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# Surplus Populations and Socio-Ecological Conflicts in Latin America: The Case of the Mapuche Struggle in Southern Chile

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## ABSTRACT

So-called surplus populations have repeatedly been the focus of critical analyses in recent years. This refers to a large social group that comprises most of the population in the Global South and is characterised by the fact that it is not integrated into the capitalist mode of production to any relevant extent through wage labour. The consequence is that these surplus populations must reproduce themselves largely outside of capitalist relations of production in a strict sense. This article addresses two research gaps. First, the debate on surplus populations has so far focused mainly on Asian or African contexts and has hardly been related to Latin America; second, this debate on surplus populations has not been linked to the large number of socio-ecological conflicts surrounding their social reproduction in this region. This article shows that this perspective is extremely insightful and illustrates this by looking at the conflict between the forestry industry and the indigenous Mapuche in southern Chile.

## 1 | Introduction

On 14 November 2018, Camilo Catrillanca was shot in the back during a police operation as part of the so-called Comando Jungla (jungle commando) in the southern Chilean region of Araucanía. Catrillanca was a political activist and a member of the indigenous Mapuche community. More than 2 years after the incident, eight police officers were convicted of murder, complicity in murder and cover up. On the same day, less than 50 km from the courtroom, more than 800 heavily armed police officers with 200 vehicles, armoured cars, drones and helicopters stormed several small towns in an area of the Ercilla municipality controlled by the Mapuche. In particular, the locality of Temucuicui, where Catrillanca comes from and which, with its approximately 1000 inhabitants, has hardly more residents than the number of officers who took part in the police operation, came into the focus of the security forces. During the operation, not only were Catrillanca's mother, widow and daughter arrested, but there were also exchanges of gunfire; one person was killed and at least eight people were seriously injured. A few weeks later, Mapuche communities from Ercilla announced that they would establish their own security forces and thus an 'indigenous police force'. While the Mapuche described this as a further step towards territorial self-government, the Chilean government at the time under Sebastián Piñera stressed that it would not tolerate any security forces other than its own. Since then, the violence has not decreased. Today, a large part of the former Mapuche territory (Wallmapu) is under a state of emergency.

The conflict between the Chilean state and the indigenous Mapuche, which has been ongoing since the 19th century, has flared up again in recent decades (Tricot 2009; Pineda 2014). The Mapuche are not only fighting against the repressive

I confirm that this work has not been published elsewhere, nor is it currently under consideration for publication in another journal.

intrusion of the state, but also against large landowners, who are the descendants of colonial settlers, and companies that are appropriating land in their territories (Schmalz et al. 2023). Since the end of the 20th century, the Mapuche have been primarily opposed to the rapid expansion of industrial forest plantations. Today, these extensive areas of straight-lined and non-native pine and eucalyptus trees characterise most of the landscapes in southern Chile.[1] They are part of the globally integrated forestry industry, which produces continuously increasing quantities of pulp for the world markets. At the same time, the rural population of southern Chile with their small-scale farming economy, and in particular the Mapuche, have only been precariously and never comprehensively integrated into Chilean capitalism as wage labourers. Rather, from the perspective of capitalist accumulation and especially from the perspective of the forestry industry, they were always 'surplus to the needs of capital' (Li 2010, 66). In this regard, the historian José Bengoa (1983, 135) critically noted in the early days of the expansion of the forestry industry: 'The Mapuche population is of no "interest" to the new form of capitalist expansion, it remains on the margins of it and, what is more, it is a "burden of the past" that needs to be decongested.' This perspective of capital, which perceives the Mapuche communities as a 'burden' or 'surplus', particularly characterises the expansion of the forestry industry in recent decades, which is why this development has also led to a high number and a particularly violent form of socio-ecological conflicts in southern Chile.

This article addresses a research gap that has arisen in the discussion on surplus populations (Li 2010, 2017; Bhattacharya et al. 2023; Sanyal 2014; Bernstein 2023; Scherrer 2018; Bernards and Soederberg 2021; Scully and Britwum 2019). This research mainly focuses on the Asian region and partly also on sub-Saharan Africa, but hardly on the Latin American region, as well-established authors have noted (Bhattacharya et al. 2023, 152; Li 2017, 4). Classic debates such as the one on the 'marginal masses' (Nun 1971; Cardoso 2001) have hardly been continued in Latin America in recent years. On the other hand, there is an extremely rich body of research on dependency and critical development theory, political ecology, extractivism and social–ecological conflicts (Svampa 2019; Gudynas 2016; Martinez-Alier 2004; Marini 2022; Alimonda 2011). By bringing these different traditions of thought together, I will use the concept of surplus populations to contribute to fill gaps in the current discussions on social-ecological conflicts in times of ecological crisis and intensified extractivism in Latin America, as well as in the debate on surplus populations with regard to the development of capitalism, conflicts and social reproduction. Currently, the role of socio-ecological conflicts regarding the survival of surplus populations is hardly emphasised. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the specific analytical concepts for the economic practices of the surplus populations, for the entanglements of the surplus populations with the capitalist sector that are in conflict and the role we can attribute to these conflicts.

In the following, I will first briefly outline the current debate on surplus populations. I will then productively link this debate with the Latin American debates on dependency, marginality and political ecology. I will argue that we must understand the socio-ecological conflicts as struggles over different entanglements between the capitalist–extractivist sector on the one hand and a need-based sector on the other. I will demonstrate this empirically using the conflict between the forestry industry and the Mapuche. Therefore, I present my data and methods, and afterwards, I show that this conflict on the ground usually takes place between the different sectors mentioned. Finally, I will draw conclusions and explain why the perspectives of socio-ecological conflicts and surplus populations are mutually enriching.

## 2 | Surplus Populations in the World Economy

Since the middle of the 20th century, the global economy has been characterised by massive depeasantization. At that time, most of the world's population lived in rural areas, and the majority of them worked on family farms. Since then, the share of the urban population in the total global population increased from 34% (1960) to about 57% today (2023).[2] The urbanisation and migration movements were often caused by extensive processes of dispossession, famine and economic crises in the countryside (Davis 2001; Li 2010, 71ff) and these large waves of rural exodus created today's megacities of the Global South that Mike Davis (2006) described in his book 'Planet of Slums'. At the turn of the millennium, it became clear that the 'late industrialisation' in countries of the Global South was in no way capable of absorbing the large masses of workers who were coming to the cities or who were being born there in large numbers (Scherrer 2018, 305f; Li 2010, 69–78; Graf 2024a, 22–30). On the contrary, many countries are characterised by premature deindustrialisation, which means an absolute or relative decline in employment in the industrial sector (Tregenna 2016; Rodrik 2016). The result is that in most countries of the Global South, there is no continuous trend towards formal and stable employment in the capitalist sector.

Particularly with regard to the regions of South and Southeast Asia, this has led to a debate about 'surplus populations', who are not integrated into the capitalist sector as workers and are therefore 'surplus to the needs of capital' (Li 2010, 66, 2017, 3; Sanyal 2014, 52–55; Bhattacharya et al. 2023; Habibi and Juliawan 2018; Breman 2024; Dasgupta 2021). The concept of surplus populations has also been applied in recent years to a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Scully and Britwum 2019; Wiegink and Kronenburg García 2022; Yeni 2024). This diagnosis of surplus leads to a number of follow-up questions. First, what does this characterisation of being 'surplus to the needs of capital' mean for the way these people reproduce themselves, how they work and relate to each other economically? Second, if the majority of workers do not serve as workforce in the capitalist sector, what significance does this have for the dominant politics towards the 'surplus populations' in the Global South? And third, what does this mean for social conflicts in these societies? With these questions in mind, my article connects to more recent debates on changing social reproduction and socio-ecological conflicts in this journal (Mezzadri et al. 2024; Raynolds and Ipsen 2024; Yeni 2024). I will start by addressing the first two of these questions theoretically and then answer the third question on social conflicts empirically.

In research on surplus populations Karl Marx's characterisation is usually used as a starting point. In Capital, he analyses

the different forms that the 'relative surplus populations' can take in relation to capitalist accumulation (Marx 2010, 634–638). The 'floating' relative surplus population forms the actual core of what Marx calls the 'industrial reserve army' and consists of workers who 'are sometimes repelled, sometimes attracted again in greater masses' by industrial capital as wage labourers (Marx 2010, 635). The 'latent surplus population', however, consists of those inhabitants of rural areas whose traditional family farming livelihoods are always threatened and precarious and who are therefore tendentially available to take up employment in the cities (Marx 2010, 636). The 'stagnant' surplus population also 'forms a part of the active labour army, but with extremely irregular employment' and its 'conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working class' (Marx 2010, 637).[3] While Marx counts all those who are not in wage labour at a certain point of time as part of the relative surplus population, others differentiate between the 'industrial reserve army' (the floating surplus population) and the other two forms of the surplus populations (Li 2010; Nun 2010; Bernards and Soederberg 2021; Bernstein 2023). Following this differentiation, I use the term surplus populations and surplus labour power in the sense of the latter two forms to refer to all those who (must) reproduce their labour force largely through income from outside capitalist labour relations. It refers to far more than just the 'unemployed', but mainly to those who are self-employed or work in small enterprises and are not directly integrated into capital cycles (Nun 2001, 234f). And it also includes underemployed workers who only work to a small extent or only occasionally as wage labourers in the capitalist sector (the so-called stagnant surplus population) and, in contrast to the 'industrial reserve army', tend to take on causal work in the service sector (Soederberg 2014, 40f). The exact relationship of these different groups of workers to capital has been the subject of repeated controversy (Nun 1971; Cardoso 2001; Kay 1989, 100–118; Li 2010; Bernstein 2023). In this article, I try to make an analytical and empirical contribution to this debate, incorporating the perspective of socio-ecological conflicts. However, and in line with Nun (Nun 2010, 115f), this requires overcoming a certain functionalist tendency.

Marx understood surplus populations as a functional 'lever of capitalistic accumulation' (Marx 2010, 626). This approach is still dominant today and, especially when referring to the 'industrial reserve army', the focus is on considering economic dynamics and practices from the perspective of capital (Foster et al. 2011; Marini 2022, 130–139; Smith 2016, 93, 124, 194; Patnaik and Patnaik 2016, 48–60). The focus is usually on questions about the differences in the conditions of exploitation and relations of unequal exchange worldwide and thus also—implicitly or explicitly—the question of the extent to which the large mass of 'relative surplus populations' is functional or dysfunctional for global capitalism. This perspective is fruitful with regard to processes of capitalist accumulation, but at the same time very limited with regard to the question of the particularities of the economic survival of the surplus populations (Li 2010, 70–71; Sanyal 2014, 4–8; Bhattacharya et al. 2023, 146–147). In line with these arguments and in order to understand the struggles of the surplus populations, it is important, as I argue in this article, to understand the specifics of the economic practices of the surplus populations. To do this, I will briefly present a few figures on the global labour force and then explain how we can conceptualise these economic practices.

Because employment in the capitalist sector in countries of the Global South is mostly low-paid and insecure (ILO 2024, 25, 30), people have to base their survival to a large extent on (additional) income opportunities outside this sector (ILO 2020, 11–13, 18). These often take place informally, in small enterprises or in self-employment.[4] One third of employees worldwide are so-called own-account workers (World Bank 2024). A total of 70% of all employed workers worldwide are working in micro, small or medium enterprises, of which 80% are operated informally.[5] Only about 1.3 billion employees work in formal jobs, and even a majority of these workers are employed in micro, small and medium enterprises. Of those who work in big enterprises, many work in public institutions or state-owned companies. This means that only about a tenth of all employees work in the large private companies of the capitalist sector. Consequently, capitalist labour relations characterise only a small fraction of the global economic activities. In this sense, a group of researchers from India and Great Britain (Bhattacharya et al. 2023) describe the dominant labour relations in the Global South as following:

> In most of these economies, there has been a continued preponderance of non-capitalist production and labour processes both in agriculture and in the nonagricultural informal sector, even when there have been sustained periods of relatively high economic growth. Both these sectors are largely comprised of small and marginal farms or micro-enterprises [ … ] that are mainly organised using unwaged family labour, and are predominantly driven by the logic of satisfying consumption needs of the households rather than by a capitalist logic of accumulation and expanded reproduction. [...]. In most postcolonial economies in the Global South, vast sections of the working population continue to generate their livelihood in such non-capitalist economic spaces. In other words, the dualism between the capitalist and non-capitalist sectors that was expected to wither away with capitalist development and structural transformation, continues to characterize most of these economies [...].

This non-capitalist sector has been understood as a 'need economy' which includes the 'ensemble of economic activities undertaken with the purpose of meeting needs, as distinct from activities driven by an impersonal force of systemic accumulation. It is a system of petty commodity production but [...] not the one that precedes capital in the historic narrative of transition. It is an effect of capital [...]' (Sanyal 2014, 209). For Sanyal, this need economy goes hand in hand with a new form of development policy that reunites the surplus populations, displaced from their land, with new means of production and thus creates new employment opportunities (Sanyal 2014, 64–65). In fact, development organisations such as the ILO recognise that the capitalist sector in most countries of the Global

South is characterised by 'jobless growth' and therefore rely on small enterprises as 'major job creation engine' (ILO 2015). Therefore, if we want to understand the conflict dynamics of the surplus populations, we need to understand these economic practices in small businesses and self-employment and how they conflict with the capitalist sector.

With regard to politics towards surplus populations and their need economies, Tania Murray Li (2010) has distinguished between the politics of 'making live' and 'letting die'. The latter refers to the millions of deaths, the famines and massive ecological destruction in the course of colonialism and ongoing dispossessions, particularly with regard to small farmers worldwide (Davis 2001; Alimonda 2011, 111–113; Li 2010, 71–78). Making live politics, on the other hand, represents politics that support the need economy and the survival of surplus populations. For Sanyal (2014, 217–222), these are part of the 'complex hegemony' of global capitalism, which simultaneously continues to expropriate the surplus populations and at the same time supports the new need economies. For Li (2010, 82–87), the establishment of making live policies is always a result of social and political struggles. However, these struggles in Li's (2017, 2010) case are always directed at state social policies and entitlements. In the following, I will argue that the survival of surplus populations depends to a large extent on local conflicts between the capitalist sector and rural communities.

## 3 | Extractivism, Marginality and Socio-Ecological Conflicts

Because large parts of Latin America were integrated into the global capitalist division of labour in the 16th century, the region has served as a supplier of cheap raw materials (Wallerstein 2004, 23–41). Initially focusing primarily on precious metals, Latin American countries have increasingly become important procurement markets for metals of all kinds, cheap food, and also energy such as oil and coal through to biofuels and forestry products (Prebisch 1950, 1; Veltmeyer 2020). The consequences for the indigenous peoples living in the Americas were drastic. Finally, European colonialism transformed the ecosystems of the entire region, made pre-Columbian modes of production and life impossible, and wiped out the vast majority of the indigenous population through wars or imported diseases (Alimonda 2011, 111–113).

The capitalist appropriation of Latin American nature has intensified in the neoliberal and post-neoliberal era (Svampa 2015; Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington 2011). While industrialisation policies still played a major role in the middle of the 20th century, since the end of the last century, the focus has again been on the export of raw materials. Today, in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia or Chile, between 73 and 92 of total exports are largely unprocessed raw materials (CEPAL 2024, 50). This economic orientation towards the export of relatively unprocessed raw materials from mining or industrial agriculture is called extractivism and is known to result in significant social and environmental costs (Gudynas 2018). The region's position in the global division of labour has thus shown a high degree of continuity since colonialism. If we put dependency thinking into today's terms, then we can say that Latin America continuously focuses on the export of cheap nature and cheap labour (Patel and Moore 2017).

The specific integration of Latin America into the global division of labour has consequences for the internal social structure of these countries. Modernisation theories of the 20th century analysed the 'underdeveloped economies' as dual economies, which consisted of two separate sectors, the traditional and the modern sector (Boeke 1953). Latin American dependency theories criticised that it would be rather appropriate to speak of a 'structural heterogeneity' (Pinto 1970) of Latin American economies, a result of the global division of labour since colonialism. Structural heterogeneity is seen not as a premodern relic, but as a product of the global division of labour and processes of marginalisation which create a continuity of non-capitalist relations of production (Quijano 2014). The marginalisation rather than proletarianisation of large sections of the population is seen as a product of a specific development phase of global capitalism (Nun 1971). This led to an intense debate about the concept of 'marginality' that refers to the vast majority of Latin America's populations who were socially, economically and culturally excluded and devalued (Cortés 2012).

Aníbal Quijano argued that in the process of increasing expansion of global capitalist monopolies, the industrial sector is more and more appropriating the basic means of production, expropriating traditional producers and creates hardly any employment opportunities. This is reinforced by the fact that increased labour productivity in the 'monopolistic sector' is causing a relative decline in demand for labour (Quijano 2014, 137). This is why more and more 'marginal labour force' is being created, which has to look for employment opportunities itself and leads to a situation where 'pre-capitalist forms of production' do not disappear, but gradually change their form and function (Quijano 2014, 135–138). However, the marginalised masses are not returning to a subsistence economy, but are creating a new market-shaped 'depressed sphere of the economy' (Quijano 2014, 139). José Nun, an Argentinian Marxist who took a prominent part in this debate, argues in line with Quijano and characterised the 'marginal mass' to be the afunctional or dysfunctional for capital (Nun 1971, 21). This perspective is intended to avoid the 'hyperfunctionalism' of many authors following Marx, who, in Nun's words, identify a decisive functional moment of capitalist accumulation even in the last landless peasant and informal vendor (Nun 2010, 115f) and provoked criticism from traditional Marxists (Kay 1989, 106–118). Among others Fernando H. Cardoso (2001) criticised that the capitalist sector in Latin America remains dependent on cheap labour and that a functional relationship between capitalist accumulation and surplus populations can therefore still be identified (Kay 1989, 114f). However, Nun already made it clear that his argument does not mean that there cannot be functional relationships at all. But, at the same time, there is no reason to assume that these functional relations are always the most profitable or most convenient for capitalist production (Nun 2010, 116). Consequently, even where they are functional, entanglements between capitalist and non-capitalist economic practices cannot be derived solely from functionality and profitability for capital.

Overall, the critical marginality perspective presented here casts light on the internal social structure of the Latin American

countries. The strength of critical marginality thinking with regard to the present article lies in its ability to demonstrate that the socioeconomic exclusion of 'marginalised labour' is itself a product of capitalist 'development' and the global division of labour and that marginality characterises a large part of the population that cannot simply be described as a functional 'industrial reserve army' for capitalist accumulation (Kay 1989, 109–111; Cortés and Torres 2025). Recent research shows that the arguments of the marginality perspective remain relatively current as internal processes of marginalisation continue to go hand in hand with the extractivist integration of Latin America into the global division of labour. Due to the increasing use of technology, the extractivist enclave industries of mining and the large-scale monocultures of industrial agriculture and forestry need even fewer workers today (Svampa 2019, 22–23, 71–78; Acosta and Cajas Guijarro 2020). Because the extractivist industries hardly create any jobs, but due to their massive exploitation of natural resources they need large areas of land and destroy local ecosystems, they significantly undermine local modes of production and living without creating employment for these people and thus produce a large amount of 'surplus populations', especially in rural areas. The result is that in rural areas, family farmers and indigenous communities are increasingly having to fight for their survival (Svampa 2019, 45–53), and in the cities to which so many people are fleeing, large peripheral districts of the marginalised have been emerging, in which the surplus populations keep themselves afloat through need-based activities (Sarria Icaza and Tirriba 2004; Nun 2010; Graf 2025).

However, the concept of marginality also suffers from analytical and empirical weaknesses. As marginality always denotes a relational reference to a non-marginal population group, which is implicitly posited as a 'developed' or 'modern' norm, as Nun later self-critically acknowledges, it remains unclear, first, what unites the extremely heterogeneous group of marginalised people, to which many ultimately count around 80% of the population, and what the inherent socioeconomic logic is that non-capitalist economic practices have in common (Nun 2010, 114f; Cortés 2012, 231). Similar to more recent research on extractivism, the debate on marginality, as Quijano (2014, 139) himself makes clear, lacks a conceptual framework for conceptualising non-capitalist practices in the context of structural heterogeneity. Second, on a more empirical level, it is necessary to continually clarify the role that relationships and the entanglements between the different economic sectors play in a given context. In order to do this, I will first make an analytical distinction between two economic sectors and then ask about their interdependencies.

Following on from the critical dependency and marginality thinking, we can roughly identify a simultaneity of a capitalist extractivist sector, which is largely oriented towards the profitable export of cheap nature, and a domestic need-based sector, which is essentially dominated by small enterprises and own account workers (Santos 1975, 8, 18–21, 44–46, 103–104; Quijano 2014, 126f; Marini 2022, 140; Graf 2025). Alongside the profit-oriented and extremely profitable export markets, which essentially benefit the small propertied classes and a few better-off workers, there are the far less profitable domestic markets for the consumer goods of the local population. Even if these are increasingly becoming part of the circuits of capital, need economic activities continue to dominate here in many cases. In the following, I will briefly discuss how we can characterise the non-capitalist economic practices within a 'need-based sector' (Graf 2025) on the basis of the previous theoretical explanations and, secondly, how we can analytically define its relationship to the capitalist sector today.

The need-based sector, as I conceptualise it, has its own specific characteristics. First, it consists of own account workers, micro and small enterprises. The small firm sizes imply specific labour relations within these enterprises, often characterised by paternalistic, kinship and family relationships and by focusing on needs, traditions and the security of household income through income diversification (Basole and Basu 2011; Bernstein 2010, 110–112; Sanyal 2014, 208–215; Quijano 2014, 139f). Second, this sector, does not coincide with the 'informal sector' because informal employment exists also in the capitalist sector and, at the same time, many formal working relations find themselves in the need-based sector (Denning 2010). The particularity of the need-based sector rather consists of the fact that it is organised around the logic of meeting the needs of private households. It functions according to the logic of 'simple reproduction' (Bernstein 2010, 101–104) and in contrast to endless accumulation they try 'to ensure the day-to-day survival of business and family' (Santos 1975, 23). This is why, following Dasgupta (2021) and in contrast to Sanyal (2014, 209), we have to include family farming in the need-based sector. At the end of the day, it is largely this sector that feeds the majority of people in the Global South and generates income especially in rural areas (Mezzadri et al. 2024). Third, the need economic activities are often a direct part of the local ecosystems, which is why they often defend these ecosystems against extractivist interventions in rural areas (Martinez-Alier 2002). Fourth, the need-based sector is accompanied by specific state policies and regulatory regimes, ranging from development policies to 'making live' politics and ongoing forms of expropriation and 'letting die' politics (Sanyal 2014; Li 2010, 2017).

Finally, this need-based sector is neither an economy of its own, as Sanyal (2014, 208ff) suggests, nor just a 'marginal pole' (Quijano 2014), but a sector as part of a structurally heterogeneous economy. The reason for this is that the specific economic practices are linked to each other through their own markets and thus form particular sectors with their own moral economies. However, these close internal connections do not mean that there are no inequalities and power relations within the sector, as Mike Davis has already pointed out (Davis 2006, 186–190). Different forms of exploitation, particularly of the unpaid work of women, can be found within this sector (Mezzadri et al. 2024). Furthermore, the need-based economic activities do not form an independent sector because they are entangled at different levels with the capitalist sector. The result of this is conflictual entanglements between the sectors, a central topic of this article, which becomes particularly clear with regard to conflicts discussed earlier looking at the extractivism debate (Svampa 2019; Martinez-Alier 2004). A distinction must be made between different entanglements. First, there are the ecological entanglements, because extractivist and need economic activities often take place in the same ecosystems. They are therefore integrated into a common ecosystem and are thus ecologically intertwined. Second, there are the economic entanglements that

have been the subject of controversial discussion, particularly in the debate on marginality. More than through labour markets (Wallerstein 2004, 32–36), these exist through subcontracting linkages (Kesar 2024; Bernstein 2010, 65). As I will show below, it is precisely these ecological and economic entanglements between the two sectors that lead to a number of conflicts. In what follows, I will use the Chilean case to analyse these conflicts as struggles of surplus populations fighting to strengthen their need-based activities against the extractivist sector.

## 4 | Data and Methods

My contribution is based on the current state of research, secondary data and empirical research in Chile using qualitative methods. My own empirical data comes from various empirical studies in the regions of La Araucanía, Biobío and O'Higgins and the capital Santiago. This empirical research was conducted in six periods: February–July 2016, March–April 2017, March–April 2019, October–December 2019, December 2021–January 2022 and December 2023–January 2024. In total, 96 semi-structured interviews with experts from companies, associations, NGOs and the state, as well as with affected local people, indigenous communities and small peasant households were conducted. The sample was constructed using a snowball technique for the expert interviews and open sampling (per Grounded Theory) with the communities (Corbin and Strauss 2015). Some individual experts were interviewed multiple times to assess changes over the multi-year study period as well as to conduct follow-up inquiries. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using open coding in the process of research.

A particular focus of this article is on members of Mapuche communities interviewed in February–July 2016 and October–December 2019 in La Araucanía and Biobío. Some findings from research on family farming in O'Higgins in 2023/2024 are also included in this article. In these years I particularly visited rural communities in La Araucanía (see Figure 1), getting to know the daily lives of rural households in the vicinity of the forest plantations and participating in local cultural and political events. In addition to this participant observation (Lüders 2010) in rural communities, I frequently visited forest plantations, sawmills, processing plants and affected Mapuche communities and attended the events and workshops of civil society actors involved in the conflicts. The research also used document analysis, especially of the annual reports of forestry companies and documents from state institutions such as the national forestry institute (INFOR). In contrast to earlier publications from this empirical research (Graf 2024b; Schmalz et al. 2023), in this article, I will analyse the conflict in southern Chile with regard to the current debates on surplus populations, which is an extremely insightful endeavour.

## 5 | Chile and the Mapuche as a 'Surplus Population'

### 5.1 | Chile's Neoliberal Model: Socially Exclusive and Ecologically Destructive

Chile's neoliberal economic and social system has long been considered a model of success by international organisations and a number of countries in Latin America. Since the 1990s, it has consisted of a continuation of the neoliberal-extractivist economic orientation of the military dictatorship (1973–1990) and of new processes of political democratisation (Pizarro Hofer 2020; Fischer 2017, 147–160). This combination of economic continuity and gradual political democratisation led to strong economic growth and the country being hailed as the 'jaguar of Latin America' (Gárate Chateau 2012, 22, 347ff). In the 1990s, the Chilean economy grew by an average of 6.1%, in the 2000s by 4.2% and in the 2010s by an average of around 3.0% per year.[6] As a result, not only has Chile's per capita income increased sixfold since the early 1990s, but exports

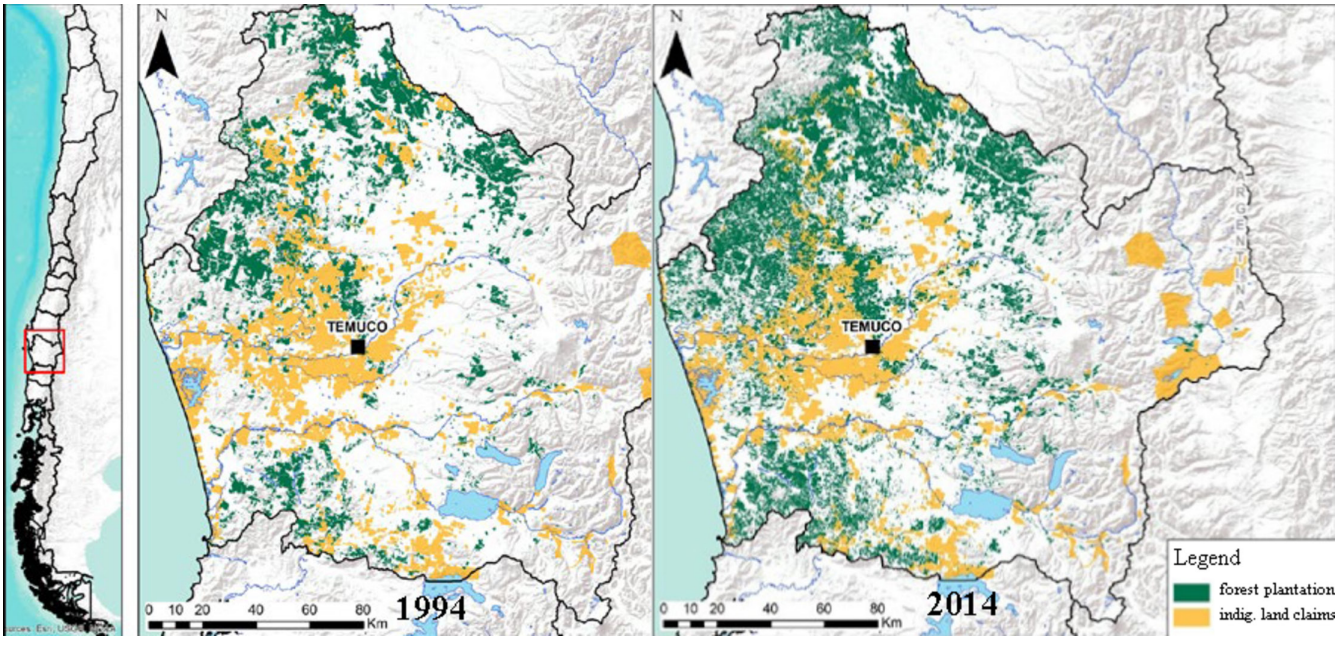


**FIGURE 1** | Region La Araucanía and increase in forest plantations. *Source:* Adapted from Romero et al. (2017, 41).

have also increased more than sevenfold, and the country has experienced a huge increase in foreign direct investment.[7] In addition poverty has fallen from nearly 40% in the early 1990s to below 10% in the 2010s, which is mostly due to state social policies and increased total labour force participation (Fischer 2017, 148–157).[8]

However, Chile's economic growth is accompanied by significant social and environmental problems. From the north to the south of Chile, the ecological damage caused by extractive industries that exploit natural resources on large scales and supply world markets with metals from mining, fruits from plantations, pulp and wood from forestry plantations and fish from the salmon industry is dramatic. This damage includes, among others, the large craters left by open-pit mining, land degradation and pollution and overexploitation of water sources by mining, agribusiness and the forestry industry. In this way, Chilean extractivism is causing enormous interventions, changes and destruction of entire ecosystems from north to south. This is not surprising because the Chilean model is essentially based on the export of raw materials, which represent, according to different sources, between 78% and 87% of the country's total exports (CEPAL 2023, 50; Barriga et al. 2022, 5).

Socially, too, most Chileans do not benefit from the extractivist model. In fact, most barely participate in economic growth, which is largely due to the fact that very few Chileans are directly employed in the industries that exploit raw materials. The few who are permanently employed in the extractive industries, especially in mining, receive higher wages, better private health insurance and pensions, and various additional company benefits (Graf 2024a, 202; Arboleda 2020, 75ff; Salazar 2012, 293). However, this class of workers in large industrial enterprises of the capitalist sector is a relatively small working class (Ruiz Encina and Boccardo Bosoni 2014, 45). What differs from these is the large mass of precarious households that receive only low or lower–middle income and have no access to adequate health, pension and education systems. Their vulnerability is compounded by economic precariousness, indebtedness and inability to respond to contingencies such as unanticipated expenses (Castiglioni 2021, 112–117). If they work as wage workers in the capitalist sector, they usually only work temporarily in retail trade or seasonally in industrial agriculture (Páez and Sáez 2017; Blanco and Julián 2019). This is why there is massive precarious employment, widespread underemployment and particularly high unemployment of up to 30%, especially in the lower income groups (Páez and Sáez 2017). Of those who find salaried work, six out of 10 workers do not earn enough to support a household of four above the poverty line (Durán and Kremerman 2019, 3). Even labour relations in state institutions tend to be extremely precarious, poorly paid and often in subcontracted companies.

This is why the social reproduction of these precarious households is often based on social transfers from the state and on the functioning of the need-based sector, where one can buy cheap food, services and everyday products and where one can earn a little extra with one's own means of labour. As a consequence, the micro, small and medium enterprises together with the own-account workers make up nearly 80% of the employment in recent decades (Salazar 2012, 369; Observatorio Social 2018, 56f; Observatorio Laboral Nacional 2024, 13). The great majority of them work as small traders, artesanos, peasants, fitters, unskilled workers in the personal services, in trade and in the transport or public sectors and are barely or only loosely integrated into capital cycles of large private companies (Observatorio Social 2018, 57–59; Observatorio Laboral Nacional 2024, 13f). The unemployment rate keeps fluctuating between 7% and 12% since the 2000s (Observatorio Social 2023a, 9). Of those in employment, almost one in four works as a *cuenta propia*, that is, as a low-skilled self-employed person, usually on a marginal income. In the lowest income decile, as many as 63% worked as *cuenta propia* in 2022 (Observatorio Social 2023a, 19). Since the 2010s, the number of those who work for wages is declining from almost 80% to under 74% in 2022 (Observatorio Social 2023a, 19). However, these are not wage labourers in the capitalist sector, as nearly three out of four of them work in micro, small or medium-sized enterprises (Observatorio Social 2018, 56). High informality of around 30% on average (and up to almost 80% in the lowest percentile) and the associated uncertain data situation only allows an estimation of those who work constantly as wage labourers in the capitalist sector, which we can narrow down to between 10% and 20%. In addition, a substantial part of wage labourers are employed directly or indirectly by the state (Observatorio Laboral Nacional 2024, 13f; Observatorio Social 2023a, 25). The number of people working in the mining industries, which is so important for Chilean exports, has been falling for some time and was recently only around two to 3% (Observatorio Social 2018, 54; Observatorio Laboral Nacional 2024, 10). To summarise, the vast majority of Chilean workers are permanently employed in the need-based sector, which mainly consists of *cuenta propias*, micro and small enterprises.

Against this background, Salazar estimated the 'new working class', which, in our terms, could be described as surplus population at around 70% (Salazar 2012, 369–371). It includes former students with university degrees who cannot find suitable skilled employment, as well as inhabitants of the (informal) settlements in the peripheries of the cities or the poor rural households whose agricultural activity helps them to survive. This 'working class' is not only socially heterogeneous, but also economically so, given that labour is distributed unequally within it, particularly with regard to unpaid reproductive work (Raynolds and Ipsen 2024, 11). What this heterogeneous group has in common, however, is that the survival of their households depends on the functioning of the reproductive forces of the need-based sector as a whole. Regardless of the exact number estimated for the surplus population, it is clear that the majority of Chilean workers are not permanently integrated into the capitalist sector through wage labour. As in other Latin American countries the economic links to the capital cycles function more via the domestic markets and the high level of private household debt (Soederberg 2014, 208f; Salazar 2012, 371). Furthermore, the need economic activities realised mainly in self-employment and micro and small enterprises are permanently in conflict with extractivist industries, especially in rural areas, which leads to sectoral conflicts. In this context, the most radical actors in favour of a functioning local need economy for cultural, ecological and economic reasons are the Mapuche communities.

### 5.2 | The Conflict Between the Forestry Industry and the Mapuche Communities

The part of Wallmapu, the territory of the Mapuche, that today belongs to Chile extends for several hundred kilometres along the Pacific coast, nestled by the mountains of the Coastal Cordillera on one side, and on the other side by the high Andes mountains. Before the colonial subjugation by the Spanish crown, beginning in the 16th century, around one million Mapuche lived here. The name Mapuche translates as 'the people of the earth'. They were not only the largest, but also the most defensive among the Indigenous peoples of Chile, and the only ones who were not defeated by the Spaniards. After many years of military encounters, however, the number of the Mapuche population had fallen to around 25% of their original population size (Silva Galdames 1995, 31–38, 76). Finally, after Chilean independence the Chilean military conducted the 'Campaña por la ocupación de la Cordillera' (Campaign for the Occupation of the Cordillera) (1880–1883). It was part of the so-called 'pacificación de la Araucanía' (pacification of the Araucanía), which ended in a victory for the Chilean military over the Mapuche in 1883.

With the end of the military conflict, a large wave of expropriation of the Mapuche from their lands began. The Mapuche were settled in *reducciones*, that is, small areas with comparatively low agricultural productivity. However, it was not until the military dictatorship under Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990) that a completely new quality of land grabs was imposed on Chile's Indigenous peoples. The dictatorship introduced policies that allowed the concentration of land, especially by forestry companies (CMPC and Forestal Arauco) and the legal division of communitarian property (Canales Tapia 2020). Furthermore, an agrarian counter-reform affected agricultural activities and weakened small peasant and Indigenous production (Bengoa 2017). While in 1973, the Mapuche still owned around 500,000 ha of land, and in 1990, this was only around 300,000 (Kaltmeier 2004, 153). A real wave of migration began. In around 80% of the Mapuche families at least one household member temporarily migrated to the North in order to look for temporary work there (Bengoa 1983, 153). The Mapuche people were transformed into a 'surplus population' in search of precarious jobs. At the same time, the Mapuches' agricultural practices hardly changed even after their land was fragmented; in the 1980s, more than 60% of them were still focused on subsistence production and many still are today (Kaltmeier 2004, 152). Overall, the policies towards the Mapuche population in southern Chile since colonialism can be described as politics of 'letting die' or even more as politics of 'making die'.

The production of the Mapuche as a surplus population is reinforced by the fact that the military dictatorship laid the foundation for today's industrial forestry in La Araucanía. The forestry industry relies on large plantations; it is concentrated in the hands of a few Chilean business families, and it is based on the export of pulp (Klubock 2014). The enormous expansion of forest plantations and their massive subsidies by the state once again increased the impoverishment of the Mapuche. Since the dictatorship, the forestry industry has expanded enormously in the former Wallmapu. The appropriation of land by the forestry industry continued into the 2000s and only reached its limits in the 2010s. This expansion led to the area of forest plantations in a number of municipalities exceeding 60% of the municipality's total area (Garín Contreras et al. 2011; Graf 2024a, 348, 355–356). Today, over 2.3 million hectares are covered with forest plantations, which provide the forestry industry with its raw materials. In 2021, the forestry sector accounted for around 1.7% of Chile's total economic output and over 6.3% of its exports (Infor 2022, 3). The industry is essentially dominated by two Chilean companies, Forestal Arauco and CMPC/Mininco, which not only own large parts of the plantations but also the entire pulp industry. Over 70% of forestry exports are in the hands of these two companies (Barton and Román 2012, 873). On the ground, in the peripheral rural areas, marginalised rural communities are pitted against extremely wealthy international forestry companies.

Almost half of the total plantation areas in Chile are concentrated in just two regions: Biobío and La Araucanía (Infor 2022, 2, 6). Because the large-scale plantations do not integrate into the local ecological cycles, but rather leach out the soil, deplete water resources, and aim for mass export without intensive further processing of the raw material, forestry is considered as an extractivist industry (Pino Albornoz and Carrasco Henríquez 2019). The enormous areas of monocultures of fast-growing tree species in pine and eucalyptus plantations lead to severe drought, declining biodiversity and a high risk of forest fires (Latorre and Rojas Pedemonte 2016). In addition to these significant negative ecological effects of the forestry industry, it hardly generates any local employment. In the 1980s, the local population and even Mapuche still had high hopes for employment in the emerging forestry industry, as a Mapuche (a10)[9] says in an interview. However, in the decades that followed, it became clear that hardly anyone in the local population was profiting economically from forestry and that the industry was having devastating social, ecological and cultural consequences.

The fact that forestry companies are hardly generating any local income opportunities is related to increasing technical development. For example, the spokesperson for an association of subcontractors in the forestry sector (b38)[10] emphasised in an interview that today, for cost and safety reasons, work in the plantations in particular is carried out by machines far more than before. As a result, the number of employees in the forestry industry has been declining for years. While there were still over 136,000 employees in the forestry industry in the mid-2000s, this number has since fallen to just around 111,000 employees today, that is only 1% of the Chilean workforce (Infor 2022, 245). Employment on the plantations alone has roughly halved during this time, from around 45,000 (2007) to 23,000 (2019). Today, Nahuel (a9)[11] describes the situation in an interview as follows: 'the work that we can do with our hands ... with chainsaws and axes and for which we need a year, they only need two or three days with their technology and machines. [...] In the end, we cannot find work and if they do employ us, they pay us miserably, barely enough to buy us something to eat.' Studies support this claim and show that the economic activities of the large forestry companies leave little wealth and employment possibilities in the surroundings of the forest plantations (Cerda 2017; Andersson et al. 2016; Román and Barton 2017).

As there is hardly any local employment in the plantations, it is not surprising that unemployment in the Araucanía is at 10%,

the highest in the country, and rural communities are therefore dependent on need-based sector (INE 2025, 3). Most of the workforce in the region works in small or very small businesses, and a quarter of them are own-account workers, of whom almost 75% work informally. The relatively small land properties of rural households compared with other regions make agricultural self-employment activities particularly relevant here (Almonacid 2023, 7). The average monthly labour income of around 700 US dollars in the Araucanía is one of the lowest in the country (Observatorio Social 2023b, 19). As a third of the population lives in rural areas, the region is particularly characterised by the relevance of rural need economic activities (Graf 2024a, 279). The vast majority of wage labour is temporary work. If any relevant employment in the capitalist sector can be identified, then it is in the form of seasonal labour in the fields of export-oriented industrial agriculture (Almonacid 2023, 7f). But in the rural communities studied, where the forestry industry is strongly present, most people survive through family farming and other self-employed activities. This implies, on the one hand, subsistence production, production for local markets (in rural urban areas or the regional capital Temuco) and, in some cases, production for larger buyers (sometimes for export) of products such as blueberries and fruits. As Miguel, a municipal employee (c6)[12] in Galvarino, explains, the production of wheat, oats, potatoes, herbs, honey and vegetables, as well as the keeping of poultry, such as some turkeys and especially chickens, but also pigs, sheep and occasionally cows, are common. Miguel reports that families always combine different sources of income (subsistence production, petty commodity production and wage labour). Wage income is particularly important during the harvest season when the local workforce is hired by industrial agriculture but also because rural households employ each other for larger harvest operations.

In the municipality of Galvarino there are, for example, repeated attempts to convince small landowners to establish small pine or eucalyptus plantations, whose trunks they can then sell to the large forestry companies after around 12–25 years (c6). However, local residents are usually disappointed with this long-term investment (c7, c9, c18),[13] which is why they end up using the wood to heat their homes (c15).[14] Similar developments are taking place in Cholchol, another municipality in La Araucanía. In addition to the forestry company programmes in which small landowners are encouraged to plant forest plantations, the municipality has set up an agricultural development programme that, as Andrés (a20),[15] a municipal employee, reports, brings together small landowners so that they can produce strawberries for more distant markets. Local development policies are nearly always aimed at such processes of integrating rural households into regional or global value chains, explains Verónica (d1), who works in a development programme of the regional government of the Araucanía.[16]

Mapuche farmers, on the other hand, are traditionally focused on producing food and goods without pesticides and genetically modified seeds for local needs instead of export markets; in fact, they have always sold their goods informally on the streets and squares, says Lautaro (a10). As a result, they are often in conflict with local development policies and, in particular, the police, who strongly suppress informal trade in the Araucanía and particularly in the centre of the regional capital Temuco, where clashes between informal traders and security forces are frequent.

The great importance of the need-based sector and the simultaneous expansion of extractivist industries have resulted in a socio-ecological conflict that is essentially being fought out between the Mapuche communities and the forest industries or the state security forces called in by them. This conflict has three levels, all of which take place along the border between the capitalist sector and need-based sector: First, the level of ecological entanglements between the two sectors; second, the level of economic entanglements between the two sectors; and third, the level of political and cultural autonomy.

At the level of ecological entanglements, ecological distribution conflicts take place. Because the extractivist forestry industry is based on extensive access to ecological resources on which the need-based sector also depends, there is a conflict over the distribution of these resources. This is an increasingly pressing issue as, apart from climate change, the consequences of the forestry industry's activities include declining ecosystem services, falling water levels and flows, and an increase in forest fires (Latorre and Rojas Pedemonte 2016, 84; Pino Albornoz and Carrasco Henríquez 2019, 214f). The dryness in and around the forest plantations is not least the result of the fact that the fast-growing pine and eucalyptus species require between 20 and 40 L of water per tree every day (Pastén et al. 2020, 64). As a result, as a Mapuche (a15)[17] reports, they are, for example, deliberately clearing plantations belonging to forestry companies near springs from which important small streams originate in order to achieve a higher water flow. By occupying the land, they would also have achieved that the forestry company would sell part of the land to CONADI, which would in turn transfer this land to their Mapuche community, he says. Land distribution is a central issue alongside conflicts over water. As local residents, forest engineers, and scientific sources point out, the expansion of the forestry industry has led to a worsening shortage of land for smallholders and especially the Mapuche population (Garín Contreras et al. 2011; Pareja Arellano 2021; Klubock 2014, 239f). A young Mapuche told me, 'If we divide the 345 hectares of our community into individual family holdings, my father has one hectare. That means I am entitled to a quarter of an hectare. What does that leave for my children?' (a17).[18] A forestry engineer explained that a peasant family needs at least 10 ha for a good life and viable production, especially in hilly areas (e1).[19] The result is that a multitude of conflicts revolve around the distribution of land. In a number of cases, Mapuche communities have been able to reclaim land in recent years also due to favourable standards at international level such as ILO convention 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention). This has, at least partially, led to an increased state-organised redistribution of land to Mapuche communities in recent years, much of it in the Araucanía (Donoso 2017). According to the Chilean government, almost 670,000 ha of land were bought and returned to Mapuche communities between 1994 and 2010 alone (Donoso 2017, 304). While this provides a new livelihood for many Mapuche and in recent years Mapuche are increasingly moving back from urban to rural areas, business associations in the region criticise the fact that the land is mostly distributed to comunidades that previously occupied the land, which would fuel the conflicts (Almonacid 2023, 9–11; Graf 2024a, 302f).

In addition to these ecological distribution conflicts, conflicts over economic entanglements continue to break out. Mapuches in the commune of Galvarino, for example, report that they are occupying the land of a large forestry company and are forcing it to hand over the contracts for felling the plantations locally to a Mapuche cooperative (a38, a39).[20] With their so-called 'territorial group', the Mapuche use road blockades and land occupations against the forestry company and force it to award them contracts. They also always try to fix the prices at which they then sell the timber. Otherwise, they threaten to stop the felling work. In addition, according to those interviewed, they plan to prevent new eucalyptus plantations on the areas they have cleared and to establish mixed forests or agricultural use, which does not always succeed. In the interviews with Mapuche, it becomes clear again and again that economic entanglements—be they subcontracts as in the case described or temporary employment opportunities—always must be fought for by the Mapuche communities.

Finally, the Mapuche struggles are also taking place on a political level. For example, there is a fight to ensure that informal vendors can sell their goods. Local development policy is also an issue. For example, when the Mapuche were mayors in Galvarino, they were striving for local development programmes to primarily strengthen subsistence farming and local markets, and not focus everything on cash crops. There are also open struggles for territorial self-government. This is particularly true for individual Mapuche communities in the north of Araucanía, which traditionally control their own territory.

## 6 | Conclusions on the Relationship Between Surplus Populations and Socio-Ecological Conflicts

Since the colonisation of Chile, the Mapuche have been fought against, not so much because they are to be exploited as slaves or wage labourers, but because their fertile land and the resources beneath their soil arouse the interest of the colonisers, large landowners and large companies. The extractivist enterprises have never needed the Mapuche as employees to any relevant extent and have always seen them as 'surplus'. The politics towards them alternated between 'letting die' and 'making die'. Today's forestry industry is expanding further into the Wallmapu and, with its huge plantations and harvesting machines, also requires a lot of land and water, but little labour force. This production of the Mapuche population as 'surplus population', precisely in the spirit of marginalisation thinking, has led to the coexistence of an internationally integrated capitalist–extractivist sector and a local need-based sector and considerable socio-ecological conflicts between these sectors.

The sharp polarisation between these two economic sectors explains why, despite the scepticism expressed about the term due to the danger of falling back into dualism (Quijano 2014, 140f; Kay 1989, 122f), I nevertheless speak of two sectors that differ enormously in terms of their cultural practices, their economic logic and their relations to nature. By examining the relationship between the capitalist forestry industry and the local need-based sector in Araucanía, I was able to demonstrate that this sectoral contradiction and the resulting socio-ecological conflicts are a result of the region's specific integration into the international division of labour in the sense of dependency thinking. At the same time, I was able to show that the two sectors are not functionally related to each other through wage labour markets. In this respect, the local need-based sector is afunctional and in the case of local conflicts even dysfunctional for the forestry industry in the sense of José Nun and Tania Murray Li, and only from this perspective of the fundamental non-functionality of the surplus populations in southern Chile can the dominant conflict there be explained.

At the same time, the two sectors do not simply exist next to each other but are in a permanent state of conflict. This, as I have shown, has to do with the fact that they are ecologically and economically entangled with one another, with the ecological entanglements representing a central cause and the economic entanglements a central consequence and form of conflict management of the conflict. Firstly, as both sectors are part of a common ecosystem, but with the forest industry undermining this ecosystem with its monocultures, this leads to struggles for access to, distribution of and utilisation of land and water that have been characterised as ecological distribution conflicts (Martinez-Alier 2004). Secondly, there are conflicts over economic entanglements. It was explained how the Mapuche use land occupations and blockades to force the forestry companies to offer employment for certain harvesting operations or to offer contracts to independent Mapuche companies. This understanding highlights the great relevance of the economically oriented struggles of local communities focused on value capturing in relation to the capitalist sector, without rural households leaving the need-based sector. At the same time, I was able to show how companies are trying to integrate small landowners into their global supply chains as suppliers of timber and fruits, thereby not only preventing resource shortages but also preventing conflict with local inhabitants. Being able to understand economic entanglements as a result of struggles and not as a functional precondition of the relationship between the sectors is a strength of the approach that utilises the concept of surplus populations. At the same time, as the focus on socio-ecological struggles presented here has shown, participation in global value chains by need economic actors is a question of local conflicts.

By emphasising socio-ecological conflicts, my article contributes to introducing a dimension to the debate on surplus populations that has been largely absent until now. I have shown that the continued existence of the need-based sector is not just a question of economic developments; that means either its functional integration as a reserve army (Marx 2010, 623ff) or its successive production through marginalisation (Nun 2001), and it is not just a question of development policy or welfare programmes as Sanyal (2014) and Li (2010) argued. Rather, it was shown that, in southern Chile, the presence of the need-based sector is primarily dependent on the outcomes of local socio-ecological conflicts. These local socio-ecological conflicts are currently becoming even more important, as initiatives at national level that would have promoted need-based economic activities, such as the introduction of a new constitution to replace the neoliberal constitution from the Pinochet era, have failed in recent years.

I consider this question about the struggles for the concrete conditions of social reproduction to be extremely important. Firstly, because it reveals possible alliances between social groups with

respect to unifying class antagonisms against extractivist capital (Borras 2023; Pattenden 2023). Regarding Chile, this means uniting Mapuche and Chileans, campesinos, self-employed and precarious wage workers against a neoliberally promoted capitalist sector. Because all of these marginalised groups are highly dependent on need-based activities, there is a high potential for alliances in social-ecological conflicts, as was made clear, for example, in the social uprisings in 2019. Secondly, and beyond Chile, because the survival of a relevant part of the world's population is based on the functioning of the need-based sector (particularly with respect to food sovereignty), and this sector is becoming increasingly precarious, especially in the wake of the ecological crisis, supporting these struggles and economic activities will be a central scientific and political task in the coming decades.


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### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

### Data Availability Statement

The empirical data cannot be shared due to data protection regulations and the guarantee of anonymity to the interviewees.

### Endnotes

[1] By the term 'southern Chile' I mean a region which is counted as part of the Macrozona Centro Sur and that lies north of the actual south of Chile, where Patagonia begins.

[2] See data.worldbank: 'Urban population (% of total population)'; https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS, accessed: 25 November 2024.

[3] Another group 'dwells in the sphere of pauperism' and cannot even be seen as a part of the 'relative surplus population' in Marx' terms; see Marx (2010, 637f) and Bernards and Soederberg (2021, 412).

[4] Of the 3.3 billion working people worldwide, two billion are employed informally. Of these, the majority are self-employed or work in small to very small businesses (ILO 2022, 23).

[5] See ILO: 'Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises'; URL: https://www.ilo.org/topics/micro-small-and-medium-enterprises, accessed: 18 July 2024.

[6] See worldbank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2023&locations=CL&start=1990, accessed: 2 October 2024.

[7] See worldbank, https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CHL/Year/2022, accessed: 2 October 2024.

[8] See worldbank, https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=CL and Banco Mundial, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.NE.ZS?locations=CL, accessed: 2 October 2024.

[9] Interview, Lautaro (a10, name anonymised), Mapuche, resident of rural commune of Galvarino, Galvarino, 27 April 2016.

[10] Interview, Fernando (b38, name anonymised), Chairman of an association of subcontractors of the forestry industry, Concepción, 5 April 2017.

[11] Interview, Nahuel (a9, name anonymised), Mapuche, resident of rural commune of Galvarino, Galvarino, 27 April 2016.

[12] Interview, Miguel (c6, name anonymised), non-Mapuche, municipal employee of the commune of Galvarino, Galvarino, 13 March 2019.

[13] Interviews, Arón (c7, name anonymised), non-Mapuche, resident of Galvarino city, Galvarino, 20 March 2019; María (c9, name anonymised), Mapuche, family farmer in Commune of Galvarino, Galcarino, 18 March 2019; Valentina and Matías (c18, names anonymised), Mapuche family farmers in Commune of Galvarino, Galvarino, 18 March 2019.

[14] Interview, Javiera und Fernanda (c15, names anonymised), Mapuche, family farmers in Commune of Galvarino, Galcarino, 18 March 2019.

[15] Interview, Andrés (a20, name anonymised), municipal employee, Cholchol, 18 May 2016.

[16] Interview, Verónica (d1, name anonymised), employee of a regional development programme, Temuco, 24 October 2019.

[17] Interview, Aukan (a15, name anonymised), Mapuche in Commune of Galvarino, rural area of Galvarino, 3 May 2016.

[18] Interview, René (a17, name anonymised), Mapuche, resident of rural commune of Galvarino, Commune of Galvarino, 4 May 2016.

[19] Interview, forestry engineer (e1), Temuco, 22 December 2021.

[20] Interview, two interviews with Lautaro and workers of the cooperative (a38 and a39, name anonymised), Mapuches, rural area of the Commune of Galvarino, 4 May 2016.

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