

**Chile**

# *Ethnicity in Chile*

## *Group selection*

According to the national census of 2002, 4,6% of the population belongs to one of the eight recognized indigenous groups. The majority of them belong to the Mapuche (87%), the Aymara (7%) and the Atacameños (3%).

The Mapuche live in the southern part of Chile and carry a long history of resistance to invasion of their lands. From being an idealized group of freedom fighters during the war of independence, they became the antipode of the newly established Chilean nation state (<sup>1099</sup>, 99). The first Mapuche organization, the Sociedad Caupolican Defensora de la Araucania (Caupolican Society Defender of the Araucania), was created in 1910. Since its beginnings Mapuche organizations placed emphasis on the existing division between the Mapuche people and the dominant Chilean society thereby insisting upon a definition of the Mapuche people as a “nation” (nacion) or “people-nation” (pueblo-nacion) (<sup>1100</sup>, 40 ff.). Further claims included territorial rights and governmental support to fight poverty (<sup>1101</sup>, 183).

Among the other indigenous groups that are not the Mapuche, we find the Rapa Nui, i.e. the native inhabitants of Easter Island. These were incorporated into Chilean territory in 1896, as the Chilean state started to exert effective control over the island, previously merely a protectorate (<sup>1102</sup>). Since their inclusion into Chilean territory, they were displaced, dispossessed and restricted in various of their rights (<sup>1103</sup>, <sup>1104</sup>). Their island was first ruled by a company (the Easter Island Exploitation Company) until the 1950s, when the Chilean state refused to renew its lease and implemented navy martial rule on the island (<sup>1105</sup>). In contrast to other indigenous groups in the country, which achieved citizenship rights through assimilation prior to 1945 (<sup>1106</sup>, <sup>1107</sup>, <sup>1108</sup>), the Rapa Nui did not have rights until 1966 (<sup>1109</sup>). According to the census of 2002, they make-up 0.03% of the total population, and 0.67% of the indigenous population.

The Rapa Nui would mobilize along with the other indigenous groups in the 1990s, thanks to the state’s Indigenous Law (Ley Indígena), which recognized their ethnicity, along with that other groups like the Aymaras, Atacameños, Yamanas, and others scattered throughout Chilean territory (<sup>1110</sup>, <sup>1111</sup>).

Hence, we consider the **Mapuche** as their own politically rele-

<sup>1099</sup> [Waldman Mitnick, 2005]

<sup>1100</sup> [Naguil Gomez, 2013]

<sup>1101</sup> [Pinto Rodriguez, 2012]

<sup>1102</sup> [McCall, 1997]

<sup>1103</sup> [McCall, 1997]

<sup>1104</sup> [Makihara, 2005]

<sup>1105</sup> [Makihara, 2005]

<sup>1106</sup> [Villaroel, 2013]

<sup>1107</sup> [Araya & Ladino, 2013]

<sup>1108</sup> [Memoria Chilena, 2018]

<sup>1109</sup> [Makihara, 2005]

<sup>1110</sup> [Makihara, 2005]

<sup>1111</sup> [Zapata S., 2004]

vant ethnic group. The same goes for the **Rapa Nui**, until 1966. The latter are then subsumed under the category of **Other indigenous groups**, appearing around the 1990s. These groups are all contrasted with the **Whites/mestizos**.

### *Power relations*

#### *1946-1952*

As the Mapuches' demands were proclaimed on a national level it seems appropriate to code the Mapuche from 1946 to 1952 as "powerless". First attempts to integrate the Mapuche into Chilean society were initiated in the 1920s by implementing education and economic programs that were sustained until 1940 (<sup>1112</sup>, 102).

<sup>1112</sup> [Waldman Mitnick, 2005]

As mentioned earlier, since their inclusion into Chilean territory, the Rapa Nui were subject to harsh actions by the state. On the one hand, under the rule of both the company and the Chilean state, they lost rights to all of their lands, which were quickly taken away from them. On the other hand, they were restricted to one section of the island, and were not allowed to move beyond it (<sup>1113</sup>, <sup>1114</sup>). Until those mobility rights were restored, and the Rapa Nui gained Chilean citizenship, they are coded as "discriminated".

<sup>1113</sup> [Makihara, 2005]

<sup>1114</sup> [McCall, 1997]

#### *1953-1958*

In the 1950s, some Mapuche leaders were elected to national and local parliaments. The founder of the "Corporacion Araucana" (Araucana Corporation, created in 1938), Venacio Conoepan, was even appointed Minister of Territory and Colonization (Ministro de Tierra y Colonizacion) in 1952. In this context the Direccion Nacional de Asuntos Indigenas was established in 1953, which enabled the Mapuche people to define and control a governmental space and thereby initiate processes to improve the Mapuches' situation (<sup>1115</sup>, 184).

<sup>1115</sup> [Pinto Rodriguez, 2012]

Even though the appointment of Conoepan as a Minister can be regarded as a mere symbolic way to thank the Aracauna Corporation for its outstanding support during Ibanez' election campaign (this view is shared, e.g., by <sup>1116</sup>, 184), the fact that he was involved in the establishment of the first governmental indigenous institution seems to legitimate the "downgrading" of Whites/Mestizos from "monopoly" to "dominant" for Ibanez' legislative period from 1953 to 1958.

<sup>1116</sup> [Pinto Rodriguez, 2012]

#### *1959-1966*

Since Conoepan's tenure was the only time in Chilean history that an indigenous representative took office as a minister, Whites/Mestizos are coded as having a "monopoly" and Mapuche "powerless" from 1959 to 1966. The Rapa Nui continue to be "discriminated".

### 1967-1973

A new period starts as the Rapa Nui, so far discriminated, deprived of mobility and citizenship rights, receive these rights in 1966 (<sup>1117</sup>). Since they are not yet mobilized, they become “irrelevant”.

<sup>1117</sup> [Makihara, 2005]

It was not before the Allende government (1970-1973), that the Mapuche were recognized as individuals with a distinct culture. However, this did not result in the creation of a policy directed at indigenous needs as the government never distinguished between peasant and specific indigenous problems (<sup>1118</sup>, 102). They continue to be “powerless”, and the Whites/mestizos as having a “monopoly”.

<sup>1118</sup> [Waldman Mitnick, 2005]

### 1974-1990

When Pinochet (1973-1990) took control over Chile, the achievements accomplished by the Mapuche movement were reversed and all indigenous people faced brutal discrimination again, e.g. through the concerted effort to break up indigenous community lands (<sup>1119</sup>). Other offenses included the prohibition of Mapuche organizations, the imprisonments of Mapuche members and their disappearance (<sup>1120</sup>, 102). According to the account given by the “Minorities at Risk” project, “Mapuche public meetings were attacked”, and “the Mapuches were not permitted to practice their religion or customs, speak their language in public, or educate their children about their traditions and language.”

<sup>1119</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

<sup>1120</sup> [Waldman Mitnick, 2005]

It was not until the 1980s that the indigenous movement was resurrected. In addition to Mapuche organizations that resumed their work, new Andean organizations were created (including new Mapuche organizations) (<sup>1121</sup>, 95).

<sup>1121</sup> [Gundermann, 2013]

### 1991-2018

After the fall of the Pinochet regime, the Mapuche are coded as “powerless” and Whites/Mestizos as having a “monopoly” on power.

Since democratization, pan-indigenous mobilization has increased and organizations such as the National Indigenous Coordinator (CONACIN) or the Confederacion Multicultural de Pueblos Originarios (Multicultural Confederation of Original People - CMPO) were created. It is in this context that other indigenous peoples, apart from the Mapuche and including the Rapa Nui, gained influence in the political sphere as well. Hence, we create a new category, namely **Other indigenous groups**, which includes the Rapa Nui, the Aymaras, Atacameños, and other groups recognized by the Indigenous Law. They are coded as “powerless”.

In recent years, ethnic tensions have become more significant. During the Lagos government (2000-2006), the anti-terrorist law and the state security law were used against members of the Mapuche movement who, in turn, have used violence in order to articulate their claims. Mapuche organizations speak of state-based terrorism and compare the situation to the Pinochet dictatorship. The

Mapuche movement pursued the creation of an autonomous nation within the Chilean territory. As a reaction to the rising tensions, the state initiated multicultural policies, but local elites resist multicultural discourses in order to maintain their dominant position. Even though the government has given some territories to indigenous peoples, their situation is clearly worse than, for instance, in Colombia, and no indigenous group has regional autonomy status.

In 2009, the Bachelet government (2006-2010 and since 2014) induced the “Consulta Indígena” (Indigenous Consultation) to obtain indigenous organizations’ opinion on political reforms that are intended to meet at least some of the indigenous claims. These proposed reforms are: the introduction of quotas for the Chamber of Deputies on the national level and the regional councils, the creation of a national indigenous council (Consejo Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas) and the establishment of an indigenous electoral roll (<sup>1122</sup>, 59). This consultation process resulted in an agreement between the Chilean government (under Pinera) and the participating indigenous organizations on how future consultations should be realized (Gobierno de Chile).

Chile is still the only country in Latin America that lacks recognition of the indigenous peoples in its constitution (<sup>1123</sup>: 259; <sup>1124</sup>: 15). The Mapuche as well as the other indigenous groups are not represented in the executive branches of government, neither on the national nor on the subnational level (<sup>1125</sup>: 2; <sup>1126</sup>: 19; <sup>1127</sup>: 8). Recent years have not yielded substantial progress in the conflict over land rights of the Mapuche (<sup>1128</sup>: 12; <sup>1129</sup>: 262; <sup>1130</sup>: 16). Protest of the Mapuche against resource extraction or infrastructure projects are answered with repression by the state (<sup>1131</sup>: 264). On the other hand, potential commitment of the government to enable increased indigenous inclusion in the future is reflected by the recent introduction of two bills by the executive branch: the first aims at the creation of a Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and the second at establishing a National Indigenous Council as well as nine Councils of Indigenous Peoples (<sup>1132</sup>: 260).

### 2019-2021

While the Whites/mestizos groups have been able to keep their "monopoly" position throughout this period, and the other indigenous groups have remained "powerless", the rise of Sebastián Piñera to power (March 2018-) has been associated with an increasing criminalisation of the Mapuche community, thus we code them as "discriminated".

Already in the second government of Michelle Bachelet (2014-2018), the continued use of the anti-terrorism law and scandals like the "Operación Huracán" (Hurricane Operation), in which evidence convicting Mapuche individuals was manufactured by the police, had generated perceptions of discrimination by international observers and the Mapuche community (<sup>1133</sup>, <sup>1134</sup>). However, there is a shift

<sup>1122</sup> [Naguil Gomez, 2013]

<sup>1123</sup> [IWGIA, 2017]

<sup>1124</sup> [USDS, 2017]

<sup>1125</sup> [Freedom House, 2016]

<sup>1126</sup> [UNHRC, 2016]

<sup>1127</sup> [USDS, 2017]

<sup>1128</sup> [BTI, 2016]

<sup>1129</sup> [IWGIA, 2017]

<sup>1130</sup> [USDS, 2017]

<sup>1131</sup> [IWGIA, 2017]

<sup>1132</sup> [IWGIA, 2017]

<sup>1133</sup> [Tojo, 2017]

<sup>1134</sup> [Ridgway, 2018]

from Bachelet's to Piñera's term in how the executive has been involved in these activities, making the period of 2019-2020 a more obvious case of discrimination. In the case of Bachelet, she campaigned on the basis of not applying the anti-terrorism law and it was not clear to which extent she could assume responsibility for the Hurracaine Operation, which remained more of a policing issue (<sup>1135</sup>, <sup>1136</sup>). Instead, Piñera made security in the Araucanía region (primarily inhabited by the Mapuche) one of his priorities in the election campaign and subsequent government (<sup>1137</sup>, <sup>1138</sup>, <sup>1139</sup>). Accordingly, during his term, he has increased military presence in the southern region, introducing the new Grupo de Operaciones Especiales (GOPE) in June of 2018, also referred as the "Comando Jungla", who are trained with the latest tactics in dealing with terrorism (<sup>1140</sup>, <sup>1141</sup>, <sup>1142</sup>).

The latest NACLA Report on the Americas (2019) identifies these actions as a continuation of the repressive strategies carried out during the dictatorship, which have also become more effective thanks to new technologies (<sup>1143</sup>). In fact, the anti-terrorism law has been strengthened, at least with the Senate's approval, with an additional "ley corta" which allows the use of further investigative techniques (<sup>1144</sup>). This has allowed the human rights violations of the Mapuche to "reach new levels" according to the NACLA report of 2019 (<sup>1145</sup>, 46). The above-mentioned Comando Jungla has been responsible for the apparently indiscriminate killing of the 24-year-old Mapuche activist Camilo Catrillanca, in November of 2018, which generated wide-spread outrage among the population (<sup>1146</sup>, <sup>1147</sup>). With the possibility of a new constitution being drafted, a possibility which was approved by the population in 2020, the Mapuche community might experience a change in status in the next period (<sup>1148</sup>). In October 2020, almost 7.5 millions of Chileans voted in favor of a new constitution which would replace the dictatorship-era constitution. More specifically, 78% of the people said "yes" in a national referendum which asked first whether the voter is in favor of the new constitution the kind of body they would want to draw it. Regarding the second question 79% voted in favor of an independent body elected 100% by the popular vote to be in charge of the drafting of the constitution. It is expected that new elections will take place again in April 2021, asking people to choose the 155 people who will be in charge of the drafting of the new constitution whereas the new vote for the newly drafted constitution is expected to take place in 2022 (<sup>1149</sup>).

In addition to this political change, there has been some small changes in the population shares of these ethnic groups, per the national census of 2017. According to the census, there was an increase in the population identifying itself as indigenous, 12,8% of the total, with the Mapuche being the largest group with 9,9%, followed by the Aymara and Diaguita groups (<sup>1150</sup>). The Mapuche share is subtracted to the share of indigenous groups to get the population share of the "Other indigenous groups". In turn, the White/mestizo

<sup>1135</sup> [Villa J., 2018]

<sup>1136</sup> [Ridgway, 2018]

<sup>1137</sup> [El Dínamo, 2017]

<sup>1138</sup> [Álvarez 2017]

<sup>1139</sup> [Soto A., 2019]

<sup>1140</sup> [?]

<sup>1141</sup> [Meer, 2019]

<sup>1142</sup> [Figuerola, 2018]

<sup>1143</sup> [Mansilla Quirones and Melin Pehuen, 2019]

<sup>1144</sup> [Senado de la República de Chile, 2019]

<sup>1145</sup> [Mansilla Quirones and Melin Pehuen, 2019]

<sup>1146</sup> [Meer, 2019]

<sup>1147</sup> [Mansilla Quirones and Melin Pehuen, 2019]

<sup>1148</sup> [Ancalao Gavilán, 2020]

<sup>1149</sup> [BBC, 2020]

<sup>1150</sup> [Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas 2018]

population is assumed to be the remainder of the respondents which did not identify as being indigenous.

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Political status of ethnic groups in Chile

From 1946 until 1952

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.91	MONOPOLY
Mapuche	0.075	POWERLESS
Rapa Nui	$3.0 \times 10^{-4}$	DISCRIMINATED

From 1953 until 1958

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.91	DOMINANT
Mapuche	0.075	POWERLESS
Rapa Nui	$3.0 \times 10^{-4}$	DISCRIMINATED

From 1959 until 1966

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.91	MONOPOLY
Mapuche	0.075	POWERLESS
Rapa Nui	$3.0 \times 10^{-4}$	DISCRIMINATED

From 1967 until 1973

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.91	MONOPOLY
Mapuche	0.075	POWERLESS
Rapa Nui	$3.0 \times 10^{-4}$	IRRELEVANT

From 1974 until 1990



Figure 197: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1946-1952.



Figure 198: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1953-1958.



Figure 199: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1959-1966.

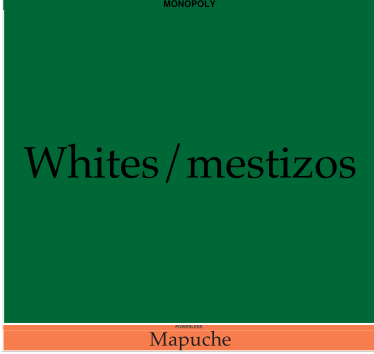


Figure 200: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1967-1973.

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.91	MONOPOLY
Mapuche	0.075	DISCRIMINATED
Rapa Nui	$3.0 \times 10^{-4}$	IRRELEVANT

*From 1991 until 2018*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.91	MONOPOLY
Mapuche	0.075	POWERLESS
Other indigenous groups	0.015	POWERLESS

*From 2019 until 2021*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.872	MONOPOLY
Mapuche	0.099	DISCRIMINATED
Other indigenous groups	0.029	POWERLESS

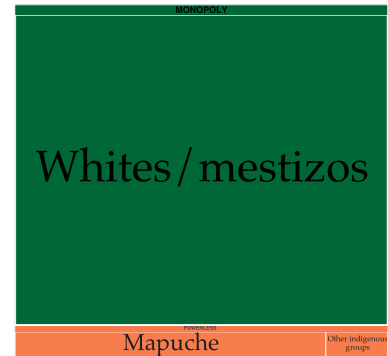


Figure 202: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1991-2018.



Figure 203: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 2019-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Chile

From 1946 until 1966

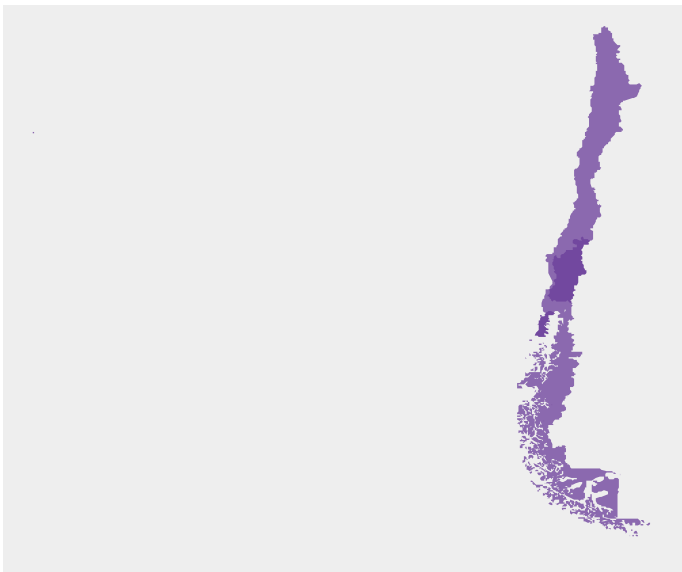


Figure 204: Map of ethnic groups in Chile during 1946-1966.

Group name		Area in km²	Type
■	Whites/mestizos	743 665	Statewide
■	Mapuche	82 595	Regionally based

Table 69: List of ethnic groups in Chile during 1946-1966.

From 1967 until 1990

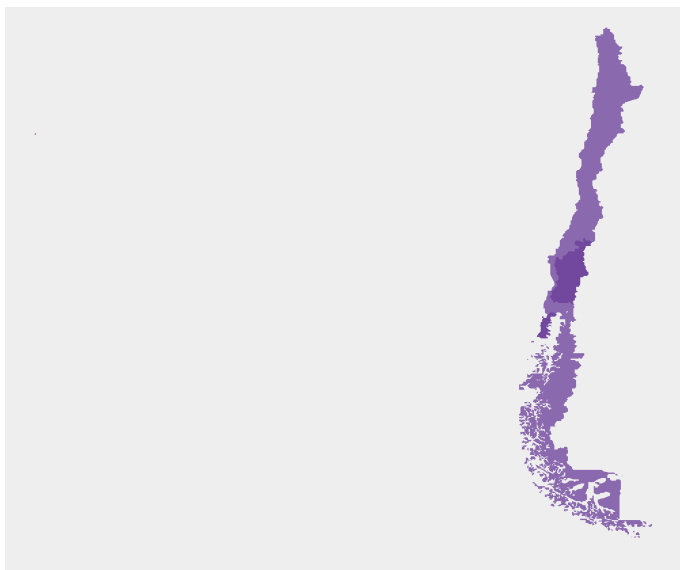


Figure 205: Map of ethnic groups in Chile during 1967-1990.

	Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■	Whites/mestizos	743 665	Statewide
■	Mapuche	82 595	Regionally based

Table 70: List of ethnic groups in Chile during 1967-1990.

*From 1991 until 2021*

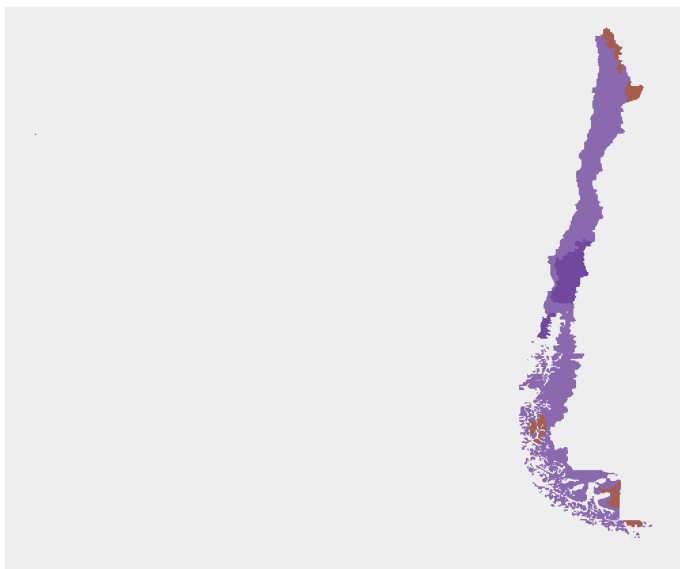


Figure 206: Map of ethnic groups in Chile during 1991-2021.

	Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■	Whites/mestizos	743 665	Statewide
■	Mapuche	82 595	Regionally based
■	Other indigenous groups	59 802	Regionally based

Table 71: List of ethnic groups in Chile during 1991-2021.

# Conflicts in Chile

*Starting on 1973-09-10*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Chile	Military faction (forces of Augusto Pinochet, Toribio Merino and Leigh Guzman)	Whites/mestizos	1973-09-10	No	Yes, from EGIP	No