

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 Atacamenos (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 (⁹⁴¹, 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) (⁹⁴², 40 ff.). Further claims included territorial rights and governmental support to fight poverty (⁹⁴³, 183).

We consider the **Mapuche** as their own politically relevant ethnic group, as contrasted with **Other indigenous groups** and **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”. Indigenous peoples of other ethnic groups (such as the aforementioned Aymara or the Atacamenos) were not able to organize themselves in a similarly effective way until 1990, so they kept on suffering discrimination (hence the “discriminated” codification until 1990).

First attempts to integrate the Mapuche into Chilean society were initiated in the 1920s by implementing education and economic programmes that were sustained until 1940 (⁹⁴⁴, 102).

⁹⁴¹ [Waldman Mitnick, 2005]

⁹⁴² [Naguil Gomez, 2013]

⁹⁴³ [Pinto Rodriguez, 2012]

⁹⁴⁴ [Waldman Mitnick, 2005]

1952-1958

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 (⁹⁴⁵, 184).

⁹⁴⁵ [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 ⁹⁴⁶, 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.

⁹⁴⁶ [Pinto Rodriguez, 2012]

1959-1973

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 1973.

It was not before the Allende government (1970-1973), though, 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 (⁹⁴⁷, 102).

⁹⁴⁷ [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 (⁹⁴⁸). Other offenses included the prohibition of Mapuche organizations, the imprisonments of Mapuche members and their disappearance (⁹⁴⁹, 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."

⁹⁴⁸ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

⁹⁴⁹ [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) (⁹⁵⁰, 95).

⁹⁵⁰ [Gundermann, 2013]

1991-2017

After the fall of the Pinochet regime, all indigenous groups 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, gained influence in the political sphere as well. 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 Indigena” (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 Indigenas) and the establishment of an indigenous electoral roll (⁹⁵¹, 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 (⁹⁵²: 259; ⁹⁵³: 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 (⁹⁵⁴: 2; ⁹⁵⁵: 19; ⁹⁵⁶: 8). Recent years have not yielded substantial progress in the conflict over land rights of the Mapuche (⁹⁵⁷: 12; ⁹⁵⁸: 262; ⁹⁵⁹: 16). Protest of the Mapuche against resource extraction or infrastructure projects are answered with repression by the state (⁹⁶⁰: 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

⁹⁵¹ [Naguil Gomez, 2013]

⁹⁵² [IWGIA, 2017]

⁹⁵³ [USDS, 2017]

⁹⁵⁴ [Freedom House, 2016]

⁹⁵⁵ [UNHRC, 2016]

⁹⁵⁶ [USDS, 2017]

National Indigenous Council as well as nine Councils of Indigenous Peoples (⁹⁶¹: 260).

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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
Other indigenous peoples	0.015	DISCRIMINATED

From 1953 until 1958

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.91	DOMINANT
Mapuche	0.075	POWERLESS
Other indigenous peoples	0.015	DISCRIMINATED

From 1959 until 1973

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

From 1974 until 1990

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

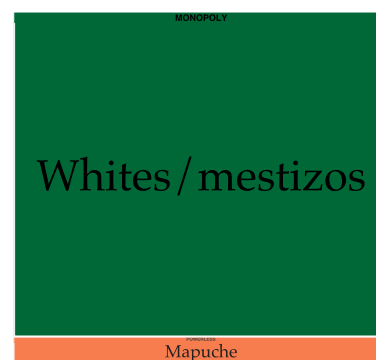


Figure 165: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1946-1952.



Figure 166: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1953-1958.



Figure 167: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1959-1973.



From 1991 until 2017

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



Figure 169: Political status of ethnic groups in Chile during 1991-2017.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Chile

From 1946 until 2017



Figure 170: Map of ethnic groups in Chile during 1946-2017.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Whites/mestizos	436 632	Statewide
Mapuche	82 526	Regionally based
Other indigenous peoples	59 843	Regionally based

Table 52: List of ethnic groups in Chile during 1946-2017.

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