Technology appropriation and Mapuche self-communication: An interpretation of indigenous e-communication in Chile

Claudio A Maldonado Rivera
Departmento de Lenguas, Universidad Católica de Temuco, Temuco, Chile;
Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Universidad Católica de Temuco, Temuco, Chile

Juan A del Valle Rojas [ORCID]
Graduate School for the Humanities, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands;
Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

Abstract

The use and appropriation of digital information and communication technologies by Mapuche communicators and activists has turned into a new process of political and identity innovation in the context of the Chilean–Mapuche intercultural and interethnic conflict. This study aims to understand the Mapuche intercultural dialogue. Based on a corpus of semi-structured interviews with Mapuche communicators, we interpret and analyze their discourses in relation to the dissemination and/or analysis of the

Corresponding author:
Juan A del Valle Rojas, Graduate School for the Humanities, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands.
Email: j.a.del.valle.rojas@rug.nl

indigenous digital informative media. The results are built upon the valorization and recognition of the mediations that the Mapuche agents develop around their own e-communication praxis. This interpretation derives from applying theoretical–conceptual categories which have enabled us to address technological, technopolitical, (inter)cultural, and communicative dimensions regarding the Mapuche e-communication work.

Keywords
Mapuche communicators, Mapuche e-communication, technology appropriation, self-communication, intercultural conflict

E-communication technology phenomena are claiming to implement new agendas that problematize their impact on society and culture. Notwithstanding, as clearly stated by Martín-Barbero (2004), technologies should determine the research on this matter and their use and practices of it. By promoting discourses based on the claiming of devices in detriment of the subjects can result in support of hegemonic narratives that, in terms of technology, development and society, are supported by technology. Furthermore, this technology is characterized by technological determinism, reductionism and instrumentalization of the information and communication (Schmucler, 1997). Contrary to that, if we understand (hyper)-mediations, we could analyze the new languages and strategies carried out by users in the digital communication ecosystem.

This study will critically reflect on the technology appropriation processes carried out by Mapuche communicators in the context of the current intercultural conflict between the Mapuche people and the Chilean nation-state. Those technological processes implemented by the communicators have to do with different claiming actions carried out by several members of Mapuche organizations and communities. In terms of methodology, this study is based on the interpretative analysis of 18 interviews with Mapuche communicators from the Araucanía region in the south of Chile. Given that this study involves a hermeneutic exercise, it provides different explicative categories about the Mapuche communication work mediated by digital information and communication technologies. Accordingly, it seeks to define a dialogue of knowledge that validates the knowledge emerging from the indigenous communication praxis, to overcome, as argued by de Sousa (2003), the waste of experience.

The *offline* Mapuche claims for a territory that face the colonial matrix of power imposed by the Chilean nation-state is currently complemented by technopolitical rationality, which means a new maneuver framework for those agents managing

the Mapuche digital communication field. This process involves the complex Mapuche intercultural communication system that has been historically produced within the asymmetric relationship between the Mapuche people and the Western world, whose telos is the contribution to the subversion of the order of colonial domination affecting the Mapuche people throughout the centuries (García and Betancour, 2014). Previous studies in this field reveal that Mapuche digital communication has enabled the virtual updating of the Chilean–Mapuche conflict in the context of the digital networks, which brings new territories to dispute the identity, memory and autonomy of the Mapuche nation (Maldonado and Del Valle, 2013). It is worth noting that the communication practices used for the subjects who are subalternized by the patterns of the new colonial power result in an ethical–political commitment seeking to think about, recognize, and legitimize the locus of enunciation and the *alter-native* communication methods. Likewise, these methods make the communication theory revisit its guiding principles to conquer the limits of Western communication paradigms (Torrico, 2016).

This article will be organized as follows. First, we will provide a brief theoretical reflection on the notion of social appropriation of technologies and mass self-communication to defend and reclaim the individual and their fighting strategies in a political–cultural struggle scenario. Afterwards, we will offer a brief literature review about Mapuche communications to locate the study problem into the communication studies that have been devoted to the understanding of the Mapuche communication process in the context of the Chilean–Mapuche conflict. Finally, we will present an interpretative analysis of the interviews applied to 18 Mapuche communicators from 2017 to 2019, in the context of the following research projects: the *Fondecyt Research Project* (*Iniciación*) ID: 11140180 (from 2014 to 2017): the *Research Project* ID: PLU180002 (from 2017 to 2018); and the current *Fondecyt Research Project* (Regular) ID: 1190286 (from 2019 to 2022). These projects are funded by the National Agency for Research and Development (ANID) from the Government of Chile. These results will emerge from a synthesising process of data collected from the application of two analysis models. The first is Argumentative Analysis, which refers to the discourses that schematizes arguments that aim to intervene in the social space. This analysis model considers that all arguments compromise a determined rhetorical–discursive strategy insofar as they select and order determined logical\--semantic operations following a precise objective (Giménez, 1981). The second is Discursive Analysis, which involves a matrix of Critical and Complex Discourse Analysis (Del Valle, 2006). This discursive level aims to establish figurative distances or initial relations of actors and topics in the discourse (Del Valle, 2006).

In this article, the collected data are analyzed based on the discursivities of the Mapuche agents. Thus, they are interrelated with a series of theoretical categories from several studies on the intersection among communication, interculturality, and digital technologies, aiming at offering an explanatory-based conceptual framework in terms of the knowledge and experience configured by the Mapuche communicators in their e-communicative work.

Technology appropriation and mass self-communication

The technological determinism discourse has achieved worldwide success. The shared fascination for the technological revolution is part of the emotions taking place in contemporary society. Notwithstanding, there is a strong demystifying impulse emerging from the practices of the social agents. They aimed to politicize technological devices employing the configuration of technopolitical rationality, which is taking place in different places worldwide. In this context, the use and appropriation of the information and communication technologies were essential for those processes. Some current examples are the political sense that the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*-EZLN assigned to the information and communication technologies, the *Arab Spring*, the *15M* movement in Spain, the *#Yo soy 132* in Mexico, the *Youth Revolution* in Egypt in 2011, and the student mobilizations in Chile in 2011, among many other cases. These emblematic cases come up with new forms of political subjectivities in which technologies become central network elements for the social movements and multitudes aiming to provide better security conditions for all citizens (Rheingold, 2004; Rovira, 2017; Tascón and Quintana, 2012).

The contemporary social movements using the internet are articulating several strategies to confront the mechanisms of control and social/global injustice in society. This articulation involves using the information and communication society to start mass self-communication, which, as stated by Castells (2015), redefines several aspects in the relationship between communication and power. He also notes that:

> Mass self-communication is based on horizontal networks of interactive communication that, by and large, are difficult to control by governments and corporations [...]. Mass-self communication provides the technological platform for constructing autonomy of social actors, be it individual or collective, vis-à-vis the institutions of society. (Castells, 2015: 6–7)

In line with the above, we can state that the agents facing several crises caused by the modern/colonial capitalist project connect mass self-communication with the processes of technology appropriation and the use of technologies. The technology appropriation process is then generated by the collectives' self-management and self-organization, which emerge from their political and cultural valorization of digital technologies. Therefore, the appropriation process is associated with access to the technological resources and the network interconnections, which is necessary to progress towards a political economy of communications creating material conditions to ensure the people's technological sovereignty. It results in radical democratization in access to information, content management, and the creation of technological resources that meet local needs (Candón, 2012).

Since these agendas carried out by the subalternized groups are not a priority in the developing countries' administrative management, it is imperative to

understand their technology appropriation and self-communication processes in connection with the antagonistic rationalities that collective agencies structure in the digital network age. Those who are appropriating the techno-communication resources assume, as their main target, the communication from the differences and protests. Likewise, they build a heteronomous social semiosis aiming to show the fissures, crises and tensions resulting from the colonial–capitalist substrate, which is locally and globally generated in the modern world-system (Maldonado, 2018a). In this vein, those groups located at the margin of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system understand technology appropriation and self-communication processes as something contradictory to the negative perceptions that characterize the appropriation as a practice against property, and an antagonistic form of socialization of foreign goods being converted into resources that are accessible to the community (Sierra and Gravante, 2012: 131).[1]

The technology appropriation process discussed in this article aims to move beyond the general conceptions on the communication being dominated by instrumental and commercial reason, as predominantly configured in the info-communication field (Zallo, 2011). Hence, this technology appropriation process enables communication as a liberating praxis, as the right of the people, by defying state/capital regulation and control. It is a type of communication that unfolds the technopolitical work of populations that, from the solidarity and valorization networks, struggles to design a decolonial pluriverse that could overcome the crisis of modernity throughout its historical context. Furthermore, the construction of other possible worlds is closely linked to the possibility of using other possible communications (Díaz-Bordenave, 2012). To do this, we must understand that communication is not a mere instrument, but a process that allows changing societies to organize and coordinate behaviors, and form non-formal pedagogical communities, to preserve freedom and the autonomy of the voices from below (Zibechi, 2007).

Mapuche communication: A brief literature review

The current Mapuche struggle against the persistence of the internal colonialism performed by the Chilean nation-state is mainly focused on the processes of territorial recovery. This issue addresses allegations made to the international human rights bodies and the consequent social protests and hunger strikes. From a political viewpoint, the process of territorial recovery has resulted in the creation of the Mapuche political party *Wallmapuwen* (citizens of the Mapuche country in Mapudungun, the Mapuche language), the electoral candidacy of Mapuche politicians in several provinces in the south of Chile and the emergence of several radical movements in resistance fighting for Mapuche autonomy, as the case of the *Coordinadora Arauco Malleco-CAM*.

Regarding the abovementioned, the communication praxis carried out by Mapuche communicators becomes complementary to those *offline* actions. From a historical perspective, the Mapuche media emerged into the Chilean media

ecosystem by offering alternative systems of significance, in opposition to those instituted by the discursive frame coming from the nation-state narrative circulating about the Mapuche as alterity (Gutiérrez, 2014; Maldonado, 2014, 2015). Besides this, Gutiérrez (2014) notes that the creation of the Mapuche media was always connected to the proliferation of Mapuche political organizations, which evidences the strategic role that indigenous peoples grant to communication, as demonstrated in the Declarations at the Continental Summit of Indigenous Communication of Abya Yala.

   The first experiences of the Mapuche informative communication emerged during the 1920s and the 1930s. The *Boletín Araucano*, issued by the *Federación Araucana* in 1926, and the *Heraldo Araucano*, published nine years later by *La Sociedad Galvarino*, can be considered as the first experiences of Mapuche informative communication. However, we must recognize that they were limited in scope and subsequently, emerged in the newspaper *La Voz de Arauco*, published in 1938 by the *Centro de Estudiantes Araucanos Nehuentuayñ*. According to their communicators, this newspaper illustrated the political dimension developed in the Mapuche organizations, in addition to the role of a platform for cultural dissemination. This role became the most influential information medium in media consumption circuits (Gutiérrez, 2014).

   Years later, in the period of civic–military dictatorship in Chile, Mapuche organizations made efforts to use the communication channel as an act of political protest. Although there are no vital records of informative production in that epoch, there is still full recognition of the existence of bulletins in the memory of social actors such as *Aukantun* and *Pelquintun* (Gutiérrez, 2014). Those bulletins were both managed by various Mapuche student groups. There is also a broad consensus over the information work by those groups that developed a communication work from the exiles, such as the *Boletín Informativo Mapuche* (1978) and *Amuleaiñ* (1979), published in France. Those newspapers merged into *El Huerquen*, becoming the official body of the *Comité Exterior Mapuche*[2] (Bernier-Khawam, 2019; Chihuailaf, 2005; Gutiérrez, 2014).

   At the beginning of the 1990s there was a proliferation of printed information such as the magazine *Liwen*, the bulletin *Weichafe*, and the newspaper *Voz Mapuche Aukiñ*. The latter case was the official information platform for the *Consejo de Todas las Tierras* (Council of All Lands), the Mapuche political body created during the return to democracy in Chile after 1989. After that, the Mapuche movements radicalized their political action as they were facing the consolidation of the neoliberal model inherited from Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1989), leading to a new kind of media to disseminate their ideas. The *Coordinadora Arauco Malleco* (the Mapuche territorial resistance group) created the digital informative medium, *Weftun,* through which they established their political arguments for territory claims and political autonomy. This digital media experienced political prosecution from the Public Prosecutor's Office due to the new scenario of the Chilean–Mapuche conflict after the *Lumako* events[3] in

1997 which diminished their possibilities for maintaining their channels of communication (Bidegain, 2017; Gutiérrez, 2014; Tricot, 2009).

From the 2000s to the present day, Mapuche communication works have been heading towards professionalization by taking on a political commitment and promoting their cultural roots. One of their foundational initiatives is the newspaper *Azkintuwe*, which was circulating in its printed version in *Ngulumapu* (Mapuche ancestral territory of Chile) and *Puelmapu* (Mapuche ancestral territory of Argentina) for five years (2003–2007). This newspaper became the new information and opinion space emerging from the recognition and validation of the Mapuche country. Afterwards, the *Azkintuwe* turned to online-only publication. Currently, only a few of its news stories and interviews can be found on the internet. In addition to this informative digital media, other Mapuche newspapers are circulating online, such as the *Werken.cl* and the *Mapuche Times*, which are not available now, and the *Colectivo Informativo Mapuexpress*, *Radio digital Aukinko*, and *Radio Kvrruf*, which are currently available online. Besides, it is worth mentioning the bilingual (Mapuzungun-Spanish) radio show *Wixage nai!*, broadcast by a group of Mapuche activists in Santiago, the capital city of Chile in 1993 and a series of radio programs, broadcast by the *Equipo de Comunicaciones Mapurbe* in the city of Bariloche, Argentina between 2003 and 2005 (Cárcamo-Huechante, 2013; Cárcamo-Huechante and Delia, 2010).

Based on the newspapers and radio stations previously mentioned that are no longer available online, we can highlight the following. The first newspaper is the *Werken.cl*, which was an informative digital media created in 2012, covering the news from Mapuche communities in the Mapuche territory (Del Valle and Maldonado, 2016). The latter is the *Mapuche Times*, which was an intercultural newspaper created in Chile in 2011. It focused on topics and news concerning the Mapuche social, economic, cultural, sport, scientific and artistic life, and those related to the indigenous peoples in general.

Concerning the newspapers and online radio stations that are still available on the internet, we can highlight the following. The first newspaper is the *Mapuexpress*, an informative collective seeking to defend and promote the people's collective rights, mainly those of the Mapuche people, the respect for human rights, and the defense of nature and territories employing social communication and activism. The second is the *Radio digital Aukinko*, the first Mapuche-only and bilingual (Mapudungun-Spanish) online radio station created in 2008. This radio station aims to disseminate Mapuche culture and history through audio-visual staff, texts, and images that illustrate the Mapuche people. The last case is *Radio Kvrruf*. It is an independent and social newspaper, which disseminates information related to Mapuche social demands, territorial defense and the search for the balance of good living in the Ngulumapu.

The Mapuche digital media phenomenon has been previously studied (Del Valle, 2019; Del Valle and Maldonado, 2016; Godoy, 2003; Maldonado, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b; Maldonado and Del Valle, 2013). Notwithstanding, still missing is a critical analysis and discussion

of the narrative carried out by the Mapuche communicators regarding their experiences in the technology appropriation and self-communication process. Therefore, this study is relevant for understanding the relationships among the distinct variables involving those communication and information processes by the Mapuche communicators through the strategic use of techno-mediation devices in the digital age. To get a contextual framework for this phenomenon, it is essential to state that the use of communication technologies by the Mapuche organizations and groups can be understood within the context of *ethnogenesis*, which developed in Latin America in the 1990s (Bengoa, 2000). The local indigenous movements in Latin America confronted the assimilationist model, which is promoted by capitalist globalization into the cultural and identity fields, resulting in discourses of territory claiming, self-recognition and integrity in public spaces.

As a result, these discourses reveal the diversity assumed from the difference by showing and expanding the horizons of the political and cultural debate rooted in multiculturalist assumptions. In this regard, Salazar (2016) establishes that, from the perspective of the indigenous communication praxis, those communication processes are incorporated as a form of political activism. He adds that it is determined that it is a performative instrument that places the exteriorized subject in the center of the public debate (Salazar, 2016).

This article offers some conceptual approaches that could make it possible to understand the processes of technology appropriation associated with the production of the Mapuche digital media by unveiling their own experiences as indigenous communicators. The conceptual and analytical keys are based on the learning from the dialogue and listening to stories from the Mapuche communicators linked to the digital media and the above-mentioned radio stations. It can also be considered to involve the perceptions of the Mapuche filmmakers participating in the *Ficwallmapu*, the International Indigenous Film Festival of Wallmapu (the land of the Mapuche people in Mapudungun). Hence, this work emerges as a construction based on the experience to inquire into the *toolbox* acting as analytical frameworks, which are consistent with the meanings that the actors build around technology appropriation and their day-to-day informative operation.

Results: New interpretative possibilities

The discussion on the process of technology appropriation and self-communication involves a problematization in close relation to the concrete practices that enable them to debate new political and communication forms measured by digital technologies in interethnic and intercultural context and struggles. As such, our interest covers the research on the Mapuche communicators' experience and knowledge about the Mapuche struggle for autonomy in the context of the identity, territorial and political conflict which characterized the Chilean–Mapuche relationship throughout the 19th century (Alvarado, 2019; Pinto, 2003).

This article adheres to a research agenda which aims to understand the role of the Mapuche digital communication concerning the aforementioned controversy.

First, the research focused on analyzing the discourses in various Mapuche websites, which involved wide-ranging inquiry into the study of the Mapuche audiovisual work in YouTube, the hypertextual structures from different Mapuche websites, and the Mapuche informative digital media narratives in social networks. Regarding the latter, the corpus gathered from the implementation of the *Fondecyt Research Project* (*Iniciación*) ID: 11140180 was analyzed using a Critical and Complex Discourse Analysis matrix.[4] Then, this study approaches the discourse analysis of semi-structured interviews applied to several Mapuche agents[5] which were collected by use of semi-structured interviews. The corpus of the interviews was analyzed using an Argumental Analysis (AA).[6]

This article expands recent research findings (Maldonado, 2018b; Maldonado et al., 2019). The transmethodological approach used in the corpus of the interviews which resulted in the synthesis of the Argumentative Analysis with formal theoretical categories, has provided us with a holistic and integrated understanding of the phenomenon by raising new permanent interpretative dimensions highlighting the complexity of the Mapuche technology appropriation and self-communication processes.

The e-communication as part of the communication intercultural Mapuche system

A vital aspect that can be found in the Mapuche communicators' interviews is the intercultural nature attributed to the communication processes that are mediated by the ICTs, which can be explained as follows: the e-communication practices are not included in the traditional Mapuche discursive system.[7] In this sense, they emerge from the dynamics of appropriation of foreign elements coming from the relationships of contact and interaction in the Western world. This situation has extended the repertoire of Mapuche communication practices, whose intercultural dimension is the main differentiating feature from the rest of the culture. It has configured a complex intercultural discursive system which comprises textual typologies, aesthetical schemes, and technology support coming from the *foreign* culture that is re-signified according to the Mapuche organizations' political-identity-territorial claiming necessary to overcome the colonial conditions imposed by the Chilean state.

Mapuche e-communication replicates this mechanism of Mapuche intercultural communication production. Therefore, it is constitutive of the *Mapuche intercultural communication system*, suggested by García (2008), and later by García and Betancour (2014) to refer to the discursive/communicative macrosystem originating in asymmetrical cultural contact relationships with Western–Chilean society. Furthermore, the primary function of Mapuche e-communication is to operate as both a socio-communicative device of rearticulation facing the imposition of the external communication system and the following role as a counter-hegemonic cultural resistance device facing the hegemonic order of domination perpetrated by Western society (García and Betancour, 2014: 105). This Mapuche

e-communication presents the intercultural dimension as a constitutive feature from an explicative level since its production conditions involve the technology appropriation process that makes possible Mapuche digital self-communication.

The second analytical result relates to the appellative nature of the Mapuche digital communication which is presented as a discursive strategy. Even though the Mapuche communicators interviewed argue that the different digital spaces produced by the Mapuche people seek to reinforce their cultural and political principles, they assume the importance of these digital devices to address the Western world. The appellative intercultural function serves as a discursive strategy that enables the Mapuche communicators to address a diverse non-Mapuche audience, such as:

- The Chilean State and its institutions: denouncing their colonial and necropolitical character;
- Multinational companies: defending the ancestral territory in response to the capitalist and extractivist projects carried out by the forestry and hydroelectric companies;
- International bodies: complaining about the Chilean State for human rights violations committed against the Mapuche people;
- Hegemonic media: a counter-response to the informative manipulation related to the Mapuche claiming processes;
- Chilean people: explaining the causes of the Mapuche struggle to make people aware of the historical process of dispossession and violation of their rights.

In both abovementioned dimensions interculturality is understood as contact among distinct peoples and involves a project of *critical interculturality* (Walsh, 2012). This project aims to move forward to designing a project for society, in which diversity can be a matter of inclusion, recognition and respect. Accordingly, we can achieve this by unveiling the colonial conditions supporting the *modus operandi* carried out by the Chilean nation-state regarding the administration of the Mapuche difference and the protection of the Mapuche cultural and identity sources. In other words, the Mapuche e-communication interculturality goes hand in hand with the decolonization desire of society as a whole.

Mapuche e-communication as a technopolitical work

At present, we are experiencing a remodeling of the citizen's political activities and the social movements that assign specific values to the systems of technomediation, according to their particular struggles proliferating within a social model that has entered into a structural crisis. This current state of political action mediated by digital technologies of information and communication has been conceptualized as *technopolitics*. In this category, we can evidence the reappropriation of tools and technological devices to influence the social sphere by creating multiple connections that enable other types of organization and action that articulate digital

networks and mobilize urban spaces (Burgos, 2015: 3). Technopolitics emphasizes the mediations and human connections over the study of technological devices (Kurban et al., 2017). The interest in this dimension is justified on the attention to the agency's capacity that new social movements are unfolding through the appropriation of technologies. Their practices aim to 'connect, gather, and synchronize, utilizing technological and communicative devices focusing on objectives, the brains and bodies of a huge number of subjects in the sequences of time, space, emotions, behaviors, and languages' (Toret, 2013: 20).

Those practices and types of mobilizations generated from the use and appropriation of the ICTs are not homogenous; they instead are expressed, organized, and projected in different forms. For Mapuche e-communication, we can prove at least two forms of technopolitics. Considering Rovira's approach (2017), the technopolitical work in the *Wallmapu* (Mapuche land) involves the *activist networks* and the *connected multitudes*. Although Rovira suggests the *activist networks* within a time frame ranging from the 1990s to 2000s, we believe that the Mapuche communicators are still managing those networks in terms of its definition. The *activist networks* are those conferring a relevant dimension to communication within the biased collective action. These networks consist of those participating in the social protest on the role of *connecting worlds*, as they are responsible for breaking the information blockades carried out by the traditional media, which even overcomes the constraints of dissemination by the alternative non-digital media. In these *activist networks*, activists become:

> Communicators who are efficient and responsible for their actions, journalists with a public appearance, concerned chroniclers, streamers, storytellers and photographers capable of reporting and showing police violence, hackers willing to interrupt flows and inventing new techniques in the global virtual spaces. (Rovira, 2017: 13)

The activist networks turn into Mapuche indigenous digital informative media, making it possible to access the dissemination of the events taking place and involving the Mapuche claiming struggle. This serves as a locus of enunciation that infringes the social semiosis carried out by the hegemonic media and the political and juridical/judicial discourse. For the interviewees, the Mapuche digital media are platforms that complement the offline struggles, which expands the events towards the digital territories where power and counterpower are updated in a virtual mode (Maldonado and Del Valle, 2013).

The second group refers to the *connected multitudes*, suggested by Rovira (2017), which approaches the relationship between the emergence of digital social networks and wireless connectivity. These connected multitudes which have allowed the internet network do not involve permanent spatiality, as they are part of the transit of the agents who simultaneously break in the material and digital space through the use of these technological devices. According to Rovira (2017), these *connected multitudes* have enabled the political breaking to become more distributed, responsive to anyone's participation, without waiting for

mediation of either communicative collectives or activists. The reason is that the cyborg subjects' hybrid protests: 'should not expect the mass media to disseminate beyond the immediate issues, but those that take place simultaneously in situ and online in a hybridization that is fed by the mass media' (Rovira, 2017: 14).

The use of mobile telephony and connectivity to the internet has enabled Mapuche individuals to simultaneously socialize what is taking place in different demonstrations, *trawün* (meeting, in Mapudungun), academic activities, solidarity events, among many other activities. This has coupled the *online* and *offline*[8] territories to connect users from different places who can access these information flows by confirming that the Mapuche collective actions are undermined by a racialized construction by the state and media control devices. Likewise, these state and media control devices convert the Mapuche struggle into events about violence and terrorism, which corresponds to the official discourse about the Mapuche as the internal enemy.

The activist networks and interconnected multitudes shape the Mapuche technopolitics to confront colonial imaginary employing a multimodal narrative. When circulating within the interactive digital interfaces, this Mapuche technopolitics position a self-representative identity system configured by Mapuche political and cultural sources. One example can be found in the following extract of an interview:

> I believe that alternative media, or people who have taken a microphone, or a video or photo camera, have played an important role in the visibilization of the conflicts existing in the [Mapuche] territories, the visibilization of the voices and demands emerging from territorial organizations and some other organizations dedicated to raising topics such as the defense of territories, topics related to [our] language, among others. (Interview 2)

Postmedia and autonomy within Mapuche e-communication

A third aspect defining Mapuche e-communication is their adaptation to the postmediatic sphere established in the era of digital networks, which should be understood in connection with the autonomous conception from which the activist-based indigenous communication work takes place.

The media age has been defined as Western-centrism (Torrico, 2015); that is, from the rationality of a helpful sort where the communication field has become a strategic enclave for the monetization of capitals (Zallo, 2011). Besides that, the media age shows in social mediations' mass media operations that turn them into technologies to control the population and reproduce dominant systems (Martín Serrano, 1977). With the emergence of the digital technologies to the communicative and cultural ecosystem, several of these principles are confronted, but not overcome. It is undeniable that the shift from the media age to the digital one has been accompanied by social and radical innovation. This shift depends on the

functions administered by the users of digital technologies in both the production of symbolic systems and the construction of solidarity networks and new forms of social organization.

The communicative possibilities from 'below' by the multitudes of the contemporary age, especially from the indigenous digital communicators and activists, confirm that we are inhabiting a postmediatic period where technological machines are linked to the political resistance agencies and the emancipation of the network society. This results in a remodeling of relations between the technical, communication, subjective and political aspects. As argued by Guattari (1979), technological progress has not only enabled Integrated Worldwide Capitalism to be deployed as a totalizing machine, but it also has been attached to the desires of subversion of those who use communication to produce fissures in the control system to lead the insurrectionist way to liberation.

It is important to emphasize that the postmediatic aspect must be understood beyond the modifications ranging from the technological to the cultural, political and subjective elements. We believe this unidirectional idea based on media ecology principles requires a revision departing from the concept sustained in the mediations. We prefer to analyze the postmediatic aspect associated with Mapuche e-communication from both indigenous agency and technical control. Therefore, the postmediatic element in the indigenous communicative socio-praxis is presented with the model of autonomous political subjectivity. They are used by the Mapuche activist and work, not only in terms of communication but also structure, that is, as a central element for their political decolonizing position and projection.

By recognizing the Mapuche autonomous communication work, we can identify the political character of both the technical devices and the forms of communicating information. It is no longer a matter of devices over the agency, neither capital over the interaction process itself. Instead, it is all a matter of maintaining autonomous communication spaces to introduce alternative narratives in the hypermediated circuits, which are required to redesign the civilized order ruled by the modernity-colonial-capitalist-patriarchal project. The following extract from one of the interviews sustains the abovementioned:

> One of the most successful movements that we have had is the one related to communication. And I can tell you that because since the irruption of the Internet and the digital media, the Mapuche topic is permanently in the public agenda, and this echo achieved in the claiming fight of territory, culture, and language would not be possible without the media, without the access to communication. (Interview 1)

The appropriation, the media, and indigenous journalism

The arrival of the digital low-cost and free digital platforms has permitted new forms of development of community journalism worldwide. This has allowed new

public spaces of dissemination and exchange of information (Riggins, 1992). In this context, this topic refers to the relevance and contribution of the *Ethnic Minority Media* and *Periodismo Indígena* (Indigenous Journalism) theories to the discussion on the Mapuche digital media. *Ethnic Minority Media* refers to the process of appropriation of the media by ethnic minorities committed to their family values, which cohabitate with other citizens of the countries such as Spain (Basques and Catalans), Turkey (Kurds), and Greenland (Inuit), among others (Riggins, 1992). They seek to legitimize their identity and culture, in opposition to the mass media that have historically ignored them or, even, represented them as conflictive communities for the citizens (Riggins, 1992). If we consider the Mapuche digital media analysis, the similarity between them and the *Ethnic Minority Media* (Del Valle, 2019) can be identified. These media, which are spelt from the spaces of the symbolic flow of the digital age, establish alternative or *alterative* narratives related to the hegemonic discourses from symbolic elites. Riggins (1992) argued that most of the traditional media ignore the ethnic minority groups by describing them as problematic actors at the top of the social structure. Likewise, the Mapuche digital media classify the Mapuche struggle into the epistemologies that intensify the normative semiosphere in terms of identity/alterity. This results in a broader system of significance.

The *Periodismo Indígena* seeks to explain the Western crisis by recognizing that its design is considered a fundamental tool to identify and value other civilized forms of construction, which demand other communications that could confront coloniality (Tabares, 2012). As Tabares (2012) indicates, *Periodismo Indígena* aims at promoting a cultural resistance within the indigenous communities to build social, cultural, political and intercultural spaces acting in opposition to the prevailing colonialism in the hegemonic powers. In this regard, the processes of technology appropriation implemented by the Mapuche communicators contribute to decolonizing the imaginaries imposed by the nationalist pedagogies responsible for the production of the archives that have sub-ontologized the Mapuche people throughout history.

The discussion addressed in this aspect is expressed in the following extract from one of the interviews:

> We try to construct another imaginary. An imaginary of us being an indigenous people that are settled here for centuries and this historiographic debate corresponds to them, those [Western] historians. But we also want to construct our own history. Our Mother Earth speaks to us. (Interview 14)

Conclusions

This article has established that communication phenomena take a primary role in the context of the Chilean–Mapuche struggle carried out by Mapuche agents and communities. They aim to repeal the colonial matrix of power used by the Chilean

nation-state to keep the Mapuche people in an asymmetrical relationship. The interpretation of the Mapuche communicators' discourses enables us to recognize alternative forms of living together, feeling, thinking, and inhabiting the world. The indigenous peoples who install their narratives in the virtual interaction channels employ a communication that is mediated by digital-based information and communication technologies. In doing so, they disclose to the readers their demands and claims as a response to dispossession policies, resulting in a process of re-writing of the colonial history that rules the *other-Mapuche* imaginary.

Mapuche e-communication engages in a variety of discursive modalities for which they legitimate their locus of enunciation. These discourses guide the opening of the social semiosis in terms of interculturality, as they confront the silencing technologies deployed by the colonial/imperial reason to validate the monotopic narrative embodying the civilizing project. Besides this, the discourses are driven by the modernity supported by nation-states and capitalism to reproduce the dominant order.

The communicational exercise stated by the Mapuche communicators in their interviews has allowed us to understand the relevant aspects of the Mapuche people's political claiming in the *Wallmapu*. This also confirms that communication plays an essential role in legitimizing several elements – such as political and territorial autonomy, distinct identity, and the configuration of a political antagonist subjectivity about the politics of exclusion carried out by the Chilean state.

The results shown in this study shed light on the processes of technology appropriation and Mapuche self-communication that connect with a series of dimensions addressing the complexities of the study phenomena and the elements that define their specificity. Together with the theory on indigenous journalism, the aspects of intercultural, technopolitical, postmediatic, and autonomous features are presented as research areas. These areas will allow the ongoing research agenda in this field of study to suggesting and developing several categories of analysis that will contribute to the understanding of the Mapuche communicative processes mediated by the digital information and communication technologies.

Regarding intercultural character, Mapuche communicators admit that using ICTs is a practice of cultural appropriation resulting from the contact and interaction relationships with the Western world. Likewise, interculturality is conceived as an appealing strategy conducted for both the states of subalternization and conscientization in terms of their demands and political, territorial and identity projections.

The technopolitical dimension assigned to Mapuche e-communication is closely connected to the *activist networks* and the *connected multitudes*. These agencies configure a political subjectivity in opposition to the colonial imaginary supported and promoted by the state's institutionalism. Concerning the postmediatic sphere, it must be understood in terms of the autonomous conception from which the indigenous activist communication process is exercised. This situation enables Mapuche e-communication to decouple from the economic–political regulation ruling Chile's hegemonic media system. By considering Mapuche e-communication

as a practice associated with the *Periodismo Indígena*, we perceive installing new forms of conception and exercise of the journalistic profession. This is characterized by the deployment of the organization models, ways of connecting with the environment and producing content that is generally excluded or reduced to the commodification and information field in the traditional media.

Depicting a real difference, these processes of self-communication and technology appropriation seek to communicate and express forms of knowing, representing and visualizing the socio-cultural relations through the prism of a subject that is sub-ontologized by the coloniality of power-knowledge-being-seeing. The Mapuche communicators interviewed in this study indicate that their self-communication and technology appropriation processes emerge as territorial claiming and resistance strategies within the Chilean–Mapuche conflict. In line with this, we consider these processes are complementary to the *offline* practices that Mapuche agents use to confront both the internal colonialism and the neo-extractivist policies of transnational capitalism imposed by the Chilean state. In this way, Mapuche e-communication shapes a complex system of practices, discourses, and frames of significance perceiving the necessary conformation of a pluritopic system of intercultural relations to eliminate the representation models prevailing in the design of the modern colonial world-system.

Declaration of conflicting interests

Funding

ORCID iD

Juan A del Valle Rojas ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5127-6785

Notes

1. The authors of this article translated this and all other quotations used here from Spanish to English.
2. It was the official declaration resulting from the Mapuche people in exile's meeting in London in 1978 (Comité Exterior Mapuche, 1978).
3. In 1997, a violent incident took place in the commune of Lumaco (Region of *La Araucanía*, southern Chile), which is known as the *Lumaco event*, where some Mapuche activists burned three logging trucks that belonged to the Arauco forestry

company. This event resulted in a new process in Mapuche organizations with the creation of the Mapuche organization *Coordinadora de Comunidades en Conflicto Arauco-Malleco*. The Mapuche organization aimed at both a new political discourse of autonomy and self-determination and the justification of political violence against the Chilean state (Bidegain, 2017; Pairicán, 2014).

4. The analysis levels that form the Critical and Complex Discourse Analysis matrix are Factual Analysis; Narratological Analysis; Discursive Analysis; Logical-Semantic Analysis; and Complex-Tetralemic Analysis (Del Valle, 2006).

5. The interviewees are men and women aged 18 or above who identify themselves as Mapuche and live in the Region of *La Araucanía*. Those digital media in which these interviewees are communicators or former communicators are *Radio Aukinko, Radio Kvrruf, Mapuexpress, Radio Wallon, Azkintuwe, Mapuche-Times, Werken.cl*.

6. The Argumentative Analysis has two levels: (1) the syntagmatic level, which seeks to schematize the argumentative structure operating in the discourse; and (2) the paradigmatic level, which refers to the identification and signification of the collective representations underlying in a generally implicit form in the argumentation (Giménez, 1981: 149).

7. The Mapuche people possess several endocultural discursive manifestations that shape their communicative, symbolic, and belief system. They are demonstrated in *Mapudungun* (Mapuche language), which are orally provided. The most public manifestations are *nütram, epeu, koyag, weupin, uldungun,* and *ngüfetun,* among others. For more information about definitions and characteristics, see Catrileo (1992).

8. Toret (2013) indicates that, in technopolitics, the network is administered for connecting the crowds through the convergence of territories. Besides, it is essential to emphasize that their relationship with technology does not determine the logical working network promoted in terms of social interaction and designing of alliances among collective human approach (Marí, 2011), in that offline practices keep generating action networks and registration to the social movements (Rueda, 2008).

References

Alvarado C (2019) Capitalismo, colonialismo y blanquitud. La necesidad de una izquierda anti-colonial y xampurria en Chile. In: Ponce J (comp) *Marx. 200 Años. Impactos y Vigencias en el Siglo XXI*. Valparaíso: América en Movimiento, pp.115–144.

Bengoa J (2000) *La Emergencia Indígena en América Latina*. México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Bernier-Khawam P (2019) La internacionalización de los mapuche: Entre pueblo indígena y nación. *Polis* 18(52): 106–120.

Bidegain G (2017) From cooperation to confrontation: The mapuche movement and its political impact. In: Donoso S and Von Bülow M (eds) *Social Movements in Chile*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.99–129.

Burgos E (2015) La tecnopolítica y la acción colectiva en la sociedad red. *Razón y Palabra* 89: 427–442.

Cárcamo-Huechante L (2013) Indigenous interference: Mapuche use of radio in times of acoustic colonialism. *Latin American Research Review* 48(S): 50–68.

Cárcamo-Huechante L and Delia N (2010) Voicing differences: Indigenous and urban radio in Argentina, Chile, and Nigeria. *New Directions for Youth Development* 2010(125): 33–47.

Candón J (2012) Soberanía tecnológica en la era de las redes. *Revista Internacional de Pensamiento Político* 7: 73–92.

Castells M (2015) *Networks of Outrage and Hope*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Catrileo M (1992) La Lengua mapuche como símbolo de identidad étnica. In: *Proceedings of the Actas Coloquio Sobre Culturas Indígenas: Lenguaje e Identidad*. Temuco: Conicyt, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile – Universidad de la Frontera.

Chihuailaf A (2005) Mapuche: Gente de la tierra. Más allá del nuke mapu (madre tierra). *El Exilio Contribuciones Desde Coatepec* 8: 157–171.

Comité Exterior Mapuche (1978) Declaración Encuentro Mapuche de Londres. Available at: www.nacionmulticultural.unam.mx/movimientosindigenas/docs/36.pdf (accessed 20 June 2020).

De Sousa B (2003) *Crítica de la Razón Indolente: Contra el Desperdicio de la Experiencia*. Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer.

Del Valle C (2006) *Comunicación Participativa: Estado-Nación y Democracia. Discurso, Tecnología y Poder*. Temuco: Universidad de La Frontera.

Del Valle J and Maldonado C (2016) El discurso del periódico digital mapuche werken.cl en torno al territorio: Una aproximación semiótico-decolonial. *Chasqui. Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación* 132(132): 329–350.

Del Valle J (2019) Technology appropriation in the mapuche territorial conflict: The case of the digital mapuche media werken.cl. *Journal of Media Research* 12(1): 40–62.

Díaz-Bordenave J (2012) La comunicación y el nuevo mundo posible | communication and the possible new world. *Razón Y Palabra* 16(80): 5–10.

García M (2008) Entre textos: La dimensión dialógica e intercultural del discurso poético mapuche. *Revista Chilena de Literatura* 72(72): 29–70.

García M and Betancour S (2014) El pueblo mapuche y su sistema de comunicación intercultural. *Alpha (Osorno)* 38(38): 101–116.

Giménez G (1981) *Poder, Estado y Discurso. Perspectiva Social y Semiológica Del Discurso Político-Jurídico*. México: Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas-UNAM.

Godoy C (2003) Sitios mapuches en internet: Reimaginando la identidad. *Revista Chilena de Antropología Visual* 3: 59–83.

Guattari F (1979) *L'inconscient Machinique*. Paris: Editions Recherches.

Gutiérrez F (2014) *We Aukiñ Zugu. Historia de Los Medios de Comunicación Mapuche*. Santiago: Quimantú.

Kurban C, Peña-López I and Haberer M (2017) What is technopolitics? A conceptual schema for understanding politics in the digital age. *IDP Revista de Internet, Derecho y Política* (24): 3–20.

Maldonado C (2011) Narrativa hipertextual mapuche: Emplazamiento y reivindicación cultural en youtube. *Revista de Comunicación de la SEECI* 26: 62–70.

Maldonado C (2012a) Narrativa audiovisual mapuche en youtube. Subalternidad en la red global. *Revista de Comunicación* 10: 547–557.

Maldonado C (2012b) Narrativa hipertextual mapuche: Reconstrucción contra-hegemónica del archivo mnémico. *Perspectivas de la Comunicación* 5: 17–26.

Maldonado C (2014) Apropiación tecnológica y producción de narrativa hipertextual mapuche: Nuevas estrategias de lucha y autoidentificación en el conflicto estado-nación y pueblo mapuche. In: Valencia J and García C (eds) *Movimientos Sociales e Internet*. Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana. pp.119–134.

Maldonado C (2015) *Decolonialidad, Tecnologías y Comunicación. Un Estudio de Caso. Revista Diálogos de la Comunicación, FELAFACS.* Edición Especial.

Maldonado C (2017a) Diferencia colonial en la narrativa hipertextual mapuche. In: Yañez C, Huerta N and Spindola J (eds) *Conocimientos y Saberes, ¿Para Quién? Conflictos Sociales y Universidad.* Santiago: Serifa, pp.80–91.

Maldonado C (2017b) Colonialidad y luchas comunicativas. Una lectura fundamentada en el conflicto chileno-mapuche. In: Restrepo P, Valencia J and Maldonado C (coords) *Comunicación y Sociedades en Movimiento: La Revolución sí Está Sucediendo.* Quito: Ediciones CIESPAL, pp.115–144.

Maldonado C (2018a) *De-Colonialidad en la Era Tecnomediática. Intersecciones Teóricas, Contextos y Procesos de Comunicación.* Quito: CIESPAL.

Maldonado C (2018b) Comunicación, discurso y decolonialidad desde el wallmapu. In: Torrico E and Castro E (coords) *Comunicación (en)Clave Decolonial.* La Paz: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, pp.249–264.

Maldonado C and Del Valle C (2013) Medios de comunicación y narrativas hipertextuales: Lógicas del desplazamiento del "conflicto mapuche" al espacio virtual. *Andamios* 22: 283–303.

Maldonado C, Peralta C and Vieira Euriques E (2019) Configuraciones culturales en la comunicación indígena. Resistencia y autonomía por comunicadores y comunicadoras de wallmapu. *Comunicación Y Sociedad* 16: 1–21.

Marí V (2011) *Comunicar Para Transformar, Transformar Para Comunicar. Tecnologías de la Información Desde Una Perspectiva Del Cambio Social.* Madrid: Popular.

Martín-Barbero J (2004) *Oficio de Cartógrafo. Travesías Latinoamericanas de la Comunicación en la Cultura.* Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Martín Serrano M (1977) *La Mediación Social.* Madrid: Akal.

Pairicán F (2014) *Malón. La Rebelión Del Movimiento Mapuche. 1990–2013.* Santiago: Pehuén Editores.

Pinto J (2003) *La Formación Del Estado y la Nación y el Pueblo Mapuche. De la Inclusión a la Exclusión.* Santiago: Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos.

Rheingold H (2004) *Multitudes Inteligentes. La Próxima Revolución Social.* Barcelona: Gedisa.

Riggins S (1992) *Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective.* California: SAGE Publications.

Rovira G (2017) *Activismo en Red y Multitudes Conectadas.* Barcelona: Icaria.

Rueda R (2008) Cibercultura: Metáforas, prácticas sociales y colectivos en red. *Nómadas* 8: 8–20.

Salazar J (2016) Contar Para ser contados: El video indígena como práctica ciudadana. In: Magallanes C and Ramos J (coords) *Miradas Propias: Pueblos Indígenas, Comunicación y Medios en la Sociedad Mundial.* Quito: CIESPAL, pp.91–109.

Schmucler H (1997) *Memorias de la Comunicación.* Buenos Aires: Bilbos.

Sierra F and Gravante T (2012) Apropiación tecnológica y mediación. Líneas y fracturas Para pensar otra comunicación possible. In: *Encina J and Ávila J (Coords) Autogestión y Vida Cotidiana.* UNILCO-Espacio Nómada: Sevilla, pp.130–138.

Tabares G (2012) *Periodismo Indígena La Minga de Pensamientos y Acciones Sobre la Comunicación Indígena.* Ecuador: FLACSO.

Tascón M and Quintana Y (2012) *Ciberactivismo. Las Nuevas Revoluciones de Las Multitudes Conectadas.* Madrid: Catarata.

Toret J (coord) (2013) *Tecnopolítica: La potencia de las multitudes conectadas. El sistema red 15M, un nuevo paradigma de la política distribuida.* Barcelona: IN3 Working Paper Series, UOC.

Torrico E (2015) La comunicación «occidental. *Oficios Terrestres* 1(32): 3–23.

Torrico E (2016) Decolonizar la comunicación. In: Sierra F and Maldonado C (coords) *Comunicación, Decolonialidad y Buen Vivir.* Quito: Ediciones CIESPAL, pp.95–111.

Tricot T (2009) Lumako: Punto de inflexión en el desarrollo del nuevo movimiento mapuche. *Historia Actual Online* 19: 77–96.

Walsh C (2012) *Interculturalidad Crítica y (de)Colonialidad. Ensayos Desde Abya Yala.* Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala.

Zallo R (2011) *Estructuras de la Comunicación y de la Cultura. Políticas Para la Era Digital.* Barcelona: Gedisa.

Zibechi R (2007) *Autonomías y Emancipaciones, América Latina en Movimiento.* Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos.