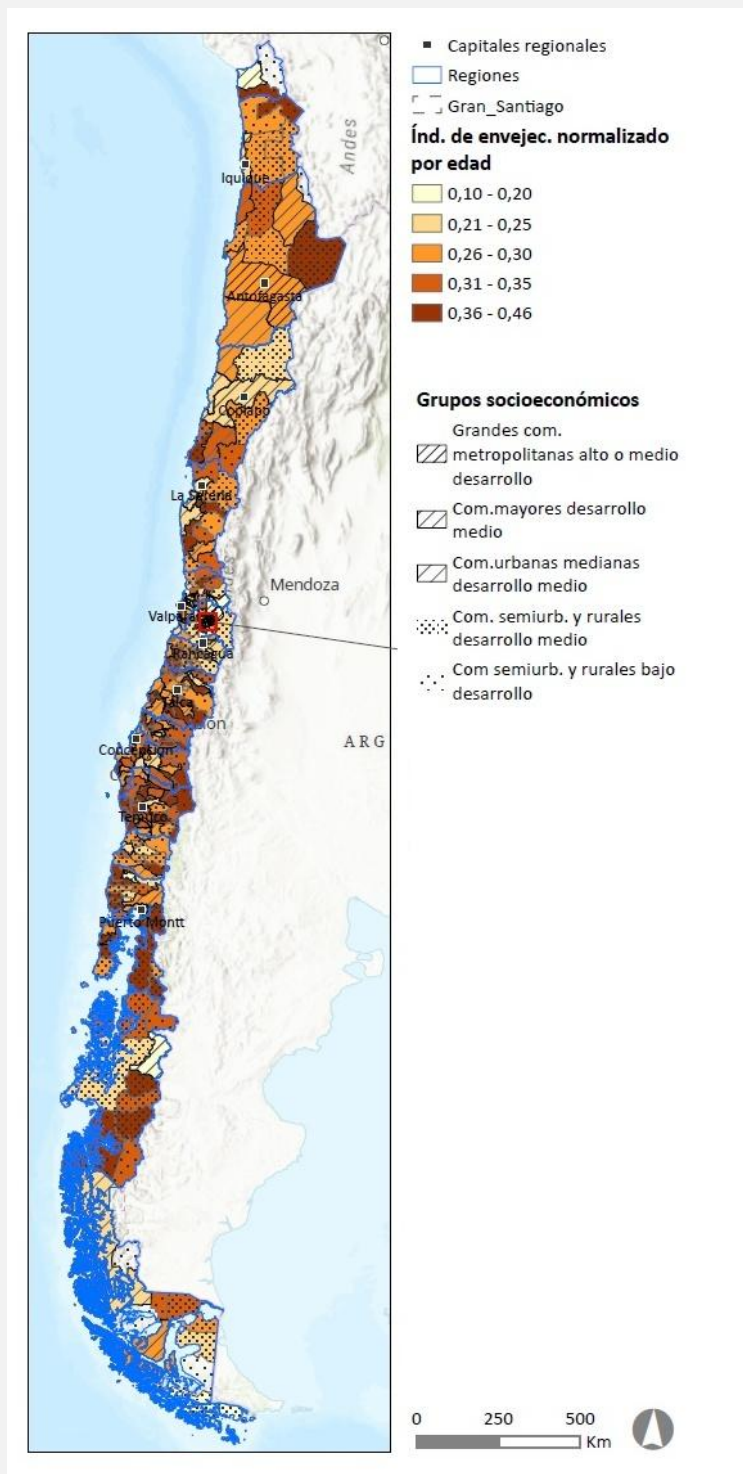


AGEING, VULNERABILITY, AND ADAPTIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION.

RETHINKING TERRITORIAL PLANNING

THE CASE OF CHILE



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Introduction

The aging of the population in Latin America has established itself as one of the most relevant demographic transformations in recent decades, with a proportion of people over 60 years of age that, according to ECLAC, will double between 2020 and 2050. In Chile, this process is occurring particularly rapidly and in a context of structural changes that have weakened traditional social protection systems. Its effects are multidimensional: they increase the demand for care and pressure on health systems, create challenges for economic sustainability, deepen territorial inequalities - especially in rural areas - and increase individual vulnerability. At the local level, these challenges are exacerbated by exposure to natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, and wildfires, which increases the risk for this age group with less responsiveness. On the other hand, current territorial planning instruments tend to be fragmented and do not adequately incorporate ageing as a key factor for risk management and adaptation, which shows the need for more integrated approaches that are sensitive to demographic dynamics. The focus of the study corresponds to the intersection between ageing, territorial inequalities and disaster risk, with the aim of generating evidence that contributes to more integrated approaches to territorial governance, adaptation and social protection.

Objectives

- To identify trends in aging and overaging in Latin America and, in particular, in Chile.
- To assess the impact of ageing on territorial governance, as well as on risk management in the face of socio-natural hazards.
- To evaluate how territorial planning instruments address risk management, as well as the aging factor as adaptation requirements.

Area of Study

The study area corresponds to Chile, considering 339 communes grouped according to development categories defined by the country's government(Fig.1).

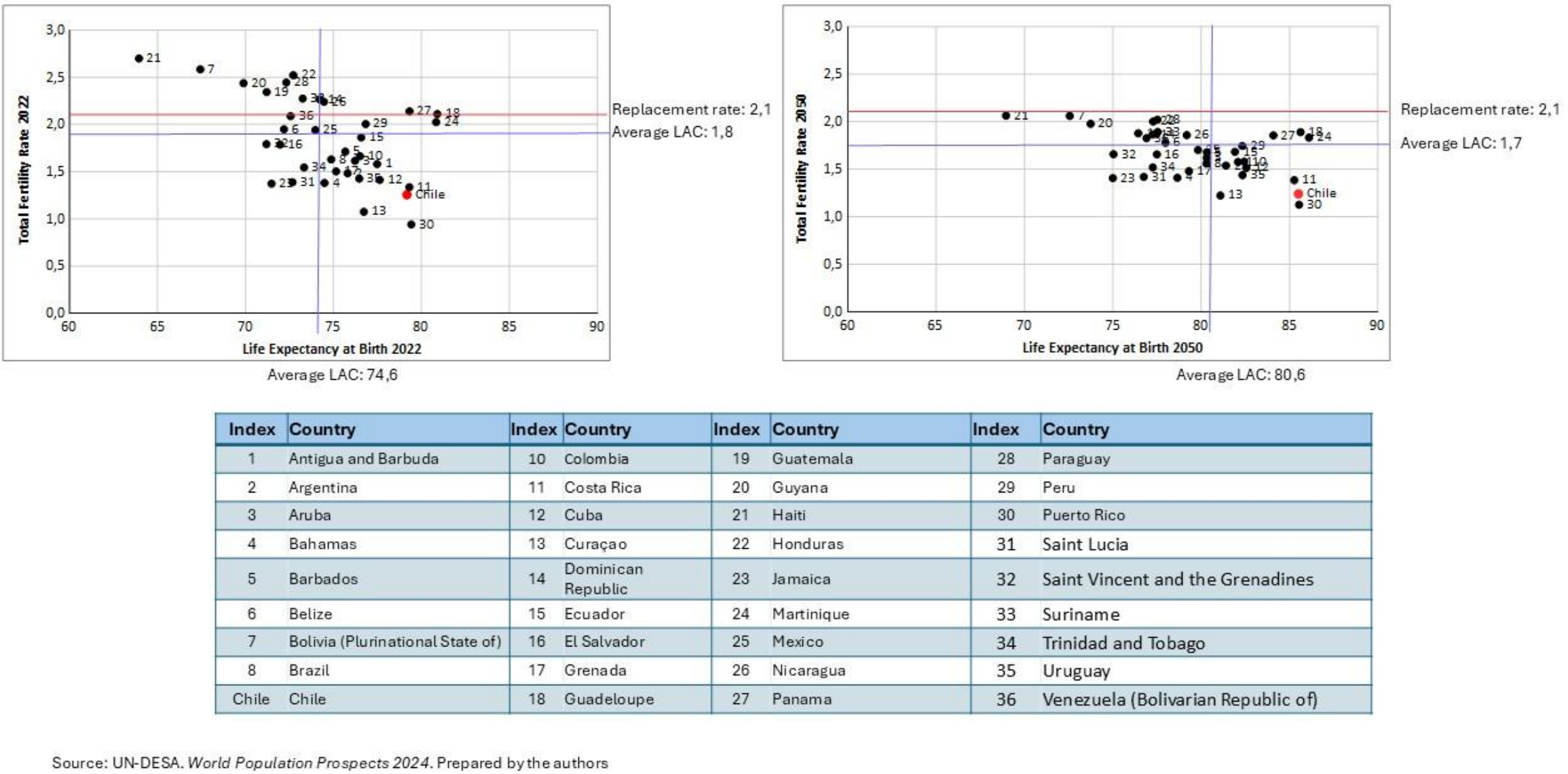
Methodology

- Mapping the degree of ageing and socio-natural hazards to identify the concentration of older people in areas of high exposure to prevalent hazards.
- Analysis of susceptibility to harm. The Global Index of Socioterritorial Vulnerability (IGVUST) of the Chilean government is used to evaluate relational and environmental variables, such as functional dependence, social isolation and digital communication gaps of the elderly.
- Analysis of Underlying Risk Factors (SENAPRED) at the community level to quantify structural deficiencies such as socioeconomic inequality, fragmentation of the health system and precariousness of urban planning. A new element is incorporated into this index: the ageing variable.
- Evaluation of territorial planning instruments to demonstrate the consideration of the variable of ageing in development processes and in disaster risk management in particular.

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Results



Source: UN-DESA, *World Population Prospects 2024*. Prepared by the authors

- Chile, Costa Rica and Puerto Rico are in the fourth quadrant that represents the most advanced countries in the demographic transition, having the lowest fertility rates and higher life expectancies at birth. The projection to 2050 confirms this trend.
- The Chilean case was analyzed using the 5 development categories identified by the Chilean government (Group 1: Large metropolitan communes with high and/or medium development; Group 2: Larger communes with medium development; Group 3: medium-sized urban communes with medium development; Group 4: Semi-urban and rural communes with medium development; and Group 5: Semi-urban and rural communes with low development). 339 communes were analyzed in terms of their aging index and their risk management capacity. The findings show that the areas with the greatest ageing correspond to those with the greatest socio-territorial vulnerability and those in the most precarious economic situation. g lo
- Only 75 communes out of 346 existincalities in the country (21.7%) include disaster risk within their communal regulatory plan. Only 12 communes (3.5%) address the issue of aging in the communal disaster risk reduction plan. Of these, 5 (1.5%) recognize the problem (aging + disaster risk) and express the need for action; only 7 communes (2%) identify specific actions to be implemented.

Discussion and Conclusions

Changes in the age structure will be dominated by the dynamics of generations of older people, so that ageing and its impact on social demands will be the most significant demographic phenomenon in the coming years.

Despite what has been described, the indicators of development, vulnerability and risk at the territorial level do not yet consider the variable of ageing.

The territories with the greatest ageing coincide with the areas of greatest vulnerability and most precarious economic development, these being the semi-urban and rural communes with low development.

Contradictorily, only 3.5% of the communes at the national level include the issue of aging in the communal regulatory plan, and only 2% identify specific actions to be implemented to reduce their vulnerability and to generate adaptations.

The study highlights the converging challenges related to the country's high exposure to socio-natural hazards, great vulnerability, and territorial inequality. This scenario demands actions from public administration that strengthen resilience, promote equity, and maintain social cohesion amid ongoing demographic and climate transformations.