognising and explicitly reflecting IPs` rights. In order to understand this systematic discrimination the Mapuce experience as right-holders and claimers, I have suggested that many answers can be found in the light of an Argentine nation-building process, which has been characterised by a white ethnic dominance denying a multicultural Argentina. There seems to be a lack of political will to enforce IPs` rights, especially since it often stands in direct opposition to the economical and political interests of powerful actors.

Nevertheless, in the midst of this provincial resistance to counterwork the Mapuce rights struggle, the Mapuce *right-claimers* have found ways to practise indigenous citizenship and claim *spaces of resistance* and *representation* in various ways. In order to fight the informal and formal structural challenges that they face, it has been important for the Mapuce to

actively engage in the invited spaces provided for them by the state, especially as they are the only spaces with potential for formalising desirable change, such as passing new laws etc. However, as these spaces appear to be difficult to work within, the Mapuce constantly continue to claim transformation within them, but more than anything creating and claiming own *spaces of resistance*. As we have seen in this thesis, these spaces are more or less formal as they range from constituting the street, medias of communication or the newly established *Consejo Plurinacional Indígena*. These spaces furthermore constitute more or less potential for agency and effective change. However, it nevertheless seems important for the Mapuce to take advantage of the opportunities that appear, take creative measures and claim alternative *spaces of resistance* if others are impossible to manoeuvre. In addition to being a canvas depicting a contrasting story of dominance and resistance, the mural at the Ruka is an example of how the Mapuce have taken such creative measures as a response to the constant constraining circumstances in which their struggle for rights is fought. In chapter 7.2 we have seen that this has especially been the task of the Kona as they have claimed *spaces of resistance* and *representation* through `*communicating with identity´* in new and creative ways.

In the course of moving within and between different spaces, the Mapuce in Neuquén experience power as they meet obstacles in the course of their struggle, but they also exercise it through claiming spaces for resistance in various ways. According to Jorge, the most important strategy that they practice in order to realise rights, is to exercise them. Recuperations of land is maybe the most explicit and controversial example of such measures being taken, but despite of the media's focus on this, it is far from the cornerstone of the Mapuce rights struggle. Although recuperations, and not to mention large demonstrations such as the Indigenous March in Buenos Aires are important, they are often only the climax of long-term processes of organisation, collaboration and capacity building. We have furthermore seen that the potential agency of the Mapuce in Neuquén depends largely on the economical, technical and political skills and resources of others, but ultimately their own *knowledgeabilities* are invaluable. The different contributions from various individuals and age groups are crucial, but it is only through collective / complementary action and their ability to draw on a combination of diverse strategies, that they become such highly potential agents of change. It is furthermore important to emphasise that the political project they carry forward is more than a strategic means of achieving a goal. More than anything, it is a way of practicing their culture and worldview.

The rights struggle is furthermore about abstract struggles. Table 1 gives an overview of some of the main *discursive struggles* the Mapuce engage in*, struggles that mainly concern the power to *represent* the truth. As mentioned in the methodological chapter, truth is both multiple and partial, but more than anything governed by power relations. The government and other powerful actors consequently term the Mapuce a *community*, *ethnic minority*, *Araucans* or the more condescending *Indian*. The idea of the Mapuce in Argentina descending from Chile has furthermore been proposed through the highly controversial Araucanisation theory, and has been strategically used by powerful state official as a way of depriving the Mapuce of indigenous rights. The Mapuce, supported by the international human rights community, on the other hand insist on their status as IPs due to their claimed pre-existence in both Argentina and Chile. This difference is crucial as the indigenous status comes with entitlements to a specific set of rights.

Another central discursive struggle concerns an attempt to downplay indigenous presence, especially by refusing to recognise the Mapuce residing in the cities. But as Jorge exclaims: `*We were massacred and stripped, but we exist, we are present*`. The Indigenous March was a massive confirmation of the latter assertion, a manifestation of indigenous existence and strength. It was furthermore a discursive challenge to the bicentennial celebration of 200 years of independence. It shows that the Mapuce no longer accept that their struggle for rights is converted into accusations of separatism, terrorism and crime.

Issue	Dominant discourse	Mapuce (counter) discourse
Mapuce identification	Community, ethnic minority, Indians, Araucans (migrants from Chile).	Indigenous people, pre-existent people.
Mapuce status	At the verge of extinction.	We are still alive!
The bicentennial	200 years of independence	200 years of genocide and resistance
Self-determination	Separatism	Intercultural coexistence
The Mapuce rights struggle	Terrorism and crime	Claiming, gaining and exercising rights

Tabel 1: Discursive struggles – Struggles over truth

This thesis has presented a more thorough illustration of the more simple, but nevertheless realistic statement of Blaser, Feit and McRae (2004:1). *Much has changed, but much has not changed* in the reality of the world's IPs, and the situation for the Mapuce in Neuquén is no exception. Although they have managed to put pressure on state officials, and succeeded in terms of achieving better incorporation of IPs` rights in federal and provincial legislation, evidence sadly indicates that a radical change of thought among the actors in power needs to take place before any significant transformation can to occur. There is no doubt that the Mapuce in Neuquén still face many challenges in their quest for realising indigenous citizenship rights, but as they are constantly claiming spaces of resistance through diverse and creative engagement, the possibilities for change appear to increase. Even though the war is over, the struggle takes new shapes and continues. One thing is certain, the Mapuce will continue to struggle for rights and pursue their battle cry for strength:

¡Marici Weu, Marici Weu, Marici Weu!

– We will win ten times over -

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Appendices

Appendix 1a: In-depth interviews with key participants

Name	Age	Characteristics	Topics discussed
Mikaela	?	Female lawyer working at the ODHPI in Neuquén.	- IPs` rights in the argentine legal system: structure, attitudes and practises. - The role of the ODHPI.
Pety	47	Female philosophical authority. Member of CPI and representative of the Confederation.	- Mapuce religion and worldview. - Intercultural education. - Rights and priorities - INAI and CPI
Jorge	51	Male Lonko of Lof Newen Mapu. Werken of the Confederation.	**First interview:** - The political role of the Lonko. - Demonstration in Buenos Aires. - Relationship between the Mapuce and the state. - Political strategies **Second interview:** - International indigenous collaboration. - Indigenous citizenship. - Rights and priorities.
Umawtufe	24	Male student of Social Communication. Working with Mapu Radio and member of Puel Kona.	- The role of the media in Argentina. - The new law of communication. - Education, communication and the role of the Kona.
Lefxaru	24	Male law student with internship at the ODHPI. Member of Puel Kona	- Education, law and role of the Kona. - The project: `Espacio comunitario Mapuce`.
Xalkan	26	Female student of Geography. First Mapuce contact.	- The role of the Kona. - Generational relationship. - Education. - Mapuce representation.
Veronica	?	Female Mapuce working at the ODHPI. Werken Xalkan of the Confederation.	- The case of Lof Kurrumil - Political strategies of the Confederation. - Role of the ODHPI.
Raywe	22	Female student of law. Working with Mapu Radio and member of Puel Kona.	- Puel Kona – Politics and music. - The role of the Kona.
Kajfv	23	Male Mapuce living in Buenos Aires. Working at Canal 7 – promoting indigenous communication.	- The media in Argentina. - His work at the TV-channel.

Appendix 1b: Group interview

Names	Age	Characteristics	Topic
Umawtufe	24	Male student of Social Communication. Working with Mapu Radio.	`Communication with identity`
Kvrvf	26	Former male student of Media and Communication. Working with Mapu Radio.	
Piren	24	Female student of Sociology. Working with Mapu Radio.	

Appendix 2: Translation of lyrics (from Spanish to English)

"Yesterday savages today they call us terrorists
always justifying their violence with lies

Mass media of communication
mercenaries of information
lying to all that listen
talking about the Mapuce problem

But we are not the problem, no!
the problem is the state and its racism

The Volcano cries its message in burning lava
to stop the exploitation is an urgent command
the Mapuce cannot be absent
listen to its call and rise our people"

- Song without title -

Puel Kona
Neuquén, Argentina