Article

Indigenous people and Information and Communication Technologies: the strengths and weaknesses of official data in Argentina

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Abstract

This article adopts an anthropological perspective to critically retrieve hard data produced by state-run bodies regarding the intersections between indigenous peoples and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Argentina. Specifically, this analysis means to contextualize and discuss statistical sources that provide data about ICTs and indigenous peoples. By drawing from these sources, this article seeks to explore the interconnections between ICTs and an overlooked ethnic minority like indigenous peoples, reflecting on how we might approach the assembly and interpretation of data from an ethnographic standpoint.

Introduction[1]

In Argentina, cultural diversity tends to be asserted as a principle and as part of the nation's design. However, though this right has been amply recognized, it is not always upheld or put into practice. This topic can be approached in many ways, the enumeration of which exceeds the purposes of the current article. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that, ever since UNESCO ratified the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Paris, 2005), which Argentina adheres to, the state and its official bodies must implement policies as well as draft and pass legislation that promotes and works toward cultural diversity.

This recognition of diversity seeks to affirm cultural identity rights, which have been implemented and accepted into laws and declarations, but it does not necessarily lead to social processes favorable to interculturality. As Négrier (2008) points out, although cultural diversity can be seen as a new standard in public policy, with the Convention as a reference point, its integration into the public policy agenda is far more complex. In fact, since the middle of the 20th century, the demands of women and various minorities—from migrants to indigenous peoples[2]—have transcended the sphere of national governments to influence transnational politics. This, in turn, has led to the incorporation, by national states, of international norms and regulations and to the implementation of policies meant to guarantee and strengthen the rights of diverse social groups. Indeed, the legal status of indigenous communities has been revised, thanks to the efforts of these communities and the changing international conversation around their plight.

In the case of Argentina, this legal revision was set in motion by the National Law on Indigenous Policy and Support to Aboriginal Communities No. 23.202/85 and the Provincial Law No. 426/84 ratified in the province of Formosa (Grupo de Estudios en Legislación Indígena [GELIND], 1999, 2000, 2008). The 1994 amendment of the Constitution served as a corollary to these legal measures, acknowledging the ethnic and cultural preexistence of indigenous peoples, in relation to Argentina, and emphasizing—as a criterion for inclusion—identity or self-adscription. In short, these regulations have positioned indigenous peoples as special legal subjects who are therefore entitled to differentiated policies. The inscription of specific rights in the National Constitution and the drafting of laws aimed at satisfying indigenous needs and demands (Altabe et al., 1995; Anaya, 2006; Berraondo, 2006; Stavenhaguen and Iturralde, 1990) have been juxtaposed to democratizing public policies (Matarrese, 2013), since indigenous communities have been and continue to be socioeconomically vulnerable.

This article specifically focuses on the critical retrieval of hard data on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Argentina, contextualizing and discussing the visibility of information produced by

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state-run bodies. At the same time, looking at how this topic intersects overlooked ethnic minorities like indigenous peoples, we critically examine how data are assembled, doing so from a standpoint that views interculturality as the centerpiece of cultural diversity.

To carry out this approach, it was necessary to select the sources that would allow us to outline how official data are implicitly and explicitly assembled, since these sources reveal particular characterizations and quantifications of indigenous peoples. Understanding how data are assembled behind the scenes allows us to critically rethink state information in three ways: it lets us consider data as such; in terms of how they are uncritically reproduced by various state-run bodies and other agencies in charge of implementing public policies; and, finally, in connection to visual representations of society's collective common sense.

The analysis methodology homes in on various officially published surveys available online on the websites of national state-run bodies. Finally, following Lenton (2001), we consider formulations and indicators used by various state instruments as well as those deliberately excluded through action or omission.

Inquiries regarding ICTs and indigenous peoples based on quantitative data

By questioning how the national state produces data, and by carrying out a concrete analysis of instruments like survey forms, we can shed light on categories that function as conceptual models—or normalizing visions of possible relationships—through which the state approaches individuals (Gastellu, 2014).

In this sense, among the tools used to assemble official data are surveys, which are formal studies that can routinely assess certain features embodied or shared by majority groups within a country. However, when the objective is to explore the practices, habits, and consumption patterns of aggrieved or vulnerable groups, such tools prove inadequate. As a result, an analysis of the limitations of these kinds of tools can help reveal how certain groups—like women employed in the informal sector or people engaged in unregistered, precarious, or unstable work—have been made invisible (Wainerman, 2011). This same phenomenon has been studied by Bourgois (2010), who conducted field research in East Harlem, Manhattan, and who found that the practices of subaltern groups are difficult to visualize via quantitative analysis since, by their very nature, they escape the reach of traditional measurement methods (as happens, for instance, with informal, unstable, or—in some cases—illegal employment). In these cases, the ethnographic method is a more adequate tool, and official data must necessarily be reviewed under a critical light in order to assess the successes and failures of its assembly. One of the key challenges, in this sense, is articulating micro- and macro-processes via a concrete analysis of certain indicators, since statistical sources that allow for such articulations are not always readily available. Other challenges

include assessing information that is obsolete or removed from the context under analysis (Cantor, 2002).

One of the general preoccupations of social studies is how social subjects, processes, and issues are constructed and defined via surveys. By analyzing these surveys, we retrieve the categories from which results were gathered and turned into data. As Guber (1991) asserts, there is a substantial difference between the gathering of results and the elaboration of data. The former arises via diverse instruments and techniques put into practice due to the interests and preconceptions of an investigator or, in this case, of the state-run agencies involved in surveys. In effect, ". . . no technique ensures the gathering of facts in their pure state" (Guber, 1991, p. 85). Instead, these techniques allow us to collect results and transform some of these into relevant material, that is, into data.

Obtaining results and analyzing data

For this study, we selected statistical sources among those available to us. To this end, we considered three distinct types of official documents, each conceived via diverse quantitative methodologies: the 2010 National Census (National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina [INDEC]), the latest Statistical Yearbook, and surveys of indigenous populations and ICTs. It should be noted that these sources are heterogeneous and respond to different scopes of inquiry, methodologies, and samples. Nevertheless, we considered them relevant to this study because of the presence or omission of certain elements or features, and because they reveal the guidelines and decision-making behind public policy (Mihal, 2009). In other words, the sources used for this study are a selection from all those available.[3] We prioritized the following sources linked to ICTs and indigenous peoples:

- Statistical Yearbook 2015. Vol. 30. National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina[4] (INDEC, 2015a);
- National Population, Homes, and Housing Census (INDEC, 2010);
- National Population, Homes, and Housing Census: Bicentennial Census. Indigenous Peoples. Cuyo, Metropolitan, Northeast, Northwest, Patagonian, and Pampean regions[5] (INDEC, 2015b);
- National Survey of Cultural Consumption and Digital Environment from 2013. Argentine System of Cultural Information (SINCA, 2014);
- National Survey of Access and Use of Communication and Information Technologies (ENTIC). Results from the first quarter of 2011 (INDEC, 2012);
- National Survey of Access and Use of Communication and Information Technologies (ENTIC). Preliminary report on basic indicators of access and use. Results from May to July of 2015 (INDEC, 2016).

Since 23.5% of indigenous people in Argentina are among the most socioeconomically vulnerable sectors in the country, given their many Unsatisfied Basic Needs

(UBNs),[6] it might seem trivial to examine ICTs. Nevertheless, since ICTs have been part of the inclusion agenda, which takes in digital inclusion, we should regard them as a key axis of analysis. As pointed out by Benítez Larghi and Duek (2016), studies of ICTs have stopped focusing primarily on access and have broadened their perspectives to consider the appropriation of symbolic goods and services associated with these technologies. The first studies carried out in Argentina were mostly preoccupied with ". . . access to technology and its relationship to social inequalities—evinced in the recurring references to the digital divide—. . ." (Benítez Larghi & Duek, 2016, p. 213). As access to various devices (computers, smartphones, online connections) became more widespread, academic interest turned toward the uses and appropriations of this technology as well as toward blogs and social media. However, we should not assume access to technology and online connectivity is now universal, even as we recognize that improving access will still not resolve the digital divide.

Keeping the above in mind, we propose an analysis of our selected sources that focuses on indigenous peoples and, then, another analysis, with the same sources, that focuses on ICTs.

Basic needs

As mentioned before, the last National Population, Homes, and Housing Census (2010) revealed UBNs in 23.5% of indigenous households along with a decrease in the indigenous rural population (Kaminker & Sourrouille, 2013). This study was noteworthy because it made it possible to enumerate, identify, and locate, within each household, those individuals who identify as indigenous or being of indigenous descent.

> The Census made it possible to establish the composition of the indigenous population as it was in 2010: 955,032 people, who make up 2.38% of the country's total population, and who belong to 31 indigenous peoples distributed across the country. (INDEC, 2015b)

In fact, the Census allowed for the identification of the following indigenous groups: Atacama, Ava Guaraní, Aymara, Chané, Charrúa, Chorote, Chulupi, Comechingón, Diaguita-Calchaquí, Guaraní, Huarpe, Kolla, Lule, Maimará, Mapuche, Mbyá Guaraní, Mocoví, Omaguaca, Ona, Pampa, Pilagá, Quechua, Rankulche, Sanavirón, Tapiete, Tehuelche, Toba (Qom), Tonocote, Tupí Guaraní, Vilela, and Wichí, among others. At the same time, the Census counted a total of 368,893 households—1.52% of the Argentinian households—with one or more people who identified as indigenous or being of indigenous descent (INDEC, 2010).

These groups were counted in the various regions where INDEC reports were carried out: in Cuyo (which includes the provinces of Mendoza, San Luis, and San Juan) over 2% of the population (56,982 people) identified as indigenous or being of indigenous descent; in the Metropolitan region (the city of Buenos Aires and Greater Buenos Aires), 1.9% of the population (248,516 people) did the same; in the Northwest (the provinces of Catamarca, Jujuy, La Rioja, Salta, Santiago del Estero, and Tucumán), the number was 3.5% (173,436 people); in the Northeast (Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa, and Misiones), it was 2.5% (91,655 people); in Patagonia (Chubut, Neuquén, Río Negro, Santa Cruz, Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica, and South Atlantic Islands), it was 6.9% (145,126 people); and in the Pampean region (Buenos Aires Province, Córdoba, Entre Ríos, La Pampa, and Santa Fe), it was 1.7% (239,317 people).

Since the same topics were addressed in every region, we will focus on just the Northwest (NOA), analyzing and unpacking the most relevant categories to shine a light on how the data were assembled (INDEC, 2015b). The criteria measured in the 2010 National Population, Homes, and Housing Census, Bicentennial Census, Indigenous Peoples (INDEC, 2015b) are the following: population who identifies as belonging to or descending from an indigenous people, rural and urban population, and population structure by sex, age, and place of birth, as well as education, employment, pension coverage, and household.

As noted above, in this region, 3.5% (173,436 people) of the population belongs to or is descended from an indigenous people. If we look at each province, the number in Catamarca is 1.9% (6,927 people); in La Rioja, 1.2% (3,935 people); in Santiago del Estero, 1.3% (11,508 people); and in Tucumán, also 1.3% (19,317 people). The percentages are far larger in Jujuy, with 7.8% (52,545 people), and in Salta, with 6.5% (79,204 people).

The indigenous urban population rate is 81.9% and is higher than the one who lives in rural areas (18.1%) (INDEC Cuyo, 2015). Nevertheless, the indigenous urban population rate is lower than the national, that is, 90.9%. On the other hand, the national rural area rate population is 9.1%, while the indigenous rate is almost the double (18.1%).

As for geographical distribution, each province has different ratios of urban to rural dwellers. In Catamarca, 63.7% of the indigenous population lives in an urban area, while 36.3% do so in a rural area. In Jujuy, these numbers are 66.9% and 33.1%, respectively. In La Rioja, they are 88.8% and 11.2%. In Salta, they are 57.4% and 42.6%, and in Tucumán, they are 57.9% and 42.1%. Only in Santiago del Estero is the ratio flipped, since 59.3% live in rural areas while 40.7% do so in urban areas. We can see, in this distribution of indigenous populations, the predominance of urban dwellers, which, in a sense, contradicts the image of rural indigenous people in the popular imagination. This rural image, as Alcida Ramos (1992) argues, is based on the social construction of a "hyperreal Indian" that has little to do with the complex and changing realities of "flesh-and-blood Indians." In this sense, Ramos and Del Río (2008), studying the Mapuche, and Gordillo (2010) and Vivaldi (2010), looking at the Qom, track the trajectory of indigenous peoples who migrated from rural to urban zones. One of the main complaints made by these migrant groups is that their ethnic identity is often called into question,[7] as if it were an attribute linked to geographical space and therefore lost with migration.

In the context of this article, it is worth highlighting unemployment and employment rates among indigenous peoples and then breaking down the data by gender. In Catamarca, the indigenous economically active population rate is 63.5%. The employment rate is 57.8% (while the overall provincial rate is 57.9%). Unemployment rate is 9% (6.4% for men and 13.2% for women). The indigenous economically inactive population rate is 36.5% (while the overall provincial rate is 37.7%). Of this total, 61.6% are women and 38.4% are men (INDEC NOA, 2015, p. 24). In Jujuy, the indigenous economically active population rate is 58.8%. The indigenous economically inactive population rate is 41.2%, while the overall provincial rate is 38.3%. Of this total, 63.7% are women and 36.3% are men. The employment rate is 58.3% (next to 54.9% for the total provincial population) and unemployment rate is 6.5%. Among men, unemployment rate reaches 5.3%, and among women, it reaches 8.3% (INDEC NOA, 2015, p. 42). In La Rioja, the indigenous economically active population rate is 69.8%. The indigenous economically inactive population rate is 30.2%. Of this total, 61.4% are women and 38.6% are men. The employment rate is 65.5% (though the provincial rate is 60.4%), while unemployment rate is 6.2% (of this total, the rate is 5.4% for men and 7.4% for women; INDEC NOA, 2015, p. 61). In Salta, the indigenous economically active population rate is 49.5%. The indigenous economically inactive population rate is 50.5% (though the provincial rate is 39.5%). The employment rate stands at 45% (though it is 55% for the overall provincial population). As for unemployment, the rate is 9.1%; it reaches 7.7% for men and 11.5% for women (INDEC NOA, 2015, p. 71). In Santiago del Estero, the indigenous economically active population rate is 50.2%. The indigenous economically inactive population rate is 49.8%. The employment rate is 47.6% (while the provincial rate is 52.4%). The unemployment rate is 5.2% (of this total, unemployment rates are 4.7% for men and 4.2% for women; INDEC NOA, 2015, p. 96). Finally, in Tucumán, the indigenous economically active population rate is 60%. The indigenous economically inactive population rate is 40%. The employment rate is 55.4% (surpassing the provincial rate of 54.2%) and the unemployment rate is 7.7% (for men, it is 5.3%, and for women, it is 11.2%; INDEC NOA, 2015, p. 114).

Pension plans were also surveyed. These are among the government benefits enjoyed by people older than 65 or unable to work, and include pensions for disability, death, or retirement after contributions have been paid. Such plans, among indigenous people, cover 92.2% in Catamarca and 86.8% in Jujuy. Meanwhile, among indigenous people over 65, pension plans cover 85.5% in La Rioja, 93.9% in Santiago del Estero, 87.4% in Salta, and 92.5% in Tucumán.

In regard to housing, the surveyed information dealt with overcrowding, the existence of public gas pipelines and water supply networks, and different types of bathrooms (with or without toilets), among other features needed to satisfy basic needs. Throughout the region, many indigenous households are inadequate. Indeed, these types of households are the majority in half of the surveyed provinces. In Jujuy, for example, 53.1% of indigenous households are inadequate. Salta, with 71.9%, has the worst rate in the region, followed by Santiago del Estero, with 67.6%. In other provinces, the rates of inadequate housing are lower: 36.8% in Catamarca, 19.7% in La Rioja, and 36.3% in Tucumán. Considering these pressing infrastructure issues and other UBNs, the 2010 Census (INDEC, 2010) did not include ICTs in its survey of indigenous peoples.

Finally, concerning education, the Census measured literacy rates, school attendance, and educational level. The Census also looked at illiteracy rates to identify differences between the sexes. In the Argentine Northwest, literacy rates among indigenous populations are 98.4% in La Rioja, 96.7% in Tucumán, 96.3% in Jujuy, 96.2% in Catamarca, 94% in Santiago del Estero, and 91.1% in Salta. In terms of illiteracy, indigenous women lead the category in four out of six provinces in the region. In Catamarca, 4.3% of women and 3.4% of men are illiterate. In Jujuy, 5.4% of women and 2% of men are illiterate. In Tucumán, illiteracy rates are 3.6% for women and 3% for men. Salta has the highest rates, with 11% of women and 6.8% of men being illiterate. Meanwhile, in La Rioja and Santiago del Estero, men are more illiterate than women: in La Rioja, 1.9% of men and 1.2% of women are illiterate, while in Santiago del Estero, the rates are 6.4% and 5.6%, respectively (INDEC, 2015b). If indigenous groups are already vulnerable, then indigenous women are the majority inside this category in four of the six surveyed provinces. Although the Census of the Argentine Northwest (INDEC, 2015b) shows the strong presence in the region of individuals who belong to or descend from indigenous peoples (3.5%), and despite the fact that such individuals make up 2.38% of the population at the national level, if we look at other publications, like statistical yearbooks, this ethnic identity remains invisible.

Moreover, the Yearbook (INDEC, 2015a) subdivides Argentina's regions differently from the National Census (INDEC, 2010). For example, the districts of Greater Buenos Aires[8]—which, in the Census, comprise the Metropolitan region together with the city of Buenos Aires—are placed within the Greater Buenos Aires region in the Yearbook. Something similar happens with the Patagonian region. Therefore, even if the desired information were available, it would be difficult to complete a comparative analysis of either the regions themselves (since they are defined differently) or ethnic identification, which is only considered in the National Census (INDEC, 2010).

Broadly speaking, it is difficult to concretely perceive cultural diversity in Argentina, except when—as happens in the National Census (INDEC, 2010)—this topic is explicitly covered by surveying respondents' self-identification as indigenous or being of indigenous descent. It is likewise impossible to identify interculturality in specific contexts, such as in education.

ICTs

As for ICTs, we dealt with different sources. Specifically, we consulted the National Census (INDEC, 2010) and the

National Survey on Cultural Consumption and Digital Environment from 2013 (SINCA, 2014). This survey, although carried out within the sphere of the national government, was conducted under the direction of the former Secretariat of Culture (now a ministry). We also analyzed the National Surveys on Access and Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ENTIC). Specifically, we looked at the results from the first quarter of 2011 (INDEC, 2012) and at the preliminary report on basic access and use indicators, based on results from May to June 2015 (INDEC, 2016).

In the National Census on Population, Homes, and Housing (INDEC, 2010), carried out throughout the country, the data gathered on ICTs focus on the availability of goods and services (computers, landlines, mobile phones, and Internet). This availability is quantified by household and not by percentage of people. In 2010, out of 12,171,675 homes in the country, 53% had no computer (6,452,490 homes), 86% had no mobile phone (10,470,239 homes), and 55.5% had no landline (6,755,638 homes) (INDEC, 2010). Although these general numbers can be broken down by province, it is impossible to determine how many homes have indigenous residents. In other words, there is no way to establish the availability of this technology within indigenous homes, since the Census does not arrange data in these terms, while the specific survey of indigenous populations omits information on the availability of ICTs.

It is possible that, given their vulnerable conditions and UBNs, indigenous homes are likely bereft of ICT assets. Nevertheless, this supposed lack is merely an assumption, since—as mentioned above—it cannot be verified by concrete data.

Another official source of quantitative information is the ENTIC (INDEC, 2012),[9] executed in the context of the Annual Survey of Urban Homes (EAHU), which assesses the number of homes and people with access to radio, television, landlines, mobile phones, computers, and the Internet. It also looks at how people age 10 and older interact with mobiles phones, the Internet, and computers, analyzing how frequently, where, and for what purpose they use these technologies. Among its most relevant results, in view of the objectives of this article, it shows that, in 2011, 52.8% of urban homes had computers and 43.8% enjoyed Internet connections. The most used device, in 95.4% of homes, was the mobile phone, since almost 85.6% of urban homes had at least one working mobile phone connection while only 61.9% had a landline. As mentioned before, 52.8% of urban homes had a computer, but results varied wildly depending on the province. For instance, in Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica, and South Atlantic Islands, 81.3% of homes had a computer, the highest rate in the country. It was followed by the city of Buenos Aires, where 72.3% of homes were likewise equipped. Meanwhile, other provinces had far lower rates of computer ownership: 33.4% in Santiago del Estero, with 35.9% in Río Negro and 35.1% in Formosa.

The same applies to Internet connections. In Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica, and South Atlantic Islands, 74.6% of homes were connected to the Internet, while in the city of Buenos Aires, the same was true in 69.4% of homes. Both far surpassed the national average of 43.8%. The most common kind of Internet connection was fixed access from home. According to the 2010 Census, among those aged 10 and older in Argentina, 17,731,301 people used computers, that is, over half of the total population (57%) in this age bracket. These data are from the Bicentennial Census, according to the information in ENTIC (2012), but they do not turn up in the public results available through the INDEC.

Unfortunately, the ENTIC (2012) also fails to clarify the presence of ICTs (hardware and connectivity) in the homes of indigenous peoples and their descendants, or the uses of such technology by this sector of the population, since the survey does not consider ethnicity. This means that it is also impossible to compare the results of the ENTIC survey with those of the National Census.

As for the 2015 ENTIC, it shows that 67% of surveyed homes had access to computers, 61.8% enjoyed an Internet connection, 85.6% had mobile phones, and 62.4% included a landline. At the national level, 5% more homes had access to computers than to the Internet. This gap was narrower than the one measured in 2011, when the number was 8.4% (ENTIC, 2012). It should be noted that access—in terms of both hardware and connectivity—is more widespread in urban homes (appraised in the ENTIC surveys) than in rural homes. As mentioned before, the ENTIC examines uses and devices among urban dwellers aged 10 and older, without delving into ethnic backgrounds and other traits.[10] In short, when looking at the ENTIC surveys to analyze ICTs and indigenous peoples, two difficulties arise. First, the surveys were only conducted in the two aforementioned years, preventing any longer term analysis of the same variables. And second, their focus on urban homes leaves out indigenous populations in rural areas.

Finally, the National Survey on Cultural Consumption and Digital Environment[11] from 2013 (SINCA, 2014) has the goal of elucidating preferences, opinions, uses, and perceptions in regard to cultural consumption. This study surveys the digital environment where certain cultural consumption occur, so it also contemplates hardware and connectivity. Keeping the interests of this article in mind, we might look at Internet, computer, and mobile phone access, which are an important part of the survey results. The data are classified by region (Northwest, Northeast, Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, Cuyo, Centre, and Patagonia), gender, and age. Results demonstrate that computers have, in recent times, become the most widespread devices, since 71% of Argentines have a PC, and among them, 68% are users, 65% connect to the Internet, and 60% connect from their homes, while 24% connect via mobile phone.

As happened with the ENTIC surveys (2012 and 2015) and the National Census (INDEC, 2010), the National Survey of Cultural Consumption and Digital Environment (SINCA, 2014) does not include ethnicity as a variable in surveying uses and consumption habits. Once again, and as we have seen with other sources, the criteria for gathering and categorizing information do not consider the demands

of indigenous peoples at home and abroad, who are pushing to generate awareness about their relationship to the digital divide and their access to ICTs, which remains a pressing matter.

Conclusion

The proposed analysis of ICTs and indigenous peoples clearly demonstrates the lack, scarcity, and obsolescence of the data found in the analyzed sources (National Census, surveys, and Yearbook). Our investigation allowed us to identify when information was omitted (in the Statistical Yearbook), when it was published intermittently (as with the 2012 and 2015 ENTIC surveys), and, in some cases, how categories like age and gender affected the results. It also allowed us to observe the absence of certain cross-sectional categories related to ethnicity (such as intercultural bilingual education). Similarly, the use of different criteria when determining regional divisions (with different limitations in surveyed urban conglomerations) made a comparative analysis difficult.

Identifying the lack—or the murkiness—of data is one of the major achievements of our present work. It makes it possible to revise certain assumptions and erasures made in quantitative studies, and to question, for example, why investigations of cultural consumption are exclusively urban or why the presence of intercultural bilingual education in educational institutions is overlooked.

Furthermore, among our sources, only the National Census (INDEC, 2010) specifically aimed to incorporate members of indigenous communities: ". . . whether for supporting tasks or as census takers, making it possible to reach almost a thousand communities across the country and enabling communication in the respondents' original languages" (INDEC, 2015b, p. 9). This reveals how the inclusion of indigenous people in state institutions and agencies remains rare (Mihal, 2017). In fact, as Négrier (2008) points out, even as different countries adhere to and recognize cultural diversity, it has proven far more difficult to achieve this goal via public policies. Official data often serve to fuel such policies, which is why they are so important.

In short, survey and census results are available for both ICTs and indigenous peoples, but the criteria that shaped these results hinder any profound inquiry. Not only are these results not aligned but no such alignment is even possible, given how they were gathered. When indigenous peoples were surveyed, ICTs were not considered; and when ICTs were assessed, ethnicity was not taken into account. This is why this article is relevant. Results can only gain real significance—and turn into useful data— when placed in a contextual web. And from these data, public policies involving indigenous peoples are often ideated, designed, and reformulated.

Finally, our present approach was able to highlight the imposition, by state agencies, of assumptions and points of view regarding the ethnic other (Ramos, 1992), such as the creation of categories related to the supposed rurality of indigenous populations (while the national indigenous urban residence population is 81.9%). In the same way, this study attempted to ethnographically unravel how official state data are elaborated, making it possible to reveal the processes and procedures by which cultural diversity (in this case, ethnic) is both defined and made invisible.

Notes

1. This article emerged from a broader investigation within the context of a Multiannual Research Project (PIP 2015–2017) on "Information and Communication Technologies and indigenous peoples: policies of digital inclusion," by the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) in Argentina. At the same time, it received funding from the Projects of Scientific and Technological Research (PICT 2015–0373)–Plan Innovative Argentina 2020, "Innovation in educational policies: discourses and strategies involving digital literacy in the context of inclusion," directed by Dr Pini.
2. The 1994 National Constitution, the first article of the 169th International Labour Organization Convention (1989, ratified by Argentina in 2008) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (2007) identifies "indigenous peoples" as collectivities with their own social, cultural, and economic characteristics, and as those who inhabited the country prior to the era of colonization and conquest.
3. It should be noted that, although a Complementary Survey on Indigenous People (ECPI, 2004–2005) was once carried out, it was not among our selected sources, since it was part of an earlier National Census of Population, Homes, and Housing (2001). For the purposes of this article, we focused on the latest Census (2010).
4. We have used this Yearbook as an example since it is the latest one published by National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina (INDEC) and is available online.
5. This census was carried out based on results obtained by the National Census of Population, Homes, and Housing (INDEC, 2010). However, results regarding indigenous peoples (INDEC, 2015b) were published in region-specific documents in 2015.
6. In this sense, from a total of 955,032 individuals who identify as belonging to or descending from an indigenous people and who live in private households, 47.4% (452,663 people) have no kind of health coverage (whether union-run insurance, private insurance, or social plan). Out of 788,497 people age 10 and older, 3.68% (29.048 people) are illiterate. Moreover, out of 368,893 homes, 49% (183,544 homes) are connected to the gas network for cooking fuel, 46.8% (172,623 homes) are connected to the sewage system, 4.55% (16,771 homes) use holes in the ground for toilet drainage, and 6.11% (22,534 homes) do not have a toilet (INDEC, 2010).
7. Regarding debates on categories like ethnic identity, see Barth (1976) and Beckett (1988).
8. Almirante Brown, Avellaneda, Berazategui, Cañuelas, Escobar, Esteban Echeverría, Ezeiza, Florencio Varela,

General Rodríguez, General San Martín, Hurlingham, Ituzaingó, José C. Paz, La Matanza, Lanús, Lomas de Zamora, Malvinas Argentinas, Marcos Paz, Merlo, Moreno, Morón, Pilar, Presidente Perón, Quilmes, San Fernando, San Isidro, San Miguel, San Vicente, Tigre, Tres de Febrero, and Vicente López.

9. Its application was focused on urban homes in populated places with 2,000 or more inhabitants. The National Survey of Access and Use of Communication and Information Technologies (ENTIC) was carried out in all homes and with people age 10 and older who were interviewed for the Annual Survey of Urban Homes (EAHU). The total amount of interviews carried out in this study included 33,297 urban homes (and 92,958 household residents).

10. It should be emphasized that the 2012 ENTIC was carried out in 33,297 urban homes while the 2015 edition was carried out in 3,804 homes in the 31 urban conglomerates considered in both surveys. An important difference is that for the 2011 version, people age 10 and older were considered, while for the 2015 version, people age 5 and older were taken into account, as explained in the 2015 ENTIC.

11. The report considered people over 12 in populated places with more than 30,000 inhabitants and located all over the country. The sample size was 3,574 cases.

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