

In the past few decades the international community has become more interested in the plight of the world's indigenous peoples. Past research shows disproportionately high levels of poverty of indigenous communities. Indigenous research in Latin America shows that indigenous peoples are more likely to be poor because of limited access to education and employment. This is consistent with a human capital approach to poverty. Discrimination also plays a part in explaining the higher rates of indigenous poverty. This research explores the case of the Mapuche people in Chile. Chile has been growing economically in the past few decades since the introduction of neoliberal economic policies. The claim is that poverty has been decreasing over time for everyone including indigenous people. However, political movements in Chile are trying to discount the existence of indigenous people. The Mapuche people are the largest indigenous group in Chile, and have been relatively isolated in agricultural communities and reservations.

The 1992 census was the first to ask respondents to self-identify as belonging to an indigenous community. The results surprised many because they showed large numbers of Indigenous people, with a majority residing in urban areas. Historically indigenous peoples were thought to reside in rural areas as subsistence agriculturalists. The poverty rate for indigenous households was higher than the non-indigenous households. The 2002 census showed a decrease in the number of indigenous people due to the change in the question on the survey. It also showed a decrease in poverty at a national level, with a decrease in indigenous poverty. The idea of self-identification coupled with an urban presence brings into the question the concept of indigeneity. Additionally, assuming the existence of a separate indigenous culture, the way in which poverty is measured and presented may not apply to Mapuche communities.

In the past few decades Chile has gone through abrupt socio-economic changes. Economic reforms, including land reforms, have affected the livelihoods of the Mapuche throughout the early to mid-1900s. A violent coup d'état occurred in 1973 starting a 17 year long military dictatorship, with severe changes in economic and social policy. Post dictatorship, the newly elected government adopted a social and economic development strategy that followed a neoliberal agenda with the hopes of improving economic and social circumstances for all people in Chile, including the Mapuche. Current reports from the government of Chile suggest that since the end of the dictatorship the economic and social circumstances have improved for the country overall, measured by the decrease in national poverty levels (MIDEPLAN 2006). This research attempts to delve deeper into the social, economic and demographic situation of the Mapuche people in Chile. In order to do so I start with a broader understanding of what it means to be Mapuche in contemporary Chile as well as questioning the prevailing economic agenda and suggested progress that has been made.

Fundamentally important to how we understand social and economic situations, which I am going to refer to as well-being, are definitions and measurements of concepts. In order to understand about the well-being of those living in Chile, including the Mapuche, defining seemingly simple ideas, like who is included as Mapuche, and what do we mean when we discuss well-being, is needed. This however is problematic because it creates a power dynamic where those with the power to create and redefine concepts can impose those definitions on others. Throughout Mapuche history, at least since the arrival of the Spaniards, the defining of social and economic concepts has been done by non-Mapuche, creating a situation where definitions are imposed upon the Mapuche, and redefining those concepts can happen without the Mapuche peoples' knowledge or consent. Redefining what it means to be Mapuche in Chile today is problematic because it can affect their well-being. This can happen, for example, when policy, that addresses the social and economic situation of the Mapuche, is changed and the Mapuche are subsequently denied access to resources that they may have had before. Or when laws granting rights and protection against discrimination are changed based on new definitions of who counts as Mapuche.

A well-known Chilean historian, Sergio Villalobos, recently published an article in a national Chilean newspaper in which he describes the reality of the indigenous people. According to Villalobos, those

fighting for Mapuche rights, those who claim to be Mapuche, are not "pure indigenous", but have been "artificially designated" as Mapuche. His article seeks to bring to light and describe the confusion surrounding indigenous issues in Chile today. It presents the reader with a question: do the Mapuche people exist today? Beyond the issue of identity the author's motivation is to problematize economic development. He suggests that the Mapuche people as a group exist artificially; they were socially constructed. Why then should they receive special help from the government? Why should they benefit more than the rest of the Chilean population; the population that is composed of mestizos (meaning people of mixed ancestry)? This confusion of ethnicity, economic rights, and social structure is the setting for which this research takes place. Addressing this confusion of Mapuche identity is not just an academic exercise, but stands to improve the lives of individuals and families whose chances in life are otherwise limited in part because politicians, policymakers, and the general society are ill-informed about these issues.

This paradigm seems to define indigenous peoples as something of the past, with remnants in the mestizo population of which the majority of Chileans can claim (Cademartori 2003). This has been met with some resistance evidenced by the conflicts over land and resources in the traditional ancestral Mapuche lands that continue today. The purpose of this research is to present information about the current situation of the Mapuche people in Chile. I attempt to describe how changing definitions of indigenous identity, or indigeneity, as well as changing definitions of poverty can affect our understanding of Mapuche well-being. This has implications for the wider field of indigenous poverty and economic development worldwide.

Using national level household survey data, where respondents self-identify as indigenous, I analyze different definitions of indigeneity and challenge the idea that the Mapuche are remnants of the past, and show that the Mapuche people do exist and that their lifestyles and livelihoods are significantly different from those who are not Mapuche. In order to understand these concepts better I ask: how can we measure how many Mapuche exist? I also examine the social and cultural differences between Mapuche and non-indigenous Chileans according to social factors that have been shown elsewhere to affect poverty levels, such as education, employment, and residential location. I also analyze whether or not the Mapuche are more poor and what factors influence that variation in poverty.

More specifically this research addresses the socio-demographic and economic factors that contribute to the incidence of household poverty among the Mapuche. Scholarly interest in indigenous poverty continues to be significant due to the many social changes occurring in places with large indigenous populations. Additionally, the United Nations has, for the second time, declared a decade of the world's indigenous peoples, with the expressed goals of developing strong mechanisms for the protection of indigenous peoples and the improvement of their lives.¹ In order for improvement to take place, it is imperative that we understand the factors influencing the socioeconomic differences between indigenous and nonindigenous populations, more specifically, between the Mapuche and the dominant Chilean society.

While most theories addressing indigenous poverty explain it as being an outcome of historical processes, such as colonization, (Loveman 2001) as well as continued discrimination from the dominant society (Merino, Quilaqueo et al. 2008), other factors may be more relevant when explaining higher rates of poverty amongst indigenous populations. Empirical studies on indigenous poverty, attribute the variation of poverty rates, between indigenous and non-indigenous populations, to differences in human capital attainment (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 1994; Hall and Patrinos 2006). Few studies have attempted to empirically analyze poverty among the indigenous people in Chile. These studies are either government reports (MIDEPLAN 2006), limited in their depth of analysis (Subramanian, Delgado et al. 2003), use

¹ See UN website: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/second.html>

aggregate data for all indigenous peoples (Montecino 1992), or focus on particular aspects of poverty such as health (Rojas 2007; Rojas 2010). This research goes beyond these studies by quantitatively analyzing Mapuche poverty specifically. The Mapuche people have a unique situation, compared to other indigenous groups, due to the timing of the Spanish invasion as well as the political processes that took place between the Mapuche, the Spanish and the Chileans. This study is the only study to date that utilizes quantitative, national level secondary data as well to understand measurements of indigeneity, and how that influences our understanding of poverty amongst the Mapuche.

Table 1: Poverty among Chilean Households, Chile 2006 (percent)

	Total	Mapuche	Non-Mapuche	
Official Poverty Line				
Poor	11.3	15.2	11.0	***
Adjusted Poverty Line				
Poor	13.0	20.6	12.6	***
Relative Poverty Line				
Poor	15.5	24.2	15.0	***

Significance values: ***p<.000; **p<.001; *p<.05

Table 2: Educational Attainment Levels by Ethnicity

	Total	Mapuche	Non-Mapuche	
No formal education	3.7	6.8	3.6	***
Basic education incomplete	21.4	34.2	20.8	***
Completed basic education	14.8	18.1	14.6	***
Secondary education incomplete	17.8	14.8	18	***
Completed secondary education	23.5	19	23.7	***
University education incomplete	4.9	1.9	5.1	***
Completed a University education	13.9	5.2	14.3	***

Source: CASEN 2006

Table 3: Employment Industry by Ethnicity, (percent)

	Total	Mapuche	Non-Mapuche	
Agriculture	14.4	29.3	13.6	***
Mining	2.3	0.6	2.4	***
Manufacturing	14.1	12.4	14.2	**
Construction	11.8	14.1	11.6	***
Utilities	0.6	0.4	0.6	
Commerce	16.1	14.6	16.2	*
Transportation	9.3	6.7	9.5	***
Finances	7.3	2.9	7.5	***
Services	23.1	18.6	23.3	***
Other	1.0	0.5	1.0	**

Table 4: Regression Models Predicting Poverty Risks; Relative Poverty Line

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Demographics							
Mapuche	1.81***	1.67***	1.59***	1.47***	1.61***	1.49***	1.05
Non-Mapuche (ref.)							
Female		1.28***	1.31***				1.01
Under 30 (ref.)							
30 to 39		0.81***	0.79***				0.74***
40 to 49		0.77***	0.77***				0.60***
50 to 59		0.79***	0.78***				0.42***
60 to 69		0.88**	0.87***				0.28***
70 and above		0.80***	0.80***				0.18***
Married		0.77***	0.78***				0.87***
Non-married (ref.)							
Household Size		0.91***	0.90***				0.88***
Number children		2.16***	2.17***				2.29***
Migrated Since Birth			0.57***				0.73***
Migrated Since 2002			0.77***				0.92
Education							
No Formal Education				7.61***			11.19***
Incomplete Primary				7.27***			8.14***
Complete Primary				6.03***			6.23***
Incomplete Secondary				4.78***			4.74***
Complete Secondary				3.10***			2.59***
More than Secondary (ref.)							
Employment							
Employed (ref.)							
Employed in Agriculture					2.83***		1.58***
Unemployed					8.02***		10.94***
Inactive in Labor Market					1.83***		3.41***
Residence							
Urban (ref.)							
Rural						2.34***	1.49***
Intercept	0.18***	0.12***	0.17***	0.04***	0.12***	0.16***	0.04***
N	71353	71353	71353	71353	71353	71353	71353
-2loglikelihood	61294	55109	54377	58324	58733	60333	48053
Nagelkerke R2	0.005	0.148	0.164	0.075	0.066	0.028	0.297
Model Chi Square	197.0***	6381.4***	7114.3***	3166.5***	2757.5***	1158.1***	13437.6***

Significant P values: * p<.05; ** p<.01; * p<.001**