Introduction
The World Wide Web offers sites of Mapuche people related to their reclaim for self-determination. More than being a space to share and transmit cultural traditions, Internet is a medium for Mapuche people to seeking autonomy and more spaces of participation. Their current situation forces them focus on solving these issues. Throughout history, this culture has been experiencing diverse levels of oppression since the arrival of the Spanish settlers to Chilean territory. To understand why Mapuche people utilize Internet mainly to seek and reclaim for self-determination we should refer to Chilean history.

Background
Since the arrival of Spanish settlers people living in central and southern Chilean territory resisted to be dominated. Since the sixteenth century, Spanish settlers and Mapuche people fought in a complex war that lasted 300 years and was known as Arauco war. After Chilean Independence, Chilean authorities fought against Mapuche in order to “pacify” them.

Spanish settlers were able to conquer the territory of Chile at the north of Bio-Bio river. This river was the frontier between Mapuche people and Spanish colony. Due to changes in the strategies of war, during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Spanish were able to ingest the south of Bio-Bio and set up cities that were destroyed by Mapuche, re-founded by Spanish, and destroyed again by Mapuche.

Villalobos (1992) sustain that the war of Arauco had three periods: a) offensive war (during the sixteenth century); b) defensive war (during the first half of the seventeenth century); and, c) parliaments (during the second half of the seventeenth century and the
entire eighteenth century). During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the war became a process of frontier life. The border was the Bío-Bío river and there were occasional encounters due to the passage of Spanish and Mapuche to the other side of the border. This process fostered the development of trade, and cultural exchange.

Before the arrival of Spanish settlers, Mapuche people were politically decentralized. They had a combination of lineage-based marriages, complex and flexible relationships among territorial identity. Communities lived within lineage systems known as aillarewe, where a group unified by blood ties lived together and shared the land.

After Chilean Independence (1810-1818) the Mapuche conflict seemed to be forgotten. Chilean governments were concerned about the formation of our nation, sovereignty, and political, social, and economic organization. But on the second half of nineteenth century things have changed. Under the then president José Joaquín Pérez (during
the 1860s), a French lawyer known as Orelie Antoine I proclaimed the Kingdom of Araucanía and Patagonia. This fact led the Chilean president to carry out the formal incorporation of Araucanía, the ancestral territory of Mapuche people. General Cornelio Saavedra led the occupation process. It consisted on the forced displacement of Mapuche from their lands and the relocation on other lands. During this process, Saavedra founded several towns and refounded other cities that were destroyed during previous conflicts with Spanish settlers.

According to Mallon (2005), since the late nineteenth century, when Chilean authorities defeated Mapuche people, the Chilean state had handed over reduced quantities of land to Mapuche communities between the Bío-Bío and Toltén rivers. The chief of each community (known as lonkos) received a legal title to these land grants (known as títulos de merced), which gave legal protection to the indigenous individuals originally settling there and to their direct descendants. However, this legal document was valid for the chief (and his direct family) of each community, but did not protect the whole community. In practice, Chilean authorities ended protecting the rights of non-Mapuche property owners and did little to preserve the interests of Mapuche communities. According to the historian José Bengoa (2000), the largest usurpation within the títulos de merced took place between 1900 and 1930.

The Occupation of Araucanía ended on the displacement of Mapuche people from most of their ancestral lands and deepened the process of deculturation that has been carrying out for centuries. Mapuche ended relocated in new territories known as reducciones, which often were poorer than their ancestral land. According to Mallon (2005) the reducciones fragmented and restructured the aillarewe, by displacing Mapuche from
their land and relocating them under new conditions. For this reason, the *reducciones* not only defeated their land possession but also crushed the foundations of their cultural traditions.

During the early twentieth century the displacement of Mapuche people from their homeland became more apparent due to rural-urban migration after Chilean Industrial Revolution. Most of them lost their land to private investors, promoted by state-back developmentalism. During the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, Mapuche were victims of the emergence of class-based rural activism and agrarian reform. In the second half of the 1970s and 1980s, during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, some of them were exiled by their leftist ideological tendencies, which were opposed to Pinochet regime.

At the dean of the twentieth century Mapuche experienced the repression of the Pinochet dictatorship, and the renaissance of ethnic-based strategies with the return to civilian rule in 1990s (Mallon, 2005). Since 1990s Chilean institutions have done little efforts to take into account the desires of this group. In order to claim their cultural and territorial rights, some Mapuche groups have engaged in violent clashes with Chilean authorities and the current owners of their lands. These groups also are expanding their claims through various websites and documentation centers that can be found on the Internet.
Current Conflict and the use of Internet by Mapuche people

“In an increasingly interdependent world, the movements of national self-determination cannot be isolated in their specific problems or in their particular political struggle”

(Curihuentro, 2009)

As we have seen above, Mapuche have been struggling throughout a painful history. The use of media by Mapuche movements and organizations through Internet is mostly related to a desire for autonomy, for respect of their traditions, and for land recovery. Mapuche are using the Web as a resource for the development and diffusion of their identity discourse and as a political tool for efficient organization and dissemination of their stances (Grillo, 2006). Most of the sites that were visited for this research speak of Mapuche self-determination, struggle, political movement, identity, and protection of rights. Globalization has allowed the resurgence of Mapuche nationalism in order to fight against the sovereignty of others more powerful, who have been dominating from ancient times (Neely, 1999).

However, there are some sites that, added to their intention of communicating their desire for autonomy and protection of their rights, seek to share cultural traditions. Thoughts and ideals that are expressed within the sites are related to caring for the land, sharing their language (Mapudungun), sharing their medicinal traditions based on Kultrun (their Medicine Wheel), and sharing their music.
Some traditions of Mapuche culture

Origins: The Creation

A long time ago there were two huge snakes: one was called Treng-Treng and the other Kai-Kai. Treng-Treng was really huge and was very good with people. Kai-Kai was also very large but did not like people. One day, Kai-Kai wanted to destroy everything and started moving his big body. So grew the water of the lakes and the sea. Everything began to flood. Treng-Treng came to help the Mapuche, began to fight with Kai-Kai, and as the water grew and grew, arched his back up, whistled strong and people, to come running and to escape the flood. Treng-Treng and Kai-Kai fought for several days. Some people, who were more fearful by the shock, turned into stones. Hence, the mountains are sometimes shaped rocks that are male or female. Others were so angry because the flood did not stop that transformed into cougars and jaguars. Others were reached by the water and became fish and frogs. Kai-Kai, tired of fighting and shaking, stood still. The water returned to the lakes and the sea. The few Mapuche that survived walked around the land and saw that they liked it more now than before: it was clean and pretty, with trees and grass, and the air pure. The Earth revived. Every time the Earth gets old and tired, appears Kai-Kai and the flood gun, but always Treng-Treng comes to save the good.

Origins: Tears of The Moon

The name “Mapuche” means “people of the land”. They were protected by the Moon (Cuyén) and the Sun (Antú). Cuyén and Antú got married under the presence of God (Nguenechen). Cuyén had a soft and tender heart and took care of women and children. Antú took care of men. Over time, there were some problems and discussions that led to
a big fight, the reasons for separation. Since then, Antú began to walk through the sky alone during the day. Cuyén walked through the sky alone during the night. One day, Antú saw a beautiful woman. He took her to the sky and named her gold star (Collipal). Several centuries later, Cuyén saw them kissing, very much in love. Unable to contain her grief, Cuyén cried so much that her tears came to Mapu (land) and thus formed the beautiful southern lakes of Chile.

Ceremonies

Mapuche people celebrate diverse ceremonies. The most relevant are:

a) We-Tripan (New Year): This ceremony consists on the joint participation between humans and nature in the renewal and emergence of new lives. That is, the che (people) being one of the components of nature endorses and participates with their families and guests at this ceremony in order to renovate the cycle of life.

b) Nguillatun: It is a religious ceremony. The community meets to pray for the coming of the morning, standing four days in a designated place. This is a prayer at three levels: In the intimate level requested by interpersonal relationships, love and friendship, children, relatives and dear friends. At the social level, it is requested prosperity. At level 3 is made an unswerving commitment to the Giver of Life. During this ceremony people develop a clear awareness that the Sacred Earth, Water, Sun, Stars, Air, give as they receive, respect, offerings, and loyalty.

c) Machitun: It is a healing rite officiated by Machi, a person consecrated by the gods to fight against the forces of evil (wekufe). It is assumed that Machis are designated by supernatural forces or fileus, which in some cases are recognized as ancestors.
Conclusions

Mapuche people have been suffering a long history of domination, violations of cultural and territorial rights. From the outside, people might interpret their history as an inexplicable mixture of different aspects that are taken from the ones who have been most powerful: “ethnicity and class; Mapuche worldview and evangelical religion; radical grassroots mobilization and loyalty to the political parties; a profound and sometimes humiliating experience of exploitation (…) with a stubborn will to survive and a complex individual subjectivity” (Mallon, 2005, pp. 21-22). Today there are numbers of movements and organizations that are seeking for a space, allowing Mapuche people to build their identity and recover what they lost as a product of the contradictions of Chilean history. Mapuche is a complex conflict. It has not reached a solution. Chilean authorities must make an effort to hear and take in consideration the claims of these people. If not, we will loose the richness of their knowledge.

References


**Resources**

**Mapuche Websites**

http://radio.mapuche.nl/

http://www.mapuche.nl/

http://www.institutoindigena.cl/

http://meli.mapuches.org

http://www.azkintuwe.org

www.mapuche-nation.org


http://www.mapuche.info/

**Documentary about Mapuche Claims**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhm2V8SwWYo

**Information about other Aboriginal Cultures of Chile**

**Rapa Nui**

http://www.easterislandechofoundation.org/english/noticias.html

http://www.portalrapanui.cl/easterisland/index.htm

**Aymara**

http://www.andes.org/

www.ilcanet.org

http://grove.ufl.edu/~hardman