

COMMUNITY FILMMAKING AND TERRITORIAL RESEARCH: DEVELOPING NEW RESEARCH METHODS FROM A MAPUCHE PERSPECTIVE

JUAN RAIN,
ROBERTO CONTRERAS,
FRESIA PAINEFIL,
GERARDO BERROCAL,
ARIELLA ORBACH,
THORA HERRMANN ET
MANON BARBEAU

Indigenous researchers worldwide are increasingly using Indigenous research methods and methodologies to decolonize research on Indigenous histories, realities and worldviews. We wish to contribute to this discussion by sharing an emerging research initiative led by Mapuche communities of the Lake Budi traditional territory in Chile, with the collaboration of a Canadian team.

The Mapuche nation (“people of the land”) is one of the First Peoples of what are today the States of Chile and Argentina. The ancestral Mapuche territory, Wallmapu, extended from the Pacific to the Atlantic coasts of the central and southern parts of both countries. In Chile, after centuries of successful resistance to Spanish invaders, the Mapuche were militarily conquered by the newly independent Chilean State in a violent campaign known as the Pacification of Araucanía, lasting from 1861 to 1883. As a result of this conquest, Mapuche society was torn from its traditional relation to the land as families were forced into *reducciones* (reserves), reducing Mapuche territory from 10 million to 500,000 hectares. Today, as part of a process of

evolving within and resisting colonialism, the Mapuche are reclaiming traditional ways of organizing and relating with their Indigenous territory.

This article shares the voices of four members of the Mapuche research team and three members of the Canadian team. It is co-written to mirror the reflective process of our collaboration and reaffirm the central role that Indigenous knowledge, expertise and analysis should have in an ethical and respectful research partnership.

Roberto Contreras: The Indigenous Other has long been a subject of research. Dominant society has always been fascinated by the distinct lifeways and worldviews of Indigenous cultures. These cultures were always observed from a Western point of view, a gaze often only able to grasp a small fraction of Indigenous knowledge and often guilty of distorting or creating crude reproductions of Indigenous peoples' realities – peoples whose cultures pre-date the creation of nation-states and who, still today, resist disappearing into “civilization” and “globalization,” with their tendency to standardize criteria and models for living a good life.



How could they understand our way of seeing the world, those who still haven't experienced how the earth expresses her sorrow, those who still haven't listened to the birds' sad song and to the slow death of the native forest? The invader drove pain deep into my people, and we withdrew our green attack.

– Oral testimony of a Mapuche woman, 1998

This model has been applied to First Peoples across the world, including the Mapuche who have survived with a history of over 450 years of resistance, first to the Spanish crown and later to the Chilean state. The unilateral gaze of Western academia has not contributed to our wellbeing, it has damaged our worldview. Many are the publications that have categorized the Mapuche as pagan beings or beings lacking spirituality; these conclusions set the stage for processes of forced evangelization and the loss of knowledge, culture and language.

To resist this ideological process, over the last two decades we have begun re-writing Mapuche history from our own perspective. A new generation of Mapuche historians has initiated a process of historical research grounded in our own sources of knowledge: the survivors of the “genocide” of our people, or what the Chilean state refers to as the “Pacification of Araucanía.” This new way of looking at our history requires new models for relating to, and structuring, information; models that are more

in tune with our ethics and values; models that grant our political and cultural authorities, our Elders who still hold empirical knowledge of their territory, the honour they deserve; models that respect these knowledge holders' rhythms, the oral nature of their narrative, and most of all, their way of understanding the world.

RECREATING KNOWLEDGE AND RECONSTRUCTING TERRITORY: A MAPUCHE APPROACH TO AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION AND RESEARCH

Juan Rain: The *aylla rewe* Budi is one of the territories that make up Lafkenmapu, the territorial space of the Mapuche Lafkenche, or “people who co-exist with the ocean.” The Budi territory is defined by the Trairaico (Imperial) River to the north and the Toltén River to the south. A *rewe* is a territorial space that has its own political and religious authorities. It can also be referred to as a *lofmapu*, or community space defined by natural barriers and how the space is used by its human residents. The *lofmapu* is, in turn, made up of the distinct *lofche*, or families, that reside within its boundaries. An *aylla rewe* is the political structure of a territorial space made up of nine (“aylla”) *rewe*. This structure allows the nine *lof* or *rewe* of a particular territorial space to develop together along the same path, bound by family ties and shared spiritual, organizational and communicative characteristics.

The subjugation of the Mapuche people by the Chilean and Argentinian states caused a social, political and cultural break from this way of organizing space, through the imposition of a new way of administering Mapuche territory. To this day, the Mapuche way of understanding and organizing territory is both unacknowledged and outright rejected. For this reason, we reclaim this territorial space and it is here that we focus our work to restructure the social, political, cultural and spiritual fabric of the territory.

We believe that this restructuring must ground itself in Mapuche principles and perspectives of knowledge. Ancestrally, the Mapuche understood life and space from their own worldview, one that emerges from *kimvn* and *rakizuam* (Mapuche knowledge and wisdom). For this reason, we value the tools that our knowledge provides us: the Mapuche language and its protocols; the spaces, such as the *ruka* (traditional house or living space), that invite us to gather and share experiences and knowledge through *ngvlam* (advice) and *nvtram* (narrative); and our own political structure and the role of our Elders and authorities¹ in passing on knowledge and in exercising our justice, or the process of resolving problems, identifying needs, re-establishing order and consolidating spaces and their organization through conversation and dialogue, *ngvlam* and *nvtram*, to reach consensus.

1. The Mapuche concept of traditional authorities or ancestral authorities refers to individuals who hold political, cultural and spiritual responsibilities, and who are considered guides or experts in their area. For example, a *logko* (chief) is a political guide; a *machi* (healer) is an expert in health and medicine.

There are many ways through which Mapuche knowledge is passed on. Orality is central to sharing knowledge through the stories and narratives of the Elders, advice given to children as part of their education, and the *tragun* (gathering) which is a political event where Mapuche authorities seal agreements through the spoken word. We believe that today, it has become necessary to design strategies for integrating new communication tools and technologies – audiovisual, radio, written – that will allow us to develop a way of communicating that incorporates the codes of our orality and reflects our Mapuche worldview. In this way, we hope to practise a Mapuche way of communicating, exercising the right to territorial control through communication and creating our own media.

In 2003, we initiated a training process, integrating new technologies and creating teams of communicators to accompany these territorial processes through communication. This training is grounded in the Mapuche way of communicating and sharing knowledge, which involves the participation of the *lofche*: the families of a community and in particular, the Elders who are the holders of Mapuche knowledge. This responds to the Mapuche way of training, educating and passing on knowledge.

The Mapuche School of Filmmaking and Communication is one of the training and self-training exercises that reflects this process. This “school” is

made up of two major fields of activity, Mapuche filmmaking and Mapuche communication. Here, we focus on the filmmaking field, which includes an annual filmmaking production workshop carried out in collaboration with Mapuche and Canadian organizations.² Initiated in 2011, this workshop provides young communicators in our territory with technical skills in digital filmmaking (short film). Youths learn to appropriate audiovisual technologies and techniques as tools for social and cultural research. Over the course of a one-month production process, they create short films that address topics of importance to the territory. The youths are responsible for script development, interviewing, shooting, sound recording and editing. This process is overseen by a Mapuche filmmaker who ensures cultural appropriation of the audiovisual tool and a filmmaking instructor sent by the Québec organization, Wapikoni Mobile. The instructor acts as a guide and technician, allowing the youths to “learn by doing.” The field team also includes two local coordinators who ensure the participation and support of the traditional authorities and *lofche*, and two logistical coordinators, one local and one Canadian.

Audiovisual production is collective, responding to the Mapuche way of handling knowledge. The youths work in groups, at times quite large (ten people), making decisions by consensus and sharing the roles of director, cameraperson, sound recorder, interviewer, editor, etc.

At the end of the month's work, each team presents a finished short film to the community at a large community event. Since 2011, 26 youths from the territory have participated, aged 9 to 23. These filmmaker-researchers have created six short films dealing with subjects as diverse as Mapuche medicine, ideological colonization, youth identity and territorial recovery.³

Filmmaking techniques are incorporated into the Mapuche way of understanding communication; the training process involves creating opportunities for reflection by our youths throughout the year, using our own spaces such as the *ruka* and sacred spaces. It is these reflections that are then embodied in the audiovisual products. Therefore, it is the Mapuche way of communicating that provides the foundation and ingredients for developing audiovisual content. Through this exercise, we aim to incorporate new technological tools to construct a distinctly Mapuche way of making films and other audiovisual creations.

Ariella Orbach: Our text is accompanied by two short films created by Mapuche youths. In *Kimeltuwn Mapuche Ñymican* (“Teaching Mapuche Weaving”), an Elder reflects on how weaving, an art practised by many Mapuche women, connects her to the land and to the next generations of Mapuche. Mixing documentary evidence with fiction, the film shows how many members of the community came together to

2. Mapuche collaborating organizations are Lafken Ñy Zugvn, the lof Malalhue Chanko and Llaguepulli, and Adkimvn; Canadian collaborating organizations are Wapikoni Mobile and Strategic Video Initiative, both from Montréal.

3. The short films created by youths from the aylla rewe Budi are: *Kimeltuwn Mapuche Ñymican* (2011); *¡Inciñ Getuai Taiñ Mapu!* (2012); *Nutuallin Taiñ Mapuche Ñen* (2012); *Petu Weicalejiñ Mojeleal ta Inciñ ka Taiñ Mapu* (2013); *Ixofil Lawen* (2013); and *Fei Lagenmi Ixofil Mogen* (2014). They can be viewed at: [youtube.com/user/escuelacinemapuche](https://www.youtube.com/user/escuelacinemapuche)



creatively re-enact the weaving process. *Ixofil Lawen* ("Everything is Medicine") is a good example of the application of Mapuche communication codes and protocols to filmmaking. It records a conversation (*nvtram*) between a healer and an Elder and chief as they reflect on the importance of traditional medicine in maintaining social and ecological equilibrium. These films are concrete examples of how audiovisual production can maintain knowledge-sharing protocols and value Elders and cultural authorities as knowledge communicators. The films stand alone as research products that reflect both the young filmmakers' curiosity about their culture and history, and broader community knowledge-sharing priorities. This creative engagement of the young generation is part of a larger research process underway in the territory.

Gerardo Berrocal: A research methodology is being developed in the *aylla rewe* Budi that seeks primarily to collect traditional knowledge and historical memories of the old territory using information and communication technologies (ICTs). These tools allow us to develop written, visual and audiovisual research products that contribute practically to local processes.⁴

Research work is being carried out alongside an audiovisual production process. While we collect knowledge and reflections about the territory, we simultaneously record the process using technological tools. Once this "collection" stage has been completed, we can begin analyzing, categorizing and structuring the information gathered through

a post-production (editing) process. This concludes with the creation of practical research products that allow local dissemination of results through public screenings.

The production process differs from conventional research or audiovisual work – that is why we speak of our own methodology – and is carried out according to our own ways of communicating. For example, we do not conduct informative interviews (as in journalistic practice), nor do we conduct semi-structured interviews or cite "sources" (as in an anthropological or sociological practice). Rather, we obtain stories or narratives from *nvtramkawvn* (conversation) or *ngvlamtuwvn* (knowledge sharing). For this reason, we have integrated the concepts of *nvtramkawvn dungun* (conversational narrative) and *ngvlamtuwvn dungun* (knowledge sharing narrative) into our research methodology. This is because orality is an essential characteristic of Mapuche communication, as is the Mapuche language (Mapuzungun) through which these narratives are generally shared.

Another important aspect is the content of these narratives, not obtained according to a pre-defined interview guide or script, or by directing questions toward a topic. A narrative is shared according to the vision and priorities of the person who is sharing it. This assumes that the teller of a narrative is the one who holds knowledge about the topic being researched; therefore it is he or she who has the authority when sharing this information and knowledge.

As noted previously, we do not seek to incorporate the common standards of audiovisual production into our documentaries. Rather, we look for images that reflect everyday Mapuche life in the *lof* and, in this way, prioritize content over "cinematographic language" or "aesthetics" in the final product.

Our current research process involves the development of several products: a sociocultural map that reflects how the old territory is seen in traditional Mapuche knowledge; a documentary that compiles narratives of historical memory about the territory and its importance and use; a visual document that summarizes research findings; and, a report containing historical information compiled from "official" archives about the territory.

The knowledge expressed through narratives, in the *aylla rewe* Budi, is related to the importance and ancestral use of the territory. Through these stories, we obtained information on the original names of each territorial space (toponyms), and why these names were chosen. We also learned about the practical, cultural and spiritual uses of these territorial spaces, like an *eltvn* (Mapuche cemetery) over which the Catholic church built its parish buildings after the "Pacification of Araucanía."

The recorded images reflect everyday situations that mark life in the communities of the *aylla rewe* Budi. The surroundings, elements of nature or landscape, ceremonies, cultural activities, family activities, agricultural work,

4. The research work currently in progress (2012-2014) is being carried out in the field by a team of Mapuche researchers from the *lof* Malalhue Chanko and Llaguepulli and the communication group *Adkimvn*, with the collaboration and support of the Canadian team, researchers Thora Herrmann (University of Montréal) and Ariella Orbach.

the fight for territorial and collective rights, conversations and, of course, the unique way that the Mapuche people perceive the world and understand their existence on Earth. These are all elements emerging from the research and production – i.e., communication – process.

This is how we hope to practically and concretely support the Mapuche people's political process through communication: by collaborating in a process that reverses colonization by reconstructing territory, recovering organizational structures, revalidating culture and spirituality and, as a result, reinforcing Mapuche autonomy and self-determination.

Juan: It is important to highlight that despite the negation and subjugation of the Mapuche people by the Chilean State, our culture remains alive as does our political structure, the *rewe* and *aylla rewe*. This is why we consider it necessary to reflect on our worldview and the importance that territory holds for us, with its spaces, organization and authorities, and the importance of our language. Through research, we hope to learn from those who have knowledge about the old territory: the Elders. They are the ones who determine how to develop a research process, identifying the priorities and topics of importance to discuss and research through *ngvlamtuwun* (conversation and stories). With the participation of the *lofche*, in the *ruka*, around the fire, the Elders and authorities share knowledge that defines the content of the research and the form in which the message will be presented. This context allows us to showcase our way of communicating.

We are very interested in how we can collect, structure, document and disseminate knowledge from the Mapuche point of view and, thereby, validate our traditional authorities and their protocols. At the same time, it is crucial that the knowledge collected through research be disseminated in a form that is understandable to us, the Mapuche, and that we feel identified in the way that the information is shared. Documentary filmmaking is a genre that allows us to preserve the way in which the Elders and authorities pass on knowledge through the spoken word and by sharing lived experience. That is why we focus on a process of creating films that is based in Mapuche protocol: first, we identify the people who are able to speak from knowledge; then, they choose the topics of importance, monitor the research process and validate each decision. It is the person who gives their knowledge who, making use of the *ruka*, chooses and prepares a space where the knowledge sharing will take place, through *ngvlam* and *nvtram*. The knowledge is then placed under the responsibility of the research team tasked with the technical role of capturing and documenting it.

This production process is the framework that defines the research work carried out by the young filmmaker-researchers of the Mapuche School of Filmmaking and Communication (through the filmmaking production workshop) and by the research team responsible for the territorial research process.



RESEARCH PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS FROM A MAPUCHE ETHIC

Roberto: The contribution made by the audiovisual research process taking place in the Lake Budi territory is extremely significant, because it is with these technologies that we are able to structure and organize Mapuche knowledge directly from its source. The researchers are members of the community and were given permission by the territory and traditional authorities to carry out their activities. This context enables the creation of diverse audiovisual archives, two of which are shared in this toolkit and illustrate the principles of ethical research from an Indigenous perspective.

Permission to carry out their work was granted to the community researchers because the community validated this new way of doing research: action-research designed in accordance with Mapuche culture and grounded in the following ethical principles.

Temporal and spatial notions: the Mapuche way of researching must be carried out according to specific temporal and spatial protocols. Prior to interviewing a Mapuche authority, cultural knowledge holder (kimce), or other community member, the researchers must visit him or her in the morning (at sunrise), when nature's energies are strongest. The researchers must also follow the pentukun, or formal greeting procedure required by Mapuche protocol. It involves inquiring about well-

being, from the personal to the communal (personal health, family health, community health). All these elements are spoken in the Mapuche language, Mapuzungun. The objective of this first visit is to inform the person about the reasons for the research work and to request the necessary authorizations to carry out the work. If these are granted, a date is fixed for an interview.

Whenever possible, this process should take place in a *ruka* or Mapuche house built according to Mapuche cultural criteria, with its door facing the rising sun (puel mapu or east).

Cooperation and reciprocity: In our research model, cooperation is reflected in the concept of action-research. Much of what is or can be researched forms part of a body of empirical knowledge and, as such, is passed on from generation to generation. Learning from another is a process that helps renew and reproduce knowledge, and is fundamental to the development of future generations. Introducing a research activity into these learning interactions should be carried out in a context of respect and emotional attachment to the work being researched. Any other way, the researchers risk interrupting not only the technical processes of the work, but also the spiritual rituals that are carried out whenever a Mapuche needs some material found in nature, a process that requires specific ceremonies to ask permission to extract and use the resource.

Cooperation by researchers in the work being researched can be seen in the

short documentary Kimeltuwn Mapuche Ñymican. For the production of this film, the young filmmaker-researchers took part in the work that they documented, participating with the papay (Elder) in the process of recreating the traditional art of weaving. This type of interaction makes research less invasive than in the Western model that positions the researcher as a passive observer who does not help out. When one does not help out in a process, one risks disturbing or getting in the way of the actions that are being carried out.

Research is not just about capturing images or stories! In the Indigenous world, research goes beyond the concrete: it requires an understanding of both the spiritual and the empirical. This re-articulates and validates a way of living and thinking that responds to cultural parameters.

Respecting Elders: This element is shared by all First Peoples of the world. In the Mapuche context, respect for Elders as sources of knowledge and their approval and support of the research are fundamental. With our Elders, the collective memory of a society undergoing a process of adaptation remains alive. They are responsible for passing on knowledge, oral tradition, history and custom. For this reason, community researchers validate and strengthen their bond with the Elders.

This is seen clearly in the short documentary Ixofil Lawen, in which the knowledge of the logko (chief) of Malalhue, who is an Elder, is validated. He was interviewed on numerous occa-

sions, in accordance with Mapuche temporal and spatial protocols. These protocols are also at work in the documentary *Kimeltuwn Mapuche Ñymican*, where the process of researching weaving work involves respecting the rhythms of this long and complex task. By accompanying all the stages of processing the wool – shearing, washing, combing, spinning, dying – the young filmmaker-researchers respect the way that the work is carried out at each stage and validate the technical, cultural and spiritual knowledge required of the person who does the work.

RESPECTFUL COLLABORATIONS: REFLECTIONS BY NON-INDIGENOUS TEAM MEMBERS

CHANGING ROLES, SHIFTING RESEARCH

Ariella: Respectful collaboration on Indigenous research projects begins with two acknowledgements. The first is that research, or the act of producing and sharing knowledge, is not the sole domain of academics and university educated “experts.” It is a natural process that all human beings undertake when they strive to understand the world around them and search (and re-search) for solutions to the diverse issues that they and their communities face. This requires setting aside the categorization of research as an essentially (Western) scientific activity and consequently, opening space for considering Indigenous

research methods and methodologies as equally valid to those offered by Western science.

The second acknowledgment is that those best placed to understand a particular situation are precisely the individuals who live that situation, since they are more likely to understand the contextual dimensions (cultural, political, historical, spiritual) of the situation with which they are faced. They are also the ones who have, to some degree, already engaged individually and collectively in searching (and re-searching) for solutions to the situation. This acknowledgement is congruent with a protocol common to both the Mapuche and First Nations: “You cannot speak about or represent something that is not yours” (Absolon and Willett 2005: 110). In this way, we are brought to consider our Indigenous partners as experts in their field, and ourselves as collaborators who support them by contributing our own expertise: disciplinary, research project management, proposal development, or otherwise.

These two acknowledgements require that the non-Indigenous collaborator approach her work with humility. It is this very humility that creates the conditions through which respectful collaboration can emerge. Just as our Mapuche partners have a specific ethical framework and protocols for carrying out research, so do we as non-Indigenous team members. This ethical framework responds to Indigenous research principles, and more specifically, the Mapuche principles outlined earlier.

Thora Herrmann: Respectful ethical research collaboration with Indigenous communities must be built before the start of the project and maintained during all phases the project through meaningful partnership and reciprocity between researchers and communities. It must acknowledge that there is no clear distinction between researchers and Indigenous people. Indigenous people are also researchers. Thus, all participants must be regarded as equal at every stage in a research process.

Over a year, prior to beginning our project, we held regular live and virtual meetings (via Skype) with our Mapuche partners to discuss and re-discuss project aims, objectives and outcomes and clearly define all details regarding activities, methodology, data ownership and management, and risks of the project. We took time to get to know one another. This long process contributed significantly to shaping the leadership roles in our research process and the responsibility structure of our project. It addressed the power relations/practices and rights within the research process. It also tackled the key concern of whose “reality” might gain dominance and legitimacy during the course of the project (Lloyd et al. 2012). As research questions emerged from the Mapuche communities and not from a university laboratory or cultural organization, the results and their interpretation far exceed an outsider’s perspective of looking in to, and taking account of, community knowledge and experience.

We also discussed the title of our project, and decided not to choose an “academic” project name. Rather, we choose a project name in Mapuzungun that expresses the Mapuche understanding of the project’s focus and guiding concept in the title: “Nvtramkaiñ Kom Taiñ Itrofil Mongen” or “Let us talk about all living beings in our lands” (in the Mapuche philosophy, Itrofil Mongen means the diversity and physical/spiritual inter-relation of all life forms).

FORGING TRUST, BUILDING BRIDGES

Ariella: Honouring and cultivating human relationships is central to any collaborative undertaking. In order to be able to walk a path together, we must first come to know one another, share moments – not only of work – but of laughter and entertainment, develop friendships, participate in ceremonies, get to know one another’s families. Given that we are collaborating in Mapuche territory and not vice-versa, it is essential that this process of getting to know one another follow the temporal and spatial protocols of Mapuche culture. In this sense, a long, informal conversation while drinking mate in a *ruka* is just as crucial a part of research as a more structured interview with notepad (or video camera) in hand. In fact, the former tends to prove far more enlightening. This approach of nurturing human relationships and open communication with a vision of long-term collaboration can be summed up nicely with the words of de Lange and Mitchell: “[we choose] to work deeper rather than wider” (2012: 324).

Thora: Respectful Indigenous-academic research is essentially about building a relationship over time. I find it very valuable that with this project, we learned how to be co-producers of knowledge, co-writers – how to not just listen – but to incorporate community views into interpretations of our results. A key aspect that I like to highlight is that speed, language and style of communication have emerged as deeply important in our collaboration. We rooted our research in Mapuche ways of knowing, communicating and understanding through storytelling and conversations with Elders.

Most of our project meetings and work were not held in an “office” but in the field. Having all participants – Mapuche youth from the two communities, Canadian partners, scientists and Elders – in the field fosters connection in a supportive environment. It underlines pride for Mapuche culture and identity, as well as inspiring youths’ curiosity in cinematographic art and communication technology to address bio-cultural diversity issues. Through this, a bridge can be built between Indigenous knowledge and science.

The Mapuche School of Filmmaking and Communication and the research on the geographical, social and cultural elements of the Lake Budi territory provided an opportunity for Elders, youths and researchers to connect and open a dialogue on culturally appropriate ways of communicating research. It also provided a platform for Elders and youths to express their feelings, views and raise concerns regarding traditional knowledge, identity, nature, wellbeing and re-

search in their communities. This dialogue assembled and sorted information that came from both Indigenous and Western knowledge, and was grounded in the experiences of the people involved. Youth participants learned how technology (ICT, GIS, and mapping technology), Indigenous and Western science can be complementary. Both types of knowledge are valuable in understanding the Lake Budi territory and the complex changes that are occurring. Several of us felt that the youths, Elders and researchers should devote more attention to each other, and community filmmaking provided such a venue for co-creating, sharing and transferring knowledge in a dynamic manner, a manner appropriate to Indigenous Peoples.

DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE, DEMOCRATIZING COMMUNICATION

Ariella: A key principle for collaborating on Indigenous research is to avoid knowledge extraction. The aversion of Indigenous communities to participating in research due to prior negative experiences is well documented by Indigenous scholars. A first and essential step to avoid extractive research is to define and develop a research project based on community priorities, rather than the priorities or interests of non-Indigenous researchers.

The extraction of Indigenous knowledge can also take place in later stages of the research, such as the case discussed by Nêhiyaw/Saulteaux scholar Margaret

Kovach in her exploration of story as methodology. Discussing the holistic nature of Indigenous stories – which goes well beyond simply what is said – she addresses the complexities of transforming oral narrative into text. She cites Cree scholar Winona Stevenson who cautions that frequently, Indigenous stories shared in the context of research are subsequently broken apart into useful parts (“facts” that directly address a research question) and “superfluous” parts, which are put aside. The result: “bits are extracted to meet empirical academic needs, and the story dies” (Stevenson 2000, cited in Kovach 2009: 101).

Avoiding this type of knowledge extraction that corresponds to the limitations of knowledge sharing through traditional (textual) means such as journal/article publication, requires a rethinking of how research is communicated, and of who does the communicating. In our work with the Mapuche team, we applied the principle of self-representation as a path to avoid knowledge extraction. This simply means that we respected the ability, and the right, of our Indigenous partners to speak for themselves and not to be spoken about by us. We applied this principle by emphasizing audiovisual production as the primary platform for research communication, as this form has proven the most appropriate for respecting oral culture and the ways that knowledge is shared by Mapuche Elders and traditional authorities.

Thora: Repeatedly, throughout our project, we also used film to record the process of the Mapuche School of Filmmaking and Communication, and to record our own reflections about our roles and the project process as we lived and saw it developing (recorded interviews with each project member). I found this an enriching experience since it blurs and distorts boundaries between researchers and researched: each of us – Mapuche partners, and Canadian partners including myself – become at once researchers and researched, observers and observed, filmmakers and filmed. This denotes a disruption of conventional power dynamics in the research relationship. Consequently, as also stated by Kindon (2003), this way of exploring enables a clearer recognition of the roles of every project participant in the politics of knowledge production associated with the project; it reduces the distance between project partners, and contributes to a deeper level of trust and understanding within our research collaboration itself. In our project, we aimed to build an evidence-based argument that decolonization of the politics of knowledge is critical to improving capacity-building outcomes through Indigenous informed action research.

In our project, we placed the Mapuche communities at the centre of knowledge production for, with and by each other (e.g., refer to the credits of the two short films). This has key implications for the democratizing and power dispersing potential of community filmmaking. Community filmmaking, if used within

carefully negotiated collaborations, has the potential to disrupt the maintenance of Western knowledge production which problematizes Indigenous Peoples and labels them as the “Other” (the consequences of such practice are silencing of Indigenous voices and production of void data that fosters marginalization). We found that the democratizing potential of community filmmaking (Pink 2001) can open up new spaces for Indigenous youths to be creators and disseminators of knowledge, encouraging them to find their voices as future leaders of their communities. As an academic scientist, one of the critical experiences that I faced in our project was that by recognizing research as a set of local collective analyses and the shared resolution of problems, it becomes possible to “de-centre” science and develop a new framework within which all knowledge systems are set on an equal footing. The co-production of locally embedded audiovisual texts, such as this one, and action-oriented academic papers which focus on research praxis, enabled us to explore the production of a “new politics of knowledge” together. For such a transformation process to become real, a strong commitment, high level of engagement and active work participation are required from all project members involved.

Ariella: By co-creating the written products – such as this article – arising from our research, we applied our collaborative research principles not only to research design and implementation, but to the act of sharing the research

with the world. This can take more effort than audiovisual production, as writing is not a skill that comes naturally to all community researchers. Collaboratively authoring an article across two or even three languages is a much longer and more complex process than sitting down to write one's own. However, we see co-authoring as a capacity-building exercise that enhances our partners' ability to access means through which to tell their stories and share their knowledge, and that enhances our ability to design and carry out ethical research.

If as non-Indigenous researchers, we use our work to create space instead of taking space (Kovach 2005), then research itself can become a powerful decolonizing project that supports and validates Indigenous knowledge.

Thora: Taking time for ongoing reflection and critical analysis, including the knowledge produced, power relations and how the project is, or is not, adhering to its principles, is crucial to developing a truly horizontal partnership with community partners and, in turn, garnering social justice outcomes!

LEARNING WITH FIRST NATIONS AND IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

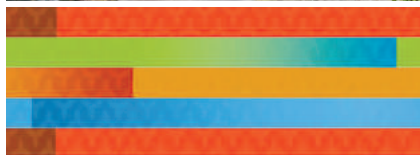
Manon Barbeau: Wapikoni Mobile is an organization involving travelling studios dedicated to cultural mediation, training, and audiovisual and musical creation. Wapikoni will celebrate ten years of existence in 2014. Wapikoni is active mainly in First Nations communities in Quebec, having initiated some 3,000 First Nations youths from 25 communities and nine different nations in the art of audiovisual production.⁵ Wapikoni Mobile is motivated by a desire to project the voices of young Aboriginals in Quebec who experience isolation and exclusion as a result of the creation of reserves in 1851. Wapikoni Mobile proposes an option to mitigate distress by making technological tools

available to youths, tools that allow them to speak out and express their concerns and dreams through filmmaking.

Oral tradition has passed on to the young generation the art of storytelling and an emphasis on image. The natural interest of these young people for the camera and contemporary media has contributed to Wapikoni's success. Since 2011, Wapikoni has collaborated in offering this training to a number of communities in Latin America, Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Panama. These communities possess the same cultural and spiritual wealth as communities in Quebec, and have many points in common with First Nations regarding environmental and territorial concerns. However, their daily realities are very distinct.

In Quebec, the audiovisual creative process undertaken by participants is more individual. Collective script development is rare. A short film is born from an individual's intimate concern about his or her community, or a topic that is important personally, in his or her own life. The individual establishes a production team to help achieve his or her idea, resulting in the creation of a film. Short films created in this manner are then presented to the community.

Above all, Latin American Indigenous communities privilege a collective approach, consultation, group work, process and consensus. Wapikoni Mobile has had to adapt to new expectations



5. Wapikoni Mobile arrives in a community at the invitation of the Chief and Band Council. Over 600 short films have been created over the past ten years by the young participants in collaboration with filmmaking instructors who act as their mentors.

and other ways of working, while maintaining our practical approach of “learning by doing” or “learning by creating.” Our challenge has been to transfer skills within a context of respect for a partner’s identity and processes that are important to their people, while enabling the creation of finished short films – a source of personal and collective validation – that can be shared within the community, but also beyond it. Spreading Indigenous messages through the dissemination of the films is a key element of Wapikoni philosophy because it allows these messages, put into images, to cross borders. It allows the struggles of one community to become known to others and brings people together, so that one day, the fight for identity and territory can become collective.

Wapikoni’s team has had to reflect on many questions over the years: how can we respectfully unite a pedagogical and artistic approach developed in the North with the distinct social reality of Indigenous communities in the South, with their own protocols and communication needs?

Happily, the environmental, social and human ideals of Wapikoni are shared by the communities that we have visited in the South. The issues and questions that arise over the course of a training process can be destabilizing, but they are infinitely beneficial. They allow us to move forward. For example, we have been immersed in the Mapuche culture, in its way of relating to others, to Elders, in its worldview. This has been genuinely enriching.

Together we have established exchanges between Mapuche and Atikamekw communities, and between Anishnabe and Kuna communities. These exchanges will continue, as they can only contribute to this reciprocal enrichment. These bridges connecting First Peoples through artistic creation are in the process of making one of our long-held dreams become reality: that Indigenous peoples of the planet unite to speak with one voice and make themselves heard.

First Nations communities in Quebec have been traumatized by their painful history. They are emerging from an intense phase of self-destruction. Their Mapuche brothers and sisters provide them with models of resistance and courage.

Regardless of whether the short films created during the workshops result from individual or collective concerns, they reflect issues and struggles that are shared by peoples of the North and the South: defending Mother Earth, protecting territory, preserving language, culture and ancestral values – values essential for the survival of humankind today.

Wapikoni Mobile has learned much from our contact with the communities that have honoured us with their invitation to collaborate. We have not finished reflecting and learning. By encountering others, we exchange what we can each contribute for a common good.

In the perspective of enabling these encounters, an International Network of Indigenous Audiovisual Creation was launched in July 2014. Through such a network, we can strengthen our ties, create the foundation for long-term exchange, develop ways to co-create and evolve together toward new forms of audiovisual creation... building bridges between Self and Other.

COOPERATION, EXCHANGE AND ADAPTATION: REFLECTIONS BY INDIGENOUS TEAM MEMBERS

Fresia Painefil: We aim to counteract the communicational model imposed by the Chilean state with a way of communicating that is grounded in our culture and social base. Faced with a model that manipulates information to categorize Mapuche demands for our rights as vandalism or acts of terrorism, we have begun the exceedingly important process of appropriating technological tools with the help of other First Peoples in order to answer back. This exercise requires the support of institutions that are sensitive to, and able to understand, the context in which First Peoples are struggling today.

For over a decade, our territory has been undergoing a communicational process that has new generations of Mapuche as its protagonists. They have received

continuous capacity-building in the use of audiovisual tools. This process has produced important changes in the way that technology is understood within the communities.

We are forced to acknowledge that this work would not have been funded with Chilean resources because the state has imposed a significant communication barrier between Mapuche communities and the rest of Chilean society. Hence, cooperation with international entities has been extremely important in allowing us to develop these activities. For the communities of the Budi territory, this means:

Cooperation: Our logic sees cooperation as always being mutual. A community that receives support and resources grows, but so does the institution that provides that support, because it has the opportunity to come to know firsthand a culture that is still alive, recreating and reproducing its worldview in spite of a history of intervention.

Historically, the management of resources from within our communities has been a complicated matter, because many developed countries do not invest in Chile: it is considered already to be developed. We believe that a developed country, in the true sense of the term, would not treat its Indigenous peoples the way it treats us.

Exchange: With the support of Wapikoni Mobile, we have begun a new project of exchange with Manawan, a community of the Atikamekw Nation.

This has opened up relations of friendship and cooperation between two First Peoples. This exchange, facilitated by Wapikoni Mobile acting as a bridge between our peoples, opens the door to a world of possibilities to understand the new communicational challenges and opportunities that peoples across the world must face.

Gerardo: The need for a distinctly Mapuche methodology to guide the incorporation and appropriation of technological tools arose in the 1990s, when Mapuche organizations brought forth a proposal for territorial recovery and reconstruction, cultural and spiritual reaffirmation as part of a larger political process and, ultimately, autonomy and self-determination.

Since the 1990s, distinct territories have begun to focus on communication by reinforcing Mapuche ways of communicating and strengthening Mapuche knowledge, philosophy and organizational structures. Communication work is seen as part of this political process. This approach led some of us to create a communication group called Adkimvn,⁶ with the vision of developing a proposal for communicating that has the Mapuche worldview as its foundation.

This proposal consists primarily of developing training activities in filmmaking and communication, creating audiovisual products using documentaries as the main tool, supporting communities by producing reports and videos about their activities, and organizing scree-

nings and the dissemination of Indigenous films. It is in the context of this communication work that we began developing a research methodology that seeks to establish a model for carrying out research that corresponds to Mapuche ways of sharing knowledge and is respectful of Mapuche cultural protocols.

We see this methodology as a work in progress and a continuous learning experience. As such, the work respects the internal dynamics of each territory, understanding that such diversity exists and that each *lof* exercises autonomy by engaging in its own processes. For this reason, in each territory we must shape or adapt what we have learned from our own practice – that is, the process of building and learning as we go – to the particular local processes of the territory where we wish to collaborate.

It is in this way that I began working in the Mapuche Lafkenche territory of the *aylla rewe* Budi, where for over ten years I have been supporting the communication process that has emerged in the context of a politico-cultural process led by the Mapuche Lafkenche communities and their traditional authorities.

In recent years, we have begun to research the concept of *aylla rewe* in the Budi territory, its structure, toponyms, use and importance as an ancestral Lafkenche territory. Adkimvn's role in this collaboration has been to support the development and consolidation of a methodology that is adapted to the local process and applied in response to the

6. *Adkimvn* can be translated as "the essence of ancestral Mapuche knowledge."

different practical actions that the communities of the *aylla rewe* are carrying out, particularly the two communities of Llaguepulli and Malalhue Chanko.

LOOKING FORWARD

Fresia: We are working to create a new way of capturing knowledge that is grounded in our culture. For the first time in the history of the *aylla rewe* Budi, we are the ones doing the research on our knowledge, with technological tools in Mapuche hands. The process of appropriating these technological elements brings with it great responsibility and awareness. Many of the recordings will need to be cared for as treasures that will increase in value over time, as some of the knowledge holders are already advanced in age and will be able to continue speaking through the stories they share. This is yet another reason why action-research validates and situates the communication process that we are undertaking in the territory as a new way of rescuing and recreating knowledge – from its origin, from its most intimate awareness. This is the knowledge that our young communicators are sharing with their cameras.

In these times, as Indigenous peoples, it has become very necessary to have a clear plan to counteract the communication invasion; to have our own media that take into account our needs, assertions and struggles at all levels – cultural, linguistic, social, political. These are our only hope of not disappearing as a culture.

Roberto: Creating this new research model allows us to interpret the Mapuche world as we perceive it, bringing to the forefront the values particular to our people and our ways of talking about life:

From knowledge, from collective memory, from that which is ethical, that which still remains, that which must be re-organized and oriented, to be able to resist ideological invasion, colonization, uniform globalization, dictatorial globalization killer of diversity, of lifeways, it is our memory and heart that are the sources of all hope to be able to leave our children a better

world in which to live and spend their terrestrial time, where their energy and conscience will be vital to ensure continued existence as a distinct people, to shake off the intolerance, discrimination, genocide, forced evangelization from which we still have not risen; on that day, Arauco will come: he will return to deploy his green attack, the ixofil mogen will be born, the diversity of memories, of energies, once again the Mapuche will believe in his newen, in her mapu, in her feyentun, from this foundation the new children of the land will plant their resistance.

– Roberto Contreras, March 2014



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