The Mapuche conflict
A critical discourse analysis on how the discourse between the Chilean government and the Mapuches has changed from 1970-2010

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The issue of the Mapuches conflict has received different reactions from stakeholders and most important, government in the countries where they exist. This issue has gained much attention in Chile, where the Mapuche form the largest ratio of the indigenous group. The issue started more than seven centuries ago when neighboring groups started to invade the mapuches land, the aggressors where mainly Inka. And the reason for invading was that the mapuche land had dense forests and were rich in minerals. The fight for the mapuches rights on these resources culminated with the entry of the Spanish. The Mapuche were involved in a war with the Spanish for about three and a half decades. When the Spanish eventually took over the territory, they divided it between Chile and Argentina to facilitate smooth governance. The Spaniards who succeeded in overcoming the Mapuche had seceded from Spain and had become permanent residents of South America under the new name “Chile”. This meant that they laid claim on the resources and territory in the mapuches land. While the Argentine Mapuche have experienced relative peace, except for the Argentine war of extermination in the 19th Century, their counterparts in Chile have had a poor relationship with most government. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relations between the Mapuche and the Chilean government over four decades. The study will examine the presidential discourse on the issue of the Mapuche conflict under six governments, during the periods between 1970 and 2010. I am interested in understanding the factors that led to the change of narrative from referring to the Mapuche as peasants/farmers entitled to resources as part of their cultural heritage to finally being labeled as terrorists by the Chilean Government. In meeting the research aims, I will examine the historical development of the Mapuche and the factors that have defined their attitude and perception of various laws, policies and government actions on them. The study will employ Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis method where I will carry out text analysis, processing analysis and eventually the social analysis of the discourse simultaneously.

Keywords: Mapuche, Chile, Chilean Government, critical discourse analysis, the Mapuche Conflict, discourse
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Introduction

The Mapuche is one of the largest indigenous groups in South America totaling to almost two million by the end of 2015. The Mapuche sees themselves as the original inhabitants of the continent and documentation of their existence on the Southern Cone can be traced to the pre-renaissance when the continent started opening up to foreigners with the invasion of the Spanish. Recently, the Mapuche have been drawing the attention of historians and human rights activists from around the world because of their struggle to maintain their identity and access to resources such as land and water bodies against the growing interest of other people to come in and share these resources (Tvedt 2006, p. 584). The confrontation of the mapuche with the Chilean government has seen many activists become vocal against the actions of the government. The police have often come under spotlight for the death and disappearance of a number of Mapuche activists (Salazar 2003, p. 1). Scholars have considered the language and cultural identity of the Mapuche as a major uniting factor and modernization has been a threat to this unity. Due to the constant attempts by the government and non-indigenous groups such as foreign corporations to take over the Mapuches resources, the community has been keen on developing its capacity to resist such attempts.

Initially, the Mapuche were scattered across the Southern Cone with each village having its own leader. The territories were peaceful with each community leading its own life until around 1200 AD (Carruthers & Rodriguez 2009, p. 4). The neighboring groups started attacking the communities for their resources at a time when some of the cultural aspects, such as language and art, between different members had begun to develop independently. However, the attacks brought the community together and this lead to their victory. Similar attacks were initiated by the Spanish and these failed again despite them having superior weapons to those of the Mapuche. After their independence from Spain, the Creole were able to Annex the Mapuche’ land. They divided the territory between themselves. With the Mapuche territory under their governance, the Creole, who controlled the governments of both countries, made desperate attempts to gain access to the resources on the Southern cone. These attempts have been fought against by the mapuche with much aggression, often to the extent where they have been blamed for the complicated relationship between the government and themselves.
While the Argentine government has experienced a growing mutual relationship with the Argentine Mapuche, the Chilean government has not had a stable relationship with the Chilean Mapuche. With some periods being defined by strong relations and others having by having misunderstandings that threaten the wellbeing of both the community and the government (Salazar 2003, p. 20). This paper will seek to explain how the discourse between the Mapuche and the Chilean government has undergone changes over time in relation to real events. The study will focus on the last quarter of the twentieth century and the 21st century where the people have been given different identities by various governments. The essay will aim at uncovering the motives and reasons behind the change in the perspective and policy, for instance, under Pinochet’s regime and in the governments after him, the Mapuche was labeled as terrorists and often referred to as such in media. This is different from the Allende’s era when the indigenous groups had different entitlements under the law and policies were enacted to ensure their wellbeing (Richards 2010 p. 62). I am interested in examining the presidential discourse on the Mapuches claim to the resources and the shift from the view of the group as farmers who were justified to agitate for their land to being referred to as terrorists. The history of presidential discourse on the Mapuche is important in this study as it helps understand the origin and development of the Mapuche and the ways of the people and how this has come to define their relationship with the various governments.
Aim of the Study

This research aims at documenting the discourse in the relationship between the Chilean government and the Mapuche people. The study examines the changes that have taken place in reference to the subject with the focus on a four-decade period where the perception of the Chilean government towards the Mapuche changed tremendously from a positive one to an extremely negative one. Understanding these changes is important in helping stakeholders come up with a permanent solution to the Mapuche conflict. The study aims at helping the reader understand how the life of the Mapuche, and how their relationship with the government has developed and has had an effect on this change of discourse. Fairclough’s analysis will be used in analyzing the nature of the relationship between these two parties, by examining changes from the government of Chilean president Salvador Allende (1970-1973) to forty years later under the presidency of Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010). The historical background and the conflicts that have existed between the Mapuche and the government is important in understanding the attitudes of each side towards the other.

This research will concentrate on the Chilean government’s case with the Mapuche and explain how this has defined the relationship between the two over time. Some of the key differences that will be important is the efforts by government to improve the wellbeing of the Mapuche, and the contempt with which the government has treated the people it is supposed to protect. Fairclough’s model will also be used in discussing the question on the indigenous territory of the Mapuche and how differently the issue has been handled by the Chilean government compared to other nations, especially in Argentina where the Mapuche still live on the Southern Cone with relatively less attention from the government and interference on its indigenous territories.
**Research Questions**

In order to achieve the aims of the study, it is important that I formulate questions that can act as a guide in the determination of the nature and strength of relationships between and among various variables and factors relevant to the study.

- How has the discourse on the relationship between the Mapuche and the Chilean government changed between 1970 and 2010?

- What factors led to the labeling of the Mapuche as terrorists during Pinochet’s era and those of his successors?

**Disposition**

This research is arranged in chapters with each chapter facilitating the development of ideas and acting as a foundation for the next one. The introductory chapter presents the purpose of the research and gives the reader a summary of what has been done on the topic by other researchers and why examination of the discourse is necessary. This chapter also defines the relevant theories and concepts used in this study. It explains and validates the methods applied in the course of the study together with their limitations. I will then embark on explaining the background information to help the reader build a foundation on which understanding the analysis will be based. In this study, the background information will cover the history of the Mapuche people, the creation of the Chilean state and how the past governments have treated and related to the Mapuche. After this, I will analyze the discourse under study to help in drawing conclusions, fulfilling the aims of the study and responding to the research questions. The last chapter will provide a brief recap of the paper and draw a conclusion after considering all the applicable concepts as discussed in this essay.
Relevant Concepts and Definitions

Since this research involves a historical analysis of a people, the study will concentrate on the important social, economic and political aspects that have defined the development and identity of the Mapuche people over time.

Economic aspects

Economic aspects of life relate to matters to do with management of resources, production and meeting of utilities within households and the state. The study will consider the economic activities of the Mapuche and how they have influenced their values and development over time. A society will place emphasis on the preservation or exploitation of a certain resource depending on its relevance in sustaining the livelihood of its people. Therefore, in understanding the emphasis that a community has treated certain matters with, I will examine how they affect the ability of the people to earn their living by either promoting their access and to the resources and their sustainability or undermining this access.

Social aspects

Communities have developed moral and value systems that place different levels of emphasis on certain relationships and actions by their members. The value systems are important in determining the standards of discipline and willingness of the members of a society to indulge in certain actions. Family, clan and community relations are also important in examining the cohesiveness and forces that hold together a community. Religion is another important aspect when examining the social structure of a community. Religious leaders and beliefs affect how the community will respond to both internal and external influences and how they will resolve the matters. The social aspect of the Mapuche lifestyle is important in this research as it will help in determining how the perceptions of the people towards the activities of the government affected their response.

Political aspects

Political aspects in this discussion are those that relate to the government and public affairs. The look of issues from this perspective is important as it covers how the country has been managed at the expense or gain of each individual. The political aspect of the Mapuche people is the most significant in this essay. I will also examine this factor from the perspective of the government. It is worth examining the role that politics has played in the relations between the
government and the Mapuche as this may offer valid insights on why the discourse went through drastic changes over the four decades. The study should look at how various factors that relate to power and governance has affected the quality of life of the Mapuche while at the same time examine how the activities of these people have affected the ability of the governments to maintain law, order, the rule of law and the respect of human rights. The research will also examine the relationship between the political social and economic aspects and how their interplay has effected the relations between the Mapuche and the government.
Research Methods

This research involves a review and analysis of sociolinguistics. The research examines language in relation to a number of social factors, key among them being the relationship between Mapuche and the Chilean government. The study will rely on a number of sources, key among them being news sources and academic journals and books to analyze various changes in the discourse between the Government of Chile and indigenous Mapuche. The study will use Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA helps me to relate the use of language and social issues affecting the society (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 1). Norman Fairclough’s CDA examines the dispensation of power through language, that is presented through both written and spoken words. Unlike other methods that apply the philosophical-oriented techniques of inquiry into a subject matter, Fairclough’s CDA looks at the inherent properties of the discourse that are key in the bringing together of various interpretations into one harmonized idea. The study will thus focus on the nature of social practices and their effects on the lives of the group of people under scrutiny. Discourses, especially by government officials indicate their stand on important issues that affect the society and the formulation and implementation of laws and policies often stem from these discourses. The discourses also go a long way in defining the relationship between the government and the affected people. Positive discourses draw the people closer to the government and it becomes easy to reach a mutual agreement while negative discourses tend to build up contempt between the two sides.

CDA provides a basis on which I can relate the discourse affiliated to a certain institution to its functions and expectations of the people on it. In this case, the study looks at the relationship established between the Chilean government, especially the executive through presidency, and the people of Mapuche. The research will be looking at how the discourse solicits certain reactions and perceptions from the Mapuche and other minority groups affected, and how the government reacts to this in return. Fairclough’s CDA thus introduces a scientific way of looking at issues on a cause-effect analysis basis.

Before the application of critical discourse analysis, the research must form a foundation for the study by providing a detailed description of the Mapuche conflict. This will begin by exploring their dependence on natural resources and the efforts that the Mapuche have made to ensure that they safeguard them not only as their source of income but also as their cultural...
heritage. This analysis will rely on secondary sources of information. Archival research on the relevant literature was carried out to obtain information and data on the history of the Mapuche and conflicts over their resources.

Archival research is convenient for this type of study because of the limited time and resources available. This method does not require additional data collection as the references used are conclusive. It does not also consume a lot of time and the researcher is not likely to face language barriers because most references are available in a variety of languages. However, this method is prone to manipulation. In the case of Mapuche, most accounts given by the community are positive while those by outsiders tend to be negative, especially when drawing the causal conclusions. Despite these challenges, archival research is appropriate in supplementing CDA analysis since many secondary sources in the main analysis section also constantly refer to the history of the Mapuche in justifying their perspectives on the matter.

**The Relevance of Discourse Analysis in This Research**

Governments deal with important issues through a variety of methods such as policies, laws and even decrees by leaders. Many governments may make commitments towards certain courses of action through enactment and enforcement of laws and policies. However, there are cases when their implementation has proved a challenge because of the perspectives and attitudes of the leaders. This research provides a background on the Mapuche conflict and discourse analysis of Chilean presidents over four decades on the Mapuche conflict. The research concentrates on the presidents because the form of leadership in the country gives the president more discretion over issues. It is therefore easy for a stand taken by the president to prevail over that of other leaders. Discourse analysis uncovers the perspective of the government and its commitment towards certain courses. By looking at the terms used by the relevant leaders to express themselves on the relevant issue, the researcher will be able to understand the intention of the government. This can also be used as an entry point into the analysis of the ability or commitment of the relevant governments in fulfilling their manifestos and policies and laws formulated by the existing regime or the preceding ones. This analysis will offer an insight into how the different leaders treated the issue of the Mapuche conflict over natural resources.
Motivation of Fairclough’s CDA

Unlike others scholars who covered the issue of discourse analysis, Fairclough’s analytic tool seeks to determine the relationship between the discussions made on the relevant topic and their resulting social effects. Laclau and Mouffes theories are based on the deconstruction of other bodies of knowledge where they presuppose a deep understanding of the other theories. On the other hand, Fairclough’s CDA incorporates knowledge drawn from these other theories and avoids assumptions and internal conflicts that are left un-argued. This means that each statement made is analysed and its effects determined before the researcher can proceed. It is the role of the discourse analysis to track the struggles for social justice and bring out the meaning of each aspect in the course of the analysis. Fairclough’s CDA allows the study to review other theories that will help the researcher in drawing inferences on some of the most important social aspects covered in the discourse under study (Fairclough 2013, p. 3).

Fairclough’s discourse analysis has been improving towards the incorporation of the idea of technologizing discourse. This adaptation has been taken due to the increased use of the internet and other modernized form of communication to communicate to stakeholders and other relevant parties. However, this specific analysis under the study may not benefit much from these improvements because it studies a matter that is mainly covered in an era when technologizing discourse was yet to be achieved or fully adopted within the context. Therefore, the recent developments made by Fairclough are not applicable to this analysis and the study will have to rely on the theory and practice that existed in the 1970s and 1980s.

Strengths

Discourse analysis can be effective in uncovering the relationship between language power, the dispensation of this power and its final effect on various sociological issues (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 3). The study will combine linguistic and social theories to help the reader understand how the Chilean government’s decisions and actions have affected the Mapuches wellbeing. Both theories will be used in understanding why governments have been taking sharper departures from the past, for instance, the shift form giving the Mapuche access to various resources in the 1970s to the latest narrative started with his successor and extended into the first decade of the 21st century labeling the Mapuche as terrorists.
This research aims at uncovering the discourse on the Mapuche by the Chilean government and its effects and counter effects on the relationship between the two over time, specifically four decades. Discourse analysis is the most relevant for application to eras where the government, through the president, widely referred to the Mapuche conflict in public. The administrations that made positive impacts on resolving the issue and granting the Mapuche their rights under the constitution and their appreciation as the founders of Chile as a country can be featured prominently when one refers to discourses. For instance, many laws, public speeches and statements were made by Salvador Allende and senior members of his administration which was supporting the granting of the Mapuche access to their indigenous resources and upholding of the indigenous dignity.

**Weaknesses**

Rulers who tended to oppress the Mapuche and other indigenous groups such as Aymara, Atacameño, Diaguita, Colla and Kawashkar in Chile hardly made open speeches about the people as it would either expose their actions against them or would be hypocritical. Therefore, the eras characterized by oppression of the Mapuche have less speeches, statements and printed data by the government that can help me maintain a constant frequency of referring to the discourse, especially presidential. In studying such eras, one can only rely on the actions of the government which are mainly effected through decrees or autonomous decision of state officers and relevant organs. Therefore, I will combine discourse analysis with literary analysis where published works on the progress of the issue of Mapuche will be examined for indicators that can help the research draw conclusions on the nature of relationship between the government and the Mapuche. In this effect, the study will rely on peer-reviewed academic journals, published books and verifiable new sources to provide important qualitative and quantitative data. I will also use alternative texts that cover the discourses to establish the link between the words used and the relations between the Chilean government and the Mapuche. These are secondary sources of data and information. This is to ensure that the discussion maintains continuity in the flow of data and information that is important in meeting the aims of research.
The Process of Implementing Fairclough’s CDA

I will undertake the process of CDA in three simultaneous stages in the following order: text analysis, processing analysis (interpretation) and social analysis (explanation). The first process involves the description of the discourse where the study looks at the selection of words and arrangement of ideas in the texts used to express government decisions and position and recorded speeches from the relevant government officers. At this stage, I will directly look at the words used by the president in reference to the Mapuche issues. The study of the initial text is aimed at identifying hypotheses or discourse on the particular subject. After this is done, other texts that touch on the issue are brought on and comparisons are made with the original text to prove whether the hypotheses constructed can be proven or not. Therefore, one works from the text to discourses rather than the vice versa. The second stage includes an explanation that mainly applies concepts in linguistics. On a typical social issue, different writers will come up with various perceptions of the state depending on the manner in which they receive and perceive these texts (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 6). Due to the multiplicity of speeches, I will also rely on analyses by other writers due to limited time and resources. These analyses will provide direct quotations and their insights. The culture of relating the text and one’s knowledge is often used to provide an entry point into analyzing a text. This means that depending on what the writer values, he will tend to place different levels of emphasis on these texts. This stage can be described as heuristic where it is upon me to learn something for myself by familiarizing with the preconceived values of the writer or speaker. After finding an entry point into understanding the discourse, I am set for the third stage of analysis where they analyze the visual signs. Text analysis offers insights into how various processes operate within the text from a linguistic view. In the case of a political discourse, like in the case of this research, the study may not necessarily concentrate on looking for superficial and simplistic meanings because the likelihood of their existence is low. Fairclough feels that textual analysis is not sufficient because it diverts its energy on the simplistic and superficial meanings and this compromises its ability to effectively review the important issues represented in the text. Therefore, textual analysis cannot effectively cover all the aspects of a discourse and there is need for me to go further and determine the relationship that exists between the text and the society. An interdisciplinary view is required to combine both the textual and social analysis (Fairclough 2013, p. 2). The view is meant to introduce to the readers the fact that each department or institution is bound by rules and regulations that govern everyday practices.
These rules are meant to shape how people relate according to power vested on them and structures constructed through social relations.

Fairclough (2013, p. 19) notes that discourse is both constituted and constitutive. This means that Norman Fairclough’s CDA is both a theory and a research method. One should be able to authenticate the use of the method in their research by explaining how the theory relates to the concepts under study to bring out the constitutive aspect. The theory depicts structures within the social strata and discursive practice as dynamic. This makes Fairclough’s approach different from other approaches of CDA which make wide use of simplistic meanings of texts. This explains why I chose Fairclough’s CDA over that of other theorists like Laclau, Mouffes and Foucault.

In conclusion CDA and archival research are generally referred to as content analysis. This is a tool that is used to examine the presence of images, concepts and words within certain media. This research is aimed at finding relationships between the words spoken by the relevant leaders and changes in the relationship between the Chilean government and the Mapuche over time. For efficiency, I have broken down the four-decade period into periods under different governments. This is relatively manageable because almost all Chilean presidents over this period were consistent on their perspective on the Mapuche conflict.
**Historical Background of the Mapuche**

History seeks to explain past occurrences with the aim of helping the current and future generations find the causes of certain situations and come up with solutions to problems. This section will discuss the history of the Mapuche from the Renaissance period. It seeks to help the reader understand the importance of natural resources to the Mapuche as a source of livelihood and identity. It will also cover the conflicts that the community has weathered in an effort to preserve these resources for their use. This part will also explain the tactics used by the community and how past incidents have led to changes and modifications of these approaches.

This section is aimed at providing an insight on why the Mapuche value their resources and the experiences that have modelled their ways of reacting to external aggression that is likely to affect their ability to access them. The Mapuche is a group of original inhabitants of some parts of South America. Due to partition of the continent by foreigners, the Mapuche were divided between Chile and Argentina. The term Mapuche means people of the land and its etymology can be attributed to the fact that they are the original inhabitants of the Southern Cone that they have always laid exclusive rights of utilization of the resources in to derive their basic needs such as food, land being one of them (Jullian, 2013, p. 3). Mapuches own history bring out the community as strong united people, who were ready to defend their identity all along, defeating the influences of the Inca empire and the Spanish for over three centuries (Crow 2013, p. 2).

The Mapuche were about one and a half million by the mid-16th century when the Spanish first made an attempt to invade their territory. After the creation of National boundaries, the Southern Cone, occupied by the community, was placed within the Chilean boundary. This region is fertile and arable and this explains why Spain was keen on annexing and utilizing it in expanding its political and economic prospects (Azócar et al. 2005, p58). Some Mapuche people led a sedentary lifestyle while others practiced economic activities that necessitated movement from one place to the other. The communities that moved around were nomads and gatherers while others who chose fishing and farming led settled life. Their small family groups, referred to as “Iof”, were under the authority of a chief referred to as Lonko.
The Mapuche bordered the Maule River on the south with the Inka Empire on the other side of the shore. This border was arrived at after a mutual agreement that was necessitated by the need to avoid future wars. The territory was divided into four parts: Paelmapu, Pinkunmapu, Lafquenmapu and Huikimapu, which meant lands of the east, north, west and south respectively. These terms were also used to refer to the people from these regions. The Mapuche had a very strong identity tied to their culture, religion, language and social organization (Morton n.p, n.d). Attempts by foreigners such as the Spanish and the Inca to invade the Mapuche made forced the latter to reorganize their lifestyle. They formed cohesive alliances and departed from their traditional villages that were scattered across the Southern Cone of the continent. This was to enable them effectively utilize the scarce resources such as land. Adoption of modernization in South America that saw other people access resources that were traditionally considered as belonging to the Mapuche has complicated their cultural survival (Salazar 2003, p. 9). Other communities have been making efforts towards settlements into the forested areas that were exclusively considered as belonging to the Mapuche. This has seen many disputes arise in the area over land ownership and control.

The cultural development of the Mapuche can be divided into three phases. Before the invasions, the Mapuche had developed regional diversity with only a few uniting factors. This is due to the vastness of the land that they occupied. Some of the groupings had lost touch with others and some language variations had even started coming up. However, the attempt by the various groups to colonize them and take up some of the resources that had traditionally belonged to them necessitated that they unite. This introduced the second phase after foreigners started invading the Mapuche territory that came with strengthening of the identity that stemmed from harmonization of their language, cultural, economic and social aspects. The unity brought in a deep sense of nationalism and a desire to ensure that they maintain their freedom. Local empires like the Chileans were surprised by the unity despite lack of central powers. During their invasion, these people thought that they could bank on the diversity between Mapuche living in different areas to conquer them but eventually, their attacks had become a factor that promoted unity (Jullian, 2013, p. 5). The third Phase of cultural development of the Mapuche exists today where many of its members have sought for better life through western education and taken up jobs in major towns and cities.
The Mapuche Conflict

The Mapuche are a spiritual people with beliefs that the universe was created by a celestial family that possess the power of nature. To date, spiritual leaders, Machi, play an important role in making decisions on the important issues that affect the people. Each community has its own Machi that handles the relevant internal affairs. The Machi manages a large, well-coordinated institution whose responsibilities also include those of physicians (Morton n.p, n.d). Some of their subordinates offer specialized services such as physiotherapies and those of a physician. They are respected for their deep knowledge on traditional medicine.

The Mapuche language, Mapudungun, has been a uniting and defining factor of the Mapuche and has been passed from one generation to the other over the centuries (Morton n.p, n.d). The ancestral beliefs include assumptions that the language developed from the land and nature itself. The ancestors listened to sounds made by earthly elements such as wind, rain, trees, rivers and animals and used them to bring the Mapudungun language into being. However, the Mapudungun language has been dying out because of the effect of Spanish in countries where the Mapuche inhabit (Crow 2013, p. 6). This has seen a number of community organizations come on board to help in the preservation of the language as an important identity of the Mapuche.

The first group of Spanish people reached the Mapuche territory in 1536 (Crow 2013, p. 3). The Mapuche had a culture of welcoming visitors warmly and these individuals were received well. They showed the intention of settling in the land. The Mapuche felt that these were homeless individuals who had been pushed out of their original homes by population pressure and thought that they could assimilate them into their land. However, their intentions started becoming clear when they sought to acquire large tracts of land for commercial agriculture against the expectations of the Mapuche that they only required land to sustain their subsistence consumption (Lucic 2005, p. 113). The Spanish started making constant attacks against the Mapuche who kept resisting mounting into a conflict that lasted well over three and a half centuries. Their actions against the initial pretense of a will to coexist with the local people was seen as betrayal. They also started carrying out heinous acts such as torture, rape and mutilation of the locals who declined to yield to their demands (Jullian, 2013, p.3).

The first military action by the Mapuche came in 1541, five years after the first group of individuals from Spain came to their land. Toki Michimalonco led his subordinates from the northern territory to free prisoners. The assault was successful and the Spaniards lost heavily with many of their soldiers either killed or maimed in the process (Crow 2013, p. 3). In the
subsequent years, the Spaniards were heavily defeated and some of their soldiers taken as war
prisoners or charged under the Law of the Mapuche people. Valdivia, a Spanish commander
who led an assault on the territory in 1553, was captured and executed after being charged and
sentenced according to the law (Morton n.p, n.d). The army destroyed all the Spanish enclaves
in the territory after this execution thus expelling all the Spaniards from the territory. The fight
that the Mapuche put against the Spanish acted as a motivation to many other territories in the
Americas. Other individuals opposed to Spanish rule sought refuge in their territory and they
were offered protection. Carruthers & Rodriguez (2009, p. 5) notes that Spain had to give up
on annexation of the land of the Mapuche as the war with them had become unsustainable.
They thus pulled out and concentrated on establishing their rule on other territories that had
been annexed with ease. Historians have not been able to trace Mapuche losses from their three
and a half centuries of aggression to resist the attempts of the Spanish to impose themselves on
them. On the other hand, over fifty thousand Spanish soldiers lost their lives and most of the
developments that they had made in South America were wiped off by the Mapuche soldiers
during the aggression (Morton n.p, n.d). The Mapuche became so familiar to freedom that they
were ready to forego anything to ensure that they maintained their dominance of their territory
and ability to utilize various resources, especially land and rivers to sustain their livelihood. To
that date, the mapuche members had never formed part of any colonial territory. The Spanish
had to sign the Treaty of Quillin to define the boundary with the Mapuche. This ended the long
aggression and hostility between the two parties.

Two decades after the signing of the Quillin treaty to end the aggression between the Spanish
and the Mapuche, a new generation of Spanish descendants sought to establish a stronger
territory. The creole and a group of anti-royalists from Chile sought independence from Spain.
This led to a war that lasted for almost a decade. These individuals were eventually able to
become independent and made further attempts to annex the land of the Mapuche. The Spanish
made promises that they would civilize the people through introduction of Christianity and
western ways of life. Instead, they reverted to the former antics that saw many Mapuche people
get persecuted and imprisoned after they tried to speak against or resist harassment by the
Spanish forces. The Mapuche territories were eventually annexed by the Chilean and
Argentinian armed forces in the 19th century (Carruthers & Rodriguez 2009, p. 5).

After this defeat and conquest, the Mapuche started expressing their contempt for the
legislation passed by various governments. Both dictatorial and democratic governments have
been receiving backlashes from the Mapuche elders on the policies and laws that are passed and implemented. The claims have been that these policies are mainly aimed at wakening the Mapuche territory and taking away their heritage and resources that exclusively belong to them (Jullian, 2013, p. 1). Despite being conquered and being confined within nation states as citizens, the Mapuche have not have a chance for personal development through education, employment and leadership as their Chilean Creole counterparts. This means that these two groups have been able to maintain their dominance over the Mapuche, enacting laws that favored them and increased their chances of achieving the Spanish former targets in the Mapuches territory.

The Chilean Creoles have always tried to complicate the nature of their authority against the Mapuche for two major reasons. The first reason is to ensure that the Mapuche remain some of the most deprived people, unable to ascend to leadership and develop socially and economically. Scholars feel that this is meant to ensure that the people do not mount sufficient pressure to agitate for equity in distribution of resources and fair governance. The second reason for these attempts is to ensure that the complexity of the law gives them access to resources that initially belonged to the Mapuche such as land and water bodies (Tvedt 2006, p. 583). These attempts have also been blamed for the Mapuches inability to access sufficient land and other economic resources and loss of their cultural identity. As it stands today, the people lack most of the technical and financial help that they deserve from the government and this has resulted in widespread poverty among the people of the Mapuche. The Mapuche people in the Chilean side mainly reside in Cuatin, Valdivia, Bio-Bio, Chiloe, Arauco and Llanquihue. However, many among these individuals have moved to the cities to prospect for better educational and employment opportunities. The Mapuche people are mainly concentrated in provinces of Neuquen, Buenos Aires, Rion Negro and Santa Cruz. According to a census conducted at the advent of the new millennium slightly more than 44% of the Mapuche were residing in Chile’s Capital, Santiago (Crow 2013, p. 5).

To date, the Mapuche people mostly rely on agriculture, keeping livestock and growing of grain crops as these two activities provide most of the foods consumed in the country (Crow 2013, p. 2; Jullian, 2013, p. 4). Most of the accounts of the historical development and the current relations with the Chilean government on the Mapuche have been given by other people, with little from within the community itself being available for comparison. In my interpretation, this explains why many historians interested in understanding the form of life adopted by the Mapuche have to seek information from the current generation and this puts...
their accounts at risk of having claims that have been distorted with time in the process of passing from one generation to the other. However, one of the unanimous parts of these accounts has been the hostility that the community has existed amongst for almost ten centuries. The Mapuche has been forced to wage war against foreigners and other indigenous group of South American coming after their resource-endowed territory.
The Mapuche Conflict

Chile has been noted by researchers as having one of the most mature democracies in South America. Full transition to democracy was marked in 1990 with the ascend of President Patricio Aylwin into power. This brought to an end a 17-year old dictatorship under the military rule of President Augusto Pinochet. Pinochet’s era had been characterized by contempt for constitutionalism, violation of human rights and dictatorship. Over two thousand disappearances that were initiated by the state under Pinochet’s era were registered by the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation that was created by his successor, Patricio Aylwin (McKinnon, R., 2016, p. 5). The period under study by this paper (1970-2010) saw six people rise to presidency in Chile. I will look at how each government treated the question of the Mapuches efforts to preserve their identity and access two important resources such as land.

Analysis of the Presidential Discourses

In the following chapters I will present the discourses from the various presidents under the period I aim to analyze, with the intent to implement the CDA so I can arrive at a conclusion at the end of this research.

President Salvador Allende (1970–1973)

After his inauguration, the president sought to uphold constitutionalism and the rule of law. He made direct reference to the Mapuche in one of his early speeches where he assured them that he would push for the elevation of their status in the society. “…. defense of the integrity and development and to assure the democratic direction of the indigenous communities, jeopardized by the usurpation, and that to the Mapuche people and appropriate technical assistance and credit (Rodríguez 2003, p. 2)” By this, he acknowledged the indigenous groups had been undermined and there was need to elevate their status in the Chilean society.

In a speech delivered in Santiago Plaza on December 21, 1970, one month after his election into office, Salvador Allende sought to address the issues affecting the minors in Chile, specifically the youth, peasants and indigenous groups, putting substantive focus on the Mapuche. He noted that it was surprise that the Mapuche were categorized as minorities despite their population. In one of the recent censuses before the speech, it had been noted that the indigenous groups made up one tenth of the total population and that the Mapuche made up
80% of these groups. The president started by noting that the Mapuche were using too much force to seize land whose access to it was their constitutional right. "…… I publicly said that it was not my intention to unearth the war axe, symbol of the Mapuche, and nor did I hypocritically exhibit a white and warm dove of peace either. I was taking the responsible word of a governor of the people, to tell the workers of the land, to tell the Mapuche that, while recognizing the justice of their hopes and yearning for land, I demanded that they no longer participate in the seizing of land or "run for fences."" (Allende 1970, n.p) By this statement, the president recognized that the Mapuche were using force to lay claim to the land further noted that though he supported their interests and determination to acquire and relinquish their land, the methods being employed were unconstitutional.

Allende indicated that he was going to put up a national Peasant Council that would decisively deal with Mapuches problem responsibly and with the urgency that the issue necessitated. Allende explains that the reaction of the Mapuche to foreigners’ encroachment on their land is modeled by their level of education “If we demand from the Mapuche, the indigenous, the worker of the land, respect for the law, we will relentlessly demand it of those who have a higher obligation to respect the law because of their cultural and educational level.” (Allende 1970, n.p). In my interpretation of this statement, he meant that the foreigners and non-native Chileans who existed among the Mapuche had a higher responsibility of ensuring that they observe the law because their cultural and educational levels were considered higher than those of the Mapuche.

The president once noted that reservation belonging to the indigenous Mapuche were to be kept to ensure that their economic activities remain intact. He appreciated the fact that the Mapuche had a defined way of life and it was the responsibility of the government through the relevant departments. In a speech delivered on his intentions on the Agrarian reforms in the country, President Allende noted, “I want to tell the people of Chile what I learned yesterday in Cautin, while the Second Mapuche Congress took place: it should be known that in Chile there are 3,048 indigenous reservations, between Bio-Bio and Llanquihue, with 392,616 Mapuches, and the highest concentration being in Cautin with 189,000; in Malleco there are 89,000; in Valdivia 3,000; 5,000 in Arauco, etc. The basic activities of the Mapuches are agriculture and cattle breeding. However, many of them only feed on pine kernels, especially in the agricultural sectors of the coast of the Bio-Bio province. (Allende, 1970, n.p)” Allende was concerned about the wellbeing of the natives to the extent that he attended their congresses and listened
closely to them. In reference to this speech, Lucic (2005, p 112) note that the President acted as a negotiator between the rest of the nation and the indigenous groups.

Allende credits the Mapuche as individuals who have defended the history and heritage of Chile and thus require recognition and protection from the rest of the Chileans in return. Rather than the affairs of the Mapuche being handled by the modern courts, they should be left to deliberate on these issues by their own institutions that understand their ways of life. The president notes that they have little understanding on the nature of the law and this necessitates that issues emerging on resources set aside for them be handled by Indigenous Courts. The President notes that the government would facilitate a move towards this enacting a law towards this course. In addition, the president noted that there was need to expand education to the Mapuche people to increase the number of individuals who understand both their anthropology and formal education. This would see the Mapuche people heritage documented and kept well for future reference. In my view, this documentation will work towards making policies and laws that will ensure the preservation of their culture.

In his subsequent speeches during his tenure, Allende stressed on the importance of the government concentrating on the wellbeing of the Mapuche people. He indicated that there was need for the people to be granted medical coverage. “I want to tell you that there are over 37,000 pre-school children in absolute abandonment and 27,000 children in breastfeeding ages without medical attention; many of whom have never drunk a glass of milk. (Allende, 1970, n.p)”

By these words, President Allende meant that there was need to supplement the traditional meals that the indigenous Mapuche took with healthy food and ensure that the children can access quality modern healthcare in addition to education (Lucic 2005, p. 126). He felt that granting these people such rights was bound to work towards dignifying the indigenous Mapuche and raising their dedication towards various aims of the national government. He encouraged fresh graduates, especially in the medical field, to carry out community work in these societies that would see the Mapuche accept modern ways of living, especially medicine and act as an avenue of introducing technology to the Mapuche.

My analysis of the discourse during Allende’s tenure brings out the dedication of the government towards ensuring the social, economic and political wellbeing of the Mapuche. Allende sought to ensure that the indigenous has unlimited access to resources such as land,
water and minerals that were considered theirs. He sought to restore the dignity and respect for the Mapuche through ensuring that they remain economically stable and they can deal with what was threatening the preservation of their culture. Allende saw this as appreciation for the Mapuche for having preserved the resources of the land for use by future generations provided that they were the largest indigenous ethnic group.

**Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990)**

Due to the dictatorial nature of his era and questionable actions that he implemented in his government, Pinochet had less discourses that could directly help me understand his views about the Mapuche and their importance to Chile. Therefore, in examining the presidential discourse in this era, I will have to rely on laws enacted and official statements from the government. In 1971, President Allende had assented to a law that sought to give the Mapuche exclusive rights of access and utilization of pieces of land that were referred to as reservations (Richards 2010 p. 60). This changed in 1979 when Pinochet, through by Decree No. 2568 of 1979 stated that "The law allowed the jointly administered tracts of land to be divided and sold as private property. To bring the new law into effect, it was sufficient to obtain the consent of a single Mapuche – regardless of the other members of the indigenous community."

The Chilean government under Pinochet felt that the reservations made and alienation of the Mapuche to certain resources was an obstacle to their civilization and integration into modernity. This explains why the laws regarding issues with land possession and occupation split the territories and forced them into ceding their territories either to the government or other people, especially companies that had obtained leases to carry out certain activities on the pieces of land (Long 1987, n.p). The most significant move towards this effect was leasing the land that initially belonged to the Mapuche to a number of timber and forestry companies. This saw a contraction of total land reservation belonging to the Mapuche contract from about two million to four hundred thousand hectares.

Pinochet started making direct references to the Mapuche and other indigenous groups after his actions had angered them resulting in violence and street protests. This came around ten years after his stay in office when Mapuche rebels had begun making attempts to scare away timber and forestry companies. In his speech made in September 1987 in Santiago, Pinochet
referred to the guerrillas as coward terrorists (Long 1987, n.p). This was after a number of fighting factions from indigenous groups had united and carried out an assault on government’s armed forces, making away with one army lieutenant colonel. He declared, “To stop them, one cannot act with consideration. A tough hand is needed, the toughest possible.” This linked the indigenous groups to the efforts of colonization by the Soviet Union.

Despite its silence on issues affecting the minorities, especially in reference to access and utilization of resources, the people like the Mapuche began feeling the burden of the policies and laws being adopted by the government. They started expressing their disgruntlement through demonstrations. Individuals who organized and participated in these demonstrations and lobby group activities were arrested and locked up in correctional facilities without trial. In these facilities, they continued expressing their dissatisfaction through hunger strikes where some prisoners could avoid solid food for as long as two months. This did not also seem to work as more land was granted to various timber and mining companies without the consent or input of the local people (Long 1987, n.p). The activities of these companies were destructive to the environment and threatened its sustainability. Eventually, violence broke out where the people took it upon themselves to attack the companies and stop their operations. Pinochet responded to this violence by stating that "Their strategy of strikes and protests having failed definitively, they have tried to unleash wide-scale terrorist action." The president totally ignored the wellbeing and the welfare of the Mapuche in his discourses. He now started speaking openly about their activities to liberate themselves, expressing contempt and insisting on how the government was keen on ensuring that it eliminates any resistance on its efforts to have the resources belonging to the minority groups exploited. The Mapuche were now referred to as terrorists because of their guerrilla warfare methods.

After fourteen years, a government that had undermined the interests of its people to the extent of using kidnappings and killings had stepped up the use of force. To date, Chileans remain divided on the legacy of Pinochet, with some non-indigenous groups feeling that despite his dictatorial regime, he promoted their ability to access important natural resources (Jullian, 2013, p. 9). However, he died at a time when he was under trial for crimes that he committed against humanity under his regime.
Pinochet was a dictatorial leader who tainted the image of the government by erasing all that Allende had proposed and instituted for the benefit of the Mapuche during his tenure. However, it is important to note that people had high expectations upon him on his entry into office because they felt that Allende was violating the constitution. At the time, the electorate was mainly drawn from the elite who were not among the indigenous groups that Allende was giving vast attention. The military coup staged by Pinochet in 1973 to overthrow Allende received little criticism from the non-indigenous groups in Chile, whose voice and opinion mattered most at the time. Allende had enacted laws and policies that sought to elevate the status of the Mapuche in Chile. Pinochet overturned these rules during his reign and used both constitutional and dictatorial powers to ensure that he takes away ancestral land that belonged to the Mapuche and other minorities in the country (Jullian, 2013, p. 6).

From the above analysis, it is clear to me that Pinochet undermined the social and political wellbeing of the Mapuche. In addition, he sought to elevate their economic status by incorporating them into the modernized world and this was against their wish. The decrees issued under him and the actions of his administration were destructive to Mapuches land and sought to undermine their cultural heritage.

**President Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994)**

After the fall of the dictatorial regime, the minorities in Chile were relieved as they were at least allowed to express their concerns to the government without threats. However, Aylwin’s presidency seemed less concerned about the affairs of these people compared to that of Allende. In the first three years of his administration, he did not make efforts to recognize the indigenous groups as special as had been the case with Allende. The first efforts came later in 1993 with the passing of the Indigenous Peoples Act (No. 19,253). It was one of the earliest documents that can be observed in as far as presidential discourses on the conflict is concerned under Aylwin’s presidency. The bill that became this law was presented by President Aylwin himself. In his speech on the bill, he noted that there was likelihood that some conservatives may reject it (Ríos 2016, n.p). He however noted that it was likely that such an action will result in violence by the Mapuche people and other minorities as it had been experienced during Allende’s era. The Mapuche appreciated this gesture by the outgoing president and this slowed down their aggression for their land that had started threatening the peaceful coexistence of the Chileans.
Not much can be discussed on presidential discourse on the issue of the Mapuche land conflict during president Aylwin’s tenure. The president seemed to be neutral on the issue because of its contentious nature. According to Faiola (1999, n.p) it seems that he felt that radical changes in favor of either groups could either spark resistance from non-indigenous groups or from the Mapuche and other indigenous groups leading to instability in the country. The law that enacted through the efforts of the president in 1993 has helped in the development of indigenous ethnic groups as it officially recognized them for the first time in history. It acknowledged and defended the indigenous groups’ cultures and their languages to some extent. It protected the natural resources that have been utilized by these ethnic groups overtime such as lands and water though it failed to grant them exclusive rights of access to them (Ríos 2016, n.p). The law created an institution that was meant to facilitate the transfer of the resources back to the indigenous groups. It established the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI) that drew representatives from the Mapuche that would implement these and other policies outlined in subsequent legislations. The corporation is also expected to collaborate with law-making organs of the government to ensure that other relevant policies and legislations are enacted to protect the rights of the minorities.


President Frei was elected on the same party ticket as his predecessor. This can be attributed to President Aylwin’s neutral stand on many issues that saw Chile enjoy relative peace and rule of law from the regime of the time. Under Frei’s regime, further subdivision of Mapuches land was stopped and about 100000 hectares of land was ceded back to the Mapuche as a fulfilment of the 1993 legislation (Faiola 1999, n.p). Using the fund created by the Indigenous Peoples Act (No. 19,253), the government embarked on empowering the Mapuche towards agribusiness and other ventures of personal development in both rural and urban areas. The National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI) also coordinated a number of programs that were aimed at helping the indigenous revert back to ways that were consistent to their culture (Eduardo 1997, n.p).

However, the benefits of the implementation of the 1993 Indigenous Peoples Act (No. 19,253) were overshadowed by the efforts of President Frei to open up the Chilean Economy to the
international markets. The policies made and implemented towards this course channeled acquired land, water, forests and other important natural resources, that had been allocated for preservation of indigenous culture, towards industrialization and mass production of goods and services. Though these were good efforts, the legacy of the president on the Mapuche conflict was dented by the fact that the indigenous groups were not compensated for these resources and this continued living in poverty after the onset of their implementation in 1997 (McKinnon, R., 2016, p. 1).

President Frei ignored issues affecting the Mapuche after he embarked on economic reformation after 1997 (Faiola 1999, n.p). However, he could make indirect references to the fact that indigenous groups should cede the resources that they held for industrialization and economic development. In a speech delivered to foreign leaders in 1998, the president noted, “The economic potential of different regions in Chile will increasingly depend on the quality and intensity of their links with their neighbors. This consideration is especially important for the regions located in the most remote areas of our country.” (Faiola 1999, n.p). Here he was discouraging the indigenous groups from denying other individuals access and use to the natural resources. He also seemed to be against the preservation of indigenous cultures by making the following statement during the same conference “Likewise, the modernization of the State becomes a crucial and indispensable factor to expedite the internationalization of the country. Our administrative structures were created to face realities much different than those of today and with different rhythms.” (International Trade Center Conference. 1998, n.p)

Throughout Frei’s era, there were minimal direct references on the affairs of the Mapuche in presidential discourses. However, the first half of his 6 years in power saw his government push for the implementation of The Indigenous Peoples Act that had been put in place by his predecessor (Faiola 1999, n.p). He seemed to realize that these efforts were undermining the interests of his regime to expand trade and take advantage of globalization of markets. This is what saw him ignore the idea of preservation of indigenous culture. The resources that were at the exposure of the Mapuche such as forests, rivers and minerals were important in the preservation of this culture. However, Frei, ignored this and in his subsequent speeches seemed to press for more international trade. To him, Chile could only sustain this trade by exploiting the vast resources that belonged to the indigenous groups (Ríos 2016, n.p; McKinnon, R., 2016, p. 3). He seemed to expect that the Mapuche should join the modernized economy out of necessity. Though these actions have had an effect on pushing the Mapuche out of their homes
into urban areas in search of self-development opportunities such as education and employment, not all of these people were willing to abandon their way of life. Though there was little open resistance during his era because of the economic development that Chile experienced, subsequent woes of the communities have made them refer back to the period as that which hampered their indigenous development and process of cultural preservation.

**President Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006)**

Lagos’ predecessor had ignored the problems faced by the Mapuche and thus he inherited a government that gave less attention to these individuals at the beginning. However, the issue got his attention two months into office and he decided to implement sixteen measures that would see problems associated with Mapuche solved. In May 2000, the president indicated that he was to allocate over $130 million towards education, health and economic empowerment of the three indigenous groups that formed about one tenth of the total population. He also created the Historical Truth and New Deal Commission that was convened on 18th January of the following year.

The reforms proposed and implemented by the government as indicated in the presidential discourse did not fully satisfy the indigenous groups, especially the Mapuche. Their aggression started growing towards the end of 2003. They demanded for resources such as land and water bodies that are important in facilitating the preservation of their cultures. He realized that an attempt to modernize the Mapuche through coercion was likely to fail and it was appropriate that he employs a more concessionary approach towards handling the Mapuche issue.

In 2004, Lagos stated that “those who know the truth know that the identity and culture of the indigenous people were not properly protected after the conquest and the establishment of the Republic.” By this, he indicated that the state had not handles the issue of the Mapuches stature and identity with the seriousness that it was supposed to. He was thus recognizing the fact that previous governments had failed to do what was necessary to ensure that they preserve the identity of the Mapuche and other indigenous groups and that they uphold their dignity as the original inhabitants of the country.
In the same year, Lagos made a speech referring to the importance of the indigenous groups in Chile and noted that “….we know that indigenous people suffered land reduction, social fragmentation and patrimonial loss; including the loss of their languages and value systems . . . even the extinction of entire communities . . . That is the reason why we want to guarantee the recognition of and respect for indigenous people . . .” In this speech, Lagos sought to reassure the indigenous groups that his regime was keen on reversing the injustices done to them by the previous governments and that he would preserve their identities (McKinnon, R., 2016, p. 2). The president then went ahead to outline the blueprint of his regime towards the promotion of the wellbeing of the indigenous groups and preservation of their culture. Towards this course he stated, “……in three fundamental tasks: First, we want the rights of indigenous people to be acknowledged. Second, we want to guarantee the development of these people with their own identity. And third, we want to improve the management of the public policies that we, from the state machinery, execute in regard to these two previous goals.”

The president proceeded to submit a document to the Congress that sought to rectify a number of issues, key among them being the approval of the country’s ratification of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169 (Wessendorf 2009, p. 218). Through the document the president expressed wide consent that the issue of indigenous groups’ welfare received from the members of the public. He also expressed the need to have land rights guaranteed and why there were no alternatives to meeting the demands made by the community through representatives. He thus appreciated the fact that the Mapuche had preserved the current resources for a long time and that they were entitled to collective rights (Ríos 2016, n.p). The document sought to strengthen the relations between the government national community and indigenous groups.

Tensions started to rise between the state and stakeholders who were benefiting from the acquired resources that initially belonged to the Mapuche, key among them being the major players in the forestry industry. The individuals threatened economic sabotage that threw the government and the president in a dilemma. The state thus had a very hard task of reconciling the issue of water and land that belonged to the indigenous groups and the market for these two resources and their products that had grown since the tenure of Augusto Pinochet (Funk 2012, p. 126). Some of the investors in the country were also against the efforts of the government to ratify the International Labor Organization Convention 169. The country thus had to ignore the
propositions through non-action and silence on the issue. To date, Chile is yet to ratify the International Labor Organization Convention 169 (Wessendorf 2009, p. 218). Chile’s constitution does not recognize the rights of the indigenous groups. The most significant legislation towards this course still remains the Indigenous Peoples Act (No. 19,253) of 1993. This law only puts in place a limited recognition status on the protection of indigenous lands. However, it tends to ignore the rights of the people to these lands. The legislation does not recognize the individual members of the indigenous language groups. Rather it recognizes the groups themselves and makes provisions aimed at facilitating their development. This has proven futile because it has been hard in mobilizing the whole groups to lay claim on these resources (Figueroa-Huencho 2014, p. 39).

The initial presidential discourse seemed to be coercive towards having the Mapuche and other indigenous groups take up modernized ways of life and discard their traditions. However, the resistance that he made through protests and backlashes necessitated that he takes action towards responding to the demand of the society. There was growing activism within the people of the three indigenous groups that saw police resort to the use of force to squash protests that often returned violent (Funk 2012, p. 132). As a result, the president expressed his commitment towards ensuring that the culture of the indigenous groups is preserved. At the time, many among these people were poor after the government deprived them of the resources on which they depended to earn their living without giving them an alternative that would see them develop economically (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization 2014, n.p). From my perspective, I think that the people saw this as betrayal by the authority that was mandated to safeguard their interests. This led to the growth of agitation by the members of the Mapuche community for the government to grant them exclusive rights to access and use the resources. The fact that this agitation threatened violence and instability in the country got the executive to respond to all the grievances by making promises that would ensure their wellbeing once implemented.
**President Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010)**

The first term of President Bachelet started at a time when Mapuche aggression was rising. The members of the community had resorted to using methods such as violent attacks and arson to express their disgruntlement at the failure of the regimes to enact laws and enforce policies that would oversee the foreign companies and non-natives cede their territories and resources back to them. Just like the initial years of the regime of president Patricio Aylwin and the second half of that of Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Bachelet did not show her dedication on the issue of indigenous groups such as the Mapuche (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization 2014, n.p). The shift of the tactics employed by the group from the government to the organizations and individuals who had settled on their land seemed to be a relief to the government. The president gave less attention to the Mapuche issue during her first term, only coming out to comment on the violence meted by the people who came out to agitate for their land rights. Mapuche leaders have differed on the attacks being executed by a group that agitates for their rights to land with some claiming that they are not Mapuche and should be treated as criminals (Ríos 2016, n.p).

During the launching on an indigenous policy in 2008 in a bid to end violence, Bachelet noted that "Some say the problem facing indigenous groups is just poverty, and that good targeting of subsidies would be the most appropriate policy. But we, on the other hand, maintain that it is a matter of rights, of a collective identity seeking expression in a multicultural society," Through this speech, she indicated that she was had taken note of other problems targeting the Mapuche and other minorities and was keen on solving them. She adds, "We are making progress on indigenous affairs, but now is the time to go further, and above all at a faster pace. We have the will, the grassroots support, the resources, the commitment and the legitimacy to do so." Despite this emphasis, the Mapuche feel that any other form of help that does not include granting them rights to access their land is not sufficient for their recovery.
Conclusion

Mapuches relationship with the Chilean government has been characterized with contempt with each side blaming the other for wrongdoing. However, most presidents within the four decades have not been keen on ensuring that the Mapuche is included in matters of national importance and that they have access to resources that can guarantee their wellbeing. Among the six presidents analyzed, President Allende has the best score in the formulation and implementation of laws and policies aimed at improving the affairs of the Mapuche. He viewed the Mapuche as farmers whose agitation would be contained by ensuring that they have access to resources that can help them indulge in economic activities to meet their utility. Allende recognized that historical injustices have been committed against the indigenous groups by previous regimes and there was need for affirmative action in areas such as education and access to jobs. Despite these attempts, the Mapuche meted violence on non-natives within the Southern cone in an effort to reclaim their land. Allendes successor, Augusto Pinochet, was ad dictator who did away with policies and laws enacted by his predecessor. Pinochet sold the Mapuches land to private companies and other people for settlement and exploitation of resources. Any resistance by the Mapuche was met with brutal force that saw murder, imprisonments and disappearance of vocal human rights activists who were keen to have the government reverse its stand on the issue. Pinochet avoided making direct references on the issue and only did so after the Mapuche became aggressive in the fight for their land. He started the tag terrorists in reference to the Mapuche guerillas. With the fall of the dictatorial regime, the Mapuche could express their discontent with government regulations and policies which were met with less brutality. The subsequent presidents have made direct references to the issue of the Mapuche promising to promote their development and granting them access to their land. However, this has failed to materialize and the Mapuche have resorted to violence and guerrilla tactics against entities and individuals occupying their land with the government responding in a similar manner. This neglect made the community desperate to express their point and this has resorted to them being tagged terrorists by the subsequent governments.
## References


