BUREAUCRACY BEYOND THE DESK

MOBILISING RESOURCES AND HUNTING FOR USERS FOR A STATE-LED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN CHILOÉ, CHILE

‘A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities’

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ABSTRACT

BUREAUCRACY BEYOND THE DESK: MOBILISING RESOURCES AND HUNTING FOR USERS FOR A STATE-LED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN CHILOÉ, CHILE.

The University of Manchester, School of Social Sciences, Social Anthropology
Diego Valdivieso Sierpe
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, 2019

This thesis is an exploration of the neoliberal state and how it can be studied through an analysis of the work of state actors at the local level. Specifically, my research is based on an ethnographic study of the everyday practices of state officials charged with implementing the Indigenous Territorial Development Programme (PDTI) in the archipelago of Chiloé in Southern Chile. I focus on how two distinct roles, that of the expert/technician and the state bureaucrat, are folded together in the working lives of those I refer to as ‘field-level officials’. I argue that the obligation to account for their practices, and the expectation of their active participation in the production and circulation of bureaucratic technologies, transforms members of extension teams in charge of providing technical support to indigenous farmers in rural areas into state bureaucrats. In more general terms, the focus on this duality sheds light on how state agencies and agents experience processes of ‘decentralisation’ in a very centralised, neoliberal state system: as they internalise accountability practices, engage in competition for resources, and live with the benefits and uncertainties of flexible contracts.

Accompanying the field-level officials in their daily tasks, I address issues regarding their role (as bureaucrats and technicians), and their potential for manoeuvre in the implementation of a generic programme, formulated at the central level, in a local context characterised by a particular socio-political, economic and cultural background. Furthermore, the thesis explores how the state is constructed and imagined in the everyday interactions between the users of the PDTI (Williche farmers) and the officials who are charged with the enactment of the programme. I draw here on the ethnography of how state effects are produced in peripheral territories through the routinised and centrally controlled practices of its decentralised institutions.

Finally, I contend that in contemporary Chile, ‘state presence’ takes on a specific form in programmes such as the PDTI that bring together the technical, the affective, the bureaucratic, and the political in the everyday practices of field-level officials. Reflecting on the role of the PDTI officials in the flow and materialisation of a public policy, I show the effect that their activities have on how a policy reaches the territories covered by the programme. In detail, I illustrate how they translate these policies into material and recordable outcomes mediated by entrepreneurial and development aspirations and impositions, and a managerial approach to territorial and identity-based belonging.
DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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<td>APR</td>
<td>Comité de Agua Potable Rural, Rural Drinking Water Committee.</td>
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<td>CEPAL</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.</td>
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<td>CNR</td>
<td>Comisión Nacional de Riego, National Irrigation Commission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONADI</td>
<td>Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena, National Indigenous Development Corporation.</td>
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<td>CONFIN</td>
<td>Consejo de Fomento e Investigación Agrícola, Council for Agricultural Development and Research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIDECO</td>
<td>Dirección de Desarrollo Comunitario, Community Development Directorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOSIS</td>
<td>Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social, Solidarity and Social Investment Fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDAP</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agropecuario, Agricultural Development Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMIL</td>
<td>Oficina Municipal de Intermediación Laboral, Municipal Office of Labour Intermediation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Policía de Investigaciones, Investigations Police.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Programa de Desarrollo de Inversiones, Development Investment Programme.</td>
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PPSRF  *Programa de Praderas Suplementarias y Recursos Forrajeros*, Supplementary Grasslands and Forage Resources Programme.

PRODESAL  *Programa de Desarrollo Local*, Local Development Programme.

SENCE  *Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo*, National Training and Employment Service.

SIPAM  *Sistemas Importantes del Patrimonio Agrícola Mundial*, Important Systems of World Agricultural Heritage.

SIRSD  *Programa Sistema de Incentivos para la Sustentabilidad Agroambiental de los Suelos Agropecuarios*, Programme of Incentives for the Agro-environmental Sustainability of Agricultural Soils.
INTRODUCTION

‘No story has any end. No picture has any boundary. But one has to put one’s small vision into a frame, because you cannot see anything clearly unless you concentrate on it.’

(J.R.R Tolkien. Letter to Chris Gilmore, 7 July 1961)

1. A stroke of luck

After the second knock on the shabby old cream-coloured door on the first floor of a wooden house lent by the municipality, a male voice coming from inside responded ‘come in!’ I carefully opened the door and entered a wide room lit by the sunlight coming through a window poorly covered by untwisted and half-functioning shutters. There were four desks in the office. A corpulent and short man, with a wide forehead and blonde hair, looked up at me from a desk directly facing the door. Another man, of darker complexion, did not take his eyes off the computer on a desk to the right of the door. In front of him, a taller man with straight, unruly and partially grey hair, a rounded face, and small smiling eyes, looked at me inquisitively. To my left, a desk was barely distinguishable under the pile of blue folders, fertilizer boxes, plastic containers, raschel nets, duct tape, and rolls of plastic film covering it.

‘Is this the PDTI [Territorial Indigenous Development Programme] office?’ – I asked respectfully. The tall man who looked at me responded with a friendly look, ‘that’s right, how can we help you?’ After explaining who I was and what had brought me to their door, he invited me to sit down and offered me a cup of tea. ‘My name is Jorge, I am the technical chief of the programme here in Castro. He is Bruno [referring to the most corpulent one] and this one is Renato [pointing to the one with dark hair]. They are the technicians with the programme, and together we are the extension team’. After that short introduction, he spent almost an hour answering my questions about the operation of the programme, its main problems and challenges, and he characterised some of the sectors in which they worked. Throughout his account, and to my surprise, he made clear that most of the farmers participating in the programme did not work and live in the rural areas surrounding the city, but mostly on one of the two islands under the administration of the municipality of Castro: Quehui Island. While telling me about the

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1 In order to maintain the anonymity of my informants I have changed their names, and in some instances, I may have changed some identifying characteristics and details such as physical characteristics, occupations and places.
difficulties of mainly working in a territory that could only be reached by motorboats and ferries, I realised that my research was going to lead me along unforeseen paths.

Throughout that first meeting, Jorge (complemented by short and precise interventions from Bruno and Renato) told me what was really at stake in their daily activities. They had to accomplish a certain number of technical visits per month and try to capture as much potential resources as possible, which can then be translated into different projects, in order to preserve their job. While their motivation was palpable when talking about how they were trying to help the indigenous farmers with whom they worked, they constantly criticised the system under which the PDTI operates. They told me about some of the problems they had to face in relation to being accountable vis-à-vis central and local government services. Rather than just being an agricultural extension programme that transfers knowledge and technology so that users could attain a better quality of life, they were involved in bureaucratic procedures, and competition and accountability processes, without which their practices were hindered or prevented.

In short, what I thought would be a fairly formal conversation about their tasks in the field, became a space in which the difficulties and vicissitudes that officials must face every day came to light. The illusion of a state-led developmental programme focused on indigenous peoples that is implemented in local territories following a linear and straightforward process did not survive this first encounter. The reality was different: there was talk of market-oriented practices, accountability and competition; of labour precarity; of mobility and infrastructure; of paperwork and bureaucratic procedures; and the problems of decentralisation.

After listening to their detailed explanation, I asked them if I could accompany them to their next activities and spend some time with them in the office, offering to collaborate in whatever way they deemed necessary. Once I had finished, Jorge exchanged a couple of looks with Renato and Bruno, and finally, with a smile playing on his lips, he answered: ‘actually, there are some things you could help us with. Over the next few months, we have to carry out some participatory methodologies, but we have no experience or knowledge about these things, and we could not get the resources to hire someone who knows’, and smiling again, he added, ‘maybe you are that person. It would be pure luck’. That afternoon, a couple of hours after this encounter, I received a call from an unknown number. At the other end of the line, I recognised Jorge’s voice: ‘Diego? Come to the office tomorrow at 8.30am. At 10, we should be taking the motorboat to the island’.
This stroke of luck did not happen fortuitously. The main reason for my visit to the PDTI office in Castro had been due to my interest in identifying an entry point into the daily practices of state officials implementing a state-led development programme. Obtaining this access allowed me to understand a set of complex socio-cultural practices that are developed both during the materialisation process of the programme and in the interactions and relations that are framed and mediated by it. In doing so, I encountered a scenario in which the technicians in charge of the implementation of the PDTI become entangled in webs of bureaucracy to make the programme effective, and to account for themselves in order to keep their employment.

Based on the different definitions provided by the Real Academia Española and Oxford Language Dictionary, a technician is a person who carries out practical work. Due to their hands-on knowledge of the technicalities of a particular field, they are in charge of the practical application of mechanical tasks related to that field. In the case of the PDTI, the officials are hired as extensionistas (extension agent/extensionists), a particular kind of technician – an expert in fields related to agriculture – in charge of visiting farmers/producers to provide them with the information and services that would help them to develop technical, organisational and managerial skills in order to change their productive or commercial practices (Swanson and Rajalahti 2010; Landini 2013; Monsalvo Zamora et al. 2017). Because from the beginning of the programme (2011) up to 4 months into my fieldwork they were hired directly as ‘technicians’ without the extensionist specification, they continued to be identified as such – técnicos(as). Although their contract stipulated a new title², and that they went from belonging to a ‘technical team’ to an ‘extension team’, both their daily tasks and how people referred to them remained unchanged.

Nevertheless, what my thesis illustrates is how these technicians/experts, commonly described as the protagonists of agricultural development (Swanson and Rajalahti 2010; Monsalvo Zamora et al. 2017; Valencia et al. 2018; Le Coq et al. 2019), are entangled in networks of bureaucratic technologies that positions them in a role that is not directly related to extensionism as it has been classically characterised. Although bureaucracy is not found merely in public administration (Hibou 2015; Alonso and Fernández 2016), due to being hired by the state, and therefore considered to be public employees, their role as technicians intersects with the managerial and entrepreneurial dynamics and obligations that today define state bureaucracy

² During 2014 and 2015, the PDTI went through several modifications mainly focused on its internal functioning and the relationship with the users. These changes sought to ‘modernise’ the programme [incorporating new terms such extensión and extensionistas], and make it more efficient and participatory.
and the practices of those carrying it out. This generates a particular scenario in which these officials must face market and quasi-market mechanisms such as performance targets, financial indicators, competition and output objectives (du Gay 2000; Lawton and Rayner 2018).

Hibou (2015), based on Weber’s (1978) seminal work on this subject, defines bureaucracy as a set of norms, rules, procedures, and formalities that are rapidly spreading in what she describes as a process of the bureaucratisation of society as a whole. This process has been accelerating due to the emergence of specific forms of bureaucratic formalities based on neoliberal criteria – managerial techniques, quantitative methods and formalisms based on the market principles such as competition, calculability and predictability. Although in a broad sense, the PDTI team can already be defined as bureaucrats, or at least as street-level bureaucrats, because they are in charge of the delivery of public goods (Lipsky 2010; Zacka 2017), they, as well as other employees in the public and private sectors face these bureaucratic procedures and formalities every day. Nevertheless, the novelty of my approach lies in the fact that their interactions with these bureaucratic technologies are at the same time mediated by their status as public servants and technicians working at the intersection of two state institutions in charge of the decentralisation of a development programme. Hence, in the following chapters, I describe how these public workers operate in a neoliberal context that: firstly, turns them into managerial/entrepreneurial bureaucrats; secondly, imposes precarious labour conditions; and thirdly, that they themselves, as state actors, perpetuate through a top-down logic (Wacquant 2012).

My main goal here is to explore the neoliberal state and how it can be studied through an analysis of the work of field-level officials at the local level. My research is an attempt to understand what kind of state-effects are produced by a neoliberal state and how, in turn, this extends our understanding of what the state is. Focussing on those at the bottom rung of the organisational structure provides an ideal perspective from which to see the state-effects of neoliberalism at play – mainly because it is a manifestation of an ideology of decentralisation and policy entrepreneurship. This focus allows me to show how localised forms of ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ (see Brenner and Theodore 2002; Peck and Tickell 2002; Brenner et al. 2010; Peck et al. 2018) are played out on the ground, telling us something new about the effects of this form of the state that expands pre-existing discussions about how the state appears in people’s everyday lives.

Therefore, my interest in the relationship between technical and bureaucratic work is an attempt to understand what happens when technicians are asked to become neoliberal state
actors. By revealing how these two categories (the expert/technician and the state bureaucrat) are folded together into a position that I call ‘field-level official’, my goal is to understand the tensions, challenges, negotiations, ambiguities, and so on that the entanglement of these two roles produces, and what this then tells us about the neoliberal state. How, by being obliged to account for their practices, are extension teams in charge of providing technical support turned into bureaucrats? What tensions are evident in the demands and expectations that arise from their roles as bureaucrats and technicians? Focusing on this duality helps us to understand better how state agencies and actors operate under neoliberal conditions at the local level by internalising accountability practices, competition for resources, and flexible hiring mechanisms. The effects of this new configuration of the state, I argue, are reflected particularly in the work, and working conditions, of these officials considered the bottom rung of the public service organisational ladder.

Paying particular attention to their everyday practices of decentralising a state-led development programme in neoliberalising times allowed me to explore the ways in which ‘state presence’ takes on a specific form that brings together the technical, the affective, the bureaucratic and the political. Taking into account that the PDTI officials are in charge of delivering resources from the central government through the municipal apparatus, the representations and expectations that arise in the interaction between officials and the recipients of these benefits acquire a particular relevance. Consequently, throughout this thesis I answer the following question: how is the state constructed and imagined in the everyday interactions of both the recipients of the programme and the officials who decentralise it? Observing this relationship, I was able to access the processes through which the neoliberal state is made effective at the local level, embedded in the routinised practices of its decentralised institutions. In addition, I had the opportunity to witness the discourses and representations of those who interact with those local agencies (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Gupta 1995; 2012). In brief, while addressing these processes, I sought to contribute to the ethnography of the state under neoliberal conditions, especially regarding state effects and state affects.

By inhabiting the lowest position in the hierarchy and being in charge of the implementation of a development programme, these officials operate as the state interface in rural and peripheral sectors. By recruiting new users, applying and implementing projects, and transferring technology, they translate the objectives of the programme into actions and tangible objects. As technicians, they move to provide advice and carry out activities in the field. As bureaucrats, they activate movements towards the concretion of these initiatives. In this way, rather than
focusing on the reasons behind the formulation of the PDTI, or on evaluating its results and relevance, my ethnographic and analytical attention is focused on the daily practices of the officials, the challenges they face, and the relations and conditions that mediate and frame their actions.

Field-level officials focus their activities primarily on the capture and distribution of resources that seek to meet the objectives of both the programme and other political drives coming from the local government. In view of the fact that the PDTI operates through an intricate institutional framework, and that the programme operates in rural territories that are often difficult to access, I reflect on how the access and management of resources (human, economic and material) assumes a central role in the practices of these officials. In addition, this focus also pays attention to the entanglements produced when the PDTI is being implemented in parallel with other territorial initiatives of the central and local government; and the bureaucratic technologies and infrastructure that make this process viable. What guises does the state take when these processes and interactions are in place? What/who is the state in each of these instances? How do the everyday procedures carried out by state agents shape the (re)production of identity and territorial categories of belonging? What bureaucratic technologies are activated and actualised throughout these processes?

1.1. Setting the scene

My research took place in Chiloé (see Fig. 1 below), an archipelago that lies at the northern edge of Chilean Patagonia, in the south of the country (approximately 1,000 kilometres south of Chile’s capital and main city, Santiago). The western coast faces the Pacific Ocean and the eastern coast, where most of the population lives, faces the inner-sea. This insular territory was colonised by the Spanish Crown in 1558, following an expansion policy to the south of Chile. As a symbol of permanence, the settlers founded the first city, ‘Castro’, on the shore of the island in 1567, in order to facilitate possible expansion towards Patagonia and the Strait of Magellan (Moreno 2011). Thus, Chiloé and its original inhabitants were familiar with the Spanish settlers and its permanent presence from the very beginning of the colonisation of Chile (Duquesnoy 2012), and whereas the rest of the country gained its independence in 1810, Chiloé was the last area loyal to the Spanish crown, remaining under its control until 1826 (Bacchiddu 2007). In the collective memory of the inhabitants of Chiloé, the feelings of being at the periphery, of remoteness, isolation, poverty and precariousness that were common throughout its colonial (and most of its republican) history are still present. Therefore, part of being a Chilote, as the inhabitants of the archipelago call themselves and as others recognise them, was forged in a
process in which the historical and geographical dimension played a very important role (Moreno 2011).

Today, in political-administrative terms, Chiloé is a province and belongs to the Región de Los Lagos (Lakes Region). The principal administrative and commercial activities of the island are centralised in the two major cities, Ancud and Castro (the capital of the province). Data from the 2017 national census shows that Chiloé has approximately 168,000 inhabitants, and as a province has one of the highest proportions of rural population in Chile (Bacchiddu 2007).
Figure 1: Chile, Lakes Region, and the Archipelago of Chiloé [Source: by Tamara Salinas-Cohn based on (A) www.curriculumnacional.cl; (B) www.icarito.cl; (C) www.gobernacionchiloe.gov.cl/geografia]
Specifically, the team that opened the doors for me was located in Castro, where most of the state’s offices are located. Following Gupta (1995), capital cities could be considered advantageous places in which to develop state-focussed ethnographies because this is where a significant number of state officials live and work, and where the majority of people encounter and interact with ‘the state’. Because I was particularly interested in the institutions that are mandated to carry out indigenous policies by the central administration, Castro seemed to be the perfect place to settle. However, and although many of the activities in which I participated were carried out in the city, this strategy had to be significantly adapted in the face of the mobility needed to implement the programme.

In addition, a couple of weeks after my first visit to the Castro team’s office, during a meeting that brought together the technical teams in the area, Jorge introduced me to Mariela, the technical chief of the PDTI of the *comuna*3 (district) of Dalcahue. After a short introduction, she invited me to visit their office the next morning and to accompany them on an activity they had to carry out in one of the sectors they covered. Half an hour after having met up in their office, and a couple of minutes into our journey towards Tenaun, a small town where the activity would take place, Marcela told me:

‘I found out you are going to help the boys [as she usually referred to the members of Castro’s team] to implement the talking maps [the name of the participative methodology]. Do you think you would have more time to help us too? This way you will be able to participate in these meetings, and that may be interesting for you. It would be a win-win.’

With this offer, the scope of my research shifted, expanding my involvement in the activities carried out by the programme in that area. Dalcahue is a district located in what, through a functional approach based on historical, identity and economic-demographic features, Ramírez et al. (2009) call ‘central Chiloé’ (Fig. 2). This area of the archipelago is characterised as being under Castro’s area of influence. Because of the consolidation of the salmon industry in the 1990s, and in comparison to the northern and southern territories of the archipelago, both Castro and Dalcahue, as well as other localities included in this area, have gone through the deepest and most evident economic, social and demographic changes on the archipelago. One of the most profound effects that these processes have generated is related to the migration of a large number of islanders traditionally engaged in traditional fishing, shellfish harvesting, algae collection, and small-scale agriculture (see Fig. 3 & 4 below). Due to the appeal of wage labour,

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3 A *Comuna* is the basic political-administrative division of Chile, which can be urban, rural, or a combination of both. The local administration of each *comuna* resides in the municipality.
many have left their mostly self-sufficient lives in the countryside, either on the main island or on the small ones (Fløysand et al. 2010; Skewes et al. 2012; Lazo 2017; Lazo and Carvajal 2018).

**Figure 2:** Sectors covered by Castro and Dalcahue’s PDTI [Source: by Tamara Salinas-Cohn based on Google Earth]
An essential element of central Chiloé that, as we will see throughout the thesis, makes possible the implementation of the PDTI both in Castro and Dalcahue, is the presence of indigenous people in the territory. The historiography of Chile normally agrees that the original inhabitants of the Great Island of Chiloé and the other islands that make up the archipelago were the Williche people and the now-vanished Chonos. The Williche (willi: south; che: people⁴) are the southern local identity of the Mapuche (mapu: land; che: people). Although today there are

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⁴ Translation from Mapudungun, the language of the Mapuche people.
organised groups seeking recognition as a different ethnic group, the Williche people have traditionally been addressed as a sub-group of the Mapuche people. For this reason, public policy targeting indigenous people living in the archipelago has mainly been focused on individuals and/or communities belonging to one of the nine ethnic groups legally recognised by the state: in this case, the Mapuche. Nevertheless, because people from the southern territories tend to identify themselves as Mapuche-Williche, or just Williche, or because there are politically-oriented groups pressing for the use of this territorial marker, both categories are widely used by citizens, experts and government institutions.

Historically, the Williche people from Chiloé were regarded as more peaceful than the Mapuche who populated the mainland. In fact, unlike the other local identities of the Mapuche who fought against the Spanish conquerors, the Williche did not offer any form of resistance against the invaders (Bacchiddu 2007). Unlike the rest of the Wallmapu (or Mapuche territory), which enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy until the end of the 19th century, the colonisation of Chiloé by Spanish settlers started in 1567. On the other hand, the end of the autonomy – acknowledged by the Spanish Crown – of the Mapuche people who inhabited the mainland to the south of the Biobío River was only achieved after the execution of the so-called *Pacificación de la Araucanía*, a military operation that took place between 1860 and 1883, led by the newly formed Chilean state. Thus, this long process of colonisation, territorial occupation, and forced assimilation to the detriment of the Mapuche and Williche people of the mainland occurred 300 years after the settlement of Chiloé. Thus, unlike the Williche living on the mainland and the Mapuche inhabiting the lands further north, the history of the Williche people of Chiloé is characterised by centuries of contact, racial and cultural mixture, and a strong evangelisation carried out mostly by the Jesuits. These violent and unique processes allowed the emergence of a local identity that differs from the rest of Chile, but also –because of 300 years more of contact - from the rest of Wallmapu (Cayuqueo and Scandizzo 2007).

Comparing the data from the last two censuses (2002 and 2017), the number of individuals who identified themselves as Mapuche both in Chile and Chiloé has seen a noticeable increase (Fig. 5 below). Although this growth is also attributed to a change in the formulation of the question, and cross-census comparisons in this regard must be done with caution, the growth is so evident that it is still illustrative of changes that have been taking place at the national and local levels. One of the elements that set these changes in motion was the declaration the implementation of the Indigenous Law, or Law No. 19.253, in 1993. Acting as a legal framework for the recognition and protection of what defines and categorises the 'indigenous ethnic groups of
In Chile, this law operates as the foundation for the emergence of state initiatives seeking to promote the development of indigenous people, their cultures, families and communities, both in rural and urban areas (Indigenous Law 1993). The context in which this law materialised was marked by the development of a transnational indigenous movement, and an international environment in which new actors emerged, permeated with the language of human rights (Wade 2010), and with a positive predisposition towards indigenous peoples and their cultural and political struggles. All of these wider processes were influential in the revitalisation of the Mapuche people in Chile, and also in Chiloé.

![Mapuche population Chiloé and Chile](image)

**Figure 5:** Percentage of the population identifying as Mapuche in Chiloé and Chile [Source: by the author based on data from 2002 and 2017 Chilean censuses]

Today, according to the 2017 Chilean national census, more than 30% of the total population of the archipelago self-identifies as Mapuche, and this proportion decreases only marginally in the cities of Castro and Dalcahue (Fig. 6 below). However, and although the Williche people – as well as their cultural, territorial and political claims – are very much still alive in the archipelago, they faced, and are still facing, a huge cultural loss that has prevented the reproduction of their political and cultural organisation. Contrasting with the north, south and parts of the island facing the Pacific, in the centre of the Great Island and in the small inner-sea islands, the revitalisation of the political and cultural organisation of the Williche people is still at an early stage.
Both the political and economic landscape of the central area of the archipelago, as well as the presence and current situation of the Williche people in the territory, generate distinctive features for the implementation of the PDTI in Castro and Dalcahue. Because the Chilean government has frequently addressed indigenous issues from a perspective focused on poverty and the need to boost productivity in rural areas with a strong presence of indigenous peoples, the Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario (Agricultural Development Institute, INDAP), under which the PDTI operates, has attained a strong role at the local level. This agency is under the Ministry of Agriculture, and its main mission is to contribute to the sustainable economic development and enhancement of agricultural peasant families and their organisations. To achieve this goal, INDAP’s actions seek the strengthening of human, social, productive, natural and cultural capitals; and of men, women, youth and indigenous peoples via a territorial approach. Thus, through technical interventions, INDAP seeks to initiate programmes aimed towards the ‘development’ of these communities.

However, one of the peculiarities of this system is that it is being channelled, in the vast majority of cases, through local governments. The municipalities are prominent actors at the local level due to their recognised autonomy. The main objectives of these institutions are to manage and redistribute existing resources for the welfare of the local population, generating institutional actions in order to address the various demands of the civil society that lives within its boundaries. In Chile, a large number of individuals and families are beneficiaries of social programmes that work through the local government. In this sense, municipalities execute programmes coming from, and financed by, the central government, occupying a well-known and relevant position within the local political arena (de la Maza 2014). The Programa de
Desarrollo Territorial Indígena (Territorial Indigenous Development Programme, PDTI) is one of these initiatives. Although it is framed by INDAP guidelines and financed both by this agency and by the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (National Indigenous Development Corporation, CONADI), the PDTI operates through the municipality.

In its own terms, this territorial programme seeks to increase the production of the rural indigenous communities participating in the programme through technical and educational guidance. It aims to create instances of technical support in order to strengthen their agriculture and forestry activities in particular, but also some related activities (e.g. crafts), while being attentive to their worldview and seeking to increase their income to improve their ‘quality of life’. In order to achieve this goal, the programme aims to generate the conditions to include these small-scale farmers into the domestic and global markets, highlighting their traditional knowledge and practices in combination with new management and entrepreneurial ideals. Furthermore, in order to take part in this programme, any potential ‘users’ must prove their indigenous belonging, accept the presence of field-level officials of decentralised state agencies in their daily activities and internal ways of organisation, and be able to incorporate self-regulating and accountable practices into their lives.

The PDTI is aimed exclusively at indigenous peoples (although there are some exceptions), including families, communities or any other form of organisation, and focused on silvicultural, agricultural and/or livestock or related activities in rural areas. Therefore, the focus of the programme is placed on individuals and/or communities whose members meet two conditions. Firstly, they should self-identify as indigenous and – as I will explore in more detail in Chapter 5 – they must meet the conditions imposed by the Indigenous Law to be recognised as such. Secondly, their main economic activity must be related to small-scale agriculture. In this way, the PDTI operates through two categories that are folded into each other: indigenous and farmer.

Today, the programme runs in 81 communes across the country, of which seven are located in Chiloé, including Castro and Dalcahue. In practice, the programme operates through ‘extension teams’ (formerly known as ‘technical teams’) preferably composed of professionals and

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5 The term ‘user’ is used to characterise a person participating in programmes or accessing the public system with any particular demand (De La Maza & Alchao 2012).
6 Indigenous status can be accredited through a certificate granted by CONADI. In short, Chileans may get this certificate if: 1) they are the child of an indigenous mother or father; 2) they have at least one indigenous surname; or 3) hose who maintain the cultural features of an indigenous ethnic group or who, being spouses of an indigenous person, self-identify as such.
technicians from the forestry and agricultural sectors. These teams should offer permanent technical advice and support to the users of the programme, operating through communal units. In order to achieve the improvement or continuity of their production systems and/or development of new endeavours and/or businesses in their territories, field-level officials must carry out several visits to the users, distribute internal resources, capture and relocate external resources, transform these resources into projects, and arrange and coordinate labour training, workshops, and tours to view successful or different agricultural experiences.

In particular, the programme with the greatest impact on indigenous people in the archipelago of Chiloé is the PDTI. In the rural areas surrounding Castro, this initiative currently assists 148 Williche farmers, and 106 in Dalcahue. However, and although only one person per household can officially be included in the programme, their area of influence also covers their families, and in some cases the whole community. In this way, certain activities organised by the PDTI, such as folklore festivals focused on the traditional practices of the islanders, are open to all residents of the sectors in which the programme is executed, whether they are Williche or not.

2. Three faces of neoliberalism

During my first visit to the PDTI office in Castro, I caught a glimpse of the main activities carried out by the field-level officials and some of the main issues they had to face in order to implement the programme, and to keep their jobs. This encounter illustrated how the way in which the PDTI operates, and therefore the day-to-day practices of officials, is strictly determined by the political-economic system that prevails in Chile, and for which it has been characterised since the 1980s. This system, commonly referred to as ‘neoliberalism’, activates a series of relations. In the context of the PDTI, this system unfolds and is instantiated in three different ways – or it operates through three faces. Firstly, it provides the ideological framework behind the kind of multiculturalism through which the state has addressed the presence of indigenous peoples with political and cultural demands. Furthermore, a neoliberal approach to labour relationships promotes a deregulated market that imposes challenging and precarious material and organisational conditions on the field-level officials implementing the programme. Lastly, these market-oriented principles not only reconfigure the labour structure under which the officials carry out their daily tasks, but also impose on them new management criteria such as accountability and competition within the state.

Neoliberalism is not only the transformed offspring of the previous liberalism. It is not especially well-defined, in that this model represents a direction which is both 'new' and 'liberal' (Thorsen
2010). Furthermore, it is argued that there is not only one unified and coherent configuration of neoliberalism, but different complex political projects (Clarke 2008) due to its hybrid, situated, contradictory and context-specific nature (Peck 2017). Therefore, it can be instantiated through different policies and programmes that, for example, seek to reform the public sector and government agencies, and demand actions commonly associated with private and market-oriented initiatives.

Similarly, Aihwa Ong (2006) defines neoliberalism as the dynamic calculative techniques, technologies and practices of governing that are constantly being rearticulated and recontextualised in different settings, encountering local politics and cultures in an awkward manner. Consequently, rather than suggesting less government, neoliberalism relies on forms of governance that encourage both official institutions of the state and individuals to follow the rules of the market (Larner 2000). However, and following on from John Clarke’s (2008) argument, an approach that could provide a greater practical significance for anthropological research in this field is that focused on the ‘neoliberalisation of things’ rather than neoliberalism in its broader sense. This approach allows me to access the inherently contradictory and ambivalent process of governing.

Chile, which is widely characterised as a laboratory for neoliberalism and a stronghold of neoliberal ideology (Venugopal 2015; Peck 2017; Di Giminiani 2018; Bauer 2018), has been governed through a form of neoliberalisation since the 1970s, after Pinochet and the military government seized power and sought economic guidance from the ‘Chicago boys’. This process has been assisted and institutionalised, to a greater or lesser extent, by the promotion of three socioeconomic principles identified by Pizarro (2005). These are, firstly, an indiscriminate economic openness to the world market, focused on the production and export of natural resources (copper, forestry, fishing, salmon farming, modern agriculture), under the direction of large local (national and regional) economic groups and international capital. Secondly, the veneration of the market, favouring the privatisation of all production and service companies, and limiting the regulatory role of the state. Finally, the execution of deep changes in social policies and their targeted groups due to the emergence and multiplication of private health and pension systems, and private educational institutions. In consequence, the state must

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7 The name commonly given to the group of technocrats who were in charge of economic and social reforms for establishing a new model inspired by the principle of subsidiarity and the free market during Pinochet’s regime (Rumié 2019).
concentrate its limited public resources on specific groups such as women, indigenous people, people in poverty, housing debtors, and so forth, leaving universal social policies aside.

This new arrangement of social policies highlights the development of civil society under the logic of market-oriented practices, but, at the same time, addresses complex issues such as cultural rights in a way that seems highly contradictory to this orientation (Hale 2005). In countries such as Chile, governmental policies focused on identity differences are managed within a controlled model of the ‘individual consumer citizen’, transforming and rearticulating other emergent, critical and historically situated political projects under the neoliberal umbrella (Clarke 2008). Furthermore, focusing on the influence of this model on the transformation of citizenship, we can identify what Wacquant (2012: 71) recognises as the central core of neoliberalism which transcends its open, plural and situated nature: ‘(...) an articulation of state, market, and citizenship that harnesses the first to impose the stamp of the second on the third’. Thus, the state that operates through a neoliberal model based on market-conforming policies reshapes the meaning and limits of citizenship and ‘effective social membership’. This is intimately entangled with how state policies seek to manage cultural differences and the consequences that these efforts produce.

2.1. The prevailing model: neoliberalism and the management of difference in Chile

The Chilean constitution only accepts the existence of one People – Chileans – and one language – Spanish (Chilean Constitution 1980). However, in the 1990s, the state began to reshape its relationship with the indigenous population following the influence of the internationalisation of indigenous demand, the high profile mobilisation of some indigenous communities in Latin America, and, at the local level, pressure from the Mapuche people who sought political and cultural recognition. While addressing some of these claims through the formulation of the Indigenous Law in 1993, the Chilean state was part of the regional turn to multiculturalist legislation and policy. This process has articulated new questions regarding power relations within societies that are built on the basis of neoliberal principles, and the hypothetical superiority of westernised institutions and social relationships (Tapia 2010).

The neoliberal principles which are defended by the Chilean elite, and promoted by the Chilean state, recognise the presence of other ethnic groups, while fixing them as discrete cultural entities (Gundermann 2013), and viewing them as features of a complex system of institutions that emerges from a national hegemony (Tapia 2010). This model is based on the idea that everyone in the country is politically equal and shares an identical set of rights and duties,
regardless of the presence of the ethnocultural diversity that can be found within its boundaries. On the one hand, this understanding of cultural difference supports the presence of governmental institutions and legal frameworks, which work towards the protection and development of indigenous groups. On the other hand, this view highlights the absence of initiatives recognising them as political interlocutors. Through the implementation of a ‘neoliberal multiculturalist’ approach, the Chilean state has developed indigenous policies over the last three decades, but limited them to addressing the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of indigenous demands (land subsidies, scholarships, housing grants, and agricultural development).

Multiculturalism is normally defined as a philosophic-political approach to the phenomenon of cultural diversity, seeking to confront the practical difficulties within societies facing and accommodating these challenges. Usually, it is characterised as a reaction to cultural assimilation. However, in countries such as Chile, this approach has been viewed only as a political gesture which, due to its market-oriented logic, does not directly address the recognition of the ‘other’ – the indigenous people (Boitano 2015). Following the interpretation of Cruz (2015) and Tubino (2002), multiculturalism works through affirmative action to ensure equal opportunities. These initiatives include material incentives and support in order to reduce social, political and economic disadvantages, such as scholarships, quotas, subsidies, and directed benefits. Therefore, multiculturalism aims to amend existing inequalities between ‘cultures’ (discrimination, poverty, marginalisation, among others) through policies focused on improving opportunities using a ‘top-down’ logic (Cruz 2015).

In Chile, the possibilities of all these processes and questions are being shaped and determined by the imposition of a particular approach towards cultural difference. The Chilean expression ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’ promotes a specific form of multiculturalism that, through the execution of centralised policies in local settings, recognises cultural diversity while demanding obedience to the economic and political principles which are supported by the state and the national elite. Therefore, to understand the scope and roles of these approaches, it is important to focus on what is understood by neoliberalism, its implications, and how it relates to the management and production of cultural difference in Chile.

An awareness of the flexibility and mobility of neoliberalism enables the identification of contradictions and complexities in cultural and identity policies, which grant rights to disadvantaged groups such as indigenous peoples. Moreover, and following Hale (2005), these kinds of arrangements represent one of the ways in which the ‘neo’ in neoliberalism becomes
visible, distancing it from classical liberalism. This new accommodation between identity and cultural rights, and the politico-economic principles of neoliberalism, is what is known as ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’.

In Latin America, the emergence and establishment of a multicultural approach to difference went hand in hand with neoliberalism. It has been argued that this trend occurred due to the necessity of destabilising and undermining the demands of indigenous peoples, which were threatening the neoliberal project (Richards 2013). Therefore multiculturalism, in its neoliberal form, emerges as a solution through which to reconcile differentiated cultural rights with the socio-economic principles of neoliberalism (Bocca 2011; Hale 2005; Richards 2013), while creating barriers to define what is, and what is not, allowed within this new model of interaction between the state and the indigenous population. In that sense, the art of ‘ethnogovernmentality’ (Bocca 2011, 2007) is found in countries such as Chile, where governmental actions promote a multiculturalism that recognises cultural diversity ‘in exchange for compliance with the economic and political constraints that follows’ (Hale 2005: 20).

An example of this is Hale’s (2002, 2005) ethnographic account of Guatemala, where he addresses how Mayan activists face neoliberal multiculturalism. In this case, he describes how communities gain cultural recognition while abandoning long-term political claims (control over their territories and its resources, collective rights, and so forth), thus accepting the active presence of the state, and its development agencies, within their internal affairs.

The policies and programmes executed in Chile after the return to democracy in 1990 and the implementation of the Indigenous Law were, and still are, normally carried out at the local level, but without allowing a space for the indigenous population to negotiate or interfere in these actions, or ‘acknowledging historically based collective rights’ (Richards 2013: 109). Therefore, political demands for autonomy, self-government, or any kind of political representation as a differentiated group have been neglected, severely limiting, in the process, the political content of indigenous claims.

Neoliberal multiculturalism comprises the creation and maintenance of an ‘ethnopolitical field’ within which indigenous peoples are legitimised, in the eyes of the state, through their participation as established communities, and as individuals acting according to the norms instituted by neoliberal policies: assuming responsibility for social policies developed and imposed from outside, self-regulating mechanisms, social accountability, good governance, and so on (Bocca 2011). This indio permitido (authorised Indian) (Hale 2005; Postero 2006;
Richards 2013) is one who welcomes and/or acts within the neoliberal policies, participating unhesitatingly in government programmes (Richards 2013).

Di Giminiani’s work (2018) on the engagement of Mapuche people living in rural areas with state programmes that seek to promote their inclusion through entrepreneurial initiatives accounts for how state policies based on discourses of self-realisation and self-management trigger a double process. On the one hand, the state generates initiatives that support the idea of achieving economic independence (which can be related to the historical and political demands of the Mapuche people); and on the other, it establishes new dependency mechanisms. Through these programmes, the state reinforces its local power through the economic inclusion of indigenous individuals who, because they participate in projects and access micro-credits provided by state institutions, are now the object of a renewed relationship of dependency.

2.2. When neoliberalism reaches the ground

Today there are different opinions about the applicability and relevance of the use of the ‘neoliberal’ concept. On the one hand, some voices highlight its importance as this concept allows ethnographers to describe some patterns that explain the changes taking place in the relationship between the state and the market, and how the ‘individual’ and their aspirations are being reshaped in the process. On the other hand, some argue that we should abandon neoliberalism because it has been operating as an umbrella concept that makes the processes and practices that are included under its aegis invisible (Eriksen et al. 2015). My research fits in with the first argument. My intention is not to describe phenomena occurring in ‘neoliberal Chile’, rather – recognising the existence of a political-economic framework commonly labelled ‘neoliberalism’ – my aim is to address the ways in which certain patterns associated with this model are actualised in the implementation of a state-led development programme carried out by a particular kind of state actor.

Authors such as Peck (2001; 2010; 2017), Castree (2006), and England and Ward (2011), state that ‘neoliberalism’ is commonly addressed as a bounded, pristine and singular end-state or design. However, they challenge this approach by highlighting that, on the ground, neoliberalism never operates in a straightforward and unchanged fashion. On the contrary, they contend that neoliberalism is a historically constructed, decentralised and context-specific force that generates diverse and distinct outcomes in its wake.

Although, and in line with Wacquant, I maintain the idea that there is a central core connecting the state, the market and citizenship, addressing neoliberalism in its broadest, static and most
general sense would constitute an infertile and counterproductive task. On the other hand, I argue that addressing this model in its decentralised forms, and as an evolving, dynamic and adaptable process (see Peck and Tickell 2002; Brenner et al. 2010; Peck and Theodore 2012), is the best strategy. Thus, my argument is that neoliberalism is actualised in local settings, shaping relations and practices that can be observed, for example, in flexible labour regimes, accountability mechanisms, or in how inclusion/exclusion categories are generated in the implementation of a state-led development programme. This then raises questions such as: what happens when the instantiations of neoliberalism (or neoliberalisations) in a local setting occur in a context of marked political-administrative centralisation? What remains centralised and wherein lies the room for manoeuvre? What kind of state-effects take place in light of its enactment? What guises of the state become effective?

Venugopal (2015: 174-175) argues that Chile is one of the most relevant examples of the implementation of a neoliberal model, based on the authoritarian capital of the dictatorship. According to this argument, the military government of Pinochet (1973-1989) represented the interests of an economic elite affected by the socialist policies of Allende’s government (1970-1973). In this way, neoliberalism as a concept moves and expands from economic policy to measures that are deployed to achieve or recover political power. However, what I find interesting about the Chilean case is that this course was also accompanied by a strong process of political centralisation, motivated by military goals (control of the territory), but also by the economic interests of the elite.

The political-administrative system of Chile is highly centralised, and the decentralisation policies have been implemented via an administrative desconcentración\(^8\) (deconcentration), which neither generates cultural recognition nor relocates political power. This is supported by an economic and political elite who strongly believe that centralism forged the country’s stability, unlike experiences elsewhere on the continent (Valenzuela 2015). Thus, the Chilean state retains a centralised and monopolistic control over formal political actions on those territories – excluding those differential meanings and interpretations used by local groups (including indigenous peoples), and the ability to impose initiatives that are often generated by individuals and institutions who ignore local and cultural particularities.

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\(^8\) The geographical relocation of central government control through local level bureaucracies with limited, if any, transfer of authority.
Mostly, the regional and local forms of the state have only an executor role in the policies produced by the central government. Under this approach, the local governments and the local government institutions rely on the guidelines handed down by the central decision makers, and lack the resources or capacity for action needed to address their own territorial dynamics (Brugué and Ricard 1998). Therefore, there is no acknowledgement (at least in the creation of the general guidelines of public policies) of the identity, autonomy, governance capacity, expectations for endogenous development, and culture of its various territories (Raczynski and Serrano 2001).

Indigenous people living in this barely decentralised context and accessing resources and benefits delivered through local territorial programmes such as the PDTI (which remains aligned with the neoliberal multiculturalist model) must encounter the localised and deconcentrated central government on a daily basis. These local level government institutions have been acting through formal and informal rules, guiding and shaping the interaction of the state (or of those who carry its authority) with local communities (Prats 1999). Moreover, the establishment of local governments and state agencies in areas with a high population of indigenous people was also targeted at ensuring a more effective state presence and the promotion of a positive economic, political and cultural development of the territory.

Following Wacquant (2012: 73), an anthropology devoted to the study of neoliberalism, or its processual expression – neoliberalisation – should focus on the machinery behind the manifestation of these processes. Thus, he proposes that the study of the bureaucratic field, in Bourdieu’s (1994) terms understood as the group of institutions in charge of the demarcation and distribution of public goods, provides an entry point into the role of the state in perpetuating the neoliberal model from a top-down logic. Through this prism, rather than being imposed homogenously from above through the fixed practices of a coherent and uniform actor (the state) neoliberalism reaches the ground mediated by the priorities of the public authority and by the decisions and possibilities of those who must carry out (decentralising or deconcentrating) the mandates of this authority in local settings. Thus, it is worth reflecting on the role of field-level officials acting as the interface between the state and local communities when pursuing the distribution of public goods.

2.3. Unfolding precarity

At this point another concern arises: although the practices of the officials contribute to the rearrangement of the state while implementing market-oriented policies and participating in
the dissemination of notions of citizenship according to these principles, they themselves are also subject to the same process. Thus, it makes sense to think about how their daily activities implementing public policy and their work experiences are conditioned by this neoliberalising process. If we take into account that prevailing neoliberal policies include labour market and welfare reforms (Peck 2017), and that among the actions undertaken to transform Chile into a neoliberal system was the deregulation of the labour market (Winn 2004), questions regarding the labour and organisational conditions that frame and determine the everyday activities of the field-level officials acquire substantial importance.

Among the measures taken towards the neoliberalising process that characterises Chile, was the deregulation or flexibilisation of the labour relations governance in accordance with the postulates of this economic model. Rather than generating policies to promote employment stability, changes based on entrepreneurial freedom, competitiveness, and the requirements of a flexible labour market were encouraged through the production and institutionalisation of contractual schemes featuring limited labour relationships (Acuña and Pérez 2005; Acuña 2008; Sisto 2009; Arredondo 2015; Aravena 2018).

The instability that these mechanisms bring contributes to what in the literature has been labelled as ‘labour precarity’. In this vein, Rodgers and Rodgers (1992) specify four elements that describe precarious working conditions: the perception of instability and uncertainty regarding work relationship; the lack of control of working conditions, wages and work pace; the lack of welfare benefits, social protection and collective rights; and insufficient income. In Chile, these four components are easily recognisable in the labour schemes used both by private and public entities. The idea that the contractual rigidity associated with traditional bureaucracy was negatively affecting the accomplishment of objectives was a reason given for the implementation of contractual mechanisms seeking to promote organisational flexibility (Arredondo 2015). In this way, the Chilean state has been using fixed-term (generally renewable after an evaluation) contracts predominantly when hiring employees to execute targeted and decentralised social programmes such as the PDTI.

Through using these mechanisms, state officials come face to face with precarity. In a neoliberal labour context, they already face feelings of anxiety and endangerment (Millar 2014). This combines with a lack of certainty about their future (Neilson and Rossiter 2005), manifesting expressions of shared precariousness that already exist. Following the work of Butler (2006), Lorey (2015) suggests that precariousness is a relational ontological dimension found in all living beings. It involves an unavoidable peril to people’s lives and bodies due to their mortal and social
condition: this is an ‘existential common’ shared by every life. On the other hand, ‘precarity can be understood as a category of order, which designates the effects of different political, social and legal compensations of a general precariousness’ (Lorey 2015: 12). However, protection against the effects of precariousness is not evenly distributed. For example, Chile does have welfare policies that protect workers against the labour market’s precarity. However, access to this protection has become uneven and only operates in some contexts.

Thus, neoliberalism will appear as a threefold concept throughout this thesis. Firstly, as the model that supports the creation and implementation of the PDTI. Secondly, as a way of understanding how the state has not been going through a process of contraction, rather it has been reformed by an ongoing process of neoliberalisation that entails the assimilation of market-oriented practices that, in turn, are transforming the notions of citizenship. Thirdly and lastly, it involves the reshaping of the labour market through mechanisms such as flexibilisation and reduction or loss of welfare benefits – commonly associated with precarity. Taking into account these three instantiations of neoliberalism, I want to map the material and discursive effects accompanying the execution of a programme ideologically based on this model and, in practice, operationally limited by it.

3. In the state’s shoes

How does the state attain its reality in everyday life? In order to answer to this question, as well as many others, I suggest that it is necessary to leave aside the idea of a reified state which dominates from the top level (Abrams 1988). We should redirect our efforts to understanding it as the outcome of an entangled set of practices and processes, within which ordinary citizens and political agents negotiate power and meaning (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005). This decision implies abandoning the idea of approaching a stable research subject, and the necessity of guiding one's focus towards the study of emergent and unstable configurations: state formations and their effects. In other words, we have to address how people, in their everyday lives, inhabit and experience different sets of strategies of governance (Anjaria 2011)

3.1. The anthropology of the state

As Kurtz (2001) affirms, ‘the concept of the state is elusive, but it is not beyond conceptualisation’. It can be understood as a complex system, or as a set of processes, interlaced apparatuses, institutions and offices with the power and authority to rework these processes, and relations of power in order to achieve materiality (Kurtz 2001; Trouillot 2001). Therefore, the state should be seen as a set of state agencies (Abrams 1988) which cannot be reduced to
any one particular government (Trouillot 2001). This conceptualisation allows anthropologists to tackle the state, interpreting it as sets of processes and relationships that are within reach. Consequently, this decision gives substance to a construct which is recognised by its abstraction and, in some cases, comprehended as a ‘non-empirical given’ (Trouillot 2001), thus turning it into an object that is ethnographically accountable.

Addressing the state as a system of apparatuses, processes, and relations of power implies a partial rupture with the so-called Weberian approach which reduces the state to an entity that — due to the social contract which legitimises it — politically conducts and regulates a particular territory through centralised government institutions operated by state agents/bureaucrats. Thus, to interrogate the state as an ethnographic subject, it is also necessary to expose its political and social foundations, its discourses and representations, technologies, activities, practices and its processes of power distribution, which delineate and fix social identities (Nagengast 1994).

In other words, rather than being only a functional bureaucratic machine, the state can be addressed as a cultural and political construction (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). It takes form through the practices of its agencies and agents, through its materiality, and through the experiences of individuals and communities who come into contact with its apparatuses. Hence, this picture presents the state, not as a centralised, historically given, and stable entity, but as an un-centred, culturally produced, and dynamic configuration of representations, actors, practices, technologies, knowledge, and institutions (Copeland 2014).

Shapiro (2011) affirms that the aim of an anthropology of the state is to answer questions related to the construction and limits of the state, exploring its activities and effects (both objectified and empirical dimensions) in everyday life. Following this argument, an approach focused only on the strategies of governance and the activities carried out by the state’s apparatuses would be limited, and would require an open dialogue with an analysis centred on how individuals and communities engage and experience these practices on a daily basis. However, my research offers a different perspective on what is and what is not negotiable or flexible. While, as Shapiro suggests, it seems essential to address the emerging dimension of the state by paying attention to the encounters between those who act as its interface and the citizens who interact with these agents, I argue that there are elements that transcend these relationships. There are compulsory and not negotiable criteria and practices coming from the central government and carried out by its officials, which must also be taken into consideration. Consequently, I tackle those strategies of governance imposed from above (outside the
ethnographic spaces in which the programme was being implemented) and translated on the ground (the kinds of processes I was able to attend to).

In the relationship between field-level officials and the Williche farmers participating in the PDTI, multiple images of the Chilean state are being (re)configured. Both the agents of the state in the local level apparatuses and the inhabitants of the territory mobilise symbolic representations of the state through cultural and political practices (Gupta 1995). Following the arguments of Ferguson and Gupta (2002) the state is being constructed and signified in the territories in which focalised programmes have been promoting encounters between frontline officials – infused with the state’s authority – and the recipients of public goods distributed through these initiatives. On the other hand, the image of the state as a surrounding identity, which encompasses all scales of social relationships, has real effects in the world because these effects are installed and re-produced within the practices, and their consequences, of those acting in its name.

3.2. State-effects and state-affects

Trouillot (2001: 126), building on Foucault’s work on power, argues that by taking into account the fluidity of the state, we should go ‘beyond governmental or national institutions to focus on the multiple sites in which state processes and practices are recognisable through their effects’. Therefore, and undermining the more institutionalist approaches based on the understanding of state apparatuses, state practices, relations, and processes, state power would not have an ‘institutional fixity’, and one could find state-effects in other places, not only governmental agencies.

In practical terms, this approach suggests that it not possible to address the state as being independent from its effects. For example, when carrying out their tasks, public servants do not necessarily enact the power of a coherent state. It is not the practice itself that embodies the essence of the state, but rather the effects that are being produced through their practices. Thus, the only way of approaching the state would be through the observation and examination of its various effects. In that sense, to recognise someone as a state agent implies that their practices and interactions, and their subsequent meanings and consequences (discursive and/or material), are identified as state actions. Nustad (2005: 92) brings together this argument by proposing that ‘if we follow the focus on state-effects to its conclusion, this would lead us to define the “state” [quotation marks in the original] as any agents that produces state-effects’.
Here we have to differentiate between what Nustad (2005: 88) identifies as intentions and effects. He suggests that state actors’ practices might produce unintended and alternative effects, which are different from the intentions that motivated them. The concept of unintended consequences goes back to Merton’s article ‘The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action’ (Merton 1936). In this work, he states that unanticipated consequences may follow unorganised and formally organised action. Due to factors such as ignorance; short-term interests that do not consider the future consequences of an action; the prominence of basic or fundamental values that motivate certain actions regardless of their effects, among others: unforeseen – but not necessarily negative – consequences may arise. Formally organised action, such as a state-led development programme like the PDTI, provides a good opportunity to observe these effects. The prior formulation of explicit statements of purpose and procedure allow us to observe how these objectives or motivations reach the ground through their decentralisation at the hands of the officials in charge at the local level. Therefore, the effects produced when interactions between state actors and, as in the case of this thesis, recipients of state programmes take place, there is a divergence between the expected outcomes (intentions) of these interactions and what actually happens during its instantiation (effects).

In a similar vein but from another approach, Mitchell (2002: 12) addresses state-effects by stressing the material dimension of the state. He argues that the modern state has been characterised ‘as a structure of rules or institutions whose regularity and abstractness separates it from the social order it governs’. Hence, the separation between the power of the state and the material world it governs continues, whilst neglecting non-human elements which interact with the activities of human agents, and also shaping diverse social processes according to human planning (with varying levels of success). Therefore, in order to grasp the state, we cannot separate its abstract manifestation from its material presence (Mitchell 1999) or, as Harvey (2005) puts it, the materiality of state-effects.

Harvey (2005) argues that ‘the materiality of state-effects’ can be studied through the state’s infrastructures, which do not simply represent political ideologies but actively participate (often unexpectedly) in the processes by which political relations take shape. In this sense, infrastructure allows us to access significant narratives of frequently unrecognised dynamics of state formation (Harvey and Knox 2012), of how the political is enacted, and how the contemporary state emerges as a potent force in people’s everyday lives (Harvey and Knox 2015).

In their work about road construction in Peru, Harvey (2005), and Harvey & Knox (2012, 2015) ethnographically addressed public infrastructure, revealing the complexity of the relations
carried out between the state with citizens and other organisations, in order to safeguard its own permanence (Harvey 2014). Attention to the political function of infrastructures allows us to reveal the ‘creative possibilities’ that emerge when infrastructures configure people’s daily lives. Public projects bring fears of undesirable transformations, and promises of a better future, to those who would be affected by its materialisation, making visible state representations and expectations, which emerge from its potential consequences.

Woodward (2016) suggests that rather than focusing on state-effects, the focus should be on those who are involved in affective relations with the state. For her, ‘state affects’ are manifested in differential and relational ways, adding inconsistencies to the structuring ‘effects’ that, at the same time, affect bodies in different forms and unexpected relations (Woodward 2014a).

Although state effects are being reproduced in bureaucratic practices and in infrastructural initiatives, they also emerge as feelings, emotions and embodied responses in contexts of interaction between individuals (citizens and non-citizens) and state agents, or when these actors are involved in state-like practices. The affective resonance of these encounters is an essential component in the unfolding contingency of political life (Laszczkowski and Reeves 2015), contributing to the (re)production of the state’s representations. Thus, encounters with ‘the state’ allow the elicitation of emotions and feelings which, in turn, enable the emergence of affective registers that shape the same object that produced them. State effects, in relational terms, produce the substance of state imagination.

Krohn-Hansen and Nustad (2005: ix) argue that the state ‘is revealed and becomes inscribed in persons and their relations’. This implies that in order to gain access to the state’s relational actualisations, an approach focused on how it is being exposed through localised interactions taking place in bounded spaces presents itself as a productive strategy. In this way, by taking into account the spatial dimension in which these interactions take place, I will be able to address how the state is made effective and affective in local settings as a material and discursive reality; what guises it adopts; and how it is rendered relevant by those who produce, and are affected by, its effects.

### 3.3. Locating the everyday enactments of the state

Das (2007: 7) argues that the everyday is itself eventful. Drawing on her work on cases of extreme violence in India, she states that the memory of certain events (e.g. moments of violence) are folded into ongoing relationships taking place in the everyday. She suggests that
in order to understand social suffering, rather than appealing to the transcendental, we should ‘descend into the ordinary’, into everyday life. By taking part in the interactions and encounters that occur in the everyday, memories and representations, in turn, shape and determine the way in which these interactions unfold. What I propose here is to use Das’s approach as a methodological strategy to access representations of the state that are being generated in the ordinary.

The ethnography of the state is particularly well-equipped to capture how the state is constructed and viewed in the everyday practices of ordinary people (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Gupta 1995), and how these quotidian state routines, rituals, activities, and policies – as cultural forms – establish and regulate the social making of meanings and the production of categories of subjects (Saldivar 2011). Hence, an opportunity to encounter the state is made possible in the observation of the relationship between these citizens and governmental bureaucracies at a local level (Gupta 1995). This approach focuses its attention on the processes through which the state is made effective in a territory, within the embedded and routinised practices of its deconcentrated institutions (Ferguson and Gupta 2002).

Therefore, focusing on the implementation of the PDTI as a particular technology that operates as one of many direct public interventions executing Chilean indigenous public policy, it is possible to address the assorted practices and the various local manifestations of the state. The effects of these interactions continuously shape cultural aspects such as local and political relations; territorial identities; and notions of belonging of the Williche people participating in the programme. While carrying out an ethnography focussed on state-effects, it is possible to identify and analyse these everyday practices and the relationship between state agents or field-level officials, and citizens or users in a local context (De La Maza 2012; De La Maza & Alchao 2012). This illuminates the mechanisms of ‘state spatialisation’ (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002) and the consequences of the implementation of a model based on the principles of neoliberal multiculturalism, which ‘imposes conditions and values on subaltern population’ (Povinelli 2002) such as the Williche farmers participating in the PDTI.

Public policy is a central concept for the analysis of the state because they are two sides of the same coin: the power mechanisms that lie beneath public policies are part of the reproduction of the state (Rastrepo 2010). These policies are a central issue for the organisation of governments: they legitimise the actions of the state and of those in power; and in the process of interacting with them, individuals assume collective identities (Ramírez 2010). Therefore, by categorising individuals and problems — and specific individuals as identified policy problems
— policies dynamically generate new groups of subjects, such as ‘citizens’, ‘migrants’, ‘homeless’, ‘indigenous’, ‘farmers’, and so on. In this way, governance operates by using policy to restrict and regulate the choices that individuals can make, and to ‘normalise’ particular kinds of practice and conduct (Wedel et al. 2005). For example, when taking part in the PDTI, Williche farmers become members and representatives of both the Williche people, and small-scale farmers’ group.

Public policies can be understood as political technologies commonly used by state apparatuses in order to achieve what appear to be generalised, neutral, and unproblematic goals. If we extend this argument, policies can be seen as a central instrument for studying a specific system of governance, and a gateway to address a group that is entwined with them (because policies are its main accessories): the state bureaucracy (Shore and Wright 1997). In this way, the practices of the officials when implementing the PDTI mobilise different categories of belonging, affecting the local politics of the areas in which they operate on a daily basis.

Therefore, to develop a more comprehensive and detailed picture of the political and interpretative processes occurring within the local state apparatuses, and their effects on the individuals who have an everyday relationship with these institutions, it is necessary to take into consideration the role of those who carry out the actions/policies of the state, thereby materialising it. Thus, paying attention to the bureaucratic tasks carried out by the field-level officials allowed me to observe the quotidian expressions of the state (Saldívar 2011).

In the aforementioned arguments concerning the processual approach, the state is addressed as a complex set of processes, of interlaced apparatuses, institutions, and technologies such as public policies and focalised interventions established as state programmes. But it also combines the representations, discourses and the power relationships which emerge from this construct. However, it is fundamental to recognise that these discourses are historically informed, and they vary according to the manner in which different actors are positioned in categories such as ethnicity and territoriality. Therefore, an ethnography of bureaucracy, and particularly bureaucratic representations of the state, must take into account the particular context in which it takes place (Saldívar 2011).

Following Bear and Mathur (2015), state bureaucracies can be understood as the result of a social contract between citizens and state agents in order to create and reproduce an order, and, therefore, they can be associated with the representation of state control, as Herzfeld (1993) does. Although individuals that work in these offices and agencies are generically labelled as
‘bureaucrats’ and represent the idea of rationality and the ‘common good’, it is impossible to understand their actions if we separate them from the particular processes at the local level, and their own belonging to social categories and positionalities.

An ethnography focused on the daily representations and practices of the local state agents is useful to address how the state is represented on the frontline, and to reflect on how the state naturalises what is, in fact, a particular and historical form of social order (Saldívar 2011). Also, by employing this approach, it is possible to understand how these ‘bureaucrats’ negotiate their positions within their interactions with the state (Radcliffe and Webb 2015) and its policies, generating representations of their own practices and their effects, and discourses on statecraft and society.

However, bureaucracy is not only about individuals, discourses, and representations. Correspondingly, these legitimised institutions of governance also have a material dimension in ‘public things such as offices, documents, technocratic procedures and infrastructure that seek to provide the foundation for social relationships with the state’ (Bear and Mathur 2015). This is the context in which public officials work, where policies become concrete actions, where the majority of the people come into contact with ‘the state’ and experience it, and, in consequence, where many of the images and representations of the state are forged (Gupta 1995). Using a broader understanding of the materiality of state-effects, and taking into account that the material structures through which the state operates can be considered as an infrastructure, the works of Hull (2012), Pinker (2015), and Hetherington (2011) are useful. Their ethnographic accounts of the role played by bureaucratic and governmental technologies such as official documents in city planning, territorial claims, and public infrastructure negotiations, provide a valuable approach to address the circulation and agency of these technologies throughout the implementation of the PDTI.

On the one hand, a focus on the political function of these technologies (or infrastructure) will allow me to map the ‘creative possibilities’ (Harvey 2014), the ‘undisciplined interpretations’ (Hetherington 2011), and, mainly in the case of documents, their ‘mediation role’, which can ‘transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’ (Hull 2012). In this vein, the work of Mathur (2016: 3) on how lower-level bureaucrats, through their everyday practices, render the developmental Indian state legible by interpreting, translating and acting upon authoritative texts, letters, meetings, a variety of documents, is relevant. He suggests, as I do, that ‘papers’ are ‘not just a thing that bureaucrats work with, and documents do not only make visible a particular state-endorsed developmental reality’. Instead,
he stresses the importance of documents for ‘the composition, maintenance, and assemblage of the state’ (Ibid).

Similarly, for Gupta (2012), one of the most important actions and technologies carried out as part of state routine is the act of writing documents. Therefore, in order to access the fine detail of the PDTI’s implementation, I will pay attention to the role of those cultural and political ‘artifacts, and reflect on how this is experienced by interlocutors in the field, highlighting the entanglements that these technologies generate, and also the boundaries that they overcome, recreate, or even reinforce’ (Lowenkron and Ferreira 2014).

Alongside my attention to other technologies and infrastructure that frame, prevent or enable the work of the extension teams, I focus particularly on certain documents, highlighting their role within the daily practices of field-level officials as they seek to mobilise and relocate resources, and capture new users. In detail, the emphasis is on the function and transition of these technologies, and on how officials and users addressed, managed, manipulated, and understood them throughout their circulation and implementation. In addition, I am particularly interested in the decisions and consequences (and their justifications) that these technologies produced.

4. State-led development at the local level

As it is an ‘agricultural extension programme’, the PDTI can be approached as a state-led development programme that identifies deficiencies to be overcome through technology transfer and advice from specialised agricultural technicians or professionals. Following Mosse (2004: 8), my ‘ethnographic question is not whether but how’ the PDTI operates in local settings. Furthermore, my research seeks to fill a gap that exists in studies of development initiatives being implemented in local communities. Most of the research around these processes has been done from the perspective of the local community, but little has been written about those who act as an interface in this process. Moreover, the few studies that do address this phenomenon are mainly focussed on development professionals working on international aid initiatives (e.g. Watanabe 2019). Therefore, and following the style of Ferguson (1994), rather than being specifically focused on the Williche people inhabiting central Chiloé, my approach is centred on the local state apparatus: namely the local branches of the PDTI, carrying out their mandate through the everyday practices of the field-level officials who act as expert advisers and bureaucrats.
Work on development, particularly international aid financed by development banks, has been focused on those processes that take place behind the scenes. Such research has generally focused on the discourses and interests that motivate these initiatives, questioning their origins and real intentions. However, my ethnographic approach seeks not to fall into an analysis of these hidden interests or negotiations taking place in the background. This is due to the following two points: firstly, this type of approach tends to obscure what really happens in the name of these development programmes (Li 2007); and secondly, although these interests are behind the formulation and implementation of these initiatives, by operating in complex and dynamic contexts, both the objectives and the outcomes are rarely consistent with the original intentions (Ferguson 1994: 17).

One of the definitions provided by Escobar (1997) posits development as a way to reach the material and economic conditions that supposedly characterise societies identified as 'developed'. Among these conditions, Escobar recognises the technification of agriculture and the adoption of values and principles of modernity such as rationality and an individual orientation. Furthermore, de Sardan (2005) suggests that these types of definitions mobilise normative notions that support discursive analyses focused on the hidden motives behind developmental initiatives. In light of this argument, he proposes a non-normative and descriptive definition that understands development in terms of the existence of actors and organisations involved in initiatives that address development as an object. This 'developmentalist configuration' comprises what he understands by development:

‘(...) a cosmopolitan world of experts, bureaucrats, NGO personnel, researchers, technicians, project chiefs and field agents, who make a living, so to speak, out of developing other people, and who, to this end, mobilize and manage a considerable amount of material and symbolic resources’ (de Sardan 2005).

The actors that de Sardan proposes as constitutive performers in these configurations can also include those that Li (2007: 4) calls ‘trustees’. She describes these actors as those holding ‘a position defined by the claim to know how others should live, to know what is best for them, to know what they need’. While this may resemble de Sardan’s approach, Li does not claim that trustees seek to rule over the recipients of these initiatives through their practices and definitions. Although de Sardan and Li make a call to avoid romanticising the intentions of these actors and the relationships that arise in the process, they state that developers or trustees aim to improve the conditions and capabilities of the ‘developees’ or ‘targeted group’. Again, the focus here is on the configuration and practicality of development, not on an analysis of the intentions behind the formulation of these initiatives. Therefore, development ‘in the field’ is
the product of the activities carried out within the framework of these configurations of actors. For this reason, examining the interactions and interface between developers or trustees and targeted groups can provide privileged access to seeing how development operates locally.

4.1. Transferring solutions

The PDTI is not the product of international aid being delivered in a third world country. However, it is the product of a series of developmentalist tendencies that imposed criteria in order to improve the living conditions of poor or vulnerable populations in what have been called 'developing countries'. Specifically, the PDTI corresponds to a category of developmental initiatives known as 'agricultural extension programmes', with the feature that it is financed by, and executed through, the state apparatuses.

Agricultural extension work 'has been created and recreated, adapted and developed over the centuries. Its evolution extends over nearly four thousand years, although its modern forms are largely a product of the past two centuries', particularly since the Irish famine in the 1840s mostly caused by potato blight (Jones 1997). In this way, these types of initiatives gained momentum in a context in which the transfer of technical knowledge was identified as a fundamental condition for enhancing agricultural production and protecting crops from potential threats. Thus, due to this context, the figure of the 'expert' or 'technician' who travels and meets with peasants or peasant communities to provide advice and transfer knowledge in pursuit of this objective emerges as a relevant actor in the agricultural field.

However, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that these types of programmes were co-opted by developmental initiatives. Rather than transferring knowledge and technologies for the protection of certain subsistence or economic activities, as developmental programmes, they sought to intervene in deprived communities by introducing new practices to improve their productivity and provide them with a better and more reliable source of income. This ideological framework gave rise to private, foreign (in the shape of international aid), and state-led initiatives such as the PDTI.

These extension or transfer programmes are based on the assumed superiority of 'rational science' and the identification of deficiencies generally associated with traditional agricultural practices (Shepherd and McWilliam 2011). Thus, such programmes seek to educate farmers and unfold changes ‘through hierarchical, technically-oriented, extension services [...] generally known as the “transfer of technology”' (Thompson and Scoones 1994: 68). Extension, therefore, aims to deliver relevant information to farmers in the form of technical advice that seeks to
encourage the implementation of new technologies and enable access to resources to increase profitability (Anderson and Feder 2004).

My use of the concept ‘technology’ is twofold. First, in discussions regarding bureaucratic practices, I understand it in terms of material devices adapted for a particular purpose, such as documents, budgets and application forms. On the other hand, I also understand it as ‘the organisation of tools and techniques for the performance of tasks’ (Crewe and Harrison 1998: 92). This definition is useful for addressing what Crewe and Harrison call the ‘fetishization of technology’ in the field of developmental initiatives. They suggest that underdevelopment is considered to be a condition of the lack or scarcity of adequate technology. Due to this active principle, agricultural extension programmes tend to focus on the transfer of technical advice, the implementation of projects, and the delivery of resources. In the case of the PDTI, this technology transfer is materialised in the delivery of greenhouses, solar panels, motor pumps, and walking tractors, or in the development of initiatives such as workshops, technical tours, and labour training, among others.

The work of Planel (2014) and Emmenegger (2016) in Ethiopia, Shepherd (2006) in the Peruvian Andes, Shepherd and McWilliam (2011) in East Timor, Desai (2006) in India, and all applied anthropology research carried out mainly by American anthropologists since the 1930s (Rhoades 2005) has (extensively or superficially) dealt with the diverse interests and practices behind, and emerging from, agricultural extension programmes and state-peasant encounters. However, these researches have been generally focused on the interface between development practitioners or technicians and the targeted communities, and there is little ethnography on how these initiatives are put into practice, and how these organisations actually work (Desai 2006). For this reason, and recognising that the implementation of the PDTI is not a straightforward process, and that its materialisation in the field frequently diverges from the intentions and objectives behind its formulation, I approach the concept of ‘transference’ critically.

Rather than focusing on the reasons behind the formulation of this particular agricultural extension programme, this research seeks to deepen an understanding of this transfer exercise. In order to do so, I address how it is carried out, what technologies – as bureaucratic devices – contribute to and shape this process, what relationships and interactions are being activated and put into play, and what practices and expertise are involved in the allocation of resources. In this way, this research contributes from a different perspective to the already existing anthropological literature in the field of agricultural extension programmes. Rather than
focusing on the discourses and motivations behind its formulation, or in assessing its impact and suitability, I sought to understand how a state-led development programme reaches its recipients through, and mediated by, the daily practices of the field-level officials in charge of its execution. In this way, my focus is not on its implementation as an excuse to address its past or its future, but rather to elucidate the process by which it is made effective in a local setting.

5. The parts that make up the whole

The first chapter provides an account of how the Chilean neoliberalising state operates under a polycentric approach that leaves field-level officials in a precarious situation with respect to their position in the organisational structure that contains them. The labour regime, in which they are inserted, and which is mainly characterised by hiring workers under ‘fee contracts’ that do not guarantee access to social welfare, generates a context marked by precarious experiences and job insecurity. Their backgrounds and work ethos allow field-level officials to navigate the labour conditions imposed by the programme and the material and institutional context that determines their actions and expectations. The conditions that they face each day nourish narratives around their precarious situation, made effective by neoliberal criteria such as flexibility, accountability, market-oriented practices, and managerialism, among others.

In the second chapter, I drew on ethnographic descriptions in order to discuss how, through practices informed by their knowledge of the local context and expertise, field-level officials exercise their discretion in shaping the material dimension of the programme’s outcomes. In stabilising budgets and securing and allocating resources, they materialise and decentralise the policy that provides the general guidelines to the PDTI, influencing how the latter reaches the local level. Therefore, and placing value on the signifying practices carried out by the officials, I demonstrated the fundamental role that technologies such as projects and budgets play in the mobilisation of resources. As material devices, or as the organisation of tools and techniques for the completion of tasks (Crewe and Harrison 1998), these technologies are essential for capturing funds that become inputs or activities for the benefit of users, and that later will be stabilised in a budget, formulated in retrospect, that will function as evidence against the officials’ redundancy.

Considering that the field-level officials are constantly recognised as state agents, Chapter 3 delved into the production of state-effects and state-affects in the course of the interactions between them and the local inhabitants of the territories in which they perform their functions. Thus, I presented evidence to argue that PDTI officials’ visits and activities, especially in areas
that are difficult to access, informs affective registers about the presence/absence of Chilean State. This ‘intermittency’ is subject to external phenomena such as access to, and the feasibility of using, mobility infrastructure. I illustrated how this infrastructure plays an essential role in how Quehui islanders experience the state, in practical and affective terms, and in the emergence of aspirations related to reducing this intermittency by anchoring it through fixed infrastructure (i.e. a municipal delegation). All this together produces and puts into circulation divergent narratives in terms of the manifestations of the state that the Islanders long for (its caring guise enacted in the delivery of public services), or are unwilling to accept (its neglectful face, that is product of its intermittence, and its inconvenient actualisations embodied by law enforcement officials).

On the other hand, in Chapter 4 I argued that official documents, those with the required signatures or stamps, act as socio-material devices with the ability to create, hinder or prevent the relocation of resources, the execution of projects and activities, and the generation of a paper trail that accounts for the work carried out by the officials. Contrary to literature suggesting that documents are an object of desire for marginalised groups, I show how in this context, due to its particular constellation of relationships, there is an asymmetry of anxieties tilted towards the PDTI officials rather than towards the indigenous farmers. The field-level officials are the ones actively collecting, producing, and mobilising these documents to boost and materialise initiatives that would validate their continuity in the programme. Thus, these technologies, validated through autographic practices that easily allow the author behind their making to be identified, take the form of evidence that facilitates the processes of accountability and the subsequent renewal of their fee contracts.

Lastly, in the fifth chapter I concluded that, through their daily practices, field-level officials intervene – many times without wishing to – in local politics, thus reconfiguring long-standing relations. In the course of their activities in the field, and mainly because of the classificatory practices they employ to approach the territory and its inhabitants, they expose and reshape tensions among users of the PDTI, their neighbours, and those who participate in similar programmes (PRODESAL). The use of belonging markers based on ethnic or territorial criteria deepens and re-signifies existing ethno-racial differences, affecting how the local political arena, and the relationships taking place in that context, are assembled and experienced. Informed by the above-mentioned, I argued that everyday state practices based on a topographic approach (and with little attention paid to both the identity and territorial categories of belonging already at play) impose borders and requirements that are triggering new and ambiguous narratives of
belonging and discrimination, and fostering language changes that reconfigure existing differences.
CHAPTER 1. *NI CHICHA NI LIMONADA: SACRIFICE UNDER PRECARITY*

After entering the cold office which was warmed only by an old and rusty gas heater, accepting a hot *mate* (a herbal infusion that is prepared in a container - also called *mate* - which is drunk through a straw commonly made from metal), and taking the only remaining decent chair not being used by the three members of the PDTI extension team, I tried to focus on their lively conversation. Like every Monday, I was visiting the office to make myself aware of their weekly schedule, and to make sure that I could be part of some of their activities. On this occasion, they were talking about their municipal responsibilities and a meeting that Jorge, the leader of the team from Castro, had had with their boss. He was explaining that she wanted them to participate in a weekly meeting where different services from the DIDECO (the Community Development Directorate, under which the PDTI operates in the municipal organisational chart – see Fig. 7 below, page 57) would present, in front of the others, a report of their activities, methodologies and goals. Immediately after this, Jorge changed the topic and started urging the team to carry out their ‘technical visits’¹⁰ on the island, because the boss (now from INDAP) was focused on the fulfilment of those particular tasks. Because Spanish is a gendered language, the use of the noun ‘boss’ could be translated as *jefa* (female) or *jefe* (male), and after a couple of months this nuance allowed me to navigate their conversation and to identify who they were referring to. The Director of DIDECO was the *jefa*, and the Mayor (with whom they would occasionally have direct contact) and the area manager from INDAP were called *jefe*.

D: ‘How many bosses do you have?’ – I asked Jorge with interest, but in a joking tone. Before replying, he looked towards the ceiling as though he was looking for the answer, while juggling a little basketball. He sighed deeply and looking at me, he replied.

J: ‘The other day I was discussing this with someone. We are *el último eslabón de la cadena* [expression similar to ‘bottom rung of the ladder’], anyone from INDAP and from the municipality can ask us to do something, and we cannot say no’.

Bruno, who could hear our conversation, intervened, adding: ‘Look, this is the way it is; we are the first to receive congratulations from the people, not from the bosses, but also the first to receive their reprimands, from the people and from the bosses’ – and in a categorical and serious tone he concluded – ‘For those working in the government we are at the bottom, the bottom rung’.

Renato, with his characteristic ironic smile, ended the conversation, saying: ‘Yes, we are!’

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¹⁰ One of the team’s tasks imposed by INDAP. As one of the main tools of agricultural extension, this practice consists of periodic visits to farmers participating in the programme, to check the condition of their crops and livestock, offer technical advice, deliver information, raise demand for possible funding applications, and verify the implementation of projects.
After spending a couple of months with the PDTI team and witnessing how they carry out their daily activities, and more importantly, what these were and what they implied, I realised that this feeling of being the last and least recognised department within the government was a direct consequence of the particularities of the programme, its place within the organisational structure, its relation with the institutions that support it, the conditions that materialise, and the precarious labour conditions to which they are subject.

In this chapter, I seek to address how precarity, made effective by the neoliberalisation of Chile’s labour regime, both explains and troubles the ethos of the PDTI officials. I describe the institutional entanglement that brings together efforts coming from the central and local governments, providing the ground for this programme to operate, as well as reflecting on its goals, methodologies, and the conditions that structure the possibilities of action for those actors involved in its implementation. In particular, informed by my ethnographic immersion, I reflect on how this programme works and what labour and material conditions are imposed on those who are in charge of its execution. Based on this, I argue that their position in the organisational structure, either as those who dwell at the bottom of the hierarchy, or as those who are in between two institutions, generates a context of ambiguity between having the autonomy to carry out what they define as a good job, and the inertia produced by the rigidity of the programme. In addition, I argue that their background and trajectories, when combined with their experiences working in the PDTI, contribute to the configuration of a work ethos based on care and self-sacrifice, but also inform their entrepreneurial aspirations and the uncontested use of neoliberal means and procedures.

1. Locating the PDTI

The Programa de Desarrollo Territorial Indígena (Territorial Indigenous Development Programme - PDTI) is a programme of the Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario (Institute of Agricultural Development - INDAP) undertaken, since 2011, preferably through municipalities, and in exceptional circumstances by private agencies. INDAP, created in 1962 under the Agrarian Reform Law,\footnote{From 1962, when it was promoted by the centre-right president Jorge Alessandri, to the military coup led by Pinochet in 1973, ‘agrarian reform’ constituted a political and technical process that sought to redistribute land from large private estates to large cooperatives or collective properties, without changing its boundaries (Valdés and Foster 2015).} as the legal heir of the Council for Agricultural Development and Research (CONFIN) seeks to promote the economic, social and technological development of small agricultural and peasant producers, in order to help raise their entrepreneurial skills,
organisational and commercial capacity, their integration into the rural development process, and to optimise the use of productive resources (Faiguenbaum 2017).

One of the ways in which INDAP, in collaboration with the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (National Corporation of Indigenous Development - CONADI) which provides 24% of the PDTI’s budget, seeks to carry out its institutional mission is through the allocation of resources through agreements and contracts with municipalities that, among other activities, must be used to hire an ‘extension team’, preferably composed of professionals and technicians from the forestry and agricultural sector (see Fig. 7 above). The distinctive features of the PDTI, and of programmes with similar characteristics, lie in the relationship between INDAP, the municipality, and the members of the extension teams. Although the latter must execute an initiative formulated, financed and assessed by INDAP, the technical norms of the programme (INDAP 2017) stipulate that ‘there will be no labour or contractual relationship of any kind or nature among the members of the extension team hired by the executing agency and INDAP’. This is particularly resonant when, as I will explain later, the area manager and other area agency officials act as hierarchical superiors, defining courses of action and imposing criteria.
As part of their tasks, the extension team must offer permanent technical advice and support to the PDTI’s ‘users’¹¹, operating through district units. As INDAP (n.d.a) puts it, the programme is oriented towards strengthening the different strategies of the economy of the indigenous farmers. This goal includes their families (defined as one or more people who, united or not by kinship ties, inhabit the same home or part of it, sharing their food and budget), indigenous communities and associations, de facto groups,¹² or any other form of organisation. In order to be a recipient of the programme, these farmers or groups must be focused on silvi-agricultural and related activities complementary to forestry and livestock production (such as handicrafts, rural tourism, processed products, gatherings, and services, among others), according to their own vision of development.

The PDTI’s target group, namely the users, are indigenous farmers, including their families, communities or any other form of organisation, who develop silvo-agricultural activities and/or activities that take place in the countryside which are in some way related (e.g. crafts). These individuals are selected when they are recognised as needing to improve or maintain their production systems, and/or to develop new endeavours and/or business in their territories. One representative per family can participate as a PDTI user, but in exceptional cases, the Regional Director may authorise more than one member of the family to be part of the programme if they carry out agricultural, forestry and/or related activities independently – especially when they are young people and/or women. Also, non-indigenous farmers and peasants may participate in the programme if an indigenous organisation or neighbours on the same territory request their incorporation.

As established in the technical norms of the programme (INDAP 2017), the PDTI seeks that the users develop certain capabilities related to the following areas: participation and empowerment; development of productive capacities; facilitation of access to financing; facilitation of access to a specialised training and advisory service; articulation with the public and private networks; and promotion of sustainable development. To achieve this INDAP, through the extension team, relocates resources that are being restructured each year, according to an adjustment factor that the Ministry of Finance provides through the Budget Law.

¹¹ The term ‘user’ is employed to characterise a person participating in programmes or accessing the public system with any particular demand (De La Maza & Alchao 2012).
¹² A ‘de facto group’ describes an association of people that exist in reality, even though such a group may not be legally recognised by official laws. In this case, it refers to a group of indigenous people, users of the PDTI, which is not recognised as an Indigenous Community or Association by the Indigenous Law 19.253.
INDAP also provides resources for the Fondo Único de Financiamiento (Single Fund for Financing) which, directed by the extension team, seeks to provide resources to meet the users’ individual or collective silvo-agricultural (or related) needs. However, the team in their role as financing facilitators must also identify and apply for funds and grants offered by other public or private institutions, such as CONADI, regional governments, or the Ministry of Culture, among others, always aiming at the users’ needs. Put simply, the programme, through the activities and practices of the extension team, seeks to grant access to technical training, integrated financing and support from local associations, community work and individual endeavours.

INDAP finances the wages and transportation allowances of the extension team, but these resources are administered by the executing agency: in this case, the municipality. INDAP also finances training initiatives such as the hiring of experts and consultants, talks, technical tours (to learn about other successful experiences), workshops and the establishment of demonstration units (small crops of different cereals or vegetables that seek to demonstrate their feasibility and possible uses in certain sectors previously chosen by the extension team), or other complementary activities directly benefitting users (including expenses regarding food, means of transportation, supplies and materials). In addition, these resources are used for the development of what is known as mesas de coordinación (coordination meeting). These meetings bring together the representatives of the users, the extension team, the area manager from INDAP, and an authority from the executing agency. Finally, the budget covers part of the necessary expenses for running an office (General Office Expenses).

The ‘transportation allowance’, one of the most needed benefits because the officials have to frequently visit remote rural areas (sometimes with poor access) is funded by an annual contribution from INDAP. For operational purposes, the allowance must be delivered to the members of the extension team in monthly instalments, and is intended to cover the costs of travelling and maintaining their vehicles (i.e. renting motorboats, paying for land or sea transport, paying for fuel, fixing mechanical problems, etc.). This fund is complemented with resources provided by the executing agency. In the same way, there are other items included in the agreement that must be co-financed between INDAP and the executing agency. For example, the municipalities should contribute towards covering the costs of certain activities, or pay for other complementary activities. This includes the hiring of specialised consultancies, training activities and workshops and technical tours, among other expenses.

Finally, the wages of the extension team are defined according to the budgetary availability of the programme (which depends on the Annual Budget Law), and follows criteria that considers
past outcomes and results of the programme, the total number and dispersion of the users, the proportion of users according to their interests and needs, and the experience and expertise of the members of the extension team. In addition, their salaries can increase if they work in isolated or island territories such as the Chiloé archipelago, adding extra resources to the transportation allowance. However, what remains stable in the contractual conditions under which the members of the extension team are hired are the flexibility and lack of labour protection enforced by their employment scheme.

2. Under a Contrato de honorarios (Fee contracts): On no man’s land.

In order to understand how the PDTI is being implemented in local settings, it is necessary to describe the material and work conditions in which those responsible for its execution have to navigate and negotiate their institutional belonging. Both the Castro PDTI extension team and the Dalcahue team, although with some nuances, share similar experiences regarding their working conditions and their role within the institutions that control them. The similarities concerning their contractual circumstances are part of a broader phenomenon taking place in Chile which is related to the dissemination of a new contracting mechanism within local governments, based on the provision of services (an obligation to do) agreed between two parties: the municipality (legal person) and the field-level official (natural person).

Starting in 1978, Chile’s stability of employment was legally dismantled through the specific recognition of the entrepreneurial freedom of dismissal, and the extensive use of a range of contractual modalities imposing limited time duration (Sisto 2009). Changes in labour regulation specified in accordance with the principles of the neoliberal economic model established by the military dictatorship in 1976 were put in place with the aim of deregulating or liberalising the system of labour relations (Acuña and Pérez 2005).

The work of Acuña and Pérez (2005) illustrates that, while with the return to democracy in 1989 some changes were introduced to ensure the protection of workers, some structural aspects were maintained, and are still in operation. Currently, labour legislation, either actively or by default, allows the implementation of all forms of employment, albeit with some restrictions incorporated. All this was justified under the assumption that the role of the state was to ensure systemic competitiveness and the national economy’s presence in the international market (Arredondo 2015). This system continued the erosion of stable jobs, weakening the employment conditions and the levels of labour and social protection of the workers, thus generating a context marked by precarious conditions and job instability. Therefore, the possibility of building a fairly upward work trajectory is nowadays increasingly difficult, and a scheme where the
individuals must be mobile and adaptable to the dramatic changes has been normalised (Sisto 2009).

In this framework, introduced by the dictatorship and continuing to this day, organisational flexibility becomes a desired object, and forms part of managerial common sense. However, these changes do not refer only to the sphere of the private labour market, but their consequences are also observable in the way in which the Chilean state operates. The implementation of different forms of flexibility within the state apparatus is materialised through the establishment of mechanisms that seek to outsource the public functions of the state, and hiring workers without the legal rigidities of the traditional bureaucracy, which was considered to be inefficient and highly politicised (Arredondo 2015). The PDTI officials can be situated within this framework, having been hired under a ‘fee contract’ scheme.

Arredondo (2015) identifies two main factors that explain the growth of the segment of officials hired under these conditions: 1) the creation of programmes to implement a restricted focused social policy, and 2) the possibility of implementing a managerial system that allows greater flexibility in the hiring and dismissal of officials. Following the implementation of this new labour relations system, the ways in which work within the state is carried out has been affected by several contradictions. It is argued that state administration was in need of an environment that allowed greater autonomy, innovation, commitment and initiative, based on managerial notions such as technical rationality and political neutrality (Arredondo 2015). This configuration, in turn, has been creating the conditions for the deterioration of health and life conditions of the now precaritised state officials (Aravena 2018).

All the members of the PDTI teams are hired through what is called a contrato de honorarios (fee contract). Essentially, this contract implies an ‘obligation to do’ where one of the two parties concerned agrees to carry out a job or to provide a particular service. This legal agreement is different from a traditional ‘labour contract’ because the latter offers a fixed salary no matter the result, whereas in a fee contract the consideration will be a payment based on the result. In simpler terms, it is a bilateral legal act in which the contracting entity agrees on a fee for the fulfilment of a particular piece of work or service.

In Chile, municipal administrations are at the forefront of these hiring practices. They have the ability to employ people through fee contracts, and as such they perform as contracting agents of services carried out by individuals: in this case PDTI officials, acting as counterpart service providers (Valdebenito 2017). In addition, the law mandates that these activities must be
transitory and not prolonged, and they must be different from those executed by a municipal official, securing the absence of any procedure that could imply a relationship of dependence and subordination specified and protected by a traditional work contract (Neira and Rojas 2015). However, in practice, this principle of non-subordination is being removed by local authorities when demanding commitments that go beyond the spirit of the fee contract, which is based on the principle of two equal parties making a mutual agreement. Thus, the labour dynamics that are reproduced support the establishment of mechanisms of subordination and dependence that overlook the main distinctive features of this type of contract.

Nowadays it is quite common to recognise a series of manifestations of subordination in the labour relations between municipalities and trabajadores a honorarios (fee workers) (Valdebenito 2017). For instance, fee workers must comply with work hours, registration of assistance, orders and instructions to fulfil, superior and internal control, hierarchical dependence (Neira and Rojas 2015), and carrying out activities that correspond to those defined by the Estatuto Administrativo de Funcionarios Municipales (Administrative Statute of Municipal Officials), therefore performing as municipal officials or public servants.

The case of the PDTI officials working under the Municipality of Dalcahue is a clear example of this phenomenon. As Mariela, the official in charge of the PDTI in this district, once explained to me, even though she and the other officials were hired under this scheme, she has to comply with procedures such as stipulating her time of arrival and departure each day, thus fulfilling the same conditions of attendance as is compulsory for municipal officials hired on a stable and indefinite contract. Similarly, on certain occasions, they are required to send reports to the municipal councillors informing them of their activities and providing relevant information to generate actions focused on the population with whom they work. These two examples, among many others that I also witnessed in Castro, are clear examples showing how, under this contracting system, practices that would imply a relationship of subordination and dependence between PDTI officials and the municipality are being enacted.

One of the explanations for the rapid propagation of this labour relationship is found in the fact that fee workers are not under the protection of the Código del Trabajo (Labour Regulations), and as such they cannot claim any of the rights established by those guidelines, such as the right to holiday entitlement, compensation for years of service, and unemployment and accident insurance. However, all these benefits, or some set of them, could be incorporated in the fee contract agreement if the parties come to an understanding. Also, because their work contract is regulated by civil regulations and not by the Dirección del Trabajo (Labour Services) – which
exists to ensure compliance with labour, social security and health legislation, and to provide systems of prevention and alternative solutions for conflicts, among other responsibilities – the officials hired under a fee contract do not have the necessary protection in case of conflicts arising from such agreements (Dirección del Trabajo n.d.).

The PDTI officials were aware of the precarious conditions imposed by their contracts. In several conversations, either in their offices or at meetings or workshops that brought together several of the extension teams working on the archipelago, this fact came to light. Especially in the gatherings in which officials from different municipalities participated, the conversation always led in one way or another to a comparison of their working conditions. Some had to participate in activities carried out by their municipalities; others had transportation allowances to pay for fuel, boats and ferries; some of them received extra money if they stayed away from home overnight due to working in areas that are difficult to access; while those with better conditions were entitled to paid holidays, although they had to comply with a certain work schedule. However, regardless of the actual conditions stated in their contracts and of the existence of mechanisms that evidenced a relationship of subordination and dependency with their employers, the general perception of the officials revealed the instability of their labour ties and the anxieties that these precarious circumstances were generating.

On numerous occasions, someone from the extension teams with whom I worked claimed to be working under precarious conditions. On one of these occasions, Bruno stated:

B: ‘We should have more protection in the workplace. We are very mistreated’.

D: ‘But in what sense?’

B: ‘If contracts or agreements are delayed, sometimes your salary does not come for a couple of months. And when it comes to our rights, they wash their hands. You are in no man’s land’.

Within the municipal administration, there are two kinds of fee contracted employees: those who are hired under the Administrative Statute of Municipal Officials, which allows the hiring of people with professional and technical expertise when some casual or unusual work is needed, and those who are hired by ‘community programmes’ such as the PDTI. The latter are employed through a triangular relationship between the municipal administration (local government), central administration (central government) and the individual. This intricate operational hierarchy leaves field-level officials on the bottom rung of the ladder because they are at the base of the hierarchical scale, starting from the central government and finishing in its local enactments.
The hiring system used by the PDTI, that is the use of resources coming from INDAP and CONADI but contracted through the municipality, only contributed to the feeling of being abused. Working in 'no man’s land' accounts for this particular situation. Although both institutions requested the fulfilment of different functions, neither of them offered concrete measures to provide greater stability to officials and, in turn, few initiatives to contribute to the labour security or welfare of the employees. An interesting point that can be observed both in the meetings that bring together various officials, but also in their individual accounts, is that they are conscious of their social position. Somos a honorarios or estoy a honorarios (both can be translated as ‘being on fee contracts’) is the answer commonly given when someone asks them about the contractual regime under which they are employed. In this act, a recognition of a shared condition emerges, transcending their individual experiences and providing substance to their belonging to a group that suffers what they identify as mistreatment.

Although its definition is sometimes porous and dependent on the aims and discipline of each academic benefiting from its malleability, the concept of ‘precarity’ is useful to describe ‘both the tenuous conditions of neoliberal labour as well as states of anxiety, desperation, unbelonging, and risk experienced by temporary and irregularly employed workers’ (Millar 2014: 34). As a sociological category and due to its double applicability (external conditions and internal consequences), precarity is a useful term to reflect on the dilemmas of those working under unstable contract arrangements, and having little or no access to social protection. These individuals, who some academics have categorised as a new social class, or ‘class-in-the-making’ (Standing 2014) known as the ‘precariat’, are the ones suffering from limited welfare access, income insecurity, intermittent jobs, and the impossibility of organising themselves collectively, among other consequences of the implementation of a highly flexible work market (Greer 2016).

Although there is strong resistance to the use of the term ‘precariat’ to denominate a hypothetical social class – especially from social scientists researching the so-called global south, arguing that several of these elements have been historically present in this region – the definition provided by Standing (2011) is useful for identifying a group of individuals determined by their inability or, as I argue, their great difficulty in accessing certain beneficial conditions associated with labour security. Therefore, individuals belonging to the precariat or (as other academics term it) experiencing precarity, have a lack of protection against practices and possibilities such as arbitrary dismissal; clear hiring guidelines; upward mobility; health, unemployment or accidents insurance or policies; collective organisation; stable and adequate income; among other factors. The consciousness of belonging to this group also nourishes the
mobilisation point from which their shared demands arise: in the case of PDTI officials, in a poorly articulated manner and without institutional and legal support. Beyond the difficulties of mobilising their demands and making visible the precariousness of their employment situation, through their narratives and encounters they generate links with a national community of state workers who are victims of this contractual arrangement.

Due to his role as coordinator of the Castro extension team, Jorge was one of the officials who was most critical of the hiring system that was imposed on them and the one who, in a more articulate way, was able to convey how he and those who worked in the programme experienced labour precarity. These denunciations increased considerably at the end of the year when the new annual fee contracts had to be re-negotiated to start the new period – although, mainly because their contractual relationship prevents them from belonging to unions, the negotiation capacity of the PDTI officials was extremely limited. Generally, this process, which in Castro was led by Jorge, consisted of meetings with the mayor, DIDECO, the area manager from INDAP, and lawyers from both institutions.

In these meetings, Jorge would try to obtain some of the social security benefits associated with a traditional and stable contract, to maintain or improve some of the benefits that they had already obtained from the municipality (e.g. transportation allowance), and to accelerate the process of signing the contracts, as a delay would mean not receiving their salary while the contracts went through the channels of the local and central bureaucracy. ‘The worst employer is the government; it is the one that does not comply. It passes labour laws, laws on labour rights, but they are the ones not fully complying with the legislation’ Jorge once said. After leaving the municipality lawyer’s office, and sinking into his desk chair, he described the meeting as bittersweet. He had managed to maintain the previous conditions stated in their contracts even though the lawyer was pushing to revoke some of them (especially the one providing money assigned for paying for transport); all contracts of team members would be renewed; and they would be signed soon. The bad news? He had not achieved anything in terms of the other benefits he wanted (without much expectation) to include in the new agreement, and, because of the well-known sluggishness of bureaucracy and some mistakes on the discussed contract, they would have to wait at least one month – which ended up being two – to start receiving their salaries.

Throughout this section, I have tried to describe the precarious working conditions enforced on the officials of the PDTI. The labour regime made possible by the deployment of fee contracts imposes material conditions with noticeable consequences on how some officials experience
precarity. The Chilean neoliberal system, which was launched in 1978 and is still in place, has generated the emergence of flexible and unstable forms of employment relationships that inform and determine the daily challenges that workers operating under this hiring model must face. State officials, lacking labour security mechanisms and experiencing the anxiety and risk associated emanating from this unstable and temporarily uncertain context, operate daily in precarious conditions. These include not having guaranteed access to the health and unemployment insurance system, spending living for months without a salary due to the annual contract renewal process based on individual results, being part of an organisational structure without clear guidelines based on subordination and dependence, and especially, not having access to a stable job position that would allow them to project themselves in the future.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss in greater detail some of the consequences that the absence of benefits, such as accident insurance, produces in the daily practices of the officials implementing the programme in areas that are difficult to access. Further, Chapters 2 and 4 will discuss the application and capture of resources, the implementation of projects and the creation of documents that stabilise and make visible their activities in the field, providing an account of the actions that officials must carry out to generate a paper trail that allows them to justify their employment and renew their annual contracts. However, despite all the constraints and precarity, there is nevertheless some space for the emergence of original mechanisms to tackle the insecurities that are being normalised under this labour scheme. Likewise, and as will be discussed below, these practices for navigating uncertainties are informed by a polycentric organisational structure and hierarchy, and by the particular set of values and dispositions of those who work under these conditions.

3. Moving in between

As described in the previous section, one of the causes of the precarity that PDTI officials experience due to their labour status is related to the polycentric organisational structure that confines them in complex subordination arrangements. In the context of the literature on the precaritisation of work in neoliberal contexts, the case of the PDTI programme highlights the role of the relationship between diffuse organisational structures and flexible contractual schemes. In particular, this context makes the life of the officials even more precarious in terms of being able to claim rights.

In the process of annual renewal of their contracts, it was common for both the Castro and Dalcahue teams to openly discuss their working conditions when facing the slightest, or sometimes non-existent, provocation. On one of these occasions, while he finished reading an
email from the INDAP area manager in which they were asked to send a spreadsheet with all the information of the users of the programme, Jorge began to rant about the consequences of being subordinated to two institutions: “the problem with our contracts is that everything is very ambiguous. The first issue is that you are hired under a fee contract and that you work for two institutions. We are ni chicha ni limonada [similar to the expression ‘neither fish nor fowl’]. They hire us through the municipality, but your direct boss is really INDAP. However, when it is convenient for INDAP, you are an INDAP official, but when it is not, you are a municipal official. The municipality acts in the same way; when it suits them, you are a municipal official, and when it does not, you belong to INDAP”.

In short, local governments in Chile hire workers under a fee contract scheme in order to implement ‘community programmes’ focused on delivering a specific social policy to defined groups. Generally, these individuals are employed through a triangular association between the municipality, a central government institution, and the individual. Because the fee contract would not imply the existence of a relationship of subordination and dependence between these institutions and the worker hired to execute these programmes, the labour relationship should not include instructions or requirements that are not stipulated in the agreement. However, as I indicated earlier, this is far from being a reality in the daily activities of the field-level officials with whom I worked. The organisational structure that loosely incorporates the officials produces frameworks of action and institutional belonging that are being shaped according to their particular expectations and experiences. The following vignettes give an account of this process, where diverse strategies are being used to navigate the officials’ status as ni chicha ni limonada.

It was 10 in the morning when Mariela and Enrique picked me up at the crossroad known as ‘the Virgin’, because there is a large statue of the Virgin Mary at the junction. The sky was clear, the air was frozen, and the grass was frosty. I quickly got into Enrique’s blue pickup truck, rearranging his daughter’s toys which were scattered across the backseat, and as soon as I was settled, we took the road on the right. This road, known as the ‘coastal road’, would take us to Tenaún where a group of women known as las hilanderas de Tenaún (spinners from Tenaún), who were users of the programme, would participate in a course. This course was funded by INDAP, taught by a Teaching Centre from the Universidad Austral, and supported by Dalcahue’s PDTI, which aimed to strengthen the organisation and leadership of the group. The road, still under construction and therefore with several temporary stops due to the cuts, provided the perfect setting to talk and ask questions that I was struggling to answer.
D: ‘Mariela, why do the guys from the PDTI Castro always wear jackets with the municipal logo on it, and you and Enrique do not?’

M: ‘I prefer not to use the jacket with the municipal logo’ – she answered, and after a couple of seconds she added – ‘I always try not to be associated with the municipality. I prefer to be associated with INDAP, with the programme.’

E: ‘That is why I always wear my blue shirt and my blue jacket with the INDAP logo’ – added Enrique, looking at me through the front mirror and pointing to the red and blue rectangle with white letters on his chest – ‘I feel more like an INDAP official than one from the municipality, because the one that supervises us, the one that gives us the navigation guide, is INDAP. We report every month to INDAP. It is true, the municipality hires us, but regardless of that, I feel more part of INDAP. Look’ – he said in a comical tone and again showing me his shirt – ‘it is very faded from so much use, you can almost see through it. Also, we are far from the municipality [building], so they leave us alone.’

The relationship between the extension teams and the institutions that hire them was always a relevant heated topic of discussion. The intertwining of INDAP and the municipalities mobilised worries and difficulties that the PDTI officials had to tackle based on their own experiences and the help of colleagues in other extension teams. Jorge, the leader of Castro’s PDTI, was always in contact with Mariela, the leader in Dalcahue. Even though they were in charge of different territories, and were therefore under different local governments acting as executing agencies, they were involved in the same hierarchical structure within INDAP. The teams from Castro and Dalcahue work under the same area agency, thus they share the same boss (area manager) and they addressed his approach regarding the role of the PDTI and how it must be implemented together. Both teams mainly disagreed with his style, which was focused mainly on generating cooperative practices, setting aside complementary activities such as crafts and tourism, and focusing on increasing the number of technical visits to the detriment of community activities. In general, this approach was considered outdated, and although they recognised the experience and local knowledge of their boss, due to their own sets of motivations and dispositions, the field-level officials sought to implement a more flexible and inclusive system incorporating complementary productive activities.

However, when it came to their relationship with the municipality, the differences became evident. On this point, Enrique’s last comment on the geographical location of their office flagged an interesting feature of how the material work conditions were entangled with their place in the organisational structure. Being far away from the main building of the local government at first struck me as an irrelevant fact, but later, as my fieldwork progressed, I realised that this separation constituted one of the fundamental differences between the two teams. The PDTI-Castro is located in a two-story building rented and administered by the municipality. The PDTI shares the space with several programmes dependent on DIDECO, which
also had an office in the building. Although these offices were also far from the main municipality building, living daily with DIDECO and other programmes of, or executed by, the municipality generates an ideal scenario to strengthen the feeling of belonging with those who work under the same department and, in turn, this strengthens the relations of subordination between the field-level officials and the local government authorities.

The PDTI-Castro work tasks, as well as the symbols used on a daily basis, account for this relationship. The coat of arms of the municipality is not only stamped on their jackets and shirts, but is also noticeable in most of the documents produced and handled by the programme. In the same way, their activities are supervised extensively by DIDECO, the mayor and his councillors ask them for information and constant collaboration, and officials from other programmes recognise them as co-workers – and vice versa. However, and regardless of the presence of these practices and symbols, the identification of PDTI officials with the municipality, or (alternatively with INDAP) is always nuanced and never total. Thus, there are officials like Bruno, who states as follows:

‘I do not feel part of either INDAP or the municipality, I work in the programme because I like to do this job, although it is difficult and requires many sacrifices, but I do not identify myself with the municipality, I cannot identify with them because they do not motivate me to feel part of them. I feel used’ – he finished laughing.

On the other hand, but not so far from the reality experienced by Castro’s officials, Dalcahue’s extension team displays a different labour relationship with their municipality. Although their offices are also located in a two-story house managed by the municipality, specifically by the Local Economic Development Department, the authorities to whom they are subordinated are not based in the same building, and rarely visit them. Also, because the first floor contains only the offices of the two agricultural extension programmes financed by INDAP, the Programa de Desarrollo Local13 (Local Development Programme, PRODESAL) and the PDTI, their relationship with other municipal officials is less frequent. This ‘isolation’ identified by Enrique reproduces the conditions for a weaker identification with the municipality than is the case in other contexts.

13 A territorial programme, very similar to the PDTI but without its focus on indigenous people. Likewise, PRODESAL is executed through an agreement between INDAP and executing entities – usually municipalities. It works through technical teams composed of agricultural and forestry officials who provide advice to small farmers (regardless of whether or not they belong to an indigenous people) who want to improve their productive capabilities (INDAP n.d.b). In Chapter 5, I will discuss some of the territorial and identitarian dynamics that are generated when these two programmes are implemented in parallel.
In Mariela’s words:

‘We owe ourselves, in technical terms, to INDAP, nothing more. With the municipality there is only a work relationship; sometimes you have to write a report for the councillors. We have to comply with formalities such as being punctual and behaving according to the expectations of the municipality, but it is just that. But the technical issues come only from INDAP. I know that in other areas you would have to participate in municipal activities, but not here. They are aware that it is up to us if we want to participate or not. The only exception is the Fiesta del Ajo [a local customs gathering known as the Garlic Festival] because all our farmers participate in it, but we do not add that activity to our activities report.’

The relationship of the Dalcahue’s team with the local government authorities was totally different from that of Castro’s team. The latter, besides actively participating in the local customs festivals of Castro and Quehui, had to carry out a number of activities required by those who were above them in the organisational chart of the municipality. In this way, there were often tensions triggered by this double institutional belonging. This context opened interesting discussions about the priorities of the team when they had to make decisions regarding compliance with differing mandates coming simultaneously from INDAP and the municipality. There were several times when they were reprimanded by some of their bosses. For example, the area manager from INDAP would admonish them for decreasing the number of technical visits or for not meeting a deadline for an application for resources and projects, because they had been spending their time on activities organised and required by the municipality (e.g. participating in the organisation of festivals; guiding local authorities when they wanted to visit the areas in which they work; and participating in inter-departmental meetings).

Although a diffuse and polycentric organisational structure is not identified by social scientists as one of the aspects that constitute a precarious labour context, my experience during fieldwork does account for its fundamental role when prompting uncertainties and tensions for the field-level officials working under this arrangement. In addition, this case shows how the position of officials in a particular organisational structure, often in an unexpected and emergent way, affects the way in which a programme may be implemented at a local level. Thus, vertical and horizontal relationships shape the possibilities for action, or which practices that may or may not be carried out in the field, leading to a scenario in which the decisions of the officials are determined by external political ambiguities. This scenario not only produces anxieties due to its instability and lack of clarity, but also leaves them as the último eslabón de la cadena.

4. On similarities and backgrounds

The organisational hierarchy, and the labour and material conditions under which the PDTI teams have to carry out their tasks, impose a complex scenario. How the programme is being
enacted is mainly, but not only, determined by this state of affairs. Among the other elements that frame their scope of action and that characterise the way in which the programme is being implemented on a daily basis include the ethos and expertise of the field-level officials. In this way, the background of those who implement and decentralise the programme is intertwined with the external conditions that enable their practices in each locality.

Each of the officials I worked with told me about some experiences they had that allowed them to address their daily work from an informed and unique perspective. Their individual trajectories led them to specialise in fields that currently allow them to differentiate themselves within their teams. The process of acquiring this expertise was often presented as an obvious and rational decision, while on many other occasions it was linked to the environment in which they were raised and educated. Therefore, the way in which both the field-level officials from the PDTI-Castro (Jorge, Bruno and Renato), and PDTI-Dalcahue (Mariela and Enrique) operated and acted at the territorial or institutional level was informed by their upbringing moulded by a rural and peasant life, and the formal and informal education to which they were exposed.

However, having similar backgrounds amongst themselves is not something that is unique to field-level officials. On the contrary, an element that provides a certain degree of legitimacy vis-à-vis the users of the PDTI is that they also share certain characteristics or experiences with them. If we consider the extension team operating in Castro, it is important to draw attention to the fact that Bruno and Renato are Chilotes.\textsuperscript{14} Jorge, on the other hand, comes from a family of self-made estancieros (landowners in Patagonia) in the southernmost region of the country. His family was originally from Chiloé, and when he moved to the archipelago those connections were still in place. Also, his link to the territory grew stronger, because his wife and her family are from a district near Castro. The three officials were raised primarily in the countryside, where they worked along with their families and actively participated in taking care of the crops and livestock that provided the means of support or additional income for their households. Additionally, during these years they had ties with their neighbours, both indigenous and non-indigenous, who participated in state-led development programmes focused on small-scale agriculture such as the PDTI and the PRODESAL.

Both Renato’s and Bruno’s cases are particularly relevant for reflecting on the influence of their backgrounds on the system of value and motivations that defined their labour practices. Renato identified himself as a Williche and proudly carried an indigenous surname that operates as an

\textsuperscript{14} Chilote is the demonym used to refer to people from the archipelago of Chiloé.
ethnic marker in the Chilean context (this form of self- and external identification will be
developed more deeply in Chapters 4 and 5). Especially when he was studying in one of the
largest cities in the region, where the elite (large farming landowners) proudly exhibit their
German ancestry, he was confronted by a several classmates who made him conscious of his
indigenous background because of his surname. This was a pivotal experience for strengthening
his identity. For the first time, he became aware of the origin of his family and of the historical
burden and future consequences that this label would carry. Thereafter, he started to identify
himself as a Williche - Chilote (this identity category will be described in Chapter 5). On the other
hand, what is relevant from Bruno’s upbringing is that he was raised by his grandparents and his
mother. Within their locality, they were well known for their traditional agricultural practices.
To this day, his mother participates as a user of PRODESAL, she holds a certification provided by
the SIPAM seal,\textsuperscript{15} which recognises and values peasant systems with cultural identity based on
sustainable agriculture that respects and preserves traditional knowledge and practices.
Because of the influence of his family, Bruno’s approach when carrying out PDTI activities stood
out, due to his sustainable agricultural focus based on the traditional/local know-how that
characterises the archipelago.

The case of Dalcahue’s extension team also illustrates this similarity. Mariela was raised in a
rural sector of the region known for its large Williche population. Because her father was a rural
schoolteacher, she attended that school, alongside classmates of Williche origin who came from
a context where their only economic support was agriculture. Enrique, also a Chilote, comes
from a family that used to own land for agricultural purposes. Therefore, from an early age, he
was involved in activities related to the countryside. Because he was orphaned when he was
young, he had to settle in Dalcahue, where he studied, as Renato and Bruno did in Castro, in a
technical school focused on agriculture. Since then he has always lived in a small city
(approximately 13,000 inhabitants), and due to his charisma and involvement in the tourism
industry (together with his wife, and in parallel with his activities as a PDTI official, he owns and
manages an inn in the centre of the city), Enrique is well known in the area.

Except for Enrique who was usually busy with his inn, the others allocated part of their time –
preferably at the weekends – to grow crops and to take care of their, or their family’s, livestock.
Jorge raised chickens and pigs, while his wife took care of the vegetables growing in their garden.

\textsuperscript{15} The SIPAM seal was created in 2013 following official recognition by the Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United Nations, FAO, of the archipelago of Chiloé as one of the first seven Important
Systems of World Agricultural Heritage, or SIPAM (the Spanish acronym).
Almost every weekend, they would go together to his father-in-law’s farm to work the land, cultivating garlic and potatoes, and to plan the next steps to produce fruit and vegetables in order to increase their monthly income. During the year I spent with Bruno, he constantly reminded me that his goal was to buy land near his family's farm. He wanted to start his own crops and to have space to raise his own livestock. When I was half-way through my stay on the archipelago, he managed to settle the purchase that would allow him to achieve these goals. He would also help his mother almost every weekend with taking care of her crops, chickens, pigs and boars. Finally, together with her husband, Mariela breeds sheep and lambs on the land around her house.

As already stated, Enrique's knowledge is based on his secondary education at a technical school focused on agriculture. Bruno's case is similar, although his knowledge expanded when he went to a local university to obtain a professional degree in the same field. Like Bruno, Renato obtained his technical degree in agriculture. However, while Bruno has specialised in traditional agricultural practices seeking to achieve greater sustainability, Renato has taken advantage of all the opportunities that have been presented to him (courses, workshops, seminars, etc.) to increase his knowledge of areas related to electrical circuits and the installation of water solutions. Because of this, and as I will describe in Chapter 2, he can now act as a contractor in the application and implementation of projects (usually promoted by the programme) that need this particular expertise. Thus, he is able to supplement his regular salary as a PDTI official.

Unlike the other members of the PDTI from Castro and Dalcahue, both team leaders have professional degrees obtained from prestigious southern universities in their areas. Mariela has a degree in forest engineering, while Jorge obtained a professional degree in agriculture, specialising in renewable systems and sustainability. During the time I worked with them, I noticed how the knowledge they had obtained and the experiences they confronted during their studies have shaped the ways in which they addressed their tasks, prioritising some over others due to their own system of values and motivations. In the same vein, these decisions were also mediated by, and intertwined with, the contexts to which they were exposed during their childhood.

As individuals employed in the public sector, working under the local government and an agency created and framed by the Ministry of Agriculture, the PDTI officials could be seen as ‘public servants’. However, and if we take into account the definition of Hoggett et al. (2009: 1-2), because they ‘have social, community or neighbourhood development contained within their job descriptions’ and due to the time they spend engaging in long-term relationships with
‘service users’ trying to deliver solutions and benefits associated with specific needs and/or problems, they could also be understood as ‘development workers’. Both as public servants and as development workers, they exhibited an ‘ethos’ that was framed by the conditions imposed by the organisation that employed them, and informed by their own experiences and values.

Although ‘ethos’ is a nebulous, but fashionable, term (Donnelly 2000), its usefulness lies in the fact that it allows us to access this double dimension. It does not refer only to a set of values or personal motivations that in their aggregation account for a community that shares them, nor does it refer only to the external conditions that structure the actions of individuals or persons performing in an organisation. It is the sum of both of these, and enables us to understand the true field of action of those individuals who hold this ethos.

Based on Weber’s (1978) model of bureaucracy, public service ethos has been generally characterised as being managed through principles of rationalisation and professionalisation, and public servants, consequently, are characterised as being neutral, objective and impersonal when implementing public policies (Richards and Smith 2000). Pratchett and Wingfield (1994) suggest that the idea (or myth) of this specific ethos is feasible due to the ambiguous notions surrounding the definitions of public service and traditional bureaucracy. Also rooted in the Weberian ideal type, these authors argue that this ethos has frequently been linked to the following elements: accountability; honesty and impartiality; serving the community; altruistic motivation; and a sense of loyalty to community, profession and organisation (Pratchett and Wingfield 1994: 9).

As one may expect, due to its stable and reified nature, this previous characterisation of the public servant’s ethos is highly contested. Having said that, and following the research of McDonough (2006) and Hoggett et al. (2009), front-line workers’ accounts do reproduce a particular ethos in which ‘a dominant vision of public service becomes internalised as a structure of dispositions and expectations’ that favours the public good before the selfish interests associated with the private world (McDonough 2006: 642). This ethos (or as McDonough terms it, public servants’ habitus) differs from the myth identified by Pratchett and Wingfield, as it describes a dynamic process that undergoes diverse alternations depending on the context or the disputes that inform it. However, stable or dynamic, both approaches recognise the existence of an ethos that manifests itself in dispositions, motivations, expectations and practices.

In parallel with Yarrow’s (2011) work, one of the ways in which field-level officials, as well as development workers, present their commitment and motivation is through a narrative of
sacrifice. These discourses should not be considered as factual truth, but rather as a moral framework through which officials give meaning to their own practices and decisions. Thus, development workers may assess their actions as guided by an ideological form that involves a commitment to accomplishing development through the subordination of their personal interests, hence seeking the ‘common good’ at the expense of their own welfare.

5. Narratives of sacrifice and understanding

Stirrat (2008) argues for the existence of three stereotypes in which development workers are pigeonholed by others or themselves: mercenaries, missionaries, and misfits. This classification, which does not operate as a static representation of the characteristics of these workers, but as ‘ideal types’ to identify different notions about how they reflect on their own role and activities, positions as a central concept the idea of commitment - or the absence of it. In this way, those identified as mercenaries do not demonstrate a commitment to the eradication of inequalities and poverty, or similar aims, but are motivated by their own interests and well-being. On the other hand, those who are classified as missionaries are motivated not by their own gain but, on the contrary, by a moral commitment and vocation compelled by a strong sense of duty to their moral aims. Finally, the misfits are those who seek to escape from their own contexts by completely immersing themselves in others. Taking Yarrow’s arguments into account, development workers who mobilise narratives around the sacrifice involved in their daily work belong to a model of a person committed to changing society to the detriment of their own interests, like missionaries. However, as I will describe in the following sections, in the case of PDTI officials the missionary analogy, although pertinent when highlighting narratives of personal sacrifice in pursuit of what is defined as a greater good (e.g. development), must be addressed as an ideal type and, thus, critically tackled. The practices and expectations of the officials not only respond to a moral project – it is also a job that secures an income – and in that sense, it is more than a calling or vocation.

In her ethnography of the everyday practices of front-line officials (indigenistas) working on the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenist Institute – INI), a federal/state agency that deals with indigenous people in Mexico, Saldívar (2008; 2011) describes what people working on this agency called the ‘indigenist spirit’ – which, due to its definition, I equate with the concept of ethos. In this vein, the workers referred to a set of qualities and aims that would shape this shared spirit. Therefore, an indigenist was someone with great physical and psychological endurance; someone able to carry out fieldwork in remote and geographically difficult territories; who had the skill to organise people and negotiate with them; ethical;
sensitive to cultural difference; and that shares the developmental ideal that their work would help to improve the living conditions of their clients. As front-line state workers implementing a development programme focussed on indigenous populations, the PDTI officials share some of the spirit elicited by the indigenists. However, due to the hiring system, their position in the institutional hierarchy and the neoliberalising context in which they operate, this ethos or spirit is bound together with job insecurity, the grammar of entrepreneurship, and their expectations about improving their own living conditions.

In this vein, and although the narrative of sacrifice is very present in the everyday life of the PDTI officials, their self-sacrifice is not only shaped by working in isolated, difficult to access localities, and subject to external events that prevent or hinder their activities (such as the recurrent bad weather that characterises the archipelago). On the contrary, their experiences and perceptions are also informed by what they identify as their precarious working conditions, their position in the organisational hierarchy, and the importance of the programme within national and local priorities. All these elements can be found in the following account from Bruno:

‘What I take from the work we do is that I like to do it well, to be there or to stay there. Nobody does it for more than one day, but we stay for three days, almost every week, for three years. You have to do it because you know how things work. The government gives us and the people an idea of development based on providing a nice, big house, where you have more than two televisions; one or two cars; where you have central heating. That is the idea of development of the government and of the people who live in Santiago [Chile’s capital city located approximately 1,000 kilometres north of the archipelago] and of the professionals who live there and who care little about the things you have to go through in order to get to the islands to give advice to a farmer, or if you have to deal with a closed port because of the bad weather, and you would have to leave regardless of the dangers because the next day you may have a meeting in Castro. They do not care, but we do’.

As I will discuss further in Chapter 3, the difficulties associated with working on islands that do not have ‘fixed connections’, that is, which are dependant on ferries or motorboats to access them, added to bad weather conditions that often prevent arrival and departure, consolidates a context in which self-sacrifice for the good of the community (the Islanders) is mobilised as one of the main narratives when it comes to reflecting on the possibilities of the PDTI, the scope of their own role as field-level officials, and the priorities and approaches of both the local and central governments. However, having to face all these obstacles provides experiential substance to how the officials interpret and make sense of their own work decisions. Due to the difficulties they face and the passivity and/or apathy they attribute to other services operating in these locations, the reflections and conclusions about their own practices are justified in the light of their own commitment, dispositions and expectations.
Nonetheless, this moral framework was also informed by values and motivations coming from their own experiences outside of the labour context in which they find themselves. In this vein, the development workers interviewed by Hoggett et al. (2009) offered narratives positioning clearly defined values and a belief system about community involvement that was separate from personal motivations. This commitment was justified by their social interactions or personal interests in particular areas, often fuelled by personal experiences of social injustice. Therefore, the personal motivations of the workers were ‘rooted in a “reparative impulse” manifest in the desire to help repair damaged communities, help troubled individuals and families and/or empower those who did not have voice’ (Hoggett et al. 2009: 85).

Therefore, the reparative impulse of the PDTI officials that was powered by practices pinpointed as ‘sacrifice’ was informed, in turn, by their similar backgrounds, or due to having lived experiences that allow them to approach the problems and realities of their users from an empathic disposition. In one of my conversations with Renato, I asked him why he believed that, up to now, and unlike the previous team, they had a good relationship with the communities they were working with. First, he explained to me that the previous team, of which he was the only one to continue, was made redundant after their contracts were not renewed following end-of-year assessments, due to their bad relationship with some of the user groups, little proactivity, and poor results. He then added:

‘What I think has given a lot of affinity to our team and that has allowed us to have good results, and what makes people value us, is that the users see us as one of them. Not as strangers who come from Santiago. We understand them well because we are part of them: we have similar characteristics to theirs, we were raised in the countryside, we speak like them; we come from a similar world.’

As I argued in the previous section, the background of the officials, the context in which they were brought up and some of the practices they still carry out, are related to what is described here by Renato. Officials share many of the contextual and biographical elements of the users of the programme, so their approach to them, and how they are perceived by them, is mediated by this expertise expressed through ethos. Yet, and still based on the arguments of Hoggett et al. (2009), I think it is necessary to add that it is not only coming from similar contexts that contributes to the emergence of this moral commitment, but it is also reinforced by their experiences in the educational system and by their professional training. Without engaging with discussions about how the context in which an individual has been raised could determine access to certain modes or systems of education, and without neglecting the role that particular conditions of upbringing and development of an individual have in their later interests and motivations, I argue that the relationships and knowledge that an individual faces and acquires
during their professional or technical training could actualise their moral framework, therefore strengthening this reparative disposition.

Nevertheless, and in order to not over-emphasise the moral project behind the narratives of the officials, I must also highlight that their motivation and aspirations are not just built around the idea of self-sacrifice. Their ethos is also shaped by their quest for success in the eyes of their bosses, which translates into having stable work (renewed if they perform well), and therefore being able to maintain a steady income (earning a leaving). In addition, they mentioned aspirations of finding ways to improve their living conditions (earning their livelihood), and living without the sacrifice that implies time away from home, precarious working conditions, and job insecurity. Both earning a living and earning a livelihood were permeated by the grammar of entrepreneurship.

6. From promoters of entrepreneurship to entrepreneurs, and vice versa

The ethos of the field-level officials was not only informed by biographical elements, or perceptible in their current labour conditions and everyday activities, both within and outside the PDTI. Their ethos was also manifested in their aspirations. The entanglement between ethos and aspirations can be seen in the following conversation I had with Bruno and Renato when we were going up a steep hill towards a meeting that was due to take place in the headquarters of the Neighbours Association of San Miguel, one of the sectors of Quehui Island covered by the programme:

B: ‘Even though our relationship with los viejos [the elderly – as they usually refer to the users of the programme] is good because we have earned their respect, because we keep our word, and because they know that we do everything possible to be useful to them, I think that after 3 or 4 years of working with the same people, relationships start to wear out. Sometimes I just want to quit and spend all the time I spend going back and forth to the island doing something else. If the purchase of the plot of land that I am trying to buy works, I will leave all this and I will start growing my own things and raising pigs. If you do things properly, for example by producing greens and selling a couple of boars, you can earn a better salary than the one we earn as technicians.’

R: ‘That is not so difficult’ – Renato added smiling – ‘but, seriously, and although I never agree with you’ – continued jokingly – ‘I think you are right. You can get tired of all this, of all the sacrifices you have to make working in the PDTI, and all the time you are away from home. That is why I take advantage of all the training within my reach, and why I have been specialising in what I like. I even got the name for my water solutions consultancy and my new business cards’ – He said as he opened his wallet, pulled out a card and handed it to me. On the white card, you could see the light blue coloured logo of the company evoking the flow of water, followed by his contact details as an expert contractor.
To understand the nuances of this conversation, Narotzky's (2015) distinction between earning a livelihood and earning a living is useful. She argues that the difference between both expressions of work are mediated by the possibility of participating, or not, in the ownership of the means of production. However, she suggests that, both because of the propagation of market-oriented rationalities and the prominence of wage labour acting to the detriment of our ability to control our means of subsistence, today’s idiom of value around work has shifted, and the production processes operating under this logic are perpetuating stronger dependency relationships between workers and those who control those processes. Thus, Narotzky argues that the reproductive and productive work associated with looking after kinship networks and earning a livelihood – what she calls ‘love labour’ – is being displaced by the capitalist moral regime that is expanding into the core of the entrepreneurial self. However, rather than being straightforward, in practice the difference between these two value realms – and the moralities behind them – are not easily separated, and they usually overlap when it comes to earning the necessities of life. The absence of clear boundaries between these realms of value is rendered visible in the expectations and motivations that PDTI officials convey. These field-level officials are entangled in a labour system based on ‘earning a living’ (relying on wage labour), but their aspirations lie in being able to obtain their livelihood through the ownership of their means of production (Narotzky 1997: 35 – 36). Although the work of the officials is not linked to the reproductive value of work, the blurred boundary between both idioms of value is perceptible when an entrepreneurial discourse and market-oriented practices reduce the possibilities of thinking about another set of obligations and motivations – either for love or kinship, or, in the case of officials, for a reparative impulse that encourages self-sacrifice.

The set of motivations elicited by the officials when they value their everyday work despite the precarious working conditions and the sacrifice that they entail is complemented and conflated with aspirations that go beyond being positively evaluated by their bosses in order to preserve their work and/or positively affect the communities involved in the programme. Therefore, even though they see themselves as having decent jobs in terms of income, they do not yet feel as if they are ‘living well’ because of the sacrifice that working under their current conditions involves. This situation gives rise to aspirations that, although linked to the idea of living well and earning a livelihood, continue to be permeated by the entrepreneurial logic that is observed in the ethos of these officials.

Based on this, how they see themselves in the future, and what activities they are carrying out to achieve their aspirations, comes to the foreground when reflecting on their current working conditions. In this way, both their background, educational experiences and their present work
in the PDTI – as an agricultural extension programme that puts them in contact with diverse developmental experiences, technologies and agricultural markets – is understood as an opportunity that provides them with the knowledge to, in the future, achieve labour and economic stability. Therefore, what this last ethnographic vignette demonstrates is related to a particular way in which the work ethos of the field-level officials, the objectives of the PDTI, and their personal goals and understandings of ‘living well’ come to be intertwined together. In simpler terms, the aspirations of Bruno and Renato, and also, as can be appreciated from the descriptions at the beginning of this section, those of Jorge, Mariela and Enrique, are not aimed only at sacrificing themselves for the sake of the users of the programme and to maintain their jobs, but also to improve their financial income through entrepreneurial activities. However, what is also interesting here is how the entrepreneurial motivations and aspirations of the officials are entangled with the entrepreneurial discourse that the programme promotes.

As a particular kind of state-led development programme, the PDTI is a focused intervention that seeks to provide tools to a targeted population – commonly categorised as deprived, backward or neglected – to overcome previously identified shortcomings. In particular, the PDTI operates through what is defined as an agricultural extension service: its objective is to provide technical advice through technology transfers, so that farmers accept and implement changes in order to improve and increase their production (Thompson and Scoones 1994; Anderson and Feder 2004).

When highlighting the benefits that the PDTI can bring to indigenous farmers, INDAP explains that through advice and constant support, the programme seeks to ‘improve the technical management of productive systems oriented to self-sufficiency or to incubate and/or improve economic enterprises’ (INDAP n.d.a). Although a hierarchical relationship between self-consumption and entrepreneurship is not considered, in practice I witnessed how the latter assumed a predominant role in the guidelines, approaches and activities that the extension teams were generating and implementing. At several of the coordination meetings that I was able to participate in, the authorities representing both the municipality and INDAP promoted initiatives and solutions focused on entrepreneurship and market inclusion.

Hindle and Moroz (2010) suggest that indigenous entrepreneurship has gained momentum since the last decade of the 20th century, due to what is considered as the failure of passive and highly bureaucratic policies carried out by state agencies. They argue that this approach is characterised by giving importance to the generation of new economic enterprises ‘for the benefit of Indigenous people as a means of overcoming disadvantage through active
participation in the global economy on a competitive business-based basis’. In the last three decades, Chile has also gone down this path. Regardless of the political tendencies of the government in place, the number of programmes based on this model have been increasing and gaining skilled practitioners as a ‘key feature of community development agendas and antipoverty state intervention’ (Di Giminiani 2018).

Although the idea of adopting new technologies to enhance productivity clearly has a built-in entrepreneurial aspect to it, and unlike other programmes focused on indigenous people, the PDTI is not directly an entrepreneurship programme. However, PDTI officials do adopt an entrepreneurial discourse. They mobilise it constantly, either through their technical visits when they offer and organise labour training, workshops and technical tours; or when they decide what funds to apply for and what projects to execute. These initiatives seek to increase the productivity of users by providing advice to move beyond agricultural practices focused only on self-sufficiency, which would allow them to participate in the market and improve their material conditions of existence. This logic also operates when officials analyse the territories in which they work.

Mariela was constantly looking for resources to empower and strengthen the ‘spinners from Tenaún’. Many times against the wishes of the area manager, who sought to focus the programme’s initiatives on purely agricultural issues, and using her room for manoeuvre and discretion, Mariela allocated resources to activities such as workshops, training, participation in craft fairs, and the construction of a small kiosk where they could sell their products to tourists visiting their area. This was so that the spinners could improve their organisation, production, and sales, by reaching other markets. Jorge and Bruno, on the other hand, had long conversations with me about a plan they were seeking to implement on Quehui Island. The ‘economic revitalisation plan’, as they called it, would generate the foundation upon which the users on the island would be able to participate in the local market under the same conditions as the producers of vegetables and meat on the big island. With this goal in mind, much of their focus was on obtaining resources for the infrastructure and technology that would allow the farmers to lower their expenses, increase their production, and participate in fair trade networks.

These two examples are useful for observing how the entrepreneurial discourse unfolds in both the officials’ labour decisions and in their personal aspirations. Although the logic of entrepreneurship can be observed in the objectives of the PDTI, both initiatives take it further. Rather than implementing projects and carrying out activities related only to the objectives of
the programme, both the Castro and Dalcahue extension teams, without being required to and with little support from the institutions under which they operate, took their intentions beyond these objectives. In this way, their own sets of values, their backgrounds and knowledge, their reparative disposition and their understanding of what constitutes a good way to improve their quality of life were activated together through this entrepreneurial approach. Likewise, and as I illustrated earlier, this logic also permeates their own labour, economic and material aspirations.

What these accounts illustrate is that entrepreneurship is entangled threefold with the ethos of the officials. Firstly, in the principles behind the objectives of the PDTI, but especially in its implementation, entrepreneurship is considered as a desirable outcome that would allow users to achieve better living conditions. Secondly, due to their own experiences and expertise that feed their reparative disposition, the field-level officials can identify the deficiencies experienced by the users of the programme. For the officials, many of these deficiencies could be overcome through the inclusion of the farmers in the local, regional or national markets. Thirdly, they themselves aspire to overcome the deficiencies that the organisational system and labour regime impose on them. For this reason, they aim to improve their quality of life and achieve stability through agricultural or agro-technical ventures.

7. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have introduced the PDTI and ethnographically illustrated the officials’ institutional position – both as el último eslabón de la cadena (on the bottom rung) and as ni chicha ni limonada (in between) – paying particular attention to the ambiguities that they articulate, and how they navigate daily through these particular organisational arrangements. I have also discussed how they deploy narratives that at times shows them to be following their own ethos of care and self-sacrifice – pervaded by a developmental and entrepreneurial reasoning – and at other times, as being pushed around and affected by their precarious labour and material conditions.

The background of each field-level official contributes to the establishment of this work ethos, which is also shaped by the rules of the programme and the material and institutional context that determines the nature, value and scope of their everyday practices as they implement the PDTI. These contexts are marked by a polycentric organisational structure and a labour scheme based on flexible hiring practices, a lack of access to welfare benefits and job stability which on the one hand, feed their narratives of sacrifice, but on the other hand also shapes their aspirations related to securing steady and better income, being their own bosses, having their own land, and being able to ‘live well’ through successful endeavours. This situation
demonstrates how two ways of giving value to work can coexist, and how both are infused by an entrepreneurial logic.

Finally, this chapter provides a first glimpse into the relationships, aspirations, tasks and daily practices being actualised in the everyday activities of PDTI officials. In turn, understanding how the programme operates and who is behind its implementation provides useful insight for understanding the process by which these technicians become neoliberal state actors. In the following chapters, I address how, based on discretionary and self-management possibilities, these field-level officials, in a more or less efficient way, confront and manoeuvre through processes taking place in a field where neoliberal (market-oriented) criteria such as competition, accountability, and audit procedures are generating uncertainties and anxieties, and activating different guises of the state in local settings.
CHAPTER 2. STABILISING BUDGETS AND PROJECTS: THE EXTENSION TEAM AS POLICY BROKERS

'It's clearly a budget. It's got a lot of numbers in it.'
George W. Bush (Reuters, 5 May 2000)

It was my first month in the archipelago and Jorge, the coordinator of Castro's PDTI extension team, invited me to a mesa de coordinación (coordination meeting) which would bring together the three main actors in the programme: the users (represented by their leaders), the municipality (represented by the Director of DIDECHO), and INDAP (embodied by the area manager). The meeting was scheduled for the following Thursday, and the days leading up to it were filled with an incipient but persistent nervousness coming from the team. Jorge was the most anxious because he wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to demonstrate everything they had achieved in the past year. Sitting at his desk covered in folders, mountains of documents, his (always-present) silver and black thermos filled with freshly heated water and his mate receptacle adorned with a metal straw, Jorge asked Bruno and Renato for the information that he wanted to add to the PowerPoint presentation which he was working on for the past two days.

J: 'Bruno, check your talonario de visitas (visits log). How many did you do this last month?' – he asked looking towards Bruno and leaning behind his computer screen – ‘I want to add the total number of our visits. Renato already gave me his, and I am only missing yours’.

Bruno opened one of his drawers, and took out a couple of talonarios, looking for the one that he needed to check.

B: ‘I did 32 this month’ – he answered after a couple of minutes – ‘How many did you do?’ – He asked curiously.

J: ‘Cha!’ – Exclaimed Jorge with a huge smile and a mocking tone – ‘even Renato did more visits than you’.

For the first time in this conversation, Renato, sitting at his desk just across from Jorge, looked away from his screen, actively joining Jorge in the dangerous art of teasing Bruno.

B: ‘They do not waste any opportunity to bully me’ – Bruno said turning towards me with a frown, tight lips and a grimace of disgust. However, I could see a playful spark in his eyes; a subtle sign that I came to recognise easily over the following months of my fieldwork.

The day arrived and the coordination meeting was held in the council hall of the municipality. It took place in a narrow room furnished with a large table, comfortable chairs, and a long line of framed photos of the former mayors of Castro. At one end of the table Jorge was connecting the projector, while at the other the Director of DIDECHO, sitting in one of the comfortable black ‘eco-leather’ chairs, chatted with the area manager from INDAP, who sat next to her. I took a seat in
the middle, among the representatives of the groups of users who had come from Quehui Island (Los Ángeles, El Estero, San Miguel, Camahue, and Peldehue), and some from rural areas close to Castro (Ten-Ten and Nercón). Sitting in front of plates with biscuits, cheese and ham sandwiches, cups of coffee, tea, and a thermos of hot water, they hardly exchanged greetings or spoke together while waiting for the meeting to begin. With their notebooks open on the table, Renato and Bruno remained anxiously silent, alternatingly fixing their eyes on Jorge or on their bosses.

Looking forward and rubbing his hands in a nervous and preparatory gesture, Jorge’s voice prevailed over the murmur of the audience. Over the following half an hour, he clearly explained all the activities carried out during the year. He went through the number of technical visits they had carried out, some of the user demographics, the amount of captured incentives (secured resources) after applying for different sources of funding, the number and type of resources acquired through these processes, and the objectives and plans they wanted to achieve in the next period. Via a pale green graph, he reported the resources granted by both the agreement of the municipality and INDAP (£185,000), the municipality alone (£10,000), and those awarded by other institutions (£83,000) and from INDAP alone (£52,000). In summary, through various applications, they managed to add more than £135,000 to the nearly £83,000 provided directly to the programme.

You could see Jorge’s pride and satisfaction as he was explaining the numbers. Bruno and Renato looked at each other, smiling, tensely trying to read the reactions of the other attendees. Neither the representatives of the users nor the bosses showed surprise or satisfaction, but this did not affect the team’s mood. Jorge and his team were proud and he continued presenting, with the same self-assurance, what he considered the achievements of his management to be. On many occasions after this meeting, the PDTI technicians with whom I worked expressed the significance of their own initiative. In several conversations, they highlighted how their willingness and personal effort – usually recognised neither by their bosses nor by the users – was essential for obtaining monetary and material resources that could be translated, ultimately, into tools, technology, machinery and activities that would support the daily activities of the users.

Following this, the second part of the presentation was focused on the projects that the team implemented during the year. Jorge showed how the captured resources had been used to carry out two labour training exercises (one on jam preparation and the other on welding) and two technical tours (one to learn about an ethno-tourism experience organised by a Mapuche
community in the Araucanía region, and another focused on sustainable farming practices in the north of the island). In addition to these initiatives, Jorge showed how they had allocated resources for the construction of greenhouses and warehouses, the purchase of brush cutters and walking tractors, and the acquisition and installation of electric pumps and solar energy kits, among other projects that would help to increase the production of the benefitting farmers.

Two financial and governmental technologies come to light through this ethnographic account: ‘budgets’ and ‘projects’. Together, as flexible, dynamic and discretionary mechanisms of management, planning and the distribution of resources, they represent an important part of the everyday concerns and tasks of the field-level officials in charge of implementing the PDTI. Commonly, these technologies appear in public policies and social programmes as already defined categories of planning and action. However, in the case of the PDTI, they behave as emergent and unpredictable possibilities that come into existence during the course of the implementation of the programme. Only at the final coordination meeting of the year (which functions as an annual public account), do these technologies make sense, as soon as they are communicated as achieved goals. Thus, their budget comes together as a ‘complete’ and ‘fixed’ document when they, retrospectively, revisit their records of secured resources during an established period of time (e.g. a fiscal year\(^{16}\)). In a similar way, projects are not ventures planned in advance and covered by a pre-established budget, but emergent possibilities secured after application processes during the course of the year. In short, neither the budget of the programme nor the projects they implement using the secured resources are defined and decided in advance.

As part of their everyday activities, as field-level officials, the PDTI extension teams have to face these complex temporalities and scales, generating accounts and records which are transformed into stabilised objects (Latour and Woolgar 1986). In order to do so, they must first apalancar (secure) some of the resources that would allow them to operate the programme, making funds move while, through their discretionary practices and their analysis of the territory, they transform flowing resources into local projects. Because the PDTI is a state-led agricultural extension programme, these practices seek to address what the team and/or the users identify as local deficiencies or needs.

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\(^{16}\) A ‘fiscal year’ is a period of 12 months (sometimes different from a ‘calendar year’) used by governments for accounting and budget purposes. It is used to perform calculations referring to annual accounting reports where the annual revenues and expenditures are budgeted.
This chapter will discuss how technologies such as budgets and projects, as essential devices in the functioning, legitimation and mobilisation of development programmes, are represented, wielded and negotiated in the everyday practices of the field-level officials in charge of implementing the PDTI. I aim to illustrate how these technologies, activated through retrospective and contingent practices, allow the movement of resources in its own rhythm. The focus here is placed on the entanglement of local knowledge, technical expertise, and discretionary practices of the brokers that make this translation possible. Therefore, in this chapter I describe the everyday practices and interactions carried out by the field-level officials when internal and external sources of funding became available, and the strategies and decisions that allow them to secure and mobilise resources that are ultimately transformed into projects and activities for the users.

By addressing the relationship between the PDTI officials and these technologies, I show how some of the principles behind neoliberalism, such as competition, accountability and self-management, reach the ground. Therefore, the focus on the emergence and mobilisation of technocratic procedures and governmental technologies such as projects and budgets allows me to make visible the fundamental role of bureaucratic and technical/expert practices, specifically those taking place on the front line (field-level), in the materialisation and concretisation of neoliberal state initiatives in a local context.

1. Budget and projects: retrospective coherence, contingent practices.

It is interesting that the etymology of the terms ‘budget’ and its Spanish translation, presupuesto, have such dissimilar origins and meanings. On the one hand, ‘budget’ is derived from the old French word bougette, leather bag, which comes from the Latin word bulga, which refers to a bag used to collect money (Singh Ghai 2010). On the other hand, presupuesto is composed of two Latin words: pre, which means before or in front of; and supuesto, which relates to something supposed or alleged. Because of this, presupuesto could be defined as something supposed in advance – something presupposed or a presupposition, an assumption (Diccionario Etimológico Español en linea, n.d.). While the English version evokes the ‘source’ of limited resources, the Spanish one refers to the action that is behind its existence. However, both point towards something that pre-exists the actions that are being financially covered by them, suggesting an unproblematic linearity that begins with the generation of the budget and that ends with the resources (contained in the imagined leather bag) being spent on the previously defined activities.
Budgeting, understood as the production of budgets and all the activities associated with this process, occupies a central place in the periodical practices of state officials. Following Wildavsky (1964), budgets are documents shaped by words and numbers which seek to create links between (envisioned or granted) financial resources and (expected) human behaviour in order to accomplish policy objectives. In that sense, a budget may be portrayed as a set of goals, each one of which is accompanied by a pre-calculated figure. In a similar vein, but emphasising their role in state administration, Collier (2008) defines budgets as technologies of formal rationalisation that connect choices and expenditures. This process occurs in the state apparatus and is characterised as the result of multi-level political and intra-bureaucratic negotiations oriented towards diverse governmental goals.

Both the proposed expenditure expressed in economic terms and the items and purposes (goals or objectives) are the product of predictions based on historical precedents and express aspirations and expectations of a desirable future. Therefore, the language used in, and to communicate about, budgets assume, classically, the future tense. Following this definitional trend, budgets could be understood as records of past political negotiations (whether defeats or victories), but also as declarations about an expected future (Wildavsky 1964: 1975). The past tense appears in these descriptions as the events that structured and contextualised both their financial component and the objectives to be met, while everything else seems to be directed to future-making outcomes.

One of the qualities of money is its malleability. As a fundamental component of budgets, these numbers and figures accompanying and financing the activities that seek to fulfil the agreed goals have two potentials: the potential for formalisation, which allows for the generation of formal relations of ‘future-making’ and ‘foreclosure’; and for ‘investments’ and ‘reallocation’ (Green et al. 2012: 1643). Taking these potentials of money into consideration, budgets, identified as financial technologies, mobilise resources in order to reach desirable futures in a limited period of time (foreclosure), investing in pre-defined ventures such as the projects to which these resources are relocated.

In public administration, goals intended to be formalised through budgets generally tend to be addressed through projects. Green et al. (2012) state that when policies relocate resources, they operate through these technologies, acting as ‘microgrids’: organising, transforming and representing the relation between previously determined inputs and expected outcomes. In a project, a particular understanding of work is mobilised, linking future and present actions with some historical awareness (Yacubovich 2012). As a technology for creating and managing
change, projects are linked to the prediction of behaviours in order to produce or cause something (Boutinet 2005).

If we go back to its etymological origins, the word ‘project’ (and its Spanish translation ‘proyecto’) is derived from the Latin pro (forward) and jacere (to throw) (Pirrie et al. 2012), which seems to express the anticipation of something being thrown from the present to the future (Yacubovich 2012). In the context of state practices and policy implementation, projects are those pre-planned initiatives stated on budgets and financed by them in order to achieve specific goals. Therefore, projects act as devices that bridge the past (they are pre-defined and are the product of negotiations and relations), the present (they are activated), and the future (they seek to accomplish objectives by mobilising notions about an expected future). However, this linear and unproblematic notion does not consider the emergent, unexpected and unpredictable processes that may occur during the implementation of a programme that depends on the successful application to internal and external financing sources.

The budgeting process of the PDTI incorporates significant dynamics that contest a linear and trouble-free understanding of budgets. Some of the elements of which it is composed are unexpected and circumstantial. It is the result of contingent practices and depends on emergent opportunities. At the beginning of the fiscal year, only a small amount of resources are completely certain, and throughout the year other amounts are added (see Fig. 8). The latter are subject to available resources and the ability of field-level officials to secure them. Therefore, far from being a straightforward process, the elaboration, formalisation and stabilisation of a budget is subject to a series of conditions that cannot be predicted in advance.
During a conversation on the way to Quehui Island, and after I asked him about how they operated and how were they financed, Jorge began to explain to me some of the intricacies of their budget:

J: ‘At first, the delivery of money is well structured. The delivery of resources for, first, the operation of the extension team; second, for training and capacity-building activities; and also items regarding general expenses and for carrying out the coordination meetings are well fixed from the beginning of the year’.

Without letting Jorge continue with his explanation, Renato, who was lying on the roof of the passenger compartment where we were all enjoying the last of the sunshine and the cold sea breeze, intervened. Looking first at Jorge as if apologising for the intrusion, and then at me, he added:

R: ‘The resources are primarily intended for us to identify who could qualify for what application, and then apply with them. Every month Jorge programs all the activities that we should carry out according to the goals to be met, but these activities do not include the application processes that are suddenly opened. In those cases, the system is truly chaotic. If we had the applications scheduled beforehand or maybe if we knew the tentative dates, perhaps we would have more clarity on the resources than we can manage. However, we do not handle this information’ — and in a tone mixing frustration and humour, he concluded — ‘Sometimes we learn about an application when 10 days have already passed!’

Throughout my fieldwork accompanying them and other PDTI officials, the two levels presented in this conversation became essential for understanding how the programme functions on a
The circumstantial and emergent elements of the budget which Jorge seemed to want to communicate through the temporality implied by the use of ‘at first’ at the beginning of his explanation, plus the supplementary information given by Renato, accounted for the intricate dynamics involved in their relationship with these particular devices. When the application processes were successful and new amounts of money would have to be relocated, the preconceived budget would have to be rearranged in order to appear as a stabilised technology. Therefore, the budget is subject to a constant process of rewriting. Its fixed initial state is not consistent with its final state, which is presented as a final document that does not account for its fluctuations.

Through their work following and observing the everyday and private processes of scientific work in a laboratory, Latour and Woolgar (1986) illustrate the negotiations and continual interactions involved in the stabilisation of fictional accounts through the inscription of scientific objects over written artefacts (i.e. scientific papers). In a similar way, field-level officials in charge of the formulation of the programme’s budget, as with those involved in the ‘construction’ of ‘scientific facts’, free these devices from the circumstances of their production. Therefore, budgets, just like facts, are a simplified method for presenting the relocation of resources through practices that leave aside all local and contingent circumstances. Thereby, as stabilised fictional accounts, budgets are constituted as such only when they lose all past references.

Budgets, as authors such as Wildavsky argue, possess their own history of construction, because they are the product of social and historical circumstances (negotiations and relationships). However, in order to make sense as a formalised device, throughout their production all emergent circumstances, all the entropy and complex temporalities involved in it, are ultimately eroded. As with the nationalist history approached by Hobsbawm and Kertzer (1992: 3), the PDTI budget is a ‘retrospective mythology’. When presenting the budget as something static and free from the circumstances of its production, the PDTI officials are retrospectively producing a fictional account that presents their own practices as something coherent, envisaged and unproblematic. However, their everyday practices show something different; they face and manage several contingent circumstances, which are afterwards left aside in the process of budget stabilisation. While dealing with non-scheduled calls for funding applications, these field-level officials face unpredicted circumstances that will determine the amount of secured resources available and, thus, the shape of their budget.

This stabilisation process aims to generate evidence that justifies not only the permanence of the programme in Castro (or in Dalcahue where things are done similarly), but also, as I describe
in Chapter 1, the annual renewal of the contracts of the officials operating under a flexible labour regime. In this way, the officials generate a paper trail to account for their activities both in the field and in the office. In doing so, they demonstrate the value of their presence in the territories covered by them, and how their role is essential to the functioning of the programme. From the point of view of the officials, the amount of resources captured, and the possibility of reporting them in an organised and appealing manner in front of their bosses and the leaders of the users, would help them to get through the assessment process that they face at the end of each year.

1.1. Those in the front-line

As a state-led programme, the PDTI is carried out by funcionarios públicos. The substantive funcionario refers to the person who performs in a professional manner any position, employment, or public work related to government institutions. Etymologically, the term comes from the verb ‘function’ and the suffix ‘ario’ that indicates a profession, occupation, position, and/or task. It could be translated as ‘functionary’ but the word ‘official’ is more broadly used in English. Through their everyday practices either in their office (administrative/bureaucratic work) or in the field (carrying out technical visits and activities, implementing projects and collecting documents), the field-level officials implementing the PDTI are responsible for several tasks. They have to relocate and secure funds, identify needs, devise solutions and projects that could address them, provide information, transfer knowledge and tools, deliver agricultural advice, motivate users to apply for resources and implement them, and encourage farmers to participate in the programme, in addition to other activities not specified in their employment contracts. In the field, they act as the decentralised administration of the state, executing and materialising policies produced somewhere else and affecting the lives of the beneficiaries of the programme and, often, those around them – their families and (non-Williche) neighbours.

Since they are hired by the municipality and work implementing a programme of a central government agency, the members of the extension teams are addressed by other municipal employees, the users of the programme, and by themselves as ‘public officials’. However, by carrying out practices associated with agricultural extension (transfer of technology, knowledge and advice) many of their daily activities take place in the rural territories covered by the programme – beyond their office in the city. One of the aims of these public policies, materialised through, and mobilised as, programmes, is to reach the ‘front line’. This space of interaction, as Clarke et al. (2015a) suggest, is where ‘front-line workers’, those at the end of the chain of command, hierarchically and geographically distant from where the policy was developed, must carry out its directives.
Generally, public policies are concentrated on the delivery of public goods and/or services, and their operation depends on the technical services (e.g. agricultural extension teams) provided by the decentralised administration of the state, far from its centre (de Sardan 2014). As Bierschenk and de Sardan (2014) state, a policy is constituted by the everyday decisions and practices of these individuals working in the field. These front-line workers are the funcionarios (public employees) implementing policies and programmes, granting access to welfare benefits, relocating resources and delivering public goods, playing a prominent role in the distribution of state resources (Dorondel and Popa 2014), and, therefore, having a substantial impact on the lives of those who participate as beneficiaries of their implementation practices (Lipsky 2010).

Lipsky (2010) coined the label ‘street-level bureaucrats’ to characterise the officials that translate (as an active process of making a meaning move from one setting to another, interpreting and reinterpreting it to make it fit its new context) the goal and language of the policy into desirable or needed objects or activities. Considering these definitions, the members of the extension teams could be considered as both front-line workers and street-level bureaucrats. Because of their particular and localised knowledge and structural position, and through their everyday practices, PDTI officials translate, for example, agricultural development into greenhouses, motor-pumps, labour training, and rainwater harvesting ponds, among other tools and activities. Acting as brokers between institutional objectives and resources, the requirements communicated by the users, and the needs that they identify as part of their fieldwork, the PDTI extension team mobilise tools and their discretion capacities to materialise and decentralise what could be referred to as a public policy.

However, the work of these officials, as I have already hinted, takes place in a particular scenario. The ‘front’ in which they operate is generally not a street in the city, or behind a desk or counter. Their main activities take place away from the city and the comfort of their offices – taking place in what they call el campo (field). ‘We have to go to el campo’ or ‘I was working in el campo’ were some of the phrases that a PDTI official would commonly say when referring to the place in which their activities would happen or were happening. However, the curious thing about the use of this word in the context of the implementation of the programme is that, similarly to English, ‘field’ could be understood as a rural landscape; a plot of land where agricultural productive activities take place; and as the place outside the office where work-related tasks are also performed. Because it is an agricultural extension programme seeking to transfer technology and provide advice to the farmer/user, all these elements are intimately related to the daily practices of the PDTI officials. Therefore, and as I explained in the introduction, I refer
to them as ‘field-level officials’, recognising this particular aspect of their everyday work, and differentiating them from street-level bureaucrats, or front-line workers.

Within this category, two dimensions of the daily routine of the officials unfolds. On the one hand, the term ‘field-level’ recognises that their work as the interface between the state and the Williche farmers takes place mainly in the field. It is in the rural territories where they operate that the technical visits, the implementation of projects, the majority of the activities, and the transfer of technology are made effective. On the other hand, as state employees, and in order to mobilise resources and account for their own practices, they must comply with several bureaucratic procedures (described both in this chapter and in Chapter 4). Thus, in their daily activities in the field, and sometimes in their office located in the city, this duality unfolds as they perform as technicians/experts in activities related to agriculture, as well as bureaucrats/officials.

Through their redistributive and allocative practices, these field-level officials decentralise and materialise policies that have originated elsewhere, determining on the ground who is entitled to government benefits and sanctions. Authors such as Dorondel and Popa (2014), and Blundo (2014) suggest that through the observation of these practices, the relations that they support, and the governmental technologies involved, one could analyse ‘the state at work’, making it legible. As Bierschenk and de Sardan (2014) argue, policies – and therefore programmes – could be understood as what ‘interface workers’ do. As such, the PDTI can be understood, to some extent and without denying the influence of the constellation of actors involved in its implementation, as ‘what field-level officials do’. Because they are an essential governmental technology for the reproduction of the state, witnessing their local implementation allow us to reflect on how the state operates in the everyday.

2. Bajando and apalancando resources.

Jumping to evade deep, cold pools of rainwater, wary of the slippery road full of deceitful mud made uneven by the transit of cattle, Bruno, Renato and I were walking towards the ojo de agua (water source\textsuperscript{17}) located about 600 meters from the house of a farmer interested in using this resource to supply his agricultural activities. Bruno was leading the way because he knew the place that we were looking for, I was following a little behind, and Renato was bringing up the rear. The call for application for the Subsidio a la Construcción de Obras de Riego y Drenaje para

\textsuperscript{17} The literally translation would be ‘water eye’ which refers to a permanent or temporary natural source of water that springs from the earth or between rocks.
Indígenas (Subsidy for the Construction of Irrigation and Drainage Works for Indigenous People) was open and Renato, who had the most experience with projects related to water solutions, needed to collect some data and identify the coordinates of the water source with his GPS. All this information was required to find the most suitable solution (in this case a motor pump), make quotes depending on that and the characteristics of the land, formulate a budget, and apply for the resources.

In Chile, the impact of agricultural drought has been increasing. This situation has triggered responses that seek to mitigate its effects (Zambrano et al. 2016). As a result, INDAP determined that ‘water’ (as well as ‘renewable energies’ and ‘machinery’) was one of the areas of priority for investment, generating a framework that imposed greater pressure on the field-level officials. They would have to identify ‘needed’ interventions and encourage those who required them to request water solutions. In addition, securing resources coming from this subsidy was essential to provide financial evidence of their activities and influence in their areas of intervention, because the year before they had managed to obtain more than £24,600 in funding through this same scheme. For this reason, Renato, Bruno and I were heading towards a water source that could provide the necessary amount of water for sustaining the crops and cattle of one of the users of the programme. When we reached the place, a deep pool surrounded by a weak wooden fence and barely separated from the other pools created by the winter rains, Renato took out his black notebook, pen and GPS, and started to collect the required information. In the meantime, Bruno, with a long, straight stick that he had found on the road, measured the depth of the pool. Taking all the data collected into account (location, distance from the area to irrigate, altitude, pool depth, among other information), we went to the farmer’s house to inform him that the project was feasible and that Renato would apply for the subsidy on his behalf.

During the first two weeks after the opening of the application process for this funding, I accompanied Renato and Bruno on several of these field reconnaissances. I also went with them on several visits during which, after talking with the users while drinking some mate accompanied by homemade bread, butter and jam, they defined the priority, if any, of their demands. After communicating the opening of this funding application, and promoting water solutions as necessary interventions in times of drought, a significant number of users started to demand resources for harvesting or irrigation water for agricultural purposes. However, while the field-level officials identify farmers who may need these potentially available resources

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18 When the availability of water on an agricultural scale is less than what crops require (Molina 2000).
motivated by increasing the number of secured funds, some users seek to access these subsidies only because they were within reach.

‘In my last visit I told you that you should cut down the Eucalyptus planted on the edge of the creek, didn’t I?’ asked Bruno, pointing at the tall trees located near the house and the greenhouse that the family had acquired thanks to a subsidy a couple of years ago. ‘Those trees suck up a lot of water, and also I told you not to clear [referring to cutting down the native vegetation] the stream’s edge. Their shadow was necessary to safeguard its water’, he finished in a serious and cutting tone. That day, we were visiting a family located in the upper part of Los Ángeles, one of the 5 sectors into which Castro’s extension team divided Quehui Island. During a previous meeting, they shown interest in applying for a rainwater-harvesting pond and a motor pump that would allow them to irrigate their crops and greenhouse. In response to Bruno’s questions and observations, Doña Marjorie, the member of the family registered as the user, and Don Hernán, her husband, only hedged and gave half answers. In the fading light of dusk, we left their house and started walking on the already dark road back to the villa. ‘Did you see the state of the greenhouse?’ Bruno asked me. ‘The cover was all ripped out and damaged. I really do not understand how they have the boldness to ask for something if they do not take care of what they have already received. And they did not do anything we asked them to do!’ He emphasised the raised tone in his voice by tossing a stone into the growing darkness.

Beyond the tensions that these interactions generate among those involved in its implementation, the programme, recognising the insufficiency of its fixed budget, rests on the ability of the technicians to secure resources and transform them into local needs. By preference, the officials apply to external institutions such as: Subsidio para la adquisición de derechos de aguas (Subsidy for the acquisition of water rights), Subsidio a la Construcción de Obras de Riego y Drenaje para Indígenas, (Subsidy for the Construction of Irrigation and Drainage Works for Indigenous People) both from CONADI, Becas Laborales from the Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo (Labour Scholarships, SENCE), and Fondos de la Comisión Nacional de Riego (Funds from the National Irrigation Commission, CNR). Through INDAP, they apply to: Programa Sistema de Incentivos para la Sustentabilidad Agroambiental de los Suelos Agropecuarios (Programme of Incentives for the Agro-environmental Sustainability of Agricultural Soils, SIRSD), Programa de Praderas Suplementarias y Recursos Forrajeros (Supplementary Grasslands and Forage Resources Programme, PPSRF), and Programa de Desarrollo de Inversiones (Development Investment Programme, PDI).
As Bruno once explained to me, one of the main responsibilities of the PDTI officials is to apply for resources in order to provide some sort of solution to an identified need. Although the technical norms of the programme (INDAP 2017) state that providing support to help resolve the financing needs of users through incentives from the PDTI, INDAP, and other public and/or private entities should be part of the daily activities of the field-level officials, throughout my fieldwork I witnessed how these application processes consumed much of the officials’ workday. In Bruno’s words:

‘More than anything our function is to apply for external resources that the government grants or (...) from other sources to be able to bajar [secure, draw down] them (...) to lead some people so that they can opt for these benefits or investments, so they can develop in the field in which they currently perform.’

PDTI officials usually used the verb bajar, which could be partially translated as ‘draw down’ or ‘bring down’, to refer to the action of securing resources, as if there were a meta-space above, where these funds are located. ‘Secure’, which seems to be the most common translation when talking about obtaining resources after a call for applications, does not depict these resources as being spatially situated anywhere. As a verb, ‘secure’ means to get something, but this something does not necessarily reside above. On the other hand, when the PDTI officials use bajar it seems that they are connecting their local, front-line practices with the source of resources through a spatial, vertical and hierarchical understanding of this process. Above dwells the money, but also the centre of power where the policy and its main objectives are being produced, and the priorities are being defined.

Intermittently they replace bajar with the verb apalancar (to leverage). Because they use this word in a context demarcated by economic practices, at first I thought they were referring to financial leverage. Defined as the relation between long-term liabilities (or debt) and total assets (Kraus and Litzenberger 1973), this definition fitted when they were discussing investments and the relocation of resources. However, the more my fieldwork progressed and my awareness of their practices and educational background increased, I realised that they seemed to use the concept not in its financial meaning, but in its mechanical one: to move a thing using a lever. Through their expert and local knowledge, they were able to operate the lever – the application processes – in order to make resources move down (bajar).

Both in the municipality and in INDAP, and even in other government offices, it was well known that there was no one with more knowledge of the current circumstances of Quehui Island and its inhabitants than the PDTI officials. It was quite common for someone from another service or another programme to visit or call the PDTI office in Castro. During those interactions, they
would ask questions regarding the areas of the island, the islanders, their activities, needs, and conflicts, among other topics. Similarly, during several of our trips by motorboat to the island, funcionarios from different programmes accompanying us would take advantage of the informal and intimate situation in order to extract practical information about the people they had to visit or with whom they would meet. While we shared a mate inside the motorboat’s cabin to keep us dry and warm, officials working at local or central government institutions such as the Oficina Municipal de Intermediación Laboral (Municipal Office of Labour Intermediation, OMIL), Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social (Solidarity and Social Investment Fund, FOSIS) or from the programme Female Worker and Head of Household who were visiting the island would approach the members of the extension team to ask them about something related to the islanders. The questions ranged from where to find someone, to more thorough enquiries such as the composition of someone’s household, kinship relations, main sources of income, relationship and participation with the community and neighbours, and so on. Faced with all these questions, the PDTI field-level officials always responded with the diligence and certainty that only experience could provide them with.

Their knowledge about each territory covered by the PDTI allowed the field-level officials to focus the allocation of resources in order to finance the implementation of projects that would benefit certain users to the detriment of others. Due to the emergent and contingent circumstances involved in the production of their budget, mainly the result of the unexpected opening of public tenders to which they can apply, the formulation of projects and the subsequent selection of the users to whom these possible solutions would be offered depended predominantly on the local knowledge of the PDTI officials. They hold the key; they manage the lever that will allow the applications for and the subsequent implementation of the projects awarded through public tenders. It is when dealing with contingent and unforeseen circumstances that these field-level officials would use their discretion in order to secure and relocate as many resources as possible.

3. Transforming available resources into local needs

A decentralised programme, such as the PDTI, maintains the logic that underlies centralised ‘extension’ practices. They work through public funds generally provided by the central government, and devote their efforts to the delivery of previously defined benefits. However, looking to enhance accountability, and aiming to generate a greater impact, the delivery of those public goods is moved ‘closer to the people who use them’ (Anderson and Feder 2004). The
field-level officials carrying out these programmes are those performing state-like practices on the front-line and, thus, decentralising it.

When an application process opens, the PDTI officials must: firstly, identify what is being offered (e.g. resources for investment in energy, water irrigation, machinery, labour courses etc.); secondly, decide which users may need these resources (this may also involve the socialisation of the funds and motivating users); then select feasible cases; and finally apply for the resources (see Fig. 9 below). In doing so, the officials act as policy brokers, catalysts, translators or mediators between the organisations providing the resources, the institutions that they represent (the municipality and INDAP), and those the funds are aimed at (the users).

![Cycle of apalancamiento](callout)

Using their expertise beyond agriculture, field-level officials hold the key that can open the padlock that holds the resource. Using their territorial knowledge, they act as a customs office that endorses the movement and relocation of resources and the subsequent implementation of projects. In this vein, through their brokerage practices, they transform available resources into material objects or relations that can meet the needs of the applicants. As Renato once explained to me, after an application process opened they would visit a farmer and, using their local knowledge rather than formal techniques of categorisation, they would identify what the farmer is lacking and what requirements they have. In this way, almost all their resources are employed primarily to identify who can qualify, and then to apply on their behalf.
Although, as I have been describing, one of the objectives of the programme is to support users to access funds that would later be translated into projects or initiatives seeking to improve their production: in the field this aim transcends what the regulations stipulate. As Mariela once told me, the educational level of many of the users makes it difficult for them to address the different steps and bureaucratic requirements involved in the calls for application and, afterwards, in the implementation of the project. Usually – unless they or a family member, usually younger, has the necessary proficiency – the technical language, a cumbersome bureaucracy and the use of online platforms becomes an obstacle for the farmers. Consequently, rather than offering support through this process, field-level officials take control of the applications from the beginning (the call) until its materialisation (the project). Through their involvement in this process, officials, I argue, assume the role of brokers and mediators.

Mosse and Lewis (2006) state that studies of development brokers tend to address ‘brokers as intermediaries between development institutions and peasant society’. Within this approach, brokerage is understood as the result of a state incapable of imposing its rationality at a local level, therefore requiring local actors to sustain patron-client relationships, ensuring control and stabilising the state’s efforts. However, while recognising its role in terms of the decentralisation of the state, I seek to broaden this definition of brokerage by divorcing it from its clientelist component, and introducing ‘discretion’ as an essential tool used by the brokers in carrying out state-led interventions. Also, and alongside Latour (2005), I contend that brokers do not operate as mere intermediaries. On the contrary, rather than only connecting inputs with outputs by transferring forces or meanings, brokers act as mediators in these processes. In doing so, they ‘transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’ (Latour 2005: 39).

As Bierschenk et al. (2002) argue, ‘development brokers’ – within which, and according to my approach, field-level officials responsible for implementing an agricultural extension development programme are included – should be able to express and communicate the needs of the local population to those providing the resources. Brokerage, under this approach, is understood as the ‘process of connecting actors in systems of social, economic, or political relations in order to facilitate access to valued resources’ (Stovel et al. 2011; Stovel and Shaw 2012: 141). This implies the active participation of agents who normally carry out actions that do not conform with the regulations imposed by the institutions involved in the process (Savitri 2015). Therefore, brokers play a fundamental role in the acquisition of resources, by bridging the gap between two separated endpoints (on the one hand, institutions providing benefits; and
on the other, the farmers) and allowing resources, knowledge, technologies and opportunities to overcome this gap (Stovel and Shaw 2012).

Brokers are key actors in what Bierschenk et. al. call ‘the hunt for projects’ (Bierschenk et al. 2002: 4). Acting as mediators between the source of resources and the potential beneficiaries during this process of the ‘hunt’, brokers have a significant influence on where these funds potentially end up (Funder and Marani 2015). This influence is based on the wide use of their margins for manoeuvre (discretion), commonly unidentified or unforeseen by those who generated the programme (Bierschenk and de Sardan 2014). Therefore, in the act of translation and the relocation of resources, these officials use their knowledge and specific expertise and personal preferences to potentially materialise some projects, and to benefit some users over others.

As mediators, and based on Latour’s (1994) approach, brokers produce connections that would not exist without their effort. During the process in which these links are actualised, the elements involved are modified and transformed. This is what Latour defines as ‘translation’. In their daily activities, field-level officials implementing the PDTI act as translators, modifying the inputs of the programme (resources and goals) and transforming them into something new. They translate up (towards their hierarchical superiors) and translate out (to the non-members of the institution) (Yanow 2004). On the one hand, when it seems necessary and useful, they inform INDAP and the municipality about what they have learned in the field, and on the other, they translate their knowledge of the programme, their everyday tasks, and the emergent and fixed benefits that they mobilise, to the users. These translation processes and the relations involved show that (just like their budget) a policy formalised through a programme, and a programme materialised through projects, is not an unfiltered, linear and unproblematic progression, but rather the consequence of several interactions between the ‘state’ (here embodied by the field-level officials) and local people (Herbert-Cheshire 2003).

4. What and for whom? Discretion and expertise at a local level

‘Don19 Caín works really well’, Mariela told me while we were in our way to Tenaún to meet him in order to carry out a technical visit. ‘He has been asking us for a walking-tractor for a long time,

19 Throughout the thesis, Don (for men) or Doña (for women) will precede the forename of most of the programme’s users and the PDTI officials’ hierarchical superiors. In doing so, I am recognising the differential treatment observed by the officials when they assign these prefixes as sign of respect and familiarity (given by the use of the forename). Among themselves, or with other front-line workers of similar rank, this form of respect would never be used unless there was a significant age difference.
and since we are now applying for machinery projects I would like to see if he is still interested’. After a minute of silence as she stared at the winding road, she added ‘it makes you want to apply for people like him. You will see that he keeps everything neat, his greenhouses are in good condition, producing, and his animals well-cared for. We have had other users who ask and ask but when you visit them, you realise that, either they have not used what we have given them, or that they keep everything in a poor state. That is why you want to work with people like Don Caín, he does not disappoint you.’

This kind of narrative regarding the existence of individuals who ‘deserve’ – and others who do not – and the willingness of the extension team to apply for projects on their behalf were rather common. Although the PDTI officials claimed to have a rotating system that in the long term would allow all (interested) users to access some benefits, these experiences inclined them to prefer some over others. Although there is no regulation that directly excludes those who do not comply with the expected and instructed conduct of a user, the officials used their discretionary authority to sanction bad practices, excluding these users or giving them very low priority when applying for projects. This situation was evident in one of Alejandra’s field visits. She was an agricultural engineer working for the area agency who was in charge of providing technical and operational support to the extension team. Along with Renato and Bruno, we visited Doña Candelaria’s land because Alejandra had to check whether some of the users reported by the extension team were not complying with the implementation of certain projects that had already been assigned and financed.

Alejandra was explaining to me that even though Doña Candelaria had not finished the construction of a warehouse funded by one of the projects secured through the programme, because it was the first black mark on her record, they could only threaten her with removal from the PDTI if this kind of behaviour continued. Bruno walked silently while listening contemplatively. When I asked him what he thought about this case, he replied that he could not believe that they did not have the ability to do something else and definitively expel her. ‘Did you see the state of that warehouse? Not only was it not finished, but also what was done was made of recycled material and she received money to buy new ones. People say that she used the money to pay for her daughter’s wedding.’ Clearly irritated, he added: ‘I will never apply for projects on her behalf again. This is not possible!’ Over the following months while the application processes were active, and as Bruno promised that day, Doña Candelaria’s name was never mentioned as a possible beneficiary of the anticipated projects and activities. In this way, although the field-level officials had few institutional instruments to sanction users who did not
comply with the programme's requirements, they used their discretion to exclude them from, or to give them a very low priority in, the application processes.

However, the discretion shown by the officials when they decided which projects to apply for and which users to benefit was not only based on their good or bad experiences working with some users. Although the ‘work-ethic’ of the farmers was one of the main justifications for offering and carrying out a project, there were other elements influencing the decisions of the officials regarding which projects to push forward. Selecting users due to their experiences with them in the field was based on their local knowledge; however, their expert knowledge also played a central role vis-à-vis the time allocated for, and the quality of, the applications. As Renato once told me:

‘First, I was focused on giving more informal technical advice, trying to provide a solution in any of the fields needed by the farmer, but nowadays I am focused on one topic, something that interests me. I am working mainly on projects related to water solutions. I also provide advice in other fields in which I have technical knowledge. For example, greenhouse production. This one goes hand in hand with irrigation, because good irrigation, technically well achieved, will generate good production.’

As described in Chapter 1, all of the officials with whom I worked had a field of ‘expertise’. Because of this background, and in addition to their personal and professional ethos, they were more or less motivated when they dealt with different calls for applications. For example, Bruno showed interest in every project related to eco-agriculture and organic ways of production; Mariela and Enrique were inclined towards projects that brought out identity aspects of the island (gastronomy, tourism, crafts); and Jorge was interested in promoting entrepreneurial initiatives and producing sustainable market networks.

The case of the PDTI team operating in Dalcahue is enlightening in this respect. The local knowledge of Mariela and Enrique, together with their agricultural expertise and personal motivations, have informed the design of several initiatives that highlight the particular characteristics of the groups of users participating in the programme. Thus, for example, they have managed to obtain resources from the municipality and INDAP for the establishment of a vegetable market that operates twice a week on a vacant plot of land next to the PDTI office. At this small market, and under tents acquired with these resources, some users selected by the extension team due to the quality of their vegetables sell their products to the inhabitants of the city, avoiding intermediaries. On the other hand, the formation of the ‘spinners from Tenaún’ group was also a product of the local knowledge acquired by the officials after years working alongside the users, getting to know their skills and interests. Based on this awareness, Mariela and Enrique have used their discretion to focus their efforts on applying for resources
that would facilitate the maintenance of this endeavour. Either by applying on behalf of users who participate in this group, or by seeking public and private resources to support them, Dalcahue’s extension team favour certain projects based on their own experiences and expectations.

The use of the team’s discretion became evident when the area manager participated in the inauguration of a small kiosk in which the spinners would sell their woven products to tourists visiting the area. This small wooden shop at the edge of the road to Tenaún (where tourist attractions are located) was financed with funds secured by the extension team. At that celebratory meeting that brought together the spinners, their families, the local community, the field-level officials and authorities from the municipality and INDAP, Don Alfredo, the area manager, made it clear that he was not happy with the way in which the team was prioritising projects. Although the programme stipulates that one of its goals is to provide assistance for the development of initiatives complementary to agriculture, as is the case of the woollen garments and home furnishings fashioned by the spinners using locally sourced supplies and traditional practices, it seemed to him that the focus of the activities carried out by the PDTI teams should be centred on initiatives related to agricultural and livestock production. However, throughout my stay in the archipelago, both Castro and Dalcahue’s teams ignored these critiques, and devoted time and resources to the development of activities focused on these complementary initiatives.

Renato’s discretionary practices were also informed by an economic rationality and by his formal expertise. Unlike the other officials, he was registered on ‘ChileProveedores’, an official electronic registry of suppliers to the state (companies, consultancy firms, professionals or technicians registered to do business with the state), and in INDAP’s Directorio de Consultores (Directory of Consultants) as a specialist in the construction of irrigation works. Consequently, the projects secured by Castro’s extension team that involved the installation or construction of water solutions were, in most cases, implemented by Renato. Because these activities were outside of his duties as a PDTI official, and because in the budget for each project the consultant's fees are specified, he received an additional remuneration for each successful application for, and subsequent implementation of, rainwater collectors, electric motor-pumps, and drainage and irrigation systems, among others.

When the calls for applications for projects focused on water solutions were active, and during the subsequent implementation of the projects that obtained financing, Renato’s workload increased notably. After learning about the opening of the call for applications, often days later,
the team visited the sectors in which they operated to raise demand and decide which projects to apply for. After motivating and convincing the most sceptical users (usually because they must agree to pay 10% of the total cost of the project), Renato would spend days moving back and forth between the office and the field. During these days, he would have to negotiate with potential suppliers, get quotes and collect data to determine the feasibility of the offered solution, calculate its total cost, and collect documents and signatures to validate the application (a process that I describe in more detail in Chapter 4). If the applications were successful, he would allocate a significant amount of his time for the acquisition of the implements and supplies, and then several days, usually weekends, for the installation of these solutions.

As the engineers described in Harvey and Knox’s ethnography about the construction of a road in Perú, when officials allocate resources and translate them into material outputs such as projects and activities, they perform as technical experts. In this role, their work ‘is oriented towards the resolution of specific problems, which fold the social and the technical together to produce material rearrangements in the name of the emancipatory transformation of “development”’ [authors’ quotation marks] (Harvey and Knox 2015). When rendering (externally or internally defined) deficiencies as technical, the members of the extension teams operate as experts in their fields, and are recognised as such by the users. Following Eyal (2013), being an expert implies claiming to have skills and knowledge in a particular field, and having a degree of credibility. In the case of the field-level officials, they have delimited areas of expertise (i.e. sustainability, irrigation, entrepreneurship) and their credibility has been supported by the implementation of successful projects over the years in which they have worked in the programme.

As I have illustrated, and following Carr (2010), the expertise of the field-level officials is not just in having the ability to achieve goals in a fast and efficient manner. It is also the product of their ability to redirect their discretion towards identifying needs, and allocating the resources to tackle them technically. Therefore, their expertise is ‘inherently interactional’ and relies on their capability to link resources and incentives with interests and opportunities. They enact expertise when assembling the institutional goals, bureaucratic devices, technologies and tools, technical and traditional concepts, and other actors involved in the process.

The expertise that field-level officials enact is the product of both their roles as bureaucrats and as experts/technicians. Mangset and Asdal (2019) argue that studies of expertise within bureaucracy have mostly been focused on formal requirements and disciplinary knowledge, leaving aside the practices and procedures involved in their everyday work. In this way, by
recognising the fundamental role of the bureaucratic practices involved in the stabilisation of budgets and the application and subsequent implementation of projects and initiatives, I aim to contribute to filling this gap. Likewise, my approach to the enactment of expertise, unlike Carr’s (2010) strategy which is focused on linguistic and metalinguistic resources, highlights the value of experiential knowledge and practices of translation and discretion. What I show here is how their expertise unfolds when they use their room for manoeuvre to transform financial resources into material outcomes.

In this way, the discretionary possibilities of the officials are intertwined with their expertise. Using the discretion allowed in the implementation of the programme, the PDTI officials use both their local and technical expertise to transform resources into projects and activities, which will later be stabilised in the programme’s budget. On the one hand, they prefer to work with some users to the detriment of others; and on the other, their expertise motivates them to apply with greater impetus and security for certain types of projects. Using their discretion, they shape the material dimensions of the programme’s outcomes which will then be stabilised through a retrospective approach. Although the results of the application processes are always uncertain, by applying with/for certain users and putting more emphasis on certain issues in which they have more expertise, or for which they will receive an additional payment, officials define how the policy behind the programme reaches the local level, and how it is decentralised and materialised. Acting as brokers, they occupy a privileged position that grants them the possibility of influencing how resources are mobilised.

5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have illustrated ethnographically how, through the everyday practices of the field-level officials informed by their knowledge of the local context, technical/professional expertise, and room for manoeuvre, they use their discretion to shape the material outcomes of the PDTI. When stabilising budgets, securing resources, and allocating them through the implementation of projects, activities and the acquisition of agricultural tools, field-level officials play a substantial role in how the policy behind the programme reaches the local level. Accordingly, I have shown how, by acting as brokers, they decentralise this policy, rendering it material, and activating, through retrospective and contingent practices, technologies such as budgets and projects; and consequently allowing the movement of resources. In conclusion, this chapter provides an account of the neoliberal state at work by making visible the negotiations, decisions and tensions used and experience by the field-level officials’ to apalancar internal and
external resources, set them in motion and, finally, translate them into material – recordable and stabilisable – outputs.
CHAPTER 3. HERE COMES THE STATE! MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE INTERMITTENCE OF THE STATE IN QUEHUI ISLAND.

‘(...) anthropology may not find the state ready-made, waiting for our ethnographic gaze in the known sites of national government’ (Trouillot 2001).

‘A stretch of water can make a world of difference (...)’ (Baldacchino 2016).

Tempestad, tempestad  
con viento la lancha se va  
La lancha está lista el zarpe aquí está,  
pasajeros todos contentos se van  
De pronto un turista se acerca al pasar,  
pregunta en voz alta ¿La lancha ‘onde va?  
‘Onde va la lancha?! A Quehui va.  
‘Onde va la lancha?! A Quehui va.  
Tempestad, tempestad  
con viento la lancha se va  
A bordo ya suban grita el capitán,  
nos vamos al tiro para nuestro hogar  
Cuando ya la lancha está por zarpar,  
llega un pasajero: ¿Me puede llevar?  
‘Onde va la lancha? A Quehui va.  
‘Onde va la lancha? A Quehui va.

‘Tempest, tempest,  
With wind, the boat is going  
The boat is ready, the sailing is here  
happy passengers are leaving  
Suddenly a tourist, he approaches when passing  
he asks out loud, ‘the boat, where is it going?’  
Where is the boat going, to Quehui it is going
Where is the boat going, to Quehui it is going
Tempest, tempest,
With wind, the boat is going
Onboard and up the Captain shouts
we are going now to our home
And when the boat is about to set sail
a passenger arrives ”can you take me?”
Where is the boat going, to Quehui it is going
Where is the boat going, to Quehui it is going.

During the summer, it is quite common to hear the song ‘A dónde va la lancha’ (‘Where is the boat going’), a piece written by the Chilean and Chilote folklorist Ramón Yáñez Delgado and included on his album Caituy de Achao (1985). At every festival, craft fair, tourist activity or folklore performance taking place on the archipelago, the song can be heard at a folklore band’s concert, or as part of a greatest hits album being played. Because is one of the best-known songs of ‘Chilote’ folklore, if you ask the question ‘where is the boat going?’ someone will usually answer, ‘to Quehui it is going’. If you travel frequently to Quehui Island – a ferry and motorboat dependant island, and one of the more than 40 islands that compose the Archipelago of Chiloé in the south of Chile – the question and its answer became an essential, and sometimes tedious, part of your daily conversations. Either as I was saying goodbye before leaving the PDTI office on my way to the island, or when explaining my daily activities, or when boarding the motorboat, someone would perform this dialogical ritual. However, it was not until I had finished my fieldwork and when I started to reflect on the role of motorboats that I really paid attention to the song’s lyrics. In the song, the boat uses the force of the wind to reach its destination, and nowadays, the storm (the weather) continues to play a fundamental role in the (im)mobility of motorboats and what they would carry, such as Islanders, visitors (field-level officials included), cargo, cattle or provisions. Therefore, this song renders visible two fundamental elements that constantly interfere with the possibility of accessing the island: boats (nowadays with a motor), and the weather.

Before the arrival of motorboats, the connectivity of Quehui Island depended on sailing boats and rowers. The route between Castro and the Island, which today takes about 2 hours,

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20 Author’s translation of the song ‘A dónde va la lancha’ (‘Where is the boat going’).
previously took at least 15 hours when conditions were ideal (it could take more than 3 days if a storm, or more than one, hit them on the way). Following the narratives collected and analysed by Yáñez (2011), the first motorboat in Quehui had been purchased in 1964. After the earthquake of 1960 (the most powerful ever recorded worldwide), the archipelago became notorious for its neglected state in comparison with the rest of the country, and was the subject of several developmental policies formulated and implemented by the central government. Because of this, new infrastructure and technology reached the territory, including the motorboats that would gradually replace the old sailing boats, improving connectivity and reducing travel time. Today, motorboats are an essential technology of mobility, a vital infrastructure in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of ferry dependant islands, and their presence is fundamental to the archipelago’s land and seascape. In the archipelago of Chiloé, it is almost impossible to imagine a panorama without one of these means of transportation, operational or abandoned, anchored in the bay or stranded on the beach.

On a dark spring day, while the rain hit the car’s windshield endlessly and air condensation fogged the windows hindering the visibility of the green landscapes that decorated the winding narrow road towards Puchilco, the three members of Castro’s extension team were frantically calling and sending messages to the owners of motorboats who could take us across to Quehui Island (see Fig. 10 below), for a reasonable fee. As always, we were late, and people were waiting for us on the other side.

‘Hello, Pato? It is Jorge, from the PDTI. I am calling you because we need a flete [paid informal service that allows movement through the archipelago without depending on the daily subsidised ferries] between Puchilco and Los Ángeles. Are you available? No!’ – He cried, worried and surprised – ‘Well, don’t worry, I will call Don Meno’ – While Jorge ended the phone call, steering the car around a curve with one hand, Renato intervened, adding – ‘Don Meno is not available. I already called him and he is running a flete to Chaulinec [another island far from Quehui, towards the inner-sea]. Maybe you should call Pedro, he might be free’.

This last resort was finally successful: Pedro was available – ‘We will be there in 20 minutes’ – said Jorge - being extremely optimistic, even unrealistic, about our schedule. After about 35 minutes we arrived at Puchilco’s pier. An old green and white motorboat was waiting for us. Pedro, a young, cheerful islander from Chelín (a small island a short distance from Quehui) was chatting with a local fisherman who was reeling in his fishing line, hoping to find a róbalo (bass) at the other end – ‘You are here! I was about to leave you. You know that I am a busy man’ – Pedro said, inviting us to board the motorboat and saying goodbye to the angler. At the age of
he was the owner of the motorboat, which he had fixed and modified to fulfil his daily activities: *fletes* of all kinds (people, cattle, building materials, etc.) and, his main source of income, petrol trafficking (petrol purchased at a very low price from workers in the salmon industry). Because of this access to cheap petrol, the cost of fuel for motorboats is relatively cheap, so the profit margins are quite high. Therefore, *fletes* in the archipelago are a very lucrative activity for those involved and especially for those who, like Pedro, own the boats they use to carry out this service.

Although the black market in petrol is an interesting topic, this chapter addresses what this practice allows: PDTI field-level officials and/or other front-line state workers can travel by motorboat on a low budget between islands to carry out their daily tasks outside their offices. In doing so, they allow the intermittent presence of the Chilean state in a territory with challenging access; poor ‘anchored’ state infrastructure; and the fluctuating presence of public institutions.

Figure 10: PDTI Castro routes [Source: by Tamara Salinas-Cohn based on Google Earth]

Research bringing together mobility, island or archipelagic studies, and infrastructure are mainly focussed on the mobile practices, socio-technical assemblages, and everyday strategies of the inhabitants of boat-dependant islands. An example of this trend is the work of Christensen and Mertz (2010) and Christensen and Gough (2012). Through extended fieldwork in the Pacific
Islands (such as the Solomon Islands), they aim to describe the livelihood of the islanders and the nature of their mobile practices, emphasising how these practices contribute to the production of seascapes. In a similar vein is Vannini’s (2011; 2012) research in British Columbia, Canada, which illustrates the role played by ferry mobilities in the daily experiences of the inhabitants of this group of islands. To do so, he addresses how mechanised technologies, temporalities and spatial mobilities are assembled together. Following the non-representational approach employed by Vannini, the work carried out by Lazo (2017), and Lazo and Carvajal (2018a; 2018b) in Chiloé on socio-technical assemblages and embodied experiences, is also a clear example of the preponderance of research focused on how everyday water-mobility is a central aspect of the ways of life of those dwelling on islands.

Taking this realisation as a starting point, this chapter brings a new angle to this type of research. I aim to show how mobility is a key dimension of the way in which islanders experience the state, in practical and affective terms. Based on Mazzarella’s (2009) definition, affect is a process that goes beyond emotions, which are generally semiotically mediated, to intersect with ‘corporeally rooted’ processes.

For this purpose, I stress the role of water mobility infrastructure (i.e. motorboats and ferries) as a key element in the study of the everyday (re)production of the state in territories without fixed links. Drawing on my experiences moving back and forth between Castro and Quehui Island accompanying the field-level officials in charge of the PDTI in this area, I reflect on the ambivalent affective registers produced when water mobility acts as a central enabler, or inhibitor, of islander’s interactions with the state. Furthermore, I illustrate how – regardless of other forms of state presence on the island – these recurrent, but sporadic, interactions with state actors in charge of delivering welfare policies give rise to narratives of a neglectful state, placing tension upon the different guises that the state takes on in local contexts. However, in order to achieve this goal, I first address how officials come to be seen as state actors (or ‘the state’) rather than as any other kind of actor? Moreover, what does it imply to be a state actor?

Based on Mitchell (1999), Troulliott (2001) and Harvey’s (2005) work on state-effects, this chapter will discuss the role played by mobility state infrastructure – and in the final section, the aspirations about anchored infrastructure – on the affective and material dimension of the state being produced in the interactions between officials and the islanders. To do this, I bring together ethnographic examples that challenge the idea of the state as a reified, freestanding actor. Following Mitchell (1999), due to the blurred boundary between society and the state, it would not be possible to consider the latter as a bounded object or entity. Because of this, he
suggests – and I agree – that the state can be only addressed as a complex set of practices and techniques involved in the continuous reproduction of its artificial differentiation from society.

Adding to this approach, but with a focus on how this process is produced and represented, Gupta (2012) allocates the responsibility of this distinction to the routinised practices of state offices and representations created and mobilised by state officials. For him, the solidity of ‘the state’ cannot resist the detailed scrutiny of ethnography if we approach it as a highly complex arrangement of institutions with multiple functions, modes of operation, diversified levels, agencies and bureaus, and locations, pulling in different directions. In a similar fashion, and also influenced by the work of Mitchell and Trouilliot, Aretxaga (2003: 398) argues that ‘the state as phenomenological reality is produced through discourses and practices of power, produced in local encounters at the everyday level’. This recognition of the ‘everyday’ as a space for state-practice is also highlighted by Harvey (2005) when she affirms that the state, often regarded as an absent social agent or abstraction, appears in a concrete way in people’s lives, entangled in mundane sociality through the materiality of its effects.

Based on the aforementioned, and following Trouillot’s (2001: 126-127) argument, the state’s lack of empirical boundaries and ‘institutional fixity’ (Gupta’s ‘complex array’), leaves room for an ethnographic strategy that would ‘focus on the multiple sites in which state processes and practices are recognized through their effects’. Rather than residing mainly in its institutions, the materiality of the state depends on the iteration of these effects. Therefore, the question here is how the effects are created, and what does it take to create and maintain the distinction between state and society that has been made ‘real’ through the effort entailed in specific practices. Taking this into consideration, my focus here is on those performing the neoliberal state or enacting its authority in a local setting, and on those who, through intermittent interactions with these state actors, encounter these state effects on a daily basis. In this way, the following sections will give an account of how the state is present in Quehui Island through practices and procedures that produce (material) state effects that resonate in the affective register and representations of the state, emerging from the interaction between front-line state officials and the islanders.

In Mazzarella’s (2009: 299) terms, ‘any social project that is not imposed through force alone has to be affective in order to be effective’. In a similar vein, Woodward (2014) argues that state effects are complementary to state affects. While the first tend to be described as seemingly unificatory practices involved in the production of state unity and coherence, the latter perform as the ‘differential’ accompaniment of these effects, emerging from contingent encounters and
relations between state actors and ‘those who are enrolled in affective relations with it [the state]’ (Woodward 2016). What I want to extract from this line of argument is the complementarity between effects and affects. In this way, and following Laszczkowski and Reeves (2015), although state affects can be seen as the differential emotional responses fostered by the material consequences of state effects, they should not be addressed only as an epiphenomenon of political life. Here, I argue that this approach is an invitation to understand how the neoliberal state is enacted and experienced, in affective and effective terms, when different technologies, actors and aspirations come into play in local setting.

In this way, the state is not only understood as the accumulation of practices and procedures that reproduce its ‘ghost-like’ bounded image at the local level, ‘but as thriving in embodied, affective resonances within and between persons and things’ (Laszczkowski and Reeves 2015: 10). As such, considering the differential emotional responses that can take place in the everyday and intermittent encounters between islanders and state actors, the affective register invoked can adopt a variety of forms such as complaints (such as feelings of being neglected) and aspirations (i.e. the desire for a regular presence of the ‘caring state’). However, and as I will show later, we must always take into account that the role of affect in the production of narratives around the state is historically informed: it ‘preserves the traces of past actions and encounters, bringing them to the present as potential’ (Mazzarella 2009).

Taking all this into account, the aim of this chapter is to pay attention to motorboats and mobility infrastructure as a technology of everyday reproductions of state presence, in its different guises. In this way, this approach provides me with a relevant entry point for examining the contradictory affective effects of state presence, or lack thereof, and how neoliberal state effects coexist along with, and in some extent produce, other kinds of narratives that are created by aspirations other than those coming from the principles behind neoliberalism.

1. We are the state!

The PDTI extension team travels frequently (once or twice a week) to Quehui, using whatever option is available. These regular visits take place because most users of the programme (130 of 148) live and carry out their daily activities – agriculture, cattle, fishing, seaweed harvesting, and handicrafts – on the island. For one year, I witnessed how the team used diverse routes and transport options in order to reach Quehui’s pier. Large ferries transporting trucks intended to collect the Islanders’ rubbish, small subsidised ferries (foot passengers only) which connects the island with Castro daily, rented speedboats, old motorboats, big ones, and small ones were all employed according to variables such as the team’s monthly budget; availability; who may be
accompanying them; the number of state/local government departments involved; available time; and weather conditions, among other factors.

The team’s presence on the island was mediated by two relevant aspects: weather conditions and accessible motorboats. Beyond these issues, and leaving aside schoolteachers and school administrative staff, health care professionals, and technicians, they are by far the state/local government officials who spend the most time in this territory. Because of this, for many islanders they constitute the state’s most visible representatives. If they cannot travel (a situation which is quite common in the autumn and winter, and not unusual during the spring and summer) due to the port being closed because of strong winds and heavy rain, the presence of the state/local government is noticeably reduced or, according to a large number of Islanders, absent.

‘We are the state; we are the visible face of the municipality on the island’, Bruno stated as we were leaving a meeting held in the neighbours’ association building in Los Ángeles. That day, he had engaged in a discussion with some islanders about sterilising the stray dogs that were causing damage on the island. One of the teachers from the school in Los Ángeles showed her disagreement with how the municipality was dealing with the rising number of free-ranging dogs running around their fields and attacking their cattle. Bruno calmly explained to her that these problems should be addressed by the Municipality’s Department of Environment, and that these kind of issues exceeded his job as a PDTI official. However, losing her temper and raising her voice, the teacher and other islanders who had joined the discussion accused him of indolence and passivity towards the problems that they must face daily. She threatened that she would talk to the mayor, or even go to the local newspaper (El Insular) to make this situation visible.

‘It’s always the same story’ – Bruno said when we were approaching the pier where the motorboat should have been waiting to take us back to Castro – ‘They always attack us for things that are not related to our jobs. In the beginning, I reacted badly, but I have learned to stay calm. The problem is that they think that we are responsible for everything because our colleagues from the muni (municipality) always have some excuse and they never come to the island’.

Although these kinds of accusations were not the exception, the members of the PDTI extension team often fulfilled tasks outside their contractual obligations. As described in Chapter 2, due to

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21 The maritime authority provides daily information about the state of the ports throughout the country. Depending on weather conditions, it determines whether each port is closed, if restrictions apply for certain types of vessels, or if it is open for every routine activity.
their advanced knowledge about this territory, and due to their regular presence on the island, they acted as more than mere technicians in charge of an agricultural extension programme. On the contrary, they would often have to perform as information brokers, guides for authorities visiting the island, a point of connection between other programmes and the islanders, escorts for external professionals carrying out activities such as courses for labour training, and as evaluators or executors of engineering projects, among others. Although they are at the bottom rung of the government and municipality organisational structure, as field-level officials, the extension team is directly responsible for the dissemination of messages to the inhabitants of the island. They participate in the production of, and in the interactions and encounters through which, the power and meaning of the state is constantly being negotiated.

However, in territories such as Quehui, these encounters are mediated by the possibilities of the functioning of mobility infrastructure: motorboats and ferries. Therefore, the role of PDTI officials as state actors, those who through their practices and interactions produce state-effects, depends on matters that transcend their will and possibilities for action. Due to this context, on Quehui Island the state’s presence, at least when it concerns its ‘caring face’ based on the delivery of public goods, is regarded as ambivalent and sometimes unpredictable: it is intermittent.

In physics, specifically in the field of dynamical systems, intermittency is understood as ‘a regime with long-lived nearly periodic laminar phases interrupted by turbulent bursts. This regime results from the collision of stable and unstable periodic cycles’ (Pikovsky 1983: L109). I argue that the narratives around the state that the islanders elicit, and the experiences of front-line officials embodying the state’s authority on the island, follow the patterns of this regime. Both the daily activities of the islanders and officials are characterised by a laminar rhythm – organised and smooth – interrupted by the sporadic interactions that mobility, and the infrastructure that enables or prevents it, renders effective.

Following Navaro-Yashin (2002: 135) the idea of the state obtains its power not only through its ideological enforcement carried out by institutions such as the army and the school, but also through ‘quotidian, and seemingly spontaneous, events and occasions’. Thus, different state-effects, and how people experience them, produce different state representations. Due to the islander’s interactions with actors representing diverse state agencies, the state is seen as having different roles, responsibilities and features, and, thus, diverse representations and affective registers emerge. In Quehui, the guises assumed by the state are mainly informed by its sporadic and sometimes unpredictable presence. Along the same lines as Navaro-Yashin, Obeid’s work in
Arsal, a Lebanese town located on the border with Syria, shows how people would attribute different ‘faces’ to the state. For example, she identifies that in their everyday interactions with the state, the Arsais deal with its oppressive and neglectful face, while, at the same time, they direct their aspirations towards the ‘ideal state’, ‘the face that incorporates its citizens, listens to their problems, and provides services that will develop the town’ (Obeid 2010). In their imagination, this face of the state, the one focussed on giving rather than taking, exists elsewhere.

The images of the state that are being produced and are circulating in Quehui, to a greater or lesser extent, follow this same logic, but with the exception that its ideal or caring face, or guise, appears intermittently. Pinker and Harvey’s (2015) work on a railroad project in the Sacred Valley of Peru shows how the affective force of the state sometimes emerges in the fluctuating movement between its ambivalent presence and absence. Likewise, but as a physical presence rather than a virtual force, the affective registers being elicited in Quehui are products of this same ambivalence. The image of both the caring guise of the state (embodied by officials in charge of delivering welfare programmes), and its inconvenient one (law enforcement) moving back and forth between Castro and the island, without the islanders being able to influence this flow, leaves the latter with the feeling that the state, although always in an ambivalent way, is more absent than present. In experiencing this intermittence, and regardless of the state workers based on the island, the Islanders elicit and mobilise narratives about being neglected. Therefore, both ‘faces’ of the state, due to their intermittency, are add together in what I identify as the locus of this kind of affective dissatisfaction – the ‘neglectful state’.

2. The guises of the state in Quehui Island

Ester, a short and corpulent woman, sat across from me on the other side of the wood stove, warming her strong hands and short fingers, removing some of the soil trapped under her nails after her morning’s work in her huerta (garden). She was wearing a thick woollen jumper and a muddy pair of white wellies. ‘A matecito?’ – she offered me with friendly eyes and a faint smile, before lifting the hot teapot on the stove and pouring some water into the mate – ‘Sorry for delaying our meeting, but for me it is really complicated to leave my chores. I am sola [an expression indicating that someone – usually a woman – has no children or spouse], and I have to take care of my animals, my potatoes, my vegetables, and most importantly, I am taking care of my aunt’ – she added, looking towards a closed door in the corner of the room – ‘She is very old and now she is bedbound because of a tumour on her leg. I have to be there, helping her and doing everything for her every day. Supposedly a nurse or someone from the Municipality
is coming to see her soon, but you know how things are. If they come to the island they come for a short time, and they want to leave soon’ – In a resigned tone, she finished, saying – ‘we will have to keep waiting’.

I had arrived at Los Ángeles’ pier (see Fig. 11) the previous evening using the state subsidised ferry service. My plan was to meet the PDTI officials after conducting a couple of interviews (one of them with Ester), but they had not been able to travel that morning because one of the municipality’s motorboats had not left Rilán (a small village located on the peninsula opposite Castro with a ‘usable’ - but rather deteriorated – jetty). The maritime authority had indicated that the port was open, but the forecast suggested that during the afternoon the weather would get worse. This risk motivated some municipal officials to convince the motorboat’s manager to cancel the trip to the island, regardless of whether some Islanders had already approached the Rural Emergency Centre or the pier in Los Ángeles, waiting for an official who would bring them information, documents, or would deliver public goods – such as welfare (Lipsky 2010): like so many other times, the officials never came. Although the port was open and navigation to the island was possible, and despite the waiting islanders who planned their day according to the activities programmed by the officials coming from Castro, the motorboat never reached the island’s main pier.

These kinds of events enabled the emergence of narratives that questioned the presence of the state on the island. Due to the role played by sea-related activities in their daily lives (fishing, shellfish and seaweed harvesting, transport, among others), many of the Islanders are aware of the conditions of navigation. Therefore, they have the knowledge to decide if officials representing different public services (from the municipality or central government) do not travel to the island due to structural causes (i.e. weather conditions) or what they perceive as a lack of commitment. Therefore, this context is not only informed by officials not going to the island, but the affective responses that their intermittent presence produces.
I visited the Island frequently during my year of fieldwork to identify the institutions, front-line workers, and individuals with local authority performing state-like practices: dealing with local affairs, implementing public policies and delivering public goods. In this sense, the perception of the inhabitants of the Island that they are in a continuous state of neglect on the part of the local and central government seems to be paradoxical. However, as an ethnographic dichotomy, the presence/absence of the state can be understood as an affective response which describes the relationship of the Islanders with wider structures of power in emotional terms, due to their feeling of being historically and currently excluded from national dynamics (Rasmussen 2015) such as economic progress, development, and connectivity.

On the Island, there is state infrastructure and a workforce hired by institutions under the administration of the local government of Castro, with resources coming from state institutions such as the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Defence, Education, the Home Office, and Social Development. Although all these services provide resources and create spaces for their officials to visit the island, public infrastructure located on this territory is still scarce, and mainly focussed on providing health and education services. Nevertheless, even though there are schools, an emergency health centre, and front-line workers working on the island, Islanders frequently affirmed that the Chilean state had historically abandoned them, and that this situation has not changed much. They experience the intermittency of the state when waiting for public officials who do not come, or when they see them in a hurry to take the motorboat back to Castro to avoid getting 'stuck' on the island. Therefore, in a territory such as Quehui,
narratives surrounding the idea of state neglect, or its frequent absence, are relatively common. As I will discuss further in the next section, the affective dimension of state formation in this territory is useful for addressing how Islanders understand this state of neglect when they experience some kind of state presence on a daily basis. What do these affirmations entail? When is the state present and when is it absent? What are the conditions for that to happen?

2.1. Undoubtedly present, however absent

The Junta de Vecinos de Los Ángeles (Neighbours’ Association of Los Angeles) building was unusually crowded. Schoolchildren, in their clean uniforms, were running around, going in and out of the venue. Islanders of all ages were gathered outside and inside, waiting for the arrival of the Mayor and the Municipal Council. It was the second attempt to have this meeting. Although everything had been prepared the week before, the authorities did not come to the island, using the excuse that on that day the weather was not suitable for navigation (despite the maritime authority keeping the port open that day after a night of strong winds). The Islanders did not seem too affected by this situation: ‘we are used to it’ someone answered me when I asked about what they thought about the unexpected non-attendance of the Mayor and the Council, despite their preparations.

A week after that episode, the main local government authorities finally disembarked on the island. After the national anthem, sung proudly by all attendees, and some traditional ‘Chilote’ songs and dances performed by children from the Los Ángeles school, the Mayor took the floor and in his strong voice proclaimed – ‘It’s a historic day for us. We wanted to change the quality of life of the inhabitants of the islands even when we were told it was impossible and populist, but today we are proving them wrong. We are already working to bring doctors to every corner of our commune, and now’ – he added, indicating two people sitting in the front row – ‘I can introduce you to the two doctors who will cover the territory of Quehui and Chelín. They will live here among you, providing expedited care when needed. Also, several years ago you obtained an ambulance boat that has strangely always been moored in Rilán, as if it belonged to the peninsula. Today, we are happy to provide a new ambulance boat with all the necessary equipment, which will be anchored in Quehui to provide the quality service that you need and deserve’. – After a brief pause, he finished, exclaiming – ‘this is not a cost for us; it is just a necessary expense’ – Immediately after these concluding words, the attendees stood up, applauding loudly, and with smiles on their faces.

As this vignette illustrates, the inhabitants of Quehui are aware of, and participate in, state-like activities, and interact with front-line officials in charge of delivering public services. Although
the Mayor and the Municipal Council’s visit to the island – assuming state-like capacities to deal with local affairs such as health-care and connectivity – was not a common sight, the presence of doctors, among other public servants, and the existence of state infrastructure in the territory, exposes the gap between the affective and subjective dimension of the state (imaginaries) and its material effects.

Public infrastructure on the island primarily supports education and healthcare initiatives. Both services are administered and operated by the Corporación Municipal de Castro (Municipal Corporation of Castro) which operates under the local government. These entities are specifically responsible for the services that were transferred from the central government to the municipalities during the 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, they are responsible for administering public schools and primary health centres using resources from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health (Marcel 1996). As private, non-profit, legal entities, their main purpose is to locally administer and carry out public education and health services, articulating resources, policies and programmes focussed on these two areas (Municipalities Constitutional Law 2006).

There are schools in the three most populated areas of the island: Los Ángeles, Peldehue, and San Miguel. These rural establishments, although they are in decline due to the low numbers of children on the island (Peldehue school currently has only 13 students), have teachers employed by the Corporación (or as it is commonly known, the Corpo). Therefore, the existence of public schools in Quehui provides a regular presence of the state (at least during the school year), materialised in its infrastructure and its hired staff (teachers and administrative personnel).

In a similar vein, health programmes are also under the administration of the Corpo. At the time of my fieldwork, there were two doctors living on the island, and two paramedics who worked on a rotating system of shifts. One of the doctors was responsible for the Posta de Salud Rural de Quehui (Rural Emergency Centre of Quehui), while the other (his wife) was in charge of the posta covering Chelín Island. In order to move between smaller islands, or in case of emergency where they needed to move a patient to the hospital in Castro, the doctors have (when it is operational) an ambulancha (a pun resembling the word ambulancia – ambulance - which comes from ambu – ambulance, and lancha – motorboat) at their disposal. The medical teams working at these postas must cover the health-related needs of rural communities such as Quehui through a set of actions, including health care, promotion, disease prevention, and self-care.

In addition to these professionals living on the island, there is also a ‘rural team’ run by the Health Department of the Corpo which performs what they call rondas médicas (medical rounds)
once a week. A team consisting of a doctor, nurse, nutritionist, paramedical technician, psychologist, midwife, social worker, administrative staff, and a dentist, travel weekly (weather permitting) to the islands in an _ambulancha_. During their few hours on the island, they look after patients at the _posta_ and/or they carry out regular visits to patients who, like Ester’s aunt, have limited or no mobility.

During the course of my fieldwork in the archipelago, the Ministry of Health fulfilled one of its most anticipated promises. A new _ambulancha_, with all the necessary equipment to respond in case of a medical emergency, was purchased to provide the much-needed connection between the main island, specifically the hospital in Castro, and Quehui and Chelín. With two off-board motors of 100 HP (horsepower), this motorboat could cover the distance between the jetty at Rilán (see Fig. 12 below) – where normally an ambulance would be waiting to continue by land – and would then get to the hospital in less than 20 minutes. In addition, when available and functioning, this was the same motorboat used by the Chelín doctor to travel daily between her house in Quehui and the _posta_ under her direct care.

![Figure 12: Jetty at Rilán [Source: by the author]](image)

The old _ambulancha_, a white speedboat adapted to accommodate medical emergency tasks, had been assigned to the rural team (Fig. 13 below). For this reason, this motorboat is now used mainly when the team needs to reach the islands to carry out their medical round. Supposedly,
the medical round takes place every Tuesday, but due to the port being closed or because the head of the medical team (sometimes influenced by another team member) considers that the weather could get worse during the day, their presence on the island is not as regular as the Islanders would wish. When it is not being used by the rural team, this motorboat is used by the Mayor, his advisers, the municipal councillors, and other department managers, who occasionally (especially in the period preceding elections) carry out official activities on the islands.

Since July 2017, the DIDECO (Community Development Management) from the municipality in collaboration with INDAP and its territorial programmes (PDTI and PRODESAL), have been renting a motorboat to facilitate the travel of front-line officials in charge of different governmental programmes to Quehui and Chelín. Every Thursday (weather permitting) a group of no more than 10 officials gather on the jetty at Rilán, waiting for the Ingrid Andrea IV, a motorboat with the capacity for 70 people and used regularly as a ferry, in order to cross to the islands to carry out their tasks (Fig. 14 below). Prior to this, each service had rented a motorboat without any intra-programme coordination, or they would have tried to get on one of the 13
seats in the *ambulancha* – which was difficult if the entire medical team had decided to visit the islands.

![Figure 14: The ferries Ingrid Andrea IV (for passengers) and Liliana I (for vehicles and cargo) [Source: by the author]](image)

**2.2. The inconvenient state**

Other forms of state presence could be found in the, often unexpected, visit of officers from the Armada (the Navy), Policía de Investigaciones (Investigation Police) and Carabineros (the Police). The presence of officials from these institutions in Quehui is an uncomfortable one. On the one hand, several islanders with whom I talked about policemen or marines visiting the island told me that they thought that their tasks focussed on prevention and control were essential to the Islanders’ feelings of safety and peace. On the other hand, I realised that most of their daily commercial activities take place under the radar of these law enforcers. Thus, this ambivalent feeling emerges when those state actors disembark in some areas of the island, or when they turn up along the sea routes used by the islanders.

Nowadays, the Navy conducts regular visits by what they call the Capitanía de Puerto Móvil (Mobile Port Captaincy), which seeks to cover a large portion of their jurisdiction, moving officials and a vehicle with a rented ferry. In addition, it is quite common to encounter their
speed motorboat circulating between the smaller islands, the ramps and Castro, carrying out routine inspection tasks. While navigating in the area they may stop motorboats to check if their documents and registration are up to date, or they may be patrolling in order to prevent, or to stop, any illegal flote or transactions happening on the sea (principally the black oil market, and non-regulated seafood or cattle trade). However, as I explained above, much of the trade taking place in the waters and ramps nearby Quehui occurs under these illicit conditions.

On a cold and rainy morning, the port was closed due to strong winds. The daily ferry to Castro did not show up, and its horn did not announce its imminent departure. After a couple of minutes talking with some frustrated islanders who would have to wait a day to be able to travel to the city and run their errands, I returned to Don Camilo’s inn, where I was staying. I needed to get to Castro somehow. I asked Don Camilo and Doña Jacinta, his wife, if they knew any motorboat owner who would take me to Puchilco, a settlement on Lemuy Island around 30 minutes’ drive from Los Ángeles – the main village on Quehui. I knew that if I could get to Puchilco, I could get a taxi to Puqueldón (the main town on Lemuy), I could then take a direct bus towards Castro. ‘I think Pedro is the best option’ – said Don Camilo, looking for the number on his old cell phone – ‘He is one of the only ones that does fletes even in this weather’. A couple of hours after I called him, his green and white motorboat (sometimes confused with the one used by the police) entered the estuary and moored at the dilapidated former jetty at Los Ángeles. Just as I was about to board the motorboat he shouted, calling for my attention and indicating a Navy speedboat entering the estuary, coming up to the new pier. ‘We can’t leave until they are gone’ – he told me as he approached me at the base of the jetty – ‘Don’t worry; it shouldn’t take too long’. When I asked him why we could not start our journey, he explained to me that, as with most of the motorboats in the area, neither the papers nor registration of the boat were up to date. After a couple of officials from the Investigation Police Department had taken some statements in the village in relation to a crash between boats at night, the Navy speedboat finally left the main pier. Even though they were no longer visible, Pedro was still worried. ‘They could be waiting near the island’, he uttered, while calling a friend who would be able to see from his house’s window if the speedboat was moving away from the island’s coast. He hung up smiling, ‘let’s go! They are already gone’.

Despite the risk of being caught, Pedro, as well as Don Meno, Patito, and other motorboat owners from Quehui, Chelin, Puchilco and Rilán operating in this area, would provide flete services on a daily basis. In doing so, they enabled the movement of people, cattle, seaweed, seafood, building materials, gallons of gas, and fuel between the nearby islands. Because they work without the required permits and often they are involved in transactions of products of
dubious origin or moving products defined by the authority as dangerous (i.e. fuel and gas), they operate outside the law and are always on the lookout, hoping that a Navy speedboat would not appear on the horizon.

In a similar vein, Islanders who own cars or motorcycles would prefer that the Carabineros did not visit the island unless necessary. Lima Charlie 109 (LC-109) is the name of the green and white speedboat used by Carabineros de Chile to reach the islands. Since 2011 this motorboat, like its predecessors, has been patrolling the islands of the Archipelago as well as the continental coast. The presence of Carabineros in these smaller islands is usually sporadic and, unless some incident had occurred, usually unexpected. They travel to the islands when someone makes a complaint or to investigate a criminal incident that has occurred during their absence. In these processes, they take statements and identify those accountable for the illicit actions denounced by witnesses or victims. However, sometimes they travel towards these territories for the purposes of prevention and control. These visits often include handing out tickets and fines for outdated driving licenses, unregistered cars, bad driving practices, and traffic violations. In my travels around the island, I witnessed how people who saw this motorboat would call someone on the Island to warn them: ‘van los verdes’ (the greens –because of the colour of their uniforms - are coming). On some occasions, even the field-level officials with whom I worked used to send warning messages to those they would consider worthy (or in need) of such notice. In particular, they would alert the Islanders from who they regularly rented cars or asked for fletes (in this case, paid informal transport service by car which allows movement all around the island).

Considering that the state and the local government were present through schoolteachers and administrative staff, doctors and paramedics, frequent visits of the medical team, police agents, Navy officers, and other front-line officials implementing localised programmes, we need a wider and more open understanding of the state to apprehend this feeling of neglect. This comprehensive idea of the state rests, as I have already stated, on a particular attention to the everyday interactions and the differential emotional responses emerging from the relationship between the islanders and front-line state actors at the local level. However, in this case, the paradoxical tension between state neglect and state presence is specifically maintained by the fundamental role played by mobility infrastructure, such as motorboats and ferries, in a context characterised by the absence of fixed links and difficult access (and departure).

As Merriman and Jones (2017) and Obeid (2010; 2015) contend, affect is not unidirectional, and bodies might react (be affected) differently to encounters with the state. Based on this differential effect, the presence (or intermittence) of the state in Quehui takes on different
guises depending on the type of state actor visiting the island, the frequency of these visits, the nature of the services delivered, and how this delivery is carried out. All of this is mediated and determined by access to, and the feasibility of using, mobility infrastructure. As I will discuss further in the next sections, regardless of the intermittent presence of the state, islanders elicit narratives and experience practices that actualise the idea of a neglectful state. Because they feel abandoned, they express a longing for the stable presence of the good and caring state (i.e. welfare programmes), and emphasise the inconveniences produced by the presence of the punishing state. These narratives make visible the ambivalence and uncertainty that interactions with ‘the state’, not as a coherent entity but as a flexible and disperse configuration, may produce (Pinker and Harvey 2015). In this vein, the state can be the locus of conflicting emotions and feelings that express desires for connection and disconnection on their own terms (Jansen 2014; Laszczkowski and Reeves 2015).

As technical means to connect and/or disconnect places, mobility Infrastructure seems to be particularly effective in the articulation of materiality, affect, and feelings. Because these technologies allow or resist the movement of bodies, they also enable the circulation and emergence of affective relations informed and produced by different ‘emotions, feelings and memories’ (Merriman and Jones 2017). I suggest that when these mobility infrastructures are involved in the movement of state actors, controlled by state regulations, or when they reveal relations of state presence/absence in a particular territory, the state emerges as an (imagined) body capable of affect towards other bodies. Because other bodies have the capability of being affected to different degrees (or not being affected at all), the imagined state might produce contradictory and concomitant affects that could be expressed as desire or contempt for it (Obeid 2015).

3. Mobility infrastructure as mediators

‘The boss [from DIDEKO] pulled my ear for going out from Puchilco’ – Jorge told me with a playful look, while heating the water for his mate. ‘She was worried about safety issues’ – and in a slightly more serious voice, he added – ‘if something happened to us the municipality could be in trouble because they are not giving us all the security measures they should. We have to go tomorrow, but we can only stay on the island for the day because the forecast says that a big storm is coming. If that happens, we could be stranded on the island, and I have to be here on Thursday because I have a meeting with people from INDAP’.

As I have shown, the dynamic image of the state produced in this territory allow Islanders to perceive the PDTI officials as state actors with state-like capacities that generally transcend their
duties, competences and possibilities. Hence, if they are not on the island, and therefore the Islanders do not interact with them, the emergent idea of the state produced in their everyday practices validates the narratives regarding the neglectful state. However, this ‘affective register’ is also informed by the entanglement of three elements that play a vital role in the daily life of the islanders: the complex nature of archipelagic formations, the southern weather, and access to and availability of mobility infrastructure.

Added to the complexity of finding a motorboat, crossing to Quehui is difficult when the southern weather shows its temperament. As Jorge described, activities depending on sea-transport in the south of Chile not only imply the dangers of moving through troubled waters, but also the possibility of not being able to get to or leave the island. According to a report provided by the Port Captaincy of Castro, during two periods in 2016 and 2017, of a total of 445 days, 145 (approximately 33%) were categorised as ‘variable’ (port closed for small boats outside the bay, and sometimes inside too), ‘bad weather’ (port closed for small boats outside and inside the bay), or ‘storm’ (totally closed). These categories, along with the dangers of navigating under these weather conditions and other issues such as breakdowns, define and determine the possibilities for action by motorboat owners and patrones (position similar to that of captain, but for fishing, passenger or merchant boats under 3000 GT - Gross Tonnage), and therefore the intermittence of the state’s perceived presence on the island.

Weather, and the naval regulations that it activates, frequently immobilises motorboats, drawing our attention to how these technologies of mobility affect the movement of bodies (Christensen and Gough 2012) and the consequences of these (im)mobilities on local supply and state presence/absence. In the same way, infrastructural breakdown highlights the centrality of maintenance and repair, which continuously allows or prevents connection, movement and flow (Graham and Thrift 2007). Whatever the case, the presence of unfixed links in this area of the archipelago highlights the undeniable importance of mobility infrastructure (Vannini 2011), which normally resides in a naturalised background as something banal and unexceptional (Edwards 2003).

‘Puras panas! (Continual breakdowns!) Please build a bridge to Quehui!’ – Renato once exclaimed, both annoyed and mischievous. He was frustrated because bad weather conditions had prevented the normal execution of an activity on the island. This was not unusual. The extension team regularly had to call the users of the programme to reschedule some activity.

22 Under 50 GT – Gross Tonnage (tonnage charge allowed by the features of the boat).
that could not be performed because the weather prevented them from travelling to the island. In addition, they were constantly suspicious about the maintenance of the ambulanchas. Often, they had managed to get a spot on one of these boats to travel to the island, but the trip was canceled due to some mechanical problem. ‘The two motorboats (the new ambulancha and the old one assigned to the rural team) are not working, again’, Bruno commented, frowning. ‘Those old men are really lazy’, he added, referring to the mechanics in charge of the motorboats and hinting at his doubts about the veracity of the mechanical malfunctions they used as excuse. ‘They do not carry out regular maintenance, and that is why the motorboats are always out of the water. It is not that the motorboats are not working, is because these lazy old men do not want to do their only job, and prefer to have them stranded’.

In a territory defined by its physical separation, mobility is, of course, essential. Following Baldacchino’s (2016: 6) definition, archipelagos are ‘fluid cultural processes, sites of abstract and material relations of movement and rest, dependent on changing conditions of articulation or connection’. These connections are covered by mobility infrastructure that, in turn, restructures those spaces by bridging the spatial separation between different locations. These dynamic processes generate interdependence, at the same time disconnecting and connecting, insulating and isolating (Vannini 2012). Through the use of motorboats and ferries, the archipelago of Chiloé is a scene of changing conditions of connectivity and emergent practices of mobility, which are the expression of both national policies (norms) and local mobility practices.

Jensen (2013) suggests that each mode of mobility, in this case motorboats and ferries, involves a particular set of practices and regulations that local people recognise and apply (for practical reasons) or, due to myriad motives, intentionally challenge. The inhabitants of Quehui and its surroundings, and those who frequently visit the island (i.e. field-level officials), have developed localised practices of mobility. Their everyday life mobility has produced routines and habits ‘beyond the state-led mobility policies’ (Vannini 2009). In this vein, the possibility of renting motorboats or hiring a flete establish a parallel (and normally illegal) system to the one recognised and financed by the state (the daily passenger ferry between Quehui Island and Castro), and represents an innovative, localised contestation to the ‘inconveniences’ (Vannini 2011) generated by formal and regulated practices of mobility.

Mobility can be approached as a political technology infused by power and meanings generated in relational practices. Bærenholdt (2013) coined the concept ‘governmobility’, informed by Foucault’s works on bio-politics and governmentality as institutionalised self-governing practices embedded in the population. For him, governmobility ‘describes a situation where the
regulations of mobilities are internalised in people’s mobile practices’. These practices of self-government are performed relationally through the materiality of technologies and environments. In this sense, he suggests that social relations and the political dimension involved in the assembly of societies only intersect through the active effects of technologies of circulation and connection, ruled through mobility. However, inconveniences and ‘frictions’ (as I will unpack below) may allow the emergence of practices of mobility which contest or displace those internalised practices of self-government, generating undisciplined practices that take place outside of the state-sponsored mobility network.

Just as the Islanders would pay for fletes in order to travel between the islands at times not covered by the ferry, the PDTI team, as described above, usually hired services from motorboats operating outside the law (undocumented and unregistered). They must rely on these services to make it to the island, or to return to Castro after carrying out their scheduled activities. ‘We don’t like to depend on the Corpo motorboat or the ferry’ – Jorge once explained to me while calling motorboat owners to schedule our next day’s visit – ‘We prefer to pay for a flete. This way, we have more flexibility and we do not owe anyone any favours’. On that day, the team were complaining about the excuses offered by the officials in charge of the PRODESAL, justifying why they had not gone to the islands (they also work with programme users on Quehui and Chelin islands). Jorge continued: ‘I think it is inexcusable, and that is why many users are unhappy with them. And it is not only about them. It is really complicated to take other public services to the island. If the port is not closed, they would find an excuse for not going to the island, and staying in their offices in Castro’.

In order to travel between the islands, both field-level officials and Islanders have to make choices informed by the means available and structural conditions. This context enables the emergence and reproduction of particular expressions of what Cresswell (2010) calls ‘constellations of mobility’: ‘particular patterns of movement (physical movement), representations of movement (which provides shared meaning), and ways of practicing movement (experience and embodiment) that make sense together’ (Cresswell 2010: 18). In order to unpack these entanglements, Cresswell suggests that we need to address six elements that he identifies as the key features of a politics of mobility, and therefore involved in the (re)production and distribution of power and social relations: speed (velocity), rhythm (i.e. regular or irregular), route (channelled process), feel (experience), motive (internal or external), and friction (stop and motion). To these elements of spatial mobility, Vannini (2011) added one not mentioned by Cresswell: cost (‘amount of money spent in the process of being mobile’).
Although all of these elements are important to create a detailed account of specific and emergent affects under certain constellations of mobility, I would like to go into more detail about the effects of friction specifically. Archipelago dwellers normally face events that would stop or slow them down: in other words, they encounter friction. Motorboats and ferries stopped by weather conditions, breakdowns, economic reasoning, fixed routes and schedules, among others, continuously shape their mobility. In this context, frictions are those obstacles that stop, impede, slow down or inconvenience the movement (Vannini 2011), but also those elements that enable it (Cresswell 2014; Tsing 2004). Therefore, maintenance, regulation, and (good) weather conditions also allow their movement between islands.

Friction makes (im)mobilities possible, but at the same time they are materialised as stickiness (Jones 2009), blockage or coagulation (Marston et al. 2005) that prevent or reduce flow and mobility, shaping and determining the possibilities for action of Islanders, and generating practices, experiences, and the foundations for the emergence of representations and narratives. Some of these narratives, for example, are about disconnection and abandonment. Hence, and expanding the work of Vannini (2012) on the (in)conveniences of mobility in the lives of a ferry-dependent island in British Columbia, friction as an ethnographic category can be addressed as the affective nexus of political struggles experienced by Islanders. The affective register that informs the idea of the neglectful state is itself informed by the constellation of mobility being reproduced in this part of the archipelago, where both field-level officials and Islanders frequently face, or generate representations about, friction in its negative expression.

_Fletes_ allow mobility and reduce the inconvenience produced by scheduled ferries. They also provide the field-level officials with a regular and accessible means to get away. As Jorge once explained to me, they use these services in order to manage their time. The flexibility that this mobility service allows contests the imposed schedules of both the subsidised ferries and the motorboat rented every Thursday by the municipality, and the improbability of finding a seat on the old _ambulancha_ managed by the _Corpo_. These innovative and undisciplined practices of mobility that exist outside state control, although mostly illegal, challenge the regulations supposedly internalised in people’s mobile practices through discursive mechanisms supported in their own experiences of friction. Due to their obligations on the island, and because their work contract does not provide social benefits such as ‘accident’ insurance that would pay for injuries during work related activities, PDTI officials (among other front-line state workers) choose this option without thinking about it twice.
The duality of the roles of field-level officials, observed in the entanglement of their daily tasks as technicians and state bureaucrats, is rendered visible in how they establish relative priorities in relation to their different responsibilities, and in how these priorities inform their mobility practices. As technicians, their priorities are in relation to their responsibility to their clients (i.e. implementing projects and providing advice in the territory); and as bureaucrats, these priorities are determined by their accountability to state hierarchies (i.e. office activities, paperwork, meetings, accompanying authorities). That said, on certain occasions these priorities go beyond their institutional position and only have significance in relation to their own ‘convenience’ (i.e. personal and family time). Thus, whether they chose to travel on business days using motorboats contracted by the municipality and INDAP, or instead opt for the flexible possibilities provided by the fletes, or use the stable service of state-subsidised ferries, they must negotiate these relative priorities.

However, these encountered frictions do not only affect the mobility of state actors. Islanders also face them when they have to travel to the main island, for example, if they need some paperwork required by state institutions. Frictions, understood as ‘the ways in which assemblages restrict mobility by impeding or inconveniencing sheer physical movement and aspects of its experience’ (Vannini 2011), may be experienced in diverse ways. Nevertheless, one particular type of friction that both field-level officials and islanders experience comes from the temporalities (rhythm) imposed by the subsidised ferries connecting Quehui with the main island. This inconvenience generates an affective response that motivates them to look for other options more suited to their particular needs. During an interview carried out in Castro, Don Leo, a born-and-bred Quehuino\textsuperscript{23} who, after a long military career in the Navy, returned to his\textsuperscript{24} island to settle in Camahue (one of the five sectors of the island), explained to me:

‘[About relying on motorboats] I find it a cocho [object, person or situation that produces a problem or obstacle] because you have to be subject to a schedule. It is just a dictatorship! I would have to get up at 5, 6 in the morning, travel 2 hours like a seagull in the sea. Then I would get to my house at night, and sometimes the paperwork would end badly (...) I, for example, always travel through Lemuy [crossing from Quehui to Puchilco, and then using the regular ferry than connects Lemuy Island with the main island] because I find the trip much more pleasant, much faster. To come here [Castro], I would leave in the morning; I would do my paperwork, I’d leave at 2 in the afternoon and at 3 I’d already be at home.’

Similarly, the PDTI officials would not take the subsided ferry – unless it was their only option – because they would have to spend an extra night on the island. To get to the island, they would

\textsuperscript{23} Demonym used to identify the residents of Quehui island.
\textsuperscript{24} Often islanders would refer to their home island as ‘my island’.

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have to take the ferry at 4 in the afternoon, meaning that they would arrive at Quehui two hours later. If they had to carry out some activity during the day, they would not be able to take the return ferry the next morning, meaning that their total journey time was half an afternoon travelling towards the island, two nights staying in an inn, and half a morning travelling towards Castro. On the one hand, this routine friction that inconveniences islanders and field-level officials brings into being a set of conditions that enable, hinder or impede encounters between state actors and those who need something from the state (benefits, paperwork, procedures, among others). On the other hand, it allows for the emergence of nonconforming practices of mobility that operate to fill the gap produced by the fixed, regulated and inconvenient rhythm of the subsidised ferries.

4. The affective register

Every Friday, a group of schoolteachers would do whatever they could to leave the Island and join their families and friends in Castro. They organise together to rent a motorboat which, depending on weather conditions, would take them either to Puchilco (Lemuy Island), Rilán (Peninsula) or Manao (Quinchao Island). A pickup truck (performing flete duties) would approach Los Ángeles’ pier carrying the schoolteacher from Peldehue. He would join those from the Los Ángeles school in the pier’s shelter (a wooden structure with a closed room and a large covered terrace, overlooking the pier and the estuary). Now protected from the cold, rain and wind, they would chat and wait for the motorboat, while some of them bought food and drinks from the yellow local store just in front of this refuge. Together they would board the motorboat which would cross the estuary to pick up the teachers from the San Miguel school, then set course for Castro (or another destination that would allow them to reach the city after finding land-based public or hired passenger transport services). Because the schoolteachers performed this ritual every Friday, and because they had an ongoing organisation system to hire the motorboat, other Islanders or front-line officials who needed to leave the island were unwillingly included.

It was Patito who provided the flete service. His old white and brown motorboat, always travelling at the minimum possible speed to reduce fuel expenses, allowed him and his passengers to reach a pier or jetty with accessible roads to Castro. He is also well known for being one of the few motorboat owners who would set sail even under weather conditions that would immobilise others, or at least make them think twice about the possible outcome of such a reckless practice. ‘Always in a hurry to leave’ – Doña Iris once told me. She was an old woman who owned and managed the local store opposite the pier. On that occasion, I was buying some
sweets while Patito’s motorboat with the teachers aboard was leaving the estuary. ‘As if they were going to catch something’ – she added with her distinct cynicism and bitterness, looking towards the motorboat almost disappearing into the landscape. With that last statement, Doña Iris was implying that they were running away from the possibility of catching a disease: they were escaping, leaving the Islanders behind with their sickness.

But it was not the only the municipal or state workers departing that day. Like them, and like every Friday, the two doctors living on the island would use the ambulancha to leave and spend their weekend in the city. On that particular day, the PDTI officials and I were also waiting for our ride towards the main island. After the conversation with Doña Iris, and with some sweets in my pocket to share with Jorge, Bruno and Renato, we waited for the flete service provided by another available motorboat owner to leave Quehui and reach our homes and families. On an ordinary weekend, only the paramedics would remain on the island, working along with the Islanders and providing care services. From the perspective of the inhabitants of the island, those who are being left behind, the intermittence of the state becomes a reality through their affective registers. You could almost feel the sentiment of abandonment rising and floating in the air, while some Islanders gathered near the pier, smoking cigarettes, sharing beers and a box of wine, and watching the motorboats departing.

Taking into account the differential affects produced by these events, different feelings and emotions arise. One of those, frequently elicited by the Islanders when talking about ‘the state’, was expressed as a feeling of abandonment. Seeing the officials doing everything in their power to leave the island has a strong affective resonance in some islanders who subsequently circulate narratives fuelled by these experiences and notions of ‘relatively immutable historic relations’ (Merriman and Jones 2017). ‘It has always been like this’, Doña Marta said to me, while putting together a plate of pork chops cooked slowly over the wood stove, rice and potatoes. She had worked as a schoolteacher in Peldehue for almost 40 years. Now retired and settled in a big old house across from the old jetty at Los Ángeles, she offered accommodation to tourists, workers carrying out seasonal tasks on the island (i.e. fixing the roads), and field-level officials such as Jorge. ‘They used to come less often because everything was harder back then [referring to connectivity], but now they leave as soon as they can’, she added, handing me the dish and offering me some bread and water.

The stories of Doña Marta about working as a rural schoolteacher in the past, where everything involved a greater effort due to the lack of both infrastructure and state aid, historically informs the affective register that she expresses in the present. However, what was striking in her
narrative is that she herself was hired by the state as a schoolteacher, and had to carry out state-like practices. As (Wilson 2000) argues, establishing schools in peripheral territories was, and could still be considered as, a technique of government which instantiates the state (Gupta 1995). Nonetheless – and also informed by her condition of being originally from a town on the main island and, therefore, having lived in a territory with better connectivity – her narrative expressed her capability of being affected by the intermittent relation with state institution and front-line workers, and their ability to affect her. Regardless of having been a state actor, her time on the island and having lived under other conditions, living on a sea-transport dependent island with difficult access and exit, provides substance to the image of the neglectful state.

Feelings such as a longing for the caring state (welfare and care programmes), the inconvenience of the forceful state (the Police and the Navy), and the feelings emerging due to the intermittent presence of front-line state workers arriving and departing, may arise at the same time. These affective registers are intertwined in paradoxical and concomitant ways, and are always historically (by memories and narratives) and situationally informed. However, this entanglement should not be addressed as an irrelevant or meaningless occurrence, but as an example of the intricacies of the affective contingencies circulating around the images of the state.

5. Dreams of an anchored state

The intermittent presence of the state it is experienced as a dynamic mobility of individuals (front-line workers) and infrastructure (motorboats and ferries) going back and forth. Islanders are used to seasonality and predictable changes. The everyday life of those involved in agricultural or sea-related activities depends on knowing how to interpret the wind and the tide. At the end of winter and the beginning of spring, they plant potato seeds, the first freeze of the autumn activates the garlic seed, the northern wind brings rain, the southern wind brings sun, and low tide allows them to collect shellfish and seaweed. Everything seems to be foreseeable and their experiences provide them with the means to anticipate possible events and to plan their daily, monthly, or seasonal activities based on this knowledge.

One sunny summer afternoon, they stopped baling hay after looking up at the sky. The wind had changed it course, anticipating the arrival of a tempest. The humidity would rot the unprotected bales scattered on the field, making it clear – at least for those who knew how to read the signs – that they would need to find different work to do under the rain that would fall the next day. For a foreigner, like me, watching them abandon their activities seemed, at first, a whimsical practice. Because they saw what I could not – that the rain was coming – what they were doing
became futile and the next day’s activities were already structured by conditions to come. However, this form of planning frequently became impractical when used to anticipate if a programme meeting would, or would not, take place the next day. The Islanders would gather outside the local neighbour’s association building waiting for the arrival of the front-line state official who had summoned them until they received a call cancelling the activity, giving excuses and asking for their understanding. Resignedly, they would say goodbye to each other before going back to their suspended activities. Oxymoronically, islanders experience some interactions with ‘the state’ as a constant intermittence.

Yet the relationship between the islanders and state actors and institutions does not only take place on the island. There are myriad motives for people from Quehui to travel to Chiloé Island, specifically to Castro: for stocking up, visiting friends and family, a sporadic job, leisure and entertainment, medical appointments, among others. However, one of the main reasons for leaving their island could be seen as a consequence of procedures required by some state or local government departments in order to gain access, or remain in, different welfare programmes such as the PDTI. Every now and then, the users or beneficiaries of a state programme would have to travel to Castro and face some sort of bureaucracy, and often the outcome of these journeys was futile. This created a situation in which they must once again devote an entire day to take care of their unresolved issues, without any guarantee that this time they would achieve their goal.

In the context of an interview, Renato unpacked how these journeys to the city could be a source of frustration for the Islanders:

‘(...) people schedule their trips, and because almost everyone has to take care of animals, they would frequently come [to Castro] just for the day. When they come to do some paperwork, sometimes they fail because of lack of time. They get frustrated and, because of that, they postpone it (...). They feel frustrated by the ferry times, which are very limited. They would arrive at 9.30 am, they would get to the municipal office at 10 am, and there would already be a large queue. At 1 pm they would be hungry, because by 12 or 1 no one has attended them yet, and they would realise that they require 50 more documents, so, eventually, they would just leave.’

In order to face the distinctive and non-commensurable rhythms of the weather, state presence, and municipal office procedures, the local government of Castro started a public bidding for the construction of a Delegación Municipal (Municipal Delegation) on the island. Although for some islanders and state officials the fulfilment of this promise will not bring anything new to the relationship between the local government and the local population, a significant number of the islanders have high expectations of the possible consequences for their everyday interactions with bureaucracy. For this last group, anchoring the state on the island would provide a direct
connection to front-line officials working in a local municipal building, making trips to the main island somewhat less frequent and avoidable.

As expressed by Don Marcelo, one of the islanders who most openly demonstrated his enthusiasm about the construction of a local office:

‘(...) today people go to Castro to do paperwork ... I will give you an example, for [the Ministry of] National Assets, and they spend all their day in the office because there is an immense flow of people, and people go there all day, and they do not even have lunch. Having that office here [in Quehui], we would not have to go to Castro. We could have an Environmental Health Office too, a Tourism Office, an office of the Social Department so that people could go with their concerns, to see how they can help you. On our island, there are also many needs to be covered. There are people who do not have work, elderly people who live only on the pension granted by the state [approx. £120 per month], so having an office on the island would be a tremendous benefit to help people in those circumstances.’

Sharing photographs of the building under construction, the Mayor of Castro publicly commented on his Facebook page: ‘With "works" [his quotation marks] we respond to the dreams of our neighbours (...)’. Several months later, he, accompanied by a couple of councillors, visited the island and inaugurated the building. On that occasion, he commented: ‘the important thing is that today, the residents of the islands can perform all kinds of procedures in this small municipality without having to travel to Castro. We want to decentralise our management, and we are achieving it’ (DiarioChiloé 2018).

Based on Renato, Don Marcelo and the Mayor’s accounts, the construction of the local municipal office ties together the promises made by the local government and aspirations coming from the islanders. Throughout the mayor election period that took place in 2016, the final part of which coincided with my fieldwork, the current Mayor of Castro, who was born and has family in Chelín Island, sought to directly address the feeling of abandonment that islanders frequently elicit and with which he, as an islander, was familiar. Following Hetherington’s (2017) argument, during the Mayor’s public speeches and visits to the island in which he addressed the construction of the municipal delegation, he generally used the tense of infrastructure – the future perfect. As a result, he was giving shape to an anticipatory state: through the materiality of this infrastructural intervention, he was able to link the islanders’ past and present notions of the neglectful state with their aspirations of connection and state presence.

Thereby, the Municipal Delegation on Quehui Island, regardless of its actual effects after its inauguration and launching, is the result of a specifiable lack resonating through the affective narratives mobilised by the islanders. Harvey (2017) affirms that, as specific interventions that operate through the articulation of identifiable gaps and calculable outcomes, development
projects carry a moral charge of an improved future. In this vein, projects such as roads or bridges carry the promise of enhanced connectivity, directly addressing ‘a sense of physical isolation or disconnection’. Likewise, and under within definition of development projects, the municipal delegation generates similar expectations by gathering aspirations and promises around facilitating access to public services and, therefore, improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of the islands.

Throughout the chapter I have argued that mobility, and the infrastructures that enable and prevent it, play an essential role in how Quehui islanders experience the state, in practical and affective terms. This final section expands the argument, showing how an ‘anchored’ state infrastructure can be involved in the reconfiguration of a relationship rendered as intermittent or inconvenient. By tackling the state as ‘set of practices and processes and their effects’ (Trouillot 2001), and considering that we cannot separate its abstract manifestation from its material presence, both the front-line officials visiting the island – especially the field-level officials in charge of the PDTI – and the building acting as a decentralised municipality, produce state effects. In this case, the latter acts in opposition to the affective and practical consequences of depending on motorboats, by rendering the state stable, reducing its intermittence, and anchoring its ‘ideal face’ or caring guise.

6. Conclusion

As a location of state practice, the islanders’ aspirations emerging from the promises made by the municipal delegation informs the affective register produced by the unreliable dependence on mobility infrastructure to interact with certain enactments of the state. The state, in its neoliberal form, is regarded as a fluctuating and irregular presence – and consequently, as neglectful. Therefore, the promise to anchor it by reducing the role played by mobility in allowing or hindering the interactions between islanders and state actors draws attention to the shifting affective and material effects being produced by stable state and intermittent mobility infrastructures in isolated territories. In this way, my focus on infrastructure, its affective dimensions and material effects, had allowed me to expose the dynamic processes involved in the enactments and unmarked boundaries of the state in local settings. Infrastructure provides a physical medium for state actors to travel and for state practices to be enacted, but it does not set up a clear and fixed line to define it as a discrete and coherent entity. On the contrary, its dynamic and permeable nature comes to light when confronted with its everyday actualisations and the effects that these produce in the process.
CHAPTER 4. PLEASE, SIGN HERE: FLOW, VALIDATION AND AUTHORSHIP OF DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS IN THE PRACTICES OF THE PDTI OFFICIALS.

As many ethnographic accounts suggest, bureaucratic performance is known for its paper-based practices, and is considered one of the most important actions and technologies carried out within state routine (Gupta 2012). Field-level officials implementing the PDTI are not exempt from this trend. On the contrary, because of the nature of their work, they must deal with a large number of documents that, on the one hand, allow them to mobilise and allocate resources, and on the other, to render their own and the users of the programme’s practices accountable. Both the paperwork for application processes and records of their field activities provide us with a starting point to ask about the agency of documents and the role that they play in the relationship between the state and the users of the programme, through this particular interface.

As I explained in the previous chapters, these officials carry out two central tasks. First, they have to secure resources by applying for funds mainly coming from public institutions, and to guarantee the implementation of the granted projects. Second, as an agriculture extension programme, they have to carry out what it is officially specified as their most important duty (although in practice it often fades into the background), to provide agricultural technical advice in the field. To carry out their first mandate, they must complete various forms (on paper and online) and bring together documents that allow them to meet the formal criteria of each call for applications in which they want to participate. On the other hand, they have to keep a record of their technical visits in order to be able to identify the progress of each farmer, and to demonstrate that, as state officials, they are carrying out their assigned responsibilities appropriately, achieving the expected numbers of visits and within the times defined in advance. This record is kept in their visit logs, and backed up by a copy left with the users – the visit sheet.

Some of the documents are easy to gather and what they enable is virtually uncontested. However, the agency of other documents, as mediating tools and artifacts (Irvine-Smith 2016) may ‘coagulate’ (Marston et al. 2005) the process, making it slow and tortuous, preventing or reducing the flow of resources and projects, and ultimately determining their fate. Thus, the flow of documents enables, shapes or even impedes other courses, acting as dynamic agents of change with direct consequences for the lives of those who require their movement. ‘Given their...
ability to travel and to open paths’ (Gonçalves Martín 2016: 437), documents acquire a ‘mediation role’, which can ‘transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’ (Hull 2012).

Because of their iterability and, in some cases, illegibility, documents representing the state (signed by those who act on its behalf), can be mimicked and/or used out of context (Das 2007) to achieve desired goals. The design and content of alternative documents carrying signs of validation and official authorship (Fraenkel 2013) allow us to reflect on the agency of the symbol that gives them authority. Signatures allow or prevent them from circulating and facilitate the identification of those accountable for their production and content, as well as of those who they want to control through practices of recording. Highlighting the entanglements and processes that these official artefacts generate - and also the boundaries that they overcome, recreate, or even reinforce (Lowenkron and Ferreira, 2014) - presents a good starting point to approach how the state is being made effective, or ineffective, in the everyday interactions between field-level officials and users of the PDTI. In addition, this particular focus allowed me to reflect on how, through their everyday professional practices, officials set into motion ideas of ownership, belonging, rights and accountability.

In most of the rural areas of Chiloé, access to documents has always been mediated by someone performing state-like practices. Beginning in the 18th century, this role was played by the Jesuit missionaries who kept records of their parishioners, provided assistance in case of quarrels between neighbours and territorial disputes, and delivered access to education and information (Gutiérrez 2007). Later, records were maintained by rural teachers acting as intermediaries between the state and the local population (Wilson 2000), and today, by field-level officials who circulate documents in order to enable access to benefits. All these actors were, and the latter still are, involved in the production and flow of these socio-material artefacts. Nowadays, PDTI officials, among other state agents seeking to carry out localised policies in these areas, imbue documents with an essential role as mediators of bureaucratic and administrative practices of control (visit logs and records), and as facilitators of future outcomes and actions (title deeds, identity cards, Certificate of Indigenous Identity, among others).

Here, I seek to problematise literature suggesting that the anxiety produced while dealing with documents can be appreciated mainly in the practices and understandings of the recipients of state programmes facing bureaucratic procedures. I argue against anthropological research mobilising notions of the indolent and indifferent bureaucrat: rather, this chapter provides ethnographic evidence of an asymmetry of anxieties tilted towards the officials. I show how
field-level officials proactively allocate time and resources to gather, produce, officialise and mobilise documents, having to face obstacles and processes that, in the long run, will allow them to generate the trace of paper – evidence – that legitimises their participation in the programme. In the same vein, I stress the role played by ‘trust’ in the production and stabilisation of these documents, as an exemplifying element of the particular relationship between the users of the programme and the officials in charge of its implementation.

Therefore, I argue that the agency of documents is not only recognisable in the kinds of flows that they create or disable. As I will demonstrate, this agency also assumes a relational dimension, relying on a constellation of relationships (between people, and between people and documents). Therefore, a key point to be addressed in this chapter focusses on the differential relations triggered and mediated by these officialised papers. For the field-level officials that I worked with, documents mediate their own sense of worth because they play an essential role as technologies of accountability. Although other ethnographies might look at how bureaucrats enable or prevent access to resources through control of documentary channels, my ethnography shows that these flows depend on the previous stabilisation of the document through practices that are often beyond the official’s control.

The main goal of this chapter is to illustrate how bureaucratic relations with documents shed light on neoliberal work relations. To do this, I highlight the role of accountability as an essential practice in state bureaucracies that operate within the context of neoliberalism based on the market, and principles such as competition and efficiency. Thus, by focusing on the practices around the production and circulation of official documents and the flows they enable, I stress the role of these technologies as key mechanisms of the neoliberalisation of the bureaucratic process – in this case, folding together the role of technician and bureaucrat. On the one hand, by activating these technologies, the extension teams are setting in motion the gears of the programme, making its decentralisation and materialisation possible. On the other hand, by being obliged to account for their practices and generating a paper trail that renders visible their authorship and worth, the officials in charge of providing technical support are turned into bureaucrats.

1. Applying through/with documents

While driving towards Las Petas (one of the sectors covered by Dalcahue’s extension team), where Enrique wanted to show me a couple of their most ‘challenging users’, we started to talk about all the nitty-gritty details involved in the application for resources, how this process worked, and what was expected from them as officials:
E: ‘One of the most time-consuming activities is to gather all the documents and information required in every call for application’ – he said in his typical affable voice. ‘You have to come and go to their [the users’] houses several times to collect them, and you have to call them constantly to remind them that they have to get or update some documents so that we can apply for them’.

D: And what kind of documents do you need?

E: ‘In general, the documents requested in the applications are mainly the registration of the land [title deeds], a photocopy of their identity card, a marriage certificate if there is one, and their certificate of indigenous belonging’.

D: And in general, do users have them?

E: ‘More or less. Some of them are used to it. Every time they want us to apply for them, there you have it, they would have the photocopies or the originals, and they would have everything ready for us’ – and after a loud laugh, he continued – ‘Also, we already have a folder for each user where all their history with the programme is kept, from the beginning to the present. This is quite helpful when the users do not take the initiative and rely on us to get the necessary documents’.

As Enrique’s account illustrates, dealing with documents was an essential part of their everyday responsibilities. Depending on the call for applications, field-level officials would have to gather, deliver and fill in different forms, certificates and other official papers. In order to secure resources and make a successful application, they must provide evidence that proves the eligibility of the users and projects. After identifying the goals promoted by the agencies in charge of granting the resources (e.g. water irrigation, electric generation, tractor implement acquisition), and selecting the users that may need these assets, or those who would make better use of them, the officials have to carefully read the call for application in order to start gathering all the required documentation. Documents ranging from identity certificates, to others that demonstrated that the farmers were members of the PDTI, evidence of being a client of INDAP, certificate of Indigenous belonging, among others, may be required, depending on each application process.
To make resources flow, the officials must first make documents flow. Coming and going from the respective territories they cover, the members of the PDTI extension teams would have to visit selected users (Fig.15) in order to gather all the required documents. Later, they would have to attach these to the applications and start the process that, ultimately, would allow them to access the resources for the implementation of the previously defined projects. In the year that I worked along with PDTI officials from Castro and Dalcahue, I witnessed this flow of documents, mainly during the months when calls for applications were more frequent - but also at other times of the year. At these times, you would see officials visiting the sectors covered by them in order to meet the users and collect the essential documents. Conversely, but less frequently, you would see users visiting the offices of the PDTI in the cities. These visits were mainly to deliver the necessary papers or to ask questions about which ones were required, where to get them, and if other documents could be submitted as replacements in case of difficulty in obtaining those specified in the application. In all these interactions, field-level officials would try to answer all enquiries, always emphasising that the documents were absolutely necessary for the application to be successful, motivating their quick acquisition, and trying to find ways to solve, or in some cases work around, the absence of one (or more) of them.
1.2. Making sense of the inaction of users

On a cold autumn day, I was accompanying Renato and Bruno as they collected documents. A couple of days before, while I was spending some time in their office in Castro, Renato had shown me a pile of 20 folders that he would have to fill with the corresponding papers to apply for that amount of water projects (mainly irrigation and harvesting). By our third visit I already knew the procedure: the officials would explain to the users the benefits that the project would bring to the (usually pre-selected) users who would like to apply, what it would imply for them, and what monetary or material contribution they would have to take on to secure the project (usually 10% of total expenses). Then they would begin to collect documents: one of them would ask for the user’s ID card in order to take a picture of it (with the appropriate app, this practice replaces the scanner), and if they did not have it in the user’s already existing file, they would do the same with their certificate of indigenous belonging. Generally, and as I often witnessed, users would have a folder containing most of the documents that may be required for these procedures. However, when the question of title deeds came up, the simplicity of the process vanished.

Because these projects frequently involved the construction, implementation or acquisition of permanent technology or machinery for agricultural purposes, the users would have to provide evidence of their farming activities, and their feasible, stable and non-contested access to land. The main document supporting these specifications are the land titles which provides evidence of tenure, and therefore the right or authorisation to make changes to the land. Access to this core resource made possible the agricultural activities that they seek to improve or enable through the implementation of projects. Although these documents were essential, their existence was always uncertain. Non-regularised land ownership seemed to be more the rule than the exception. Whether because for generations they had lived and worked on tierras fiscales (state lands), or because after the death of the legal owner their descendants never processed the ‘actual possession’\(^\text{25}\) of the inheritance, or because an individual wanted to exploit, with authorisation, a portion of someone else’s land, legitimate title deeds were scarce.

After Chilean independence in 1818, it was determined that the Chilean State would regulate any new lands acquired after this process, and would also be in charge of administering the lands where there was no effective occupation or where sovereignty was not consolidated (Ministerio

\(^{25}\) Process through which the heirs request authorisation to legally dispose of the property of a deceased person who left no will.
However, many of these territories were historically occupied by indigenous peoples who, by misinformation and/or spatial and socio-political exclusion, now find that their lands are owned by others. Due to the interest of the state in populating territories categorised as ‘not occupied’ to ensure sovereignty, in many cases the lands were given to European or Chilean settlers who arrived, attracted by the promise of new productive land, among other benefits (Almonacid 2009). Nevertheless, and as happened in the areas of Chiloé where I worked, many of these lands remained in the hands of the state, although they were still occupied by their former inhabitants.

Bacigalupo (2017) gives an alternative explanation for the land tenure problem that the Mapuche in Chile are facing to this day. She contends that they have used diverse strategies to resist the colonising discourses rooted in the official documents that determine their legal existence vis à vis the state, such as birth certificates, identity documents, and land title deeds. Based on Fogelson's (1989) work, she shows how, in the past, some Mapuche eluded census takers and surveyors and chose to remain invisible to the written record as a defensive strategy against discrimination, conscription and other possible threats to their autonomy. However, invisibility was sometimes a counterproductive strategy in terms of land rights. Currently, the absence of these documents prevents them from accessing certain benefits and puts them at the mercy of other stakeholders interested in their lands.

For this reason, the Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales (Ministry of National Assets) now administers and manages state property, and regularises land titles requested by those who inhabit or make use of the land. The Ministry states that this process seeks to resolve situations of irregularity of public or private properties, granting the possibility for those claiming the land to access social benefits offered by the state, therefore strengthening their citizenship. In the same vein, organisations such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) promote these practices, arguing that land regularisation can generate links between farmers and the productive strategies sponsored by the state in order to overcome poverty. However, they also recognise that regularisation strengthens the land market by facilitating access to it (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2002). This last point is identified by different authors as the main driver of this policy. Regularisation produces the commodification of the land by assigning it a market value - becoming, as a result, a tradable good either as a physical unit or by the potential uses derived from its features (Gutiérrez et al. 2005).
Beyond the reasons behind this policy, non-regulated land - and therefore the absence of a document proving ownership of it - immobilises the applications for projects and therefore limits access to resources. Enrique identified land titles as the main ‘bottleneck’ or ‘filter’ when applying for resources. ‘Since they are not owners’ he told me, criticising the application’s requirements, ‘they are at a clear disadvantage compared to those who have their title deeds up to date’. According to Enrique, there has been more flexibility on this issue in recent years, which makes the process easier for both the officials and the users. However, some programmes still require the original deed, and for obvious reasons this requirement is problematic for those who do not have title to their land.

The current flexibility allowed by some state institutions pointed out by Enrique refers to the possibility of mobilising other documents in order to prove their legal right to use a property. These options are accepted to allow people making use of a section of a larger property (normally sons and/or daughters exploiting, or wanting to exploit, a portion of their parents’ property) to qualify for these resources. Depending on the call for application, users may present a comodato (loan exempt of payment), or a lease contract (notarised and following the format provided by INDAP) that would support their claim to make legal use of the property. Yet, these solutions are sometimes insufficient because the user would be required to provide a copy of the title to the land that is being subdivided.

Although it seemed that the lack of legal land titles would prevent any attempt to generate a successful application, field-level officials worked around, or tried to find partial solutions that would enable them to overcome this obstacle, allowing the eligibility of projects on non-regularised lands. To do so, they creatively seek ways to produce or ‘officialise’ alternative documents that could act as evidence of the users’ legal right to use, exploit and execute projects financed by state agencies on ‘their’ land.

During one of the recurring visits to the users in the rural areas adjacent to the city of Castro, Don César, president of the Williche Community Mapuñoñi (‘land of potatoes’ in Mapudungun) of Ten-Ten, welcomed us into his home. Sitting at a table next to the wood stove, Renato asked the questions that, after each visit, would allow them to keep a record of the user’s agricultural activities, based on which they could then offer them technical advice and/or think about a future project that could improve the user’s current production. Don César answered the questions without much thought, but when asked about the Rol (identification number) of one of his properties and its surface area, his calmness disappeared. He got up from the table, left the kitchen and after a couple of minutes returned with a blue folder. Among the documents
contained in the folder were the purchase agreement, the photocopy of his identity card, his certificate of indigenous belonging, and the plans of the property with its corresponding subdivisions. He dived into the papers trying to locate the identification number with the help of Renato, but they were not able to find the document containing those specifications. After a couple of minutes spent exchanging possible reasons for the absence of the number, Renato identified the problem: the inheritance of the property was not regularised. Don César had bought it from the widow and the offspring of a deceased neighbour, but the legal heirs had not yet taken actual possession of the inheritance. After explaining this situation, Renato took out his mobile and took a picture of the purchase agreement, promising Don César that he would show it to the lawyer from INDAP to make sure that this contract was valid for any application that may come up in the near future. A couple of days later, Renato called Don César to let him know that everything was okay. Although it did not meet the required standards, they were going to let him use that document until he could regularise the purchase of the land and get a proper title deed.

The field-level officials were always seeking to work around the restrictions imposed by the absence of documents. As well as persuading users to update their expired papers (e.g. identity cards), they also motivated those without title deeds to either initiate or resume the process of land regularisation, or to generate alternative documents that would allow them to apply for projects. As they were accountable for the final amount of secured resources and implemented projects, and also because they often expressed a genuine desire to contribute to local development, they were particularly aware of the agency of documents. For them, these artefacts were not merely containers of information, but active agents that could influence the outcome of social interaction (Prior 2008) between the farmer and the state, and between the latter – as their employer – and themselves.

As described above, these land titles were needed along with identity documents and evidence of belonging and membership in order to accomplish successful applications. Researchers such as Gordillo (2006), Jacob (2007) and Ellison (2017) argue that in Latin America identification documents, which produce identities and are therefore mechanisms of control, are an object of desire on the part of marginalised populations such as indigenous people. Documents such as ID cards, certificates of birth and even title deeds work as indicators of national belonging, thus allowing access to social and political rights. Although these documents, as these authors illustrate, seek the production of governable subjects, they also generate unexpected consequences such as the empowerment of those who manage to obtain them. In this scenario, the state creates and distributes ID documents and the ‘subjects’, formerly relegated, now have
access to new tools that allow them to subvert its control goal, using these ‘technologies of
visibility’ (Street 2012), in turn, to claim inclusion and citizenship rights.

In the case of the Williche farmers with whom I worked, their relationship with these types of
documents displays some different features. In the past, either due to the geo-political isolation
of the archipelago or as a consequence of the strategies deployed by the Williche to stay off the
radar of the Chilean state (Bacigalupo 2017), claims around incomplete citizenship and exclusion
were more frequent. However, because of the pervasive presence of ‘calculative practices’ and
‘technologies of government’ (Rose 1991) set up by the Chilean state, their demands have
changed. Today, the islanders living in the archipelago, indigenous or non-indigenous, enjoy the
same set of citizenship rights as the inhabitants of other areas of the country. In addition,
influenced by the Latin American indigenous movements, the cultural and political claims of
politically oriented Mapuche-Williche organisations have shifted towards obtaining political
recognition, differentiated rights, autonomy and self-determination (Assies and Gundermann
2007).

Because the PDTI users have full citizens’ rights, it cannot be argued that in their relationship
with documents they would need to subvert their uses in order to claim for inclusion and
recognition. Having said that, my aim here is to shift the notion of marginalised subjects in
relation to the use of documents from ‘not fully citizens’ to ‘neglected citizens’. In doing so, I
highlight the role played by documents in the consolidation of citizenship rights. Thus, I argue,
access to documents such as land titles could be seen as a way to strengthen the citizenship of
individuals who, although full citizens, live in conditions of neglect and material deficiencies that
prevent them from exercising those rights – or at least hinders their enactment. Yet, what I
witnessed during my fieldwork was that, regardless of the possible benefits that access to official
documents brings, in some cases these papers were far from being the objects of desire
identified in poor and marginalised populations both by Gordillo (2006) – regarding identity
papers in the Argentinean Chaco – and Ellison (2017) – when dealing with legal-like documents
in El Alto, Bolivia.

More attention is therefore needed when contrasting this reality with the objectives of both the
PDTI and the land regularisation policies of the Ministry of National Assets. Both initiatives,
within their different objectives, seek to promote the inclusion of these actors either through
technology transfer and knowledge, or through the regularisation of their land tenure for both
exploitation and/or sale. In this way, obtaining the necessary documents to be included in the
calls for applications managed by the PDTI or to formalise their relationship with the land on
which they live and produce, should act as a motivator for the users. However, and contrary to what common sense dictates, the farmers seemed reluctant to claim resources they were entitled to, or were just unconcerned with it all.

When I asked the members of Castro’s extension team about the reasons behind this apparent indifference, they recognised that these benefits were often not part of the short-term aspirations of their users. As described in Chapter 2, often what users identify as needed was not consistent with the priority areas of investment defined by INDAP (i.e. water harvesting and irrigation, renewable energy and machinery), either because they did not share the reasoning that supported these priorities or because they were unaware of the technological assets offered by the programme. However, there were other reasons suggested by the members of the PDTI to explain this phenomenon.

R: ‘Look, there are several things that could explain this behaviour. I think it is a combination of a lack of interest, stubbornness and a lack of knowledge. Especially the older ones can be very stubborn. They are used to certain ways of doing things and living as they do. Although sometimes they are interested in participating and receiving some benefits, on other occasions they do not want us, or anyone, to get involved. Usually, if we offer them a project they would say yes, but in the end we will be the ones motivating them and pressing them to, for example, regularise their lands or apply for an electric motor pump. Also, this has a lot to do with the effects of asistencialismo (assistentialism)\textsuperscript{26}.

J: ‘I agree!’ – said Jorge, who was attentively listening to Renato’s analysis – ‘I believe that one of the most important problems is assistentialism. I think it is a good way to carry out social policy, but I think it has been poorly implemented. It should have been temporary, but because this has been the style for a long time, people now depend on these benefits, without having a real chance to get out of poverty. The thing is that people got used to it, and try to take away those mañas (bad habits)! Yet, it is also true that especially the youngest users sometimes get really motivated by some projects. From time to time, if we explain the projects in detail, they will get enthusiastic, and in that case everything becomes much easier for us’ – and after a little pause he added – ‘but this is rarely the case’.

In general terms, this reasoning was shared by Jorge and Bruno, and by the members of Dalcahue’s extension team. Nevertheless, and especially when talking about the users on Quehui Island, they would add issues related to the difficulties of living in a sea transport-dependant island to the explanation elicited by Renato. As I explained in the previous chapter, due to the absence of fixed links, islanders have to face several obstacles and inconveniences in order to visit Castro and to be able to allocate time and resources to cumbersome procedures without assured outcomes. Consequently, their partial isolation can obstruct the acquisition and

\textsuperscript{26} A concept that is usually used to refer to the action, or set of actions, carried out by state institutions in order to provide temporal or permanent assistance to unprotected or vulnerable citizens.
collection of official documents, discouraging them, and fostering their dependence on the actions carried out by the field-level officials.

These accounts illustrate the mixed responses that emerged when this discussion was brought into play. Field-level officials ascribe an expectation of assistance to the islanders, but recognising that the experiences of such assistance, such as having to go to the city and deal with bureaucracy, can put them into difficult positions that are not of their own making. Therefore, the dependency is associated with the demands that the assistance brings with it – many of which are hard to comply with due to circumstances that people cannot control.

Nevertheless, this was not always the case, and sometimes users actively wanted the benefits that the programme could bring, thus leaving aside this relationship of dependency. For example, during one call for applications, the Indigenous Community Lafken Mapu from San Miguel, Quehui, wanted to apply for tractor implements. Because, as an indigenous community, they were participating in the programme Chile Indígena (Indigenous Chile), they would receive a tractor in the coming months. However, the long-awaited machine would arrive without the necessary implements to work the land for the seasonal potato growing. Don Dago and Don Bauche, the leaders behind this community project, had placed all their expectations on being able to facilitate and increase production through the incorporation of this technology. However, to fulfil their longing in the short term, they needed the collaboration of the PDTI, of which the majority of community members were users. Because a call for applications was open during the weeks prior to the arrival of the tractor, the community leaders assumed an active role in the application process, requesting meetings with the PDTI officials and visiting their office in Castro on several occasions. Under these circumstances, the users were the ones who, within their abilities, gathered the documents necessary to secure those resources. However, this was the exception rather than the rule, and in most of the cases I witnessed, the user (or collectivity of users if they were applying as a community or group) participated passively in the collection and production of documents.

In this way, despite granting access to programmes such as the PDTI and its subsequent benefits, what my fieldwork illustrates is that, rather than becoming objects of desire for marginalised/neglected individuals or communities, documents mainly perform an essential role in the everyday life of the field-level officials in charge of the PDTI. In order to secure more resources, they are the ones addressing the absence or inadequacy of the documents that provide access to benefits. They are the ones putting pressure on users to regularise their lands and to update their ID documents – or making the effort to circumvent their absence or
However, while these papers were indispensable for allowing the flow of benefits, other documents and forms containing a ‘sign of validation’ must also accompany them. In this vein, the signature assumes a validating role, allowing movement through mandatory stages, and acting as a point of passage towards the achievement of the purpose of the paper that displays it (Gherardi and Landri 2014). The agency of a document is generally shaped by the presence (or absence) of these graphic forms. Therefore, the collection of signatures and the act of signing are fundamental for the effective development of the practices of field-level officials.

2. Hunting for signatures

J: ‘We are applying for fifty-something projects, so we need fifty-something signatures!’ said Jorge. ‘Renato and Bruno are in Puerto Montt [a major city on the mainland and capital of the region] getting the last quotes for walking-tractors, mini tractors and water harvesting ponds. Tomorrow [Tuesday] we will take the motorboat to Quehui and each one of us will be in charge of a sector. I think that between now and Friday, or Saturday at the latest, we should be able to gather all the necessary signatures and all the missing documents.’

D: ‘Why don’t you summon them to the same place at the same time so you have them all gathered together to get their signatures?’ – I asked him curiously. Having to cover a huge area of the Island, considering the possibility that a person was not there to receive them and sign the documents, seemed to me to be an unnecessary and stressful race against time.

J: ‘Let us see how it goes’ – he replied thoughtfully.

When Thursday arrived, and I was able to join them on the Island, the picture did not look promising. It had been raining for much of Tuesday and Wednesday and, because of that, they were noticeable behind with their schedule. Bruno was collecting signatures and documents in Camahue and El Estero, and Renato, using Jorge’s motocross bike, was covering Peldehue – one of the areas with the largest number of users, but also with the greatest dispersion. I called Jorge and he told me to meet him at the inn where he usually stayed. When I entered the house of la maestra (a former schoolteacher now providing accommodation for regular or sporadic visitors), she immediately told me to go upstairs to where Jorge was waiting for me.

Surrounded by piles of folders and papers, sitting on his bed in front of a desk on which rested his laptop, a printer and his infallible thermos, Jorge was organising by area the blue folders that included each individual’s required documents and the collective project that he would apply for in the coming days. Quotes for tools or solutions offered; scanned copies of each user’s ID; property plans and title deeds of the plots of land to be worked (or other documents that prove incompleteness. In doing so, these documents are be able to initiate the application process that will end with resource allocation, the implementation of projects, and the generation of a paper trail that accounts for their annual activities.
the legitimacy of their use); letters of commitment and consent; forms stating the goal of the project, justification of its relevance, and the materials and the budget necessary for its implementation (including timetables and labour); official documents that proved their belonging to an Indigenous People (Mapuche in this case); and letters of support provided by INDAP and the PDTI.

‘We are not going to make it at this rate’ – Jorge said to me when I asked him how they were doing with their schedule. After talking about possible strategies to reach their goal, he decided to call each missing user from Los Angeles and San Miguel in order to convene them in the neighbour’s association building of the respective areas (Fig. 16). When the time came, first in Los Angeles and later in San Miguel, Jorge called the summoned farmers one by one so they could sign the corresponding documents. He briefly reminded them what they were applying for, showing them the quotes and explaining, first, which quote will be pushed forward; and second, what was expected from them (generally the economic contribution of up to 10% of the total investment). When the afternoon came and the job was finished we saw, far in the distance, a motorcycle approaching. After a couple of minutes, Renato dismounted, telling us that he would have to continue the next day and maybe over the weekend. Some of the users were not at home so he was unable to get their signatures. Bruno had a similar story: although he had done better than Renato, he would still have to spend at least a day collecting the missing signatures. The hunt would have to continue and documents, still immobilised and unable to reach their next destination, were lacking something.
The act of signing was necessary to ensure that the projects were eligible. The absence of these ‘forms of stabilisation that may have a multiplicity of instantiations (written signs, digital modes, symbols, drawings, etc.), and a plurality of sociocultural meanings (ownership, responsibilities, accountability, etc.)’ (Gherardi and Landri 2014), would mean the immobility of the application and the impossibility of progressing towards the capture of resources and the implementation of the expected projects. Failure to achieve a signature implies the failure of a piece of paper to become an official document, and therefore to be able to open the door to the implementation of projects. A paper without the required signature assumes a different agency: rather than allowing the flow, it stops it completely.

As a sign of validation, closure and stabilisation, signatures enable the movement of documents and therefore give rise to subsequent actions. A signature, thus, can be understood as an ‘obligatory point of passage within diverse stages of practice’ (Gherardi and Landri 2014). Only when the signatures are written, does the paper become an authorised text ‘vested with testimonial and executive power’ (Fraenkel 2013) and therefore capable of initiating its projected journey, opening new possibilities in its path. However, I argue that the act of signing is the result of several previous practices framed under specific relationships and expectations. The stabilisation or production of a document through the act of signing comes to be, then, a particular setting in which field-level officials and the recipients of their initiatives instantiate
interactions based on emerging and historical dynamics. The latter are informed by events that happened in the past, but also by their long-term relationship, which generates a prolific context for the establishment of (dis)trust – understood as the intention to accept uncertainty and risk based on a positive or negative (as the consequence of being let down) expectation of others (Dietz et al. 2010; Humphrey 2013).

Jorge, Bruno and Renato always talked about how, during the three years that they had been working as PDTI officials in Castro, they had managed to generate a trusting relationship with the users. They always remembered how difficult it was to repair the trust damaged during the management of the team who had preceded them. They proudly boasted of what they had achieved in a couple of years, and how people now recognised that they were trustworthy. ‘For them, the most important thing is that you honour your word. Here [Quehui Island] the given word still holds a lot of value’ Bruno often said. During the time I spent with them working on the Island I witnessed, and sometimes I also experienced, the anxiety produced by not being able to fulfil a commitment (e.g. not being able to get to a meeting because the weather conditions prevented the departure of the motorboat or ferry). The given word, commonly secured with a handshake, worked as an unequivocal commitment between the users and the field-level officials, and its fulfilment acted as the cornerstone of the generation of trust.

Documents or the act of signing them seemed to be something simpler and lacking in symbolism when compared to the social value attributed to the given word. Yet, because the latter exists and a trusting relationship had been achieved, the former was possible. Users frequently signed without a second thought because these relationships were already in place. It was common to see users signing documents without even reading them, after a short explanation of their content. Due to their previous experiences of receiving agricultural tools and implements such as greenhouses, fertilizer, walking-tractors, sheds, etc., or participating in labour-training workshops financed by the programme and organised by the officials, signing documents, apart from being necessary (i.e. if the user did not sign, his/her application could not go forward), came to be seen as something harmless and, if everything went well, ultimately convenient.

As I described above, users, unless they were applying for something that they deemed truly necessary as in the case of San Miguel’s indigenous community and the tools compatible with their new tractor, assumed a passive role, at least when compared to the highly active role performed by the officials. Among their everyday activities, the PDTI extension team takes responsibility for identifying the funds to apply for, the definition of projects (was it a feasible and efficient technical solution), and, finally, the collection of signatures and documents. Due to
this asymmetrical relationship, most of the efforts for bringing these procedures to a successful conclusion rested on the shoulders of the officials. Therefore, the anxieties that emerged when a call for applications was in progress were also asymmetrically distributed. Some were bound to lose more than others.

Allard’s (2012) ethnography about the relationship between the Warao people and front-line bureaucrats in Venezuela is a good example of how documents understood as mediums of interactions can produce uncertainty and anxieties. In Allard’s account, the bureaucratic interactions mediated by documents such as letters of appointment, baptismal records, and ID and electoral cards produce expectations and anxiety in the Warao who take part in these relationships. The ambivalence between, on the one hand, not knowing the purpose of these documents and thus fearing the possibility of being cheated during their production, and, on the other, being a potential recipient of state benefits, generates a scenario marked by its unforeseen outcomes. Because the meanings of the documents were frequently not shared, an asymmetrical relationship was reproduced during these interactions, and anxieties regarding their production and consequences emerged. However, I contend that in the case of the PDTI – because of its particular network of relationships in which the agency of documents is entangled together with the practices and motivations of officials and users – anxiety is distributed in a different way. Due to the relationships already in place, the users do not see signing as a dangerous action with possible negative consequences and uncertain outcomes: however, being unable to provide the frame for that action to happen does act to the detriment of the officials.

Therefore, and against the description assembled and activated by several ethnographies dealing with these issues, in the context of my fieldwork the ones suffering from these tensions were not those facing these bureaucratic procedures, but instead those who were carrying them out. Because some of these documents were used as technologies of accountability through which the fulfilment of individual and collective annual goals were measured, and because some of them were necessary for securing resources that would affect the number of projects and activities implemented under their administration, these devices mediated the officials’ own sense of worth as state employees. They were aware of the agency of these documents as evidence of their own value and usefulness, thus shaping a context of anxiety regarding the

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production, circulation and visibility of the bureaucratic devices that would testify for and justify the importance and necessity of their actions as technicians/experts in the field.

‘We will start charging for each signature!’ exclaimed an old woman, when Mariela reminded the participants of a programme activity that took place in the neighbour’s association of Tenaún (a town next to Dalcahue) to sign the attendance record. The other attendants simply burst into laughter. This particular situation highlights how some users were aware of the worth of their signatures as valuable assets for the officials and the programme. Not only did they know they were essential for completing a successful application or demonstrating that they were actively participating in the activities framed under the PDTI, but also that they were necessary for the stability of the programme itself. They identified that the records, in general, could be used to account for their own participation as users, but – mainly in the case of those who acted as representatives of the users in the annual public accounts organised by the municipality and INDAP – they knew that their signatures were used to activate documents then operated by officials to account for their own achievements.

3. Who is accountable for what: visit logs and commitment agreements in the field

Institutionalised practices of account-giving are common among state programmes. They entail the presence of a legitimate counterpart (accountees) requiring accounts from the officials involved in the programme (accountors) (Hupe and Hill 2007). These ‘calculative practices’, which can be understood as technologies of government that link responsibility and calculation (Miller 2001) through monitoring techniques used to guarantee internal control, play a central role in the allocation of resources (Strathern 2000), and therefore in the future or aspirations of a programme. Accountability implies giving an explanation or justification of the accountors’ behaviour or practices while carrying out their role. This commonly involves some external body with political legitimacy at the top (political or legal authority) or at the bottom (community) demanding answers; and the threat of sanctions when the actions taken have been assessed against pre-defined criteria (Bemelmans-Videc and Lonsdale 2007; McKernan 2012)

Accountability is closely related to the concept of responsibility, even sometimes being approached as the same idea (Bemelmans-Videc 2007). However, the latter, according to some definitions, would have wider normative connotations (Hupe and Hill 2007), while the former would be strongly linked to calculative and scientific methodologies such as accounting, evaluation and auditing (Vosselman 2016; Bemelmans-Videc 2007). Yet, the connection between both concepts is widely accepted and taken into account, mainly by researchers focused on their role in management and administration of organisations and public institutions.
Calculative practices come into use when numerical indicators are used to manage, control and produce responsibilised subjects (Shore and Wright 2015). Accountability, as a technology of government, rests extensively on the generation and circulation of records and documents through which performance can be measured. These devices are crucial for demonstrating the fulfilment of previously defined goals (e.g. number of technical visits), but also for producing a paper trail to later explain or justify some decisions and/or actions; or to state responsibilities and to be able to evaluate in the light of previously defined criteria, if any actor involved deserves awards or sanctions.

In Hull’s (2003) account of bureaucracies in Islamabad, responsibility and accountability are tempered by the production of anonymous documents. Due to the uncertain political landscape of Pakistani bureaucracy, documents are seen as a source of great anxiety. Hence, bureaucrats use an impersonal tone in order to avoid authorship and, thus, individual responsibility. By contrast, the field-level officials with whom I worked used an ‘autographic’ language to make clear the individual authorship of the document they were producing. Rather than underplaying their role in the production of these bureaucratic devices and avoiding individual responsibility, they signed the documents and gave their names in order to render visible the activities they carried out and their effects.

‘Through autographic writing, the actions of individuals within an organisation are made visible’ (Hull 2003), and signatures, names, a first-person point of view, and even stamps could be used to fix authorship in a bureaucratic procedure. Whether officials were producing and/or activating documents through other’s signatures, their authorship was always stated either by the language used or by the signature at the bottom of the document. Here the anxiety was not produced by the political consequences that could come from being identified as an author, but from the practical consequences of not being seen as accountable for an activity that contributes to the measurement of their performance as technicians or extensionists. In this vein, officialised papers, carrying the signature of those involved in their production, not only have a representational goal but also produce effects throughout their flow, transcending their textual content (Hull 2003; 2012; Riles 2006; Ellison 2017). When those producing the documents are aware of the agency of these artifacts, practices that try to contain or manage their possible consequences are brought into play, giving rise to new expectations and anxieties.

One day, along with Renato and Carolina (an INDAP executive responsible for the area covered by Castro’s PDTI), we travelled towards Quehui to visit the house of four users in order to give them notice that, due to various infringements, they would be removed from the programme.
Our final visit took us to Doña Esterlina’s land. Her small and poorly maintained house was located in the upper part of Los Angeles. Difficult to access due to the absence of a road, you had to cross a number of fields (always asking for permission and being extremely cautious about dogs) to get there. She received us with two of her sons who worked as day labourers in the fields of those who needed an extra hand. This family was known in the area for their high level of alcoholism and for neglecting their crops and animals. The two sons, the oldest of whom was about 50 years old, the mother and one or two sporadic visitors would spend days drinking, using the mother’s pension and the limited resources obtained by the men. The field was in a clear state of neglect: only a few chickens pecked around the house and weeds abounded among the potato plants. We were greeted in a kitchen with an irregular floor, missing planks and thin walls. The wood stove was not alight, although the day was cold.

Even before this visit I had already realised that, although the PDTI officials were always complaining about the unresponsiveness of some users and the lack of tools that would allow them to directly sanction or expel those who failed to comply with their programme commitments, they would always try to avoid these awkward moments of confrontation. Knowledge of the economic and social situation in which some of the families find themselves – added to the fact that they actively need to recruit participants and, thus, would not want to expel people from the programmes unless they really had to – often prevents them from acting with strictness. However, Carolina just wanted to comply with her mandate – to activate the withdrawal protocols by obtaining the [expelled to be] user’s signature. Either because she was unaware of the particular history of the users of the PDTI (most of her work was done from the INDAP offices in Castro), or because her labour conditions did not include evaluations that considered the number of users, she could carry out this task unceremoniously.

C: ‘Ms Esterlina, you are in the PDTI, right?’

The old woman, as Renato and her sons called her, took a moment to answer:

E: ‘Yes, of course, yes’ – she answered timidly.

C: ‘Well, we were checking our records, and we notice that you have not participated in or attended the activities held by the programme. A new season is starting so we came here to tell you that you will no longer be part of the programme’ – she said in a cold tone and still looking at a notebook with annotations. ‘Because you are a farmer you will continue to be an INDAP client, but you will no longer be part of the PDTI’ – she added while handing her a document entitled ‘Notice of withdrawal’ and a blue pen.

The old woman took the document and, without reading it, she accepted the pen and signed it while saying:
E: ‘Okay, it is not a problem’ – and returning the document added with her fragile voice – ‘the truth is that I have been very ill, and it is difficult for me to leave the house’.

- ‘So, Renato will not visit us anymore?’ – Asked one of the sons.

R: ‘Yes, of course I will, but no longer as a technician... and speaking of visits, do you have a copy of the last one [visit record]?’

This conversation shows an essential element involved in the way in which this network of relationships between people, and between people and documents, operates in practice. The relationship of trust that exists between officials and users often transcends the limits of the interaction framed by the programme. In this way, when the client’s son asks if Renato will visit them even though his mother had been expelled, it becomes clear that the expectations regarding the relationship go beyond the interactions actualised through the activities framed by the programme. This familiarity makes the hunt for signature slightly easier, but not devoid of concerns.

Renato had not kept the original visit sheet, and now people from INDAP were asking for it. The old woman left the kitchen, heading to the back rooms of the house, and after a couple of minutes returned with a folder full of disorganised sheets: bills, documents and visit records dating from 2014, when she entered the programme, until that day. Oddly, she did not find any visit record from 2017. Her son joined her in the messy business of looking through the papers. He also left the kitchen and returned with another pile of documents. While we were watching them coming and going between the other rooms, and while Renato asked them a couple of questions about the condition of their crops and animals, the son and the old woman went through the papers one by one. After about ten minutes of intense searching, they finally gave up, looking towards Renato and telling him that they did not have it.

R: ‘Do not worry, the original will appear’ – he responded, trying to hide his concern.

Beyond the documents mobilised in order to apply for resources, the daily activities of the PDTI officials in the field involved other types of graphic artifacts seeking to guarantee a two-sided accountability. On the one hand, they used visit logs and attendance records to provide evidence that they were effectively carrying out their obligations in the field. On the other hand, the commitment agreements were wielded as indications of the expected behaviour of the users of the programme. Thus, visit logs and commitment agreements act as intermediaries between practices that can go unnoticed, and official (and therefore visible) accounts play an essential role in measuring the individual performance (Munro 1996) of both the field-level officials and the users.
This vignette brings forward two relevant practices of accountability mediated by different documents and stabilised by signatures. During each technical visit the field-level officials have to record, first, some relevant information about the current state of both the farming (or farming-related) activities being executed by the user, and her/his animals, crops and infrastructure; and second, they have to record the technical advice provided based on the information that they were given. All these materials are recorded in their logbooks during the visit. This log normally states the name of the programme, the institution in charge of its implementation (INDAP and the corresponding municipality), and includes a space for the name of the user, the sector or group to which she/he belongs, and a section to register the information pertinent to each visit. As usual, each sheet ends with a line for the signature of the user and another for the signature, or sometimes the stamp, of the technician responsible for the visit.

![Figure 17: Dalcahue’s PDTI visit sheet](Source: by the author)

Almost all of our visits took place in the house’s kitchen (the main space in Chiloé houses, mainly because the wood stove is the only source of heating). The officials, sitting by the table and after a chat outside the scope of the programme, gave way to their usual battery of inquiries: What is the surface area of the field? What animals do you have? How many? Any sick? Did some die
of illness? The surface area of the vegetable garden? What products did you plant? Did you plant potatoes? How many bags did you harvest? What is the state of the sheds? What about the greenhouse? Did you get a project last year? Would you like to apply for a project this year? What is missing in terms of infrastructure? Do you have water problems? The farmer, frequently accompanied by other members of her/his household, would answer these questions as best as they could, recalling their previous farming-related activities while offering something to eat and drink. After recording all this information in the visit log, the field-level official would usually ask to see the crops, animals, sheds and/or greenhouses. After the tour, they would return to the warm kitchen to discuss some of the tips and advice that had emerged during the visit. All this would then be crowned with a request for a signature and the delivery of a copy of the visit sheet (Fig. 17 above).

This would be an ideal visit but, as I witnessed, visits sometimes did not flow in an expected manner, and neither the document nor the signature materialised. However, and due to the importance of these devices to generate accountability, the officials would find a way to generate the documents and get the signatures after the visit. For example, short visits to discuss the implementation of a project, or to gather documents required for an application, were sometimes masked as technical visits in order to reach the required number imposed by the programme.

In one such case, while we were in Peldehue (an area of Quehui island) visiting a new user called Don Demetrio, Bruno asked him if he remembered his last visit. Given a positive answer, Bruno told him that on that occasion he had forgotten to ask him for his signature, so at the end of this visit, he would ask him to sign both sheets – the previous one (filled in in advance by himself) and the one corresponding to the visit he was carrying out. At first sight, this request did not strike me as something peculiar or problematic. However, after a while, I realised that what Bruno was considering to be the first technical visit was in fact the first contact with a potential user in order to incorporate him into the programme. In formal terms, that meeting, although essential and within the tasks that the field-level officials had to perform, did not meet the necessary requirements to be formally considered as a technical visit. Generally, similar strategies were used when the number of visits that a member of the extension team had to carry out in a month did not reach the minimum demanded by the area manager – their main boss from INDAP.

This case gives us a point of entry into the importance of documents and signatures in the everyday practices of the field-level officials, but also the role played by these technologies as
devices of accountability. As Hull (2003) argues, the production of official documents in the context of bureaucratic practices seeks to determine responsibility. By imprinting their signature and using an autographic language focused on their own agency, the actions of those producing the documents are rendered effective. The use of graphic forms like signatures not only provides legitimacy to a form or template, transforming them into official documents, but also implies the public recognition of authorship and, therefore, responsibility for its production and for the potential consequences of its flow. Every signature printed on a document allows the traceability of its manufacturer and therefore the identification of those responsible for it (Fraenkel 2013). However, because the documents produced and circulated by the PDTI would generally have the signatures of both the officials and the users, the identification of their authorship and the responsibilities arising from those documents were not straightforward, but were dependent on the differential effects that their activation could generate.

‘Signing a document’ – an act that most people with experience of bureaucratic procedures would believe they already understand – can entail different things, depending on the way it is plugged into a network of actors, things, and relations. Therefore, what I am arguing here is that signatures (and documents) can mean and do different things for various people. As I witnessed during my fieldwork, one of the interesting things about this differential relation rests on the fact that, unlike what may seem apparent, the value of the signatures, regarding accountability, is not equally distributed. In this way, the signature of a user, for example, on a visit sheet is different (in terms of its meaning, precursors, entailments, and its place in the network) from that of the officials on the same document. In this way, a visit sheet – or other forms, templates or agreements necessary for the operation of the programme, the capture of resources and the implementation of projects – that fails to become an official document due to the lack of a signature, would have negative consequences mostly for the extension teams.

Either as a means of demonstrating compliance with goals (the visit log), or to define – and then sanction or reward depending on this – responsibilities and duties, field-level officials simultaneously play the roles of both accountors (those accountable for some action or behaviour) and accountees (the forum, individual or collective, seeking accountability) (Hupe and Hill 2007). The role played by the deployment and circulation of documents, and by the stabilisation and legitimation provided by signatures, was essential in both circumstances. Once, during one of the formal interviews I carried out in the field, I asked Jorge about what their main duties as PDTI officials were. Among others, he described the following:

‘They [INDAP] also ask us for support when project reviews have to be carried out. This is necessary to keep track of which requirements have been met and which have not. We have to
assess if the farmers are complying with the specific standards stated in their projects; if they lacked preparation, and, for example in the case of the construction of a small warehouse, if they have the quotes and invoices for the materials they have used, and to verify that the technical specifications are well implemented and that the users have built the warehouse by sticking to these specifications.’

As I described before, the calls for applications entail the circulation of various documents and the need to gather signatures that provide the documents with an official status. Ultimately, this allows documents to follow their formal course towards the capture of resources and their materialisation into technology or activities. Because the users’ signatures were included in documents such as a ‘statement of compliance with requirements for request of incentives’ a ‘letter of commitment’, an ‘affidavit’, or another kind of engagement agreement which demanded compliance with certain criteria and standards of behaviour and probity, the PDTI officials could carry out accountability practices. A failure to comply with what was stated on those papers could initiate an assessment process that might end with ad-hoc sanctions. Although this rarely happened (mainly because – as I explain in the next chapter – extension teams need to maintain the number of users so that the programme continues to operate with the same number of officials), the most severe penalty was definitive expulsion from the programme. This decision was officially made effective after, as Doña Esterlina did, signing the ‘notice of withdrawal’ document.

Although by no means common, it was not unusual to see projects implemented without meeting the committed standards. Occasionally, users substituted some of the supplies requested in the application with reused or cheaper materials to reduce their own monetary contribution to the project or, in some cases, did not even implement the project at all. Since the agreements signed in the application process included clauses related to allowing and facilitating the evaluation of the projects, the officials visited the place where the projects should have been under way or have been already executed at specific times. If during those visits they saw some bad practices being carried out, they first tried to convince the user to respect the previously defined requirements, threatening them with sanctions and even with being discharged from the programme. If the bad practices continued, this could trigger a visit from the area executive, generally Carolina, bringing into play a document that would trigger their expulsion – the ‘notice of withdrawal’.

4. Conclusion

As Strathern (2000) argues, audit practices, as major instruments resulting from and essential to the optimisation of accountability, evoke anxiety. The production, validation and circulation of
documents are fundamental for the officials because obtaining the required number of visits and projects by which they would be evaluated would provide the necessary justification for them to continue as state employees. In addition, not respecting the requirements included in a document that contains their signature – the sign of taking responsibility and being accountable – could be crucial for the future of a user. However, this second faculty of documents as technologies of accountability could also generate a negative scenario for officials, who after the expulsion of a user would have to go out to the field to try to reach the quota of users by enlisting a new farmer. The number of users enrolled in the programme defines the number of staff implementing it. One less farmer could mean the removal of one of the officials, generating another source of anxiety.

In this vein, the relations mediated by documents tend to generate an asymmetry of anxieties where the officials, rather than the users, have much to lose. As explored in Chapter 1, this phenomenon is mainly, but not entirely, explained by the precarity of their labour contracts which depend largely on accountability practices to determine, year after year, whether they will continue as public officials. In this way, being able to justify their value through calculative practices such as the number of visits and projects implemented, gives a fundamental role to those devices capable of providing evidence – because they are legitimated by signatures and stamps – of the activities carried out. The effects generated by the production and circulation of documents demonstrate their agency. As mediators, they are not mere containers of information, but are instead socio-material devices that widely influence interactions, relationships and arrangements of social organisation (Prior 2008) taking place throughout their flow, and only to the extent that they flow.
CHAPTER 5. CRAFTING TERRITORIES AND HUNTING FOR USERS: THE PDTI AS CATALYSTS OF IDENTITY

‘Although the conventional, hard-nosed view is that politics is about “who gets what,” the prior question is who “who” is’ (Starr 1992: 294)

One of the aims of this thesis has been to illustrate how the decisions, practices, and relations instantiated by the field-level officials implementing the PDTI, together with the external and institutional conditions that determine their scope of action, enable the emergence of particular representations and effects related to how the neoliberal Chilean state becomes effective (and affective) in a local setting. I have addressed this by broadly focusing on the first two letters of the acronym of the PDTI: ‘Programme’ and ‘Development’. However, in this chapter, I would like to address the role of its last two letters: ‘Territorial’ and ‘Indigenous’. Tackling these two words proved essential to understanding the effects of a state-led development programme that uses and makes effective classificatory practices that generate, in its wake, new frameworks of interaction in both territorial and identity terms.

In Chile, local officials and state-led development programmes focussed on indigenous people are entwined with the governance and management of collective difference fashioned by the principles of neoliberal multiculturalism. Following this approach, the interactions between the Chilean state and the indigenous population are framed by mechanisms and criteria that determine who can receive the benefits provided by public initiatives focused on individuals or communities that meet the requirements stipulated in the Indigenous Law (1993). Using a state-validated category of differentiated citizenship, with rights to valued resources attached, field-level officials render this governance project effective in local settings. In doing so, the state provides differentiated benefits to indigenous people in exchange for compliance with the norms and categories instituted by neoliberal policies that are accompanied by concepts such as accountability, governance, and market-oriented and managerial practices (Hale 2005; Boccara 2011; Richards 2013; Di Giminiani 2018).

As essential devices for the organisation of governments, public policies mobilise, and to some degree also impose, collective identities (Ramírez 2010). Thus, by classifying specific individuals as policy recipients, policies and programmes dynamically generate groups of subjects, imposing categories on people such as ‘citizens’, ‘migrants’, ‘indigenous’, and so forth. The actions
undertaken by field-level officials provide an ideal setting for developing a more comprehensive and detailed picture of the everyday interpretative and relational processes, and their effects, which take place throughout the decentralisation and implementation of the programme’s initiatives on Williche farmers.

Based on the above, this chapter addresses the role of the officials as catalysts of new territorial and identity arrangements while carrying out practices of encouragement and motivation to influence the farmers that inhabit the territories under the scope of action of the programme. Through the actions undertaken in the name of the PDTI they, often unconsciously, intervene in local micro-politics, generating tensions between groups or individuals who, when faced with new categories forced or disseminated by the programme, brandish new identity distinctions and stress local relationships between groups that already ascribed or used latent categories. Thus, field-level officials, through bureaucratic or managerial practices, deepen and disrupt differences often already present in the territory. Being categorised as indio28 or belonging to a particular sector was already a reality in many of the areas where the programme is being implemented, however, the actions carried out by the officials tend to formalise and crystallise this existing distinction between indigenous and mestizos29 which was generally obscure.

Therefore, in this chapter I aim to show how the activities of field-level officials have deep consequences in how the local political arena is assembled and experienced. Following Mouffe (2005) and Spencer (1997; 2007), I understand ‘political arena’ as a space, instantiated inside or outside the institutional boundaries of the state, where everyday disagreements are expressed and performed. This definition allows me to focus particularly on the domain of ‘who gets what’ and how racial and territorial tensions are intertwined with the categories of belonging being produced and mobilised by field-level officials and the users of the programme. In short, I show how the neoliberal state produces indigeneity as a category, and the role that the PDTI officials play in this process.

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28 Because Columbus thought that he had reached India, ‘indio’ was the colonial term used by the Spaniards to refer to the inhabitants of the Americas. During colonial times it acquired a derogatory character and was therefore rejected by some influential Latin American intellectuals after the wars of independence. However, the word is still in use (Peña 2005).

29 The category used to describe the ‘racial’ mixture of white Europeans – generally men – and indigenous and black people – mostly women – (Wade 2016).
The decision of a group of farmers participating in the PDTI to form a new neighbours’ association was, to some extent, motivated by the establishment of territorial groups delimited by the PDTI officials to better cover the scattered users living on Quehui Island. In a similar way, the use of participatory mapping methodologies triggered reflections that questioned the existing borders between the sectors in which the island is traditionally territorially divided. In addition, the PDTI officials regularly deployed a set of strategies to encourage farmers – who met the necessary conditions – to obtain a certificate of indigenous belonging (Fig. 18) that officially certified them as indigenous vis-à-vis the state, making them eligible to participate in the PDTI, become a ‘user’, and receive its benefits.

As Pigg (1992) states, development programmes often have problems in reaching their explicit goals (e.g. an increase in agricultural productivity), but frequently have great (if unexpected) success in producing ideological changes through the imposition (but also the local assimilation) of development categories. In Chiloé, these classificatory practices generate the flow of identity
and/or territorial categories with consequences for everyday interactions among local inhabitants. Therefore, throughout this chapter I address the following questions: What are the local political and social implications of this ‘crafting of territories’ and ‘hunting for users’? How are these spatial and identity classifications experienced and exercised at the local level? What is the role of the PDTI, and the interactions that it frames and enables, in how these categories reach individuals and communities, and in how they are constructed and shaped?

The ethnographic moments that I draw upon here took place primarily in Los Ángeles and El Estero – two sectors of Quehui Island – but also in Rilán, a town near Castro. These accounts are examples of instantiated disagreements and disputes between different actors and groups: on the one hand, mestizos and indigenous people; and on the other, between the users of the two agricultural extension programmes operating at the same time: the PRODESAL (Local Development Programme), focused on small-scale farmers; and the PDTI, focused on small-scale farmers officially recognised as indigenous. In a necessary disclaimer, I must emphasise that the categories of belonging on which I reflect throughout this chapter do not operate as isolated distinctions, as laws and policies frequently portray. On the contrary, in everyday life several nuances arise and, thus, these categories tend to be permeable and to overlap. As a result, especially in territories that do not have a PDTI, it is possible to find farmers that could be included in the PDTI – due to fulfilling the conditions for obtaining a certificate of indigenous belonging – participating in the PRODESAL, because this programme does not operate using the indigenous/non-indigenous distinction. Similarly, although Los Ángeles has traditionally been associated with a mestizo population, today many indigenous families live in the area and those dedicated to agricultural activities have their own PDTI group. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in Chiloé, PRODESAL users are largely non-indigenous and the mestizo population of the island is mostly concentrated in Los Ángeles, where they still hold greater prestige, have better livelihoods, and perform as leaders in diverse community organisations.

1. From class to ethnicity, from peasants to indigenous

Indigenous peoples’ growing awareness of their own identity and position does not take place only from the bottom up. It is a process that is highly mediated by a variety of actors (Wade 2010). Ratcliffe (2004: 30) suggests that ‘contemporary culture and political economy show how other global or transnational factors are part of an ‘ethnicity-making’ process’. An example of this influence can be seen in how the neoliberal reforms carried out in Latin America, mainly during the 1980s and 1990s, which dismantled state institutions that in the past offered a system
based on ‘corporatist class rights and community autonomy’ (Yashar 1998), fashioned new
configurations of social relationships, group belonging and self-representations.

Samaniego (2002) states that in countries like Chile, where Marxism and its categories were in
widespread use in the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the political left never separated
indigenous issues from the problems of the peasantry, frequently considering ethnicity to be a
distraction. Therefore, social and political movements considered that ‘the Mapuche’, and by
default the Williche, made sense solely through the lenses of class struggle mobilised by the
‘socialist’ project. Ethnicity might favour a particular awareness, but the Mapuche were
understood as exploited ‘peasants’. In this way, many Mapuche actively participated in social
movements incorporating and using their class identity, and because of this, the military coup
resulted in the slaughter of many Mapuche activists and their families.

In Latin America, due to politico-economic processes that took place in the last two decades of
the 20th century, and influenced by postmodernist and postcolonialist language (Wade 2010),
the categories of ‘belonging’ used in political actions shifted towards ‘cultural differences’,
repositioning concepts such as ‘ethnicity’ and partially abandoning ‘class’ identities. It is also
argued that this transformation is being produced by the breakthrough of the neoliberal model
which tends to divert attention from structural forces of oppression (e.g. race and class),
concentrating on accommodating constructs such as ‘culture’ (Goldberg 2011).

Wade (2010) argues that ‘culture’, beyond its multiple meanings and uses, is closely related to
ethnicity. Ethnic differentiation develops and reproduces ‘cultural geographies’ (spatial
imaginaries of origin and belonging that primarily refers to and evokes the language of place:
where are you from?), which people use to talk about difference and sameness. Moreover, he
states that in periods of intense redefinition of boundaries (e.g. due to globalisation and
transnationalisation processes) and social collectivities (e.g. new, or reshaping of, categories of
belonging), cultural geographies become a very salient strategy as a defining feature of ethnic
origin.

The idea of ‘ethnic groups’ (which incorporates indigenous people) as unproblematic and fixed
‘culture-bearing units’ (discrete groups of people sharing – historically informed – customs,
values, practices and behaviour) was, and to some extent still is, very present in Anthropology,
as well as in policy-making. This issue has produced a context which avoids critical questions on
the significant factors, local and global, that are involved in the emergence and reproduction of
these groups (Barth 1998). Nevertheless, in social sciences currently there is a shared
understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity as elusive constructs that can be difficult to grasp
in reality. Identity is seen as a situational and dynamic process which depends on ‘exogenous contemporary factors, both material and ideological’ (Ratcliffe 1996: 7). One of these external forces is the practices of the state which, through its classification processes, tends to create and reproduce racial, ethnic and cultural categories (Skrentny 2008). In this way, through its classificatory practices, the ‘bureaucratic’ state stabilises these (otherwise dynamic) conditions of inclusion and exclusion creating representations that are ‘precise rather than plural and approximate, content-driven rather than structurally positioned, fixed rather than shifting’ (Alexander 2002).

Because of its history and the current implementation of indigenous policies such as the PDTI, these issues are important in territories such as Chiloé. Following French’s (2009) argument in her work among two neighbouring communities, the Xoco people and the Quilombolas from Mocambo in North-eastern Brazil, governmental efforts, and in this case particularly the law, can successfully become one of the main driving forces for the transformation of cultural practices and collective identity. Likewise, in Chile, the Indigenous Law recognises and defines the parameters and possibilities for the self-identification as an indigenous person. This category, supported by a certificate of indigenous belonging granted by a state agency (CONADI), provides access to a range of benefits and programmes that render visible historical racial tensions now expressed through alternative inclusion and exclusion criteria.

2. Hunting for users

In the Chilean context, as in others, it is not at all unusual to hear someone, either indigenous or non-indigenous, claiming that a significant number of people self-identify as indigenous due to the benefits that this belonging can provide. This suspicion is always linked to the possibility of accessing scholarships, specific public funds, healthcare, culture and agricultural programmes, among others, by being officially recognised as an indigenous person. The existence of this narrative about a ‘strategic’ or ‘instrumental’ approach to self-recognition generally tends to question the motives behind the claim of identity belonging. Thus, the identification with an indigenous people is seen as subordinated to the individual motivation of a subject trying to obtain benefits aimed at citizens that specifically meet these conditions.

As Graham and Penny (2014) suggest, people embrace indigeneity compelled by their own set of aspirations. In this sense, indigeneity can be seen as a collection of emergent possibilities rather than an essential category of personhood. Economic interests, political and historical claims, and cultural recognition are among those multiple, and not mutually exclusive, desires for displaying their indigenous identity. From these drives, it is possible to extract two
archetypes or, in the Weberian sense, ‘ideal types’ of individuals who decide to self-identify as indigenous. First, and as I briefly described before, are the strategically or instrumentally-minded individuals, not engaged in any moralising argument and motivated by their personal aspirations or desires, who mobilise their kinship and historical background in order to self-identify as indigenous. Consequently, these individuals gain recognition from the state, and thus access to a series of benefits directed at people and groups that subscribe to the same identity as they do.

Likewise, there are others who, wielding what they recognise as morally accepted arguments based on political, cultural and historical claims, consider themselves as members of an indigenous people. Although they are motivated by the idea of belonging to an imagined community that shares the same cultural roots and a history of political and cultural subordination, they personally assume the task of mobilising this identity. In this way, both individuals who are motivated by accessing benefits and those committed to the political and cultural claims of indigenous people, are among those who, individually and self-motivated, approach CONADI offices to obtain a certificate of indigenous belonging that officially certifies them as indigenous vis-à-vis the state.

These kinds of individuals are well depicted in De la Maza’s (2012) account of the everyday interactions framed under the implementation of indigenous policies in the Araucanía Region in the South of Chile. No es solo para obtener beneficios (it is not just to obtain benefits) one of her informants, a Mapuche official in charge of a local office of CONADI, often said. In the privacy of his office, this official interacted with individuals seeking to obtain the certificate. In her descriptions, De la Maza illustrates how some Mapuche individuals who worked as CONADI officials, and were in charge of granting the certificate of indigenous belonging, would take this sporadic interaction as an opportunity to bring up the importance of self-identification and its centrality to the political claims and the survival of the Mapuche people. Inquiring about the individual’s motivations for obtaining the certificate, these officials encouraged them to commit to the duties associated with being indigenous, rather than just focusing on the rights and benefits made available with such an identity (de la Maza and Alchao 2012).

Although the role of the official is relevant in De la Maza’s account, their attempt to influence was only evident when those wanting to be recognised as indigenous had already made the decision based on their own motivations. This scenario differs from the interactions that I witnessed during my fieldwork, where a different set of motivations, and unusual sources of encouragement, were activated. On several occasions, the indigenous identity of the users
participating in the PDTI, and formalised through the possession of the certificate of indigenous belonging, had not come from the personal motivation of the farmers, but from the supervisory and managerial practices of the officials implementing the programme. In these cases, the officials were the ones encouraging those farmers who met the criteria to go to CONADI in order to acquire the certificate.

One of the reasons why the process of obtaining the certificate in central Chiloé often depends on external motivating forces is related to the particular history of colonisation in the territory. Unlike the rest of the Wallmapu (or Mapuche territory), which enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy until the Chilean military operation known as ‘the Pacification of Araucania’ that took place between 1860 and 1883, Chiloé was colonised earlier, by the Spanish Crown. This violent process started in 1567 and so there was three centuries more of contact, racial and cultural mixture, and a strong and persistent evangelisation that was carried out mostly by the Jesuits. This context allowed the emergence of a local identity that differs from the rest of Wallmapu, and from the rest of Chile (Cayuqueo and Scandizzo 2007). This specificity gave way to a deep cultural loss on the part of the Williche population, who, in addition to undergoing sustained discrimination, chose not to identify themselves as indigenous.

This history of extensive colonisation and the subsequent reluctance of the Williche descendants to identify themselves as indigenous generates a scenario in which the field-level officials play a fundamental role in the circulation of this identity category. In this way, the fact that the indigenous belonging of the users is sometimes driven by an external requirement mobilised by the officials is an example of the influence of the actions implemented by the programme – and of those implementing it – specifically on how they ‘hunt for users’, creating a particular kind of subject. Of course, and as one may anticipate, this process has multiple political and social implications both in how identity and indigeneity play a role in the organisation of a local community, and in how the programme, and the interactions that it frames and enables, are experienced at the local level.

2.1. Go get your certificate!

The end of the season was fast approaching, and a new problem for the PDTI officials was becoming increasingly evident and difficult to ignore. The expulsion of two farmers who were not complying with the programme standards resulted in the need to attract new ones in order to maintain, or increase, the number of users. The number of expulsions should not mean a decrease in the number of users participating in the programme. To maintain this balance between expulsion and new users, field-level officials had to carry out a series of strategies and
negotiations that would allow them to stabilise these figures. Because the number of officials is
determined by the number of users enrolled in the programme, the expulsion of farmers and a
subsequent inability to fill those quotas could trigger the redundancy of a member of the
extension team.

J: ‘We cannot expel anyone else. We will fall short’ – said Jorge looking worried.

B: ‘No, I talked with Ms Carmen [the area executive from INDAP] and she said that she has five
potential users in Pid-Pid, Ten-Ten, Nercón and Nalhuitad’.

J: ‘But Nalhuitad is part of Chonchi [another district and therefore outside their jurisdiction]’.

B: ‘Not necessarily. Apparently, they live just on the border so we would have to check where
they are registered [as INDAP clients]. If they are registered in [INDAP’s offices in] Castro, we
could include them’.

A couple of days later, Don Cesar visited the PDTI office. He wanted to clarify some doubts that
he had regarding some courses and training that would take place in Ten-Ten about vegetable
farming (hortalizas). When they had discussed this and all his doubts were answered, Jorge took
advantage of the occasion and asked him for his help in attracting new users from his sector. As
president of the Indigenous Community who was well-known locally and knowledgeable about
the other farmers in his sector, Jorge thought of Don Cesar as a strategic ally in identifying
potential stakeholders, or at least farmers who would meet the minimum requirements to join
the programme.

Don Cesar: ‘What do I have to tell them?’ – He asked dubiously.

J: ‘The most important thing is that they have to have land available. The form in which they have
access to it does not matter. They can be owners, tenants, occupants or usufructuaries. It is
essential that they have some document that proves this. It could be a letter from the
neighbours’ association giving an account of this situation. For example, Don X lives in the X
sector and he has X hectares of land. Also, they need to have their certificate of indigenous
belonging. If they have problems with any of these issues tell them to come and talk to us so we
can explain how to get those documents and how the programme works in simple terms. Tell
them not to go to INDAP, because they will not understand much. They would talk about credits,
land surface and technical issues’.

Although while I was carrying out my fieldwork the hunting process – as they frequently called
it – was straightforward and prompt, it generated a context of anxiety that fuelled the
uncertainty that already characterised the precarious working conditions of the officials. As
explained in Chapter 1, their continuity in the programme was always subject to a yearly
assessment at the end of the season that could result in the removal of one of the officials.
Having less than 150 active users in the programme would mean, as indicated by the regulations,
that the contract renewal of one of them would not be justified.
The conversation between Don Cesar and Jorge demonstrates one of the two main obstacles that the officials have to overcome. First, and as explained in the previous chapter, the difficulty in obtaining a document proving land ownership was always pointed out as one of the main barriers when trying to incorporate a farmer as a user of the programme. Second, although the farmer may have one or two indigenous surnames, she or he often did not identify as indigenous, and therefore was not in possession of the certificate of indigenous belonging. This situation meant that the farmer must be motivated to go to CONADI to obtain the certificate by explaining the benefits which, upon entering the programme, he could access. On the occasions that I witnessed, this request was quite up-front and honest, as described here:

After parking his white Nissan pick-up truck at the muddy front of the house of a potential user, Bruno and I went directly to the door passing, quickly and cautiously, two black dogs that barked at us menacingly. Don Ismael, a tall, skinny farmer and fisherman in his late forties, having heard the sound of the car engine, was waiting for us in the doorway shouting at the dogs to silence them. Later, sitting in the kitchen and drinking mate, Bruno started to tell him about the programme and the reason for our visit. As a resident of Ten-Ten (a rural sector under the management of the Municipality of Castro); as someone who was carrying out some activities related to agriculture; who had land dedicated to these activities; and for having an indigenous last name, he was entitled to be included in the PDTI. His land was regularised, so his entry into the programme would be easy. Yet one small detail was missing: he did not have his certificate of indigenous belonging. Like other farmers in the central area on the island of Chiloé, Don Ismael had never asked for it. He had never needed it, and he had not identified with the Williche people as such. Given this situation, Bruno only added: ‘without this certificate you cannot be part of the PDTI, but do not worry. The process is easy and fast. Go to CONADI in the city centre, get your certificate, and we are ready’.

Even though in a later conversation Don Ismael told me that since he was a child he had known that he was an indio, and that at school he had often been mocked for his indigenous surname, he had never felt that he belonged to a community or a people. Like many of the rural inhabitants of the island, and also many urban inhabitants, he always identified himself as a Chilote and not as an indigenous person or Williche. For this reason, he had never felt the need to request the certificate until Bruno knocked on his door to invite him to participate in the programme. Don Ismael’s experience was not at all exceptional. During my fieldwork, I heard similar accounts from other users of the PDTI. Some farmers told me about how they had experienced discrimination because of their surnames or physical features, and in some cases about how they had known that they were indigenous either because their grandparents,
parents or an older family member sometimes spoke to them about this. In addition, in encounters with some of their mestizo neighbours or, when they were children, classmates had identified them, usually pejoratively, as indios. However, their knowledge about the Williche people and their subsequent self-identification as Williche came much later.

This process of self-identification motivated by the arrival of the programme and the efforts of the field-level officials can be grasped in the following account by Don Carlos:

‘There was never much talk about identity here on the Island [Quehui]. Since the programmes arrived, people started identifying themselves as Williche, six or seven years ago. Before, people would say to those who had an indigenous surname, ‘Ah! These indios!’ But if you were an Velásquez or Cárdenas [surnames of Spanish origin common in Chile and Chiloé], you were a mestizo. For many years it was like that. Nowadays, people have begun to understand their identity.’

The influence of the arrival of the programme, the interweaving of identities, added to the racial tension existing in these territories, can be also recognised in one of the conversations I had with Doña Evelyn, a member of the Tenaun Group under the management of Dalcahue’s PDTI.

E: ‘Being indigenous in Chiloé did not exist, because people were ashamed to identify themselves, but today people are looking for indigenous surnames everywhere so they would be able to join these groups, and that is happening because now they see that there are benefits...’

D: ‘And you felt indigenous before?’

E: ‘Sure, because of my last name. But it was something that was never said, people would never say they were indigenous, as they do today, because now it is clear that all of us who belong to the PDTI are indigenous, so we are clearly identified’ (laughs).

D: ‘When did you start to feel that you could say ‘I am a Williche’?’

E: ‘It was when I entered the programme. Before, you would never identify yourself as indigenous, we were all Chilotes’.

Rather than merely reflecting on the influence of the programme and those implementing it on their self-identification as indigenous, these accounts also illustrate how ethno-racial tensions played an important role in the social relations taking place in the territory. Local political life, as well as the daily interactions of neighbours, were certainly determined by racialised categories such as indio and mestizo. However, with the promulgation of the Indigenous Law and the definition of fixed criteria of belonging, a moral shift has been taking place in territories such as Chiloé. Before, being an indigenous person was not something desirable, and people sought to avoid that ascription by not self-identifying, and abandoning their traditional practices and language. Later, it became a classification requested by those who met the conditions established by the law. In this chapter I argue that the arrival of the PDTI – as well as the PRODESAL – not only reconfigured the politics behind self-identification, but have also
generated a change of language, camouflaging and, in some measure, re-shaping these – usually ascribed – distinctions with a discourse of belonging to policy-backed groups.

3. *From indio to PDTI: Old racism, new language*

Since the formation of the PDTI in 2011, there has been some animosity between its users and the farmers participating in the PRODESAL. The latter was created in 1996 as a national programme dependent on INDAP and, like the PDTI, has mainly been implemented by municipalities, addressing poor rural communities in order to improve agricultural and livestock production (de la Maza 2012a). In general terms, the objectives, means, resources, activities, and teams implementing the PRODESAL are similar to those of the PDTI. However, the major difference lies in their target populations. The PDTI is focused only on indigenous farmers, while PRODESAL does not operate through this distinction.

In small and contained territories such as Quehui Island and Chelín Island, but also in some of the rural territories close to Dalcahue and Castro, the simultaneous implementation of both programmes generates friction among the officials operating them, and among the users. Field-level officials, working in the same municipal building, carrying out activities in the same territory and often sharing means of transport; and the users, neighbours now segmented for reasons unrelated to their daily practices and local political life, have experienced moments of tension due to the parallel operation of these initiatives.

Although indigenous farmers should be incorporated into the PDTI, and non-indigenous farmers to the PRODESAL, in everyday life these distinctions are often blurred when administrative decisions focused on facilitating their implementation come into place. An example of this managerial accommodation occurred when I was halfway through my fieldwork. Since the beginning of Castro’s PDTI, a group of islanders from Chelín had participated in the programme. However, and without taking into account the opinion of the users and the officials, INDAP management, together with the authorities of Castro’s municipality, decided that in order to deal more effectively with the needs of the inhabitants of the smaller islands (Quehui and Chelín), all the farmers from Chelín, regardless of their indigenous belonging, would be incorporated into the PRODESAL. This was taken as an insult by the PDTI officials who, because they were losing programme members, saw the continuity of their job positions to be in danger; and by the users of Chelín, who were already familiar with the system used by the PDTI extension team.
This context also allowed the emergence of an (often silenced) narrative. The PDTI users did not want to be included in the same groups as the users of the PRODESAL because the former considered that the latter would not treat them fairly because they were *indios*. On another occasion, I witnessed how a group of users from a village called Calen, under the umbrella of Dalcahue’s PDTI, refused to accept a non-indigenous farmer who lived in the sector, arguing that he and other non-indigenous neighbours had always treated them in a pejorative manner. ‘Now that it suits them, they want to jump on the bandwagon!’ exclaimed one of the farmers who openly opposed the motion of accepting him.

![Figure 19: The bus/bone of contention [Source: by the author]](image)

Likewise, on a cold and humid winter’s day as the Municipality of Castro was celebrating *El Día del Campesino* (Farmer’s Day) which sought to bring together and celebrate all the farmers of the district, users of PRODESAL prevented PDTI users from getting on to one of the shuttle buses (Fig. 19) arranged by the organisers. They contended that the bus was only for users of the PRODESAL. Because both groups lived in Ten-Ten, the organising team had hired a single bus to collect the farmers and take them to Rilán, the sector where the celebration would take place. After picking up the users of the PRODESAL from the house of one of its members, the bus stopped at a crossroads where PDTI users were waiting. As they were trying to board the bus, some PRODESAL users tried to stop them, arguing that the bus had been hired by the PRODESAL and that it was only for them. After a long and heated exchange, and a couple of phone calls to the organisers, it was determined that another bus would pick up the PDTI farmers. This
situation was felt by those who were excluded from the bus as a belligerent example of discrimination against them, for being indigenous.

When the PDTI team heard about this, they were irritated. The PDTI officials reacted angrily to this affront, blaming the PRODESAL officials who, they argued, had always treated their users as superior to those of the PDTI. However, what they did not acknowledge was the ethno-racial aspect that arose in this conflict. By blaming the managerial style of their counterparts, they were actively, and naively, neglecting that this situation had triggered old ethno-racial narratives and classifications, now camouflaged or reshaped through a new and ambiguous language of entitlement and discrimination. Although the officials were not blind to the existence of these discriminatory practices and discourses, their interpretation of the facts always left this type of reasoning in the background. As Chilotes, who had been working for 3 years in the area (and, in the case of Renato, self-identifying as Williche), they knew about cases of discrimination between farmers and neighbours, but generally, they would not mention the racial dimension of these disputes. They tended to avoid these issues by focusing on aspects related to their own professional practice. In this way, they would highlight differences in their management styles, on the relationships with their users, their lack of commitment, or, as this case illustrates, the consequences of their actions in the territories covered by PDTI, and on the users under the supervision of the PDTI extension team.

Today, farmers are subject to a bureaucratic segmentation based on the categories of indigenous and non-indigenous. Both the PRODESAL and the PDTI reproduce social distinctions based on markers of belonging such as the surnames and longstanding territorial divisions among indios and mestizos. As Li (2000) states, self-identification is not just invented or imposed, but brings into play historical tensions, meanings, and conflicts; is a ‘contingent product of agency and the cultural and political work of articulation’. Although the practices of the officials operate as one of the triggers of this self-identification, both officials and users are actively involved in the process of classification forged under particular political and material conditions. However, the criteria imposed by the PDTI and the practices of the field-level officials entail the deployment of a language and a bureaucracy that requires people to self-identify as indigenous in order to receive specific benefits, while at the same time doing very little to destabilise the racialised and hierarchical distinctions between indigenous and non-indigenous farmers.

Even though the mobilisation of these categories drives division among farmers coexisting on the same island, the density of each group (organised by the PDTI and PRODESAL) is usually more or less concentrated in different sectors. Thus, there are sectors where the vast majority of users
belong to the PDTI or to PRODESAL (as I discuss later in the case of El Estero and Los Ángeles). Due to this phenomenon, the categories of belonging associated with the territory assume a fundamental position for understanding the true extent of the effects of the governmental practices on the daily experiences of those who participate, as users/beneficiaries, in programmes focused on certain predefined groups.

4. Crafting territories

Goemans (2006: 21) states that every form of territoriality implies a form of classification. As a result, territories are not just empty managerial artifacts, lacking in complexity and socio-political consequences, but are essential mechanisms for social order that can reify differences and identities in their wake (Delaney 2005). Taking this into account, in this chapter territory and territoriality are not addressed as hollow and unproblematic technical devices used to reproduce existing boundaries, but as a ‘human strategy to affect, influence, and control’ (Sack 1986: 2). This classificatory practice of spacialisation is strategically used by the state in order to address communities, deliver benefits, impose sanctions and circulate information, guaranteeing some degree of presence through localised agencies.

Decision makers both create spatial classifications and recognise pre-existing ones in order to administer more efficiently, defining delimited and reachable territories to address them in a more straightforward and focused way. However, as a undesired consequence, these territorial strategies usually ‘have empirical impacts by being enacted’ (Shields 2013: 261). The creation of boundaries, in turn, activates distinctions among social groups both influencing, over time, the emergence of new spatial identities, and re-shaping old differences through a language of belonging and identity. These new or restyled tensions between territorial identities are, therefore, a product of administrative and geographical divisions which carry affective responses and meanings that were not intended by their imposition.

These divisions are no longer just lines on a map or strategies for the delivery of governmental services, but an example of how everyday state practices can interfere in the generation of territorial identities (Storey 2001). In this vein, a – in this case institutionalised – territory, could be understood as the outcome of continuous interactions between top-down initiatives and local practices and experiences (Antonsich 2011). Thus, these classifications are reinforced by the state and its agencies, and, at the same time, are experienced by the communities that coexist within these imposed and constructed divisions, generating an idea of ‘locality’ that rests on the construction of an 'other' who is different from those who inhabit this newly-defined
territory (Lovell 1998). This type of phenomenon reaches another level of complexity when these artificial divisions overlap with pre-existing, and perceived, differences.

One way in which the state reinforces these divisions at the local level is by encouraging the establishment of community-based organisations. These organisations defend and watch over the interests of the local inhabitants of defined territories, playing a fundamental role in the creation and promotion of a territorial identity (Storey 2001). In Chile, neighbours’ associations are a clear example of a community-based organisation endorsed by the state and in a close relationship with the local government, working at the local level and often cutting across the indigenous/non-indigenous divide. Because they seek to promote the integration, participation and development of the residents of a locality, their activities all tend to address problems or benefits identified by them, generating in their wake a discourse of local belonging and shared purpose.

4.1. Re-shaping and formalising an existing difference

‘We wanted to discuss something with you’ – said Doña Ester, the leader of the El Estero users, to Jorge and the other team members. ‘We wanted to ask for your help to create our own neighbours’ association so we can separate from Los Ángeles. We have been talking, and the truth is that we want to change things. We work well together, we know what we need and with your help, we could do it’ – As she spoke, voices of support, coming from other members of the group participating in the meeting, made themselves heard.

That day, we were carrying out a qualitative methodology called mapas parlantes (talking maps) in which we asked the users of the programme (and to their relatives who wanted to participate) to reflect on their territory, first thinking about the past, then about their current situation, and finally about their desired future. At each step, the participants had to draw their sector on a piece of cardboard, including what they thought were relevant issues when responding to a predefined interview guideline. By order of INGAP, the task was to adopt this methodology in each sector where the PDTI was being implemented, to graphically capture the perception of the users about the local territory, in order to identify problems, plan actions, and evaluate progress and changes. Afterwards, and as planned, the results of this methodology were used as the main input for the conception of a specific Development Strategy for each sector.

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30 Law N° 19.418 (1997) concerning Neighbours’ Associations, and other community organisations
The El Estero (The Estuary) group is one of the five groups that constitute the PDTI programme on Quehui Island. Along with Los Ángeles, San Miguel, Camahue and Peldehue, El Estero is one of the territorial units created by the programme to manage the users in a more efficient way. By creating ‘de facto groups’, the field-level officials were able to channel the dissemination of information and knowledge (technical advice), and the relocation of resources, identifying problems and possible solutions according to the particularities of each territory. Although the ‘de facto group’ of El Estero was created by the programme, this does not mean that the territory lacked a historical denomination and that its inhabitants, and the inhabitants of the island, have not attributed the area with its own features and identity. On the contrary, before the arrival of the PDTI, and, therefore, the creation of a group including the indigenous farmers living in that territory, the Islanders already referred to the area as ‘El Estero’. The name comes from the borders of the Pindo Estuary, a narrow channel of seawater that cuts into the heart of the island, often used to anchor the islanders’ fishing boats, ferries and, in the summer, to protect the yachts and sailboats used by sporadic tourists from the strong winds that are common in the area. Although the estuary would seem to be the most prominent geographic element locally, this area also includes a mountainous territory lying towards the east, where most users live and work.

Because of its proximity and connections, since 1990 the inhabitants of El Estero were members of the Neighbours’ Association of Los Ángeles (Fig. 20). To this day, and unlike the other four territories on the island, the inhabitants of El Estero are the only ones who do not have their own association. This implies that every time they are summoned by some authority (even by the PDTI officials when they want to address an important issue that includes the association as a relevant institutional actor), they must travel to the association’s building in the centre of the town of Los Ángeles. Because El Estero is one of the poorest sectors on the island, access to pick-up trucks or being able to pay for a flete is relatively uncommon, which means that they would have to walk approximately 40 minutes to reach the association's headquarters. However, and more importantly, not having their own association also implies that their local problems (e.g. lack of water or infrastructure) are diluted, and often neglected, when they are included alongside the requirements or problems mobilised by the inhabitants of Los Ángeles.
Having a neighbours’ association enables the possibility of applying for public funds to address some of the deficiencies identified by the local residents. Therefore, if they manage to make a successful application, they would get resources for projects related to infrastructure, public space and equipment, energy efficiency, recycling, water care, reforestation, and environmental education, among others. There are public tenders addressing each of these categories, and, as territorial community organisations, neighbours’ associations are entitled to apply for these autonomously and without the need to channel the process through programmes such as the PDTI. Thus, without external support – although often with it, in practice – these associations can apply for various funding sources such as the Fondo Social Presidente de la República (President of the Republic’s Social Fund), Fondo de Desarrollo Comunitario (Community Development Fund), Chile de Todos y Todas (Chile for All), and the Fondo Comunidad Activa (Active Community Fund), among many others. These funds are granted, after a competitive application process, mainly by public entities such as the regional governments, and the Ministries of Culture, Environment, Energy, Home Office, and Health.

In addition, many public investments identify neighbours’ associations as their beneficiaries, and address them as relevant actors when developing infrastructural projects. Under this scheme, Los Ángeles has benefited from the construction of an esplanade, with room for vehicle traffic, sidewalks and parking lots, as well as a shelter in which to wait for the ferries, electrical installations using poles with mixed wind and solar energy, and a connectivity ramp that
facilitates the connection with the main island. Likewise, the sector has a Comité de Agua Potable Rural (Rural Drinking Water Committee – APR) that administers, operates and maintains the potable water service built by the Ministry of Public Works. Although this organisation is (on paper) linked to the neighbours’ association, its area of irrigation does not include El Estero. Additionally, the municipal services, tourist and political activities, as well as the school with the best infrastructure, and the best-stocked minimarkets are located in this sector. By contrast, the inhabitants of El Estero access water through springs and wells, they do not have their own school so must travel to the rural school in Los Ángeles, they have some stores that are not very well supplied, and their connectivity with Castro and other sectors of the main Island is mediated by the pier located in Los Ángeles.

This notorious material difference, added to racial discrimination and a feeling of historical subordination – fed by the concentration of the mestizo population in Los Ángeles and a high concentration of families with indigenous backgrounds in El Estero – provided the necessary setting to initiate a discussion regarding the formation of a new association. However, I argue that this process was facilitated and activated by the influence of the programme and of the everyday practices of those implementing it. In this case, it was enabled by the topographic and managerial approach to the territory, and the state-validated categories of identity mobilised by the field-level officials. Through the generation of ‘de facto groups’ with a territorial attachment, they triggered new narratives of a topological nature, propitiating the emergence of categories of belonging based on fluid and contingent dichotomies of inclusion/exclusion, as I will show in the next section.

4.2. **Boundary-drawing and categories of belonging**

The first instruction provided by those acting as moderators – myself included – when carrying out the talking maps activity, was to draw the borders of their sector on a piece of cardboard that had the outline of the island already drawn on it (Fig. 21). In the initial planning, we planned that each group (usually composed of 6 to 8 users and their relatives) should spend only a couple of minutes on this first stage. For the officials, who were familiar with this spatial approach based on maps and fixed borders, delimiting the territory was simple and straightforward. To our surprise, an action that in planning should have taken no more than two minutes took more than 15. The experience of seeing the island from above was revealed to be challenging for the majority of the participants, especially for the older ones, who needed several practical explanations to place themselves on the map.
‘We are here’ – said Bruno while marking a point on the map – ‘Your house should be near this point’ – he continued, as he drew a circle on the cardboard where the house of Don Jorge, an old farmer still looking unconvinced, was. After several more such examples, and as the other participants understood and added milestones to the map, Don Jorge and the group were able to initiate the demarcation of the sector. However, this stage was also far from unproblematic. Although the programme works through the territorial delimitation of the groups, and therefore the officials know where the sectors start, where they end and who inhabits them, the participants, on the other hand, used other devices to trace the demarcation line. The boundaries with the sectors of the west (San Miguel and Camahue) and the east (Peldehue) were rather clear, but the dividing line with Los Ángeles, to the north, was a matter of discussion. The trembling line struggled between following the pragmatic approach of the officials who, while moderating the groups were also influencing some of the decisions made, and the historical and kinship linkages recognised by the users. How to leave out a family member? Why include someone who does not participate in the programme and who has clear ties to Los Ángeles? The impatience of the youngest ones prevailed, and a line was finally drawn which left no one satisfied.

Harvey (2012), based on her analysis of the relationship between infrastructural systems and territorialising practices in Peru, argues that when ‘borders of inclusion and exclusion do not coincide with the edges of a demarcated territory’, a topological idiom incorporating the
relational effects of social interaction becomes useful for questioning notions of power relationships as commensurate, bounded, and spatially fixed. Therefore, this topological sensibility provides the necessary scope and language to challenge the more clear-cut understandings of territory mobilised by a topographic approach based on measurements and metrics (Allen 2011). The above ethnographic account is an example of how these two approaches intersect and interact. Administrative divisions informed by a managerial reasoning are based on the existence of clear territorial boundaries; therefore, they rest on a topographic understanding of the territory. However, the participants incorporated new relationships and meanings into the boundary-making, challenging this fixed design while using more fluid inclusion/exclusion criteria. This exercise highlighted the imaginative process involved in boundary-making, especially with regard to the emergence of classificatory practices about who belongs to a territory, and who does not (Brighenti 2010).

Brighenti (2010: 60-61) draws our attention to four questions related to boundary-making: ‘who’ is drawing, referred to the agents carrying out this activity; ‘how’ the drawing is made, that seeks to identify the technologies used in the process; ‘what’ kind of drawing is being made, describing the different applications and expressions that a territory can adopt; and ‘why’ the drawing is being made, which identifies the qualities that are to be inscribed on the territory. In turn, and taking into consideration what I witnessed during the talking maps and in several subsequent meetings and interactions, I would like to stress the first and the last questions: who and why.

The ‘agents’ involved in the drawing were both the participants and the field-level officials. Together they co-drew the boundaries, negotiating their interpretations and understandings of the sector. In that interaction, categories of territorial belonging were reconstructed and wielded by both groups, in order to make sense of the direction in which the line had to be drawn. Consequently, categories of belonging, inclusion and recognition were also being put in place when deliberating over ‘who’ should be included within the sector.

Moreover, this negotiation shed light on the question ‘why’. For the officials, it was necessary to produce these maps in order to obtain information about the territory and to design the Strategic Development Plan requested by INDAP. For them, the map was already fixed and its boundaries, established by the office although taking into account the pre-existence of a more elastic and malleable sector previously identified by the Islanders, were necessary to operate in the territory in an effective way, allowing the delivery of benefits and the circulation of information in a practical fashion. They operated as if the map was a stable object that needed to be filled with elements of the past, present and future. As Brighenti (2010: 66) states, ‘projects
and plans transform territories themselves into resources’, thus the presence of the programme was actively contributing to this transformation. As a resource, and by addressing them as affective and not just rational mechanisms, territories play a central role in the creation and/or mobilisation of categories of belonging and identity formation.

The relational dimension of territoriality identified by Sack (1986), Brighenti (2010) and Raffestin (2012) was made clear when the participants, mostly users of the programme, inscribed their own logic in the boundary-making. Although they were involved because their participation in the programme demanded it, their own set of motivations was activated during the process, sometimes colliding with the interests and expectations of the officials. Drawing the boundary brought with it the negotiation and application of inclusion/exclusion criteria, problematising the categories of belonging, but also in turn, reinforcing the affective links between identity and territory. This facilitated the discussion reproduced below.

As a moderator of one of the groups, I realised that as they were talking about their current problems and projecting their desired future, the users were highlighting the need to separate themselves from Los Ángeles. This was even more evident when we reached the final step of the methodology: each group had to present their maps, hanging the cardboard on the front wall of the precarious warehouse that one of the users usually made available for the group meetings, underlining their main conclusions. On all the maps on which the expectations regarding the future were addressed, there was a drawing of a building placed in the centre of the territory. This building, drawn with blackboard markers, was labelled as ‘neighbours’ association’. When the participants realised that many shared the same aspiration, an old man sitting in the back of the room exclaimed:

‘In my case, it takes me more than an hour to get there walking. I do not have a pickup truck, and if nobody offers to take me, or if I do not have the money to pay the flete, it is very difficult to go to the meetings. But that is not the only reason; if you notice, most of the members and most of who participated in the neighbours’ association meetings [in Los Ángeles] are from here, from El Estero. What for? All the money that comes in, and most of the projects stay there! In Los Ángeles. Nothing comes to us. We have our own problems, but if we continue like this, we will never solve them.’

Doña Ester said something similar when I was interviewing her. When I asked her to introduce herself, without any provocation, she answered as follows:

E: ‘I am from Los Ángeles, but from an annexed sector, El Estero; but the truth is that we want to become independent, to create a separate sector, a separate neighbours’ association.’

D: ‘Why do you want that?’
E: ‘First, Los Ángeles is very far. You will have noticed walking here, how long did it take you to arrive? Almost an hour it will have taken. Also, there has always been a division and that division will always exist. We are two different sectors. You can see how this division works when projects are implemented. All the projects that come, everything stays down there. Because if they have something to fight for, they are going to fight for their own interests, nothing more. Years ago, they had a power generator that provided electricity for a few hours a day. Nobody ever asked us if we needed one, and of course, we needed it! They also have a rural water committee, and what about us? Nothing! We have been always left aside, mainly because of the distance but also because they do not think about us. Before you would hear things, today not so much, but before there was discrimination because they considered us indios. If a child from our sector went down there to play, they always bothered him or excluded him. Today things have changed, but some differences persist, and that is why one day we got together, and we said: why we are not going to be able to become independent and work for our own sector?’

As this account demonstrates, inconvenience was wielded as one of the arguments to support the idea of forming their own association. However, and as I outlined earlier, beyond the practical problems associated with the obligation to travel in order to participate in the meetings, issues such as the lack of representation and historical subordination were also stated as some of the main reasons for going forward with the separation. The officials were aware of these claims, and rather than trying to dissuade them, Jorge and the others promised to help. Several times I had heard someone from the extension team highlighting the work of El Estero group, emphasising that, although they were poorer than many of the users living in the vicinity of Los Ángeles, it was much easier to work with them. The officials saw them as a united group, made up of people who always told you things to your face, without cahuines (gossip) and who, with some exceptions, listened to the advice provided by the officials, introducing changes to their agricultural practices and actively participating in the activities carried out by the programme.

As stated above, El Estero had its own territorial identity before the arrival of the programme. However, both the officials and the users, using a topographic and topological approach respectively, recognised that the creation of the El Estero ‘de facto group’ – because a large number of the area’s families participated in it – facilitated the re-emergence and re-shaping of pre-existing boundaries. This process was enabled by the activation of discourses of belonging and identity that highlighted the historical subordination to Los Ángeles. Therefore, the possibility of the formalisation of the Neighbours’ Association of El Estero and the subsequent

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31 The objective of a Rural Water Committee is to manage, operate and maintain the potable water supply in each locality where the Ministry of Public Works has built a service. In general terms, living in a rural area and not being a member of a committee would mean that you would not have access to drinking water and that you need to have access, through other means, to non-potable water.
loss of members from the association of Los Ángeles rendered visible a series of conflicts between the inhabitants of El Estero, Los Ángeles and, of course, the officials.

One day, as I was spending time in the PDTI offices in Castro, Jorge's phone started vibrating insistently. After a couple of minutes, he turned his gaze away from the computer screen and directed his attention to the messages he was receiving. While he slid his finger across the screen, reading the messages, I saw him frowning. The messages were from Bruno. In them he told Jorge that Don Camilo, the new president of the Neighbours’ Association of Los Ángeles, was speaking badly of him in front of other islanders. A couple of days before, Don Camilo had learned that the PDTI was helping the users of El Estero to form their own neighbours’ association, and had asked Jorge to participate in a meeting that Sunday. On that occasion, they would discuss the repercussions that the separation of El Estero would cause for Los Ángeles.

When he was rebuked by Don Camilo, Jorge asked him to send him a formal letter of invitation to attend the meeting, emphasising that he was asked to participate in his role as a municipal official. With this letter he could request a *per diem* fee, and so not having to incur personal expenses for travel to the island on a weekend. As the letter did not arrive, Jorge decided not to attend the meeting, generating the annoyance of the leaders of the association, who saw this rejection as a clear sign of the PDTI's intentions to facilitate the formation of the Neighbours’ Association of El Estero.

On a subsequent visit to the island, I witnessed how Don Carlos reproached Jorge for his absence at the meeting, revealing that they were not going to facilitate the creation of another association. The main argument offered by Don Camilo was that the loss of members would harm Los Ángeles, making them less important and therefore enabling the loss, or division, of possible resources that could be invested on that part of the island. In the same way, some of my interviewees from Los Ángeles criticised the role of the officials in the development of this project. Thus, the PDTI’s support for the division of the sector was wielded as evidence of the influence that the field-level officials were exercising over the inhabitants of El Estero. ‘It would be a stupid thing to do! This will harm us all if it happens’, Doña Celeste told me when I asked her what would happen if El Estero’s association was formalised. For her, it was clear that ‘everyone should “remar para el mismo lado” (to row in the same direction/to all pull together)’.

As I described in Chapter 3, the role of the field-level officials, and how the Islanders perceive them, goes beyond the tasks set out in their labour contracts. The inhabitants of the island rely on the support of the officials to solve problems and access benefits because, as public employees working in the field, they embody the authority and responsibilities of the state in
the territory. In this way, officials are involved in disputes over resources that are not channelled through the programme. Even though the formation of this new association would not reconfigure the existing PDTI groups, such as the one recruiting indigenous farmers from Los Ángeles and the one from El Estero, and consequently, not endangering access to the resources channelled through the PDTI, the users were worried about the threat of losing access to other funds and potential public investment. As a new political actor, El Estero would be seen as a target for public infrastructure, and its inhabitants as potential beneficiaries of resources and projects obtained through successful calls for applications. This would imply greater competition for Los Ángeles and could relegate Los Ángeles in territorial (as a site for public investment) and demographic terms (a vulnerable population as a locus for project allocation).

However, what the inhabitants of Los Ángeles, especially those living in the centre of the town and who actively participate in the neighbours’ association, were not considering were both the racial and the historical dimensions informing this conflict. The inhabitants of Los Ángeles were blind to the structural reasons why the inhabitants of El Estero users wanted to separate. By contrast, the people from El Estero was able to identify the disadvantaged situation in which they stood when evaluating both the current state of their material conditions in comparison with those of Los Ángeles, and their experiences of discrimination and neglect.

The distinction between the topographic and the topological approach offers a way to reflect on the role of boundary-making in the mobilisation (or stabilisation) of categories of identity. The topographic approach carried out by the officials enables the inscription of fixed identities. However, this process is not unequivocal, and diverse intersections may take place. Although the field-level officials were aware of the social relational aspect of the territory (i.e. they knew about family connections and disputes), their static approach is an example of how these overlapping categories of belonging are being shaped through managerial practices based on a principle of efficiency.

The case of El Estero illustrates how these processes are materialised and experienced at a local level. Due to the operation of the programme and the consequent practices of the field-level officials, the sector has been delimited and stabilised as a bounded community composed mainly of families that incorporate, within their ranks, a PDTI user. Because of this, people from El Estero are addressed by the PDTI under the developmental logic enacted by the programme. Thus, they are classified as recipients of benefits and defined by the category ‘indigenous’. The boundary-drawing carried out by the officials to approach the territory and the users in a more
practical and efficient way brought with it these classifications, generating overlaps and new connections between existing categories of identity.

Belonging to El Estero is, in one way or another, intertwined with two intersecting categories of belonging: being indigenous and being a user. Due to this entanglement, the categories historically mobilised to racially discriminate against the inhabitants of this sector are undergoing a process of resignification. Being an inhabitant of El Estero used to be – and to certain extent still is – associated with being an indio; today, because an indio/indigenous person is eligible to be a user of the PDTI, its inhabitants are mainly linked to the programme, generating a connection between being from El Estero, being indigenous, and being a user of the PDTI. Thus, the indio / mestizo distinction today is also being expressed through the distinction of PDTI user / non-user (or PRODESAL user). However, and as I demonstrated in the previous section, the consequences of this new territorialisation (defined as the act of bounding, enclosing and bordering) while bringing with it new categories of belonging and inscription, has not ended already circulating racialised practices and discourses. Despite some of the inhabitants of Los Ángeles having an indigenous surname and participating in the PDTI, the categories of exclusion and inclusion that continue to be mobilised are connected to being or not being an indio. Although, due to the influence of the programme in the territory, this distinction assumes a new language: belonging or not to the PDTI.

5. Conclusion

As I have shown in this chapter, field-level officials play a key role in the application of identity and territorial classifications that define who gets what, and who ‘who’ is. In the same vein, I have shown many of the complexities related to indigeneity that occur in these territories, and illustrated how programmes oriented to indigenous groups create the grounds for the production of indigeneity: not just responding to it, but making it.

Because the practices of the PDTI officials are framed by a development programme based on the principles of neoliberal multiculturalism, their daily practices carry this project forward by mobilising stated-validated categories of belonging that determine who is entitled to receive the benefits they distribute in the local context. In addition, and as I have illustrated throughout this thesis, the officials themselves are entangled in the bureaucratic practices that enable the PDTI and that allow them to keep their jobs, actively chasing farmers who meet the conditions to join the programme.
The act of boundary-drawing, even though it comes from a topographic approach, is more than just delimiting a territory on a map or a strategy for simplifying the delivery of benefits and the circulation of information. It is an example of how everyday state practices play a role in the generation of territorial identities. Classifications, reinforced by the programmes and field-level officials and experienced by territorially bounded communities dwelling within these imposed and emergent divisions, reproduce an idea of ‘locality’ based on overlapping categories of inclusion/exclusion that can adopt new and ambiguous ways of expressing them, camouflaging – or doing little to challenge – old racial tensions and power relationships.

By focusing on how the state, through local state actors, participates in the production of identity and in identity politics, I have addressed the way in which PDTI officials are themselves entangled in this identity politics. Thus, the effects of their daily practices while shaping the categories of indigeneity and territoriality are to some extent determined by the way they are employed and positioned in the development field and in the state hierarchy. Their situation of job insecurity (precarity) gives rise to specific practices (the hunt) that actively participate in the re-production of identity policies.
CONCLUSIONS

‘It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters, in the end’

(Le Guin 1981: 220)

One of the main conclusions of my work relates to the exploration of the neoliberal state through the practices of technicians turning into bureaucrats. As a result, this thesis contributes to the literature suggesting that the study of the neoliberal state should be focused on the processes of neoliberalisation, or actually existing neoliberalism, rather than the question of what neoliberalism is. Thus, by addressing the neoliberal state through the study of field-level officials, I am distancing my analytical framework from the notion of neoliberalism as a static entity. In contrast, what my thesis demonstrates is that addressing neoliberalism in its localised and processual form allows us to explore how its enactment answers to contextual variables.

Wacquant (2012) argues that in order to understand how neoliberalism is being disseminated through a top-down logic, we should focus our analytical efforts on the study of the bureaucratic field, as defined by Bourdieu (1994). Through this strategy, Wacquant suggests, we can gain access to the machinery that, through the delivery of public services, perpetuates this model. However, this research makes visible the value of an approach focused on the bottom-up processes involved not only in the reproduction of this model and its consequences for those who make contact with the neoliberal state through bureaucracy, but also in how bureaucrats themselves are entwined in this governance project. Thus, throughout this thesis, I have provided ethnographic material that accounts for how different effects produced by the neoliberal state operate locally through the everyday practices of the PDTI officials and their relationship with bureaucratic and mobility technologies, the users of the programme (and their neighbours), and the structural conditions framing their activities and possibilities.

Bierschenk and de Sardan (2019) argue that the anthropology of public bureaucracy has two empirical foci. The first involves the interface between bureaucrats and the recipients of the public goods/services that the former is in charge of delivering; and the second can be localised on the internal dynamics shaping the practices of the bureaucrats themselves. However, for these authors, the actors involved and the practices taking place both in the interaction between bureaucrats and their ‘clients’ and in the inner functioning of these public services, should simultaneously be the focus of an ethnographic study of bureaucracy that acknowledges the agency of the ‘native’ – the bureaucrat. Echoing this statement, my ethnographic and analytical approach to this phenomenon has incorporated elements from both fields, and was mainly centred on the practices of the public officials as a strategy to explore the state-effects of
neoliberalism at play. This decision led me to findings that question and contest the idea of bureaucracy as a ‘desk-centred rule’ based on repetitive tasks and fixed procedures (du Gay 2000; Zacka 2017; Hahonou and Martin 2019). On the contrary, I found state officials unfolding their bureaucratic practices beyond the desk, carrying out their daily activities in the field away from their office, and in a neoliberal context characterised by labour precarity, pervasive accountability, constant competition for resources, entrepreneurial and developmental aspirations and impositions, and a managerial, category-based approach to territorial and identity belonging.

Similar to the definition of ‘new public management’ or ‘entrepreneurial governance’ provided by du Gay (2000: 11), members of the extension teams charged with the implementation of the PDTI are subject to market or quasi-market mechanisms oriented towards targeted performance and output-objective dependency, reliant on the activation of bureaucratic technologies. When dealing with these mechanisms, technicians are turned into neoliberal state actors that, in turn, through their daily practices, make neoliberalism effective in emergent and dynamic ways.

In investigating the links between the PDTI as a state-led development programme determined by regulations and objectives, and the technologies and devices that allow and restrict its functioning at the local level, I have shown how field-level officials deal, in their everyday activities, with technologies such as projects, budgets, motorboats, documents and maps. Consecutively, this focus allowed me to illustrate the symbiotic relationship that arises in the interaction of officials with bureaucratic and mobility infrastructure. Hence, I have explored questions related to how the field-level officials participate in the production, circulation, and effects of these technologies, but also about how they are affected by the conditions enacted by the flows and frictions of such technologies.

Following the definitions provided by de Sardan (2005) and Li (2007), as the product of initiatives executed under a configuration of actors formed (in this case) by experts and technicians devoted to the development of indigenous farmers, and more obviously due to having the word ‘development’ on its acronym, the PDTI is a clear example of a development initiative ‘in the field’. By approaching it from this angle, I emphasise both the role of those who carry out this development, and their position in the constellation of relationships that are being shaped throughout the implementation process. This constellation is composed of dynamic relationships between officials, users, governmental and bureaucratic technologies, and infrastructures that are actualised in the capture of resources, the transfer of knowledge and tools, the implementation of projects and activities, and also in all the other interactions that
occur outside the framework of the programme. Thus, to label the PDTI extension team members as ‘field-level officials’ is an acknowledgement of the developmental, technical, bureaucratic and governmental practices folded together while enacted under the aegis of the state – both in its central and local expressions.

Throughout this thesis, I have examined the coalescence between the neoliberal multicultural approach and the actual decentralisation of the PDTI as a state-led programme targeting indigenous farmers. This particular interest, added to the unavoidable contingencies of fieldwork, informed my reflections on the implementation of the PDTI – originating from a centralised political-administrative system, but managed under a polycentric organisational scheme that brings together central and local state agencies and resources. In dialogue with - and adding new perspectives to - discussions on neoliberalism, precarity, mobility, the state, bureaucracy and development, throughout this thesis I have addressed the state-effects of neoliberalism at play by showing how the PDTI reaches the recipients of its benefits (namely technical agricultural advice, training, workshops, projects and tools) mediated by the daily practices of the field-level officials in charge of its implementation. My focus was not on the structural conditions surrounding the production and execution of the programme as an excuse to address its past or its future, but rather to expose the process by which it is rendered effective and actualised in a local setting, and the effects that are produced throughout its implementation. In detail, I reflected on the effects related to the construction of subjects and categories of belonging; as well as the procedures, movements and interactions involved in the assembly of the different guises of the neoliberal state, and the representations that endorse or challenge it, that are being produced and mobilised in the territories covered by the PDTI.

I have traced both the roles and distinctive features of the individuals in charge of the implementation of this programme, and the organisational, material and historically informed challenges and difficulties must face when carrying out their everyday activities regarding their bureaucratic tasks and their relationship with the recipients of the benefits they provide. As I have argued throughout this thesis, access to the nitty-gritty details of the daily practices carried out by state officials in a local setting allows us to understand both the flow and materialisation of a public policy established under centralist criteria. Much has been written about how public policies move through and between what seem to be bounded, either national or supra-national, political systems (Clarke et al. 2015b). However, little attention has been paid to how these policies reach the ground, the processes that they must face before finally being translated into material outcomes, and their role in in how the state appears in people’s lives (state effects). In this way, this research contributes to bridging this gap by directing attention towards the
practices and challenges of those in charge of taking the programme to a territory in which these policies would be reshaped by local dynamics informed by material conditions, historical relations, social and cultural specificities, and territorial and ethno-racial tensions. Likewise, this thesis contributed to exploring how such policies, in addition to changing through their implementation, generate effects both for their recipients and their surroundings (by transferring technologies and knowledge), and for those who are in charge of their implementation (by turning them into bureaucrats and imposing neoliberal management mechanisms).

1. The guiding threads

One of the most relevant results of this research is in the demonstration of the fundamental role that the mobilisation of resources, through the example of the incorporation of market mechanisms into bureaucratic practice, acquires in the daily activities of the officials implementing the programme. The capture, relocation and use of financial, material and human resources enable and determine the actions that are performed under the umbrella of this state initiative. Practices and expectations surrounding resources allow or prevent the movement of the officials; mediate the relationship with the users; define what version/guise of the neoliberal state is enacted in remote territories, and the emergent aspirations that challenge it; activate diverse bureaucratic and managerial technologies; promote a precarious labour regime; and trigger and reformulate conceptions of identity and territorial belonging. Moreover, it is mainly due to their role in the capture and relocation of resources, and all the procedures that these processes entail, that the technician/expert in charge of the technical delivery of an agricultural extension programme is pushed into bureaucratic practices that enable the operation of the programme and the continuity of the officials.

In addition, because an important part of the tasks carried out by the officials is focused on securing resources for the execution of projects that would benefit users, the relationship with the latter is mediated by two main goals. First, for the purpose of achieving access to these resources and being able to offer technical solutions according to local needs; and second, for the requirements of users seeking to improve their material conditions of existence. In this way, the hunt for resources provides a space for interaction and encounter between the aspirations of both officials and users.

Each chapter has ethnographically contributed to the examination of the neoliberal state through a focus on how the pursuit and management of resources affects the way in which the PDTI, an initiative coming from the centralised government, reaches the local context, mutating
and being transformed during its process of decentralisation. This role as articulator operates mainly through, and together with, four themes addressed throughout the thesis: the state in the field; mobility; bureaucracy; and precariousness – all of which bridge previously developed ethnographic descriptions and analytical arguments.

1.1. The state in the field

Following field-level officials carrying out activities in rural sectors and dealing with communities far from the centres where the state bureaus are located allowed me to witness emergent and unstable configurations of the state and its different effects. Based on the idea that in order to grasp the state we cannot separate its abstract manifestation from its material presence (Mitchell 1999) or, as Harvey (2005) states, the materiality of state-effects, this strategy allowed me to observe the interactions through which the Chilean neoliberalising state was materialised through the effects – and affects – generated by the practices of its officials in the field.

In each chapter, these effects assume distinctive forms. From its intermittent presence, the use of the officials’ discretion and mediation when it came to allocating resources, the collection and movement of documents and their officialisation through the pursuit of signatures, the delimitation of territories and the imposition of membership requirements, the practices of the field-level officials gave rise to settings in which the state was enacted and instantiated through the effects that these activities produced. Both in their actions in the field and in their offices, as well as their decisions based, loosely or fully, on the regulations of the programme, shaped their interactions with the recipients of this programme, but also with the other inhabitants of the sectors in which they intervene. Unlike other officials who occasionally travelled to rural areas to deliver benefits or develop activities within the framework of their tasks, the members of the PDTI extension team are those that are most present in these sectors, often performing functions that do not fall within their competency.

This context is feasible due to their local knowledge, their shared background, governmental technologies of management, and access to resources. Through these elements, officials are, sometimes inadvertently or unconsciously, seen as the state, or as embodying its authority. Therefore, in the course of these interactions, different narratives are constructed, fed and disseminated around the version of state that is present or absent in the territories, which frame and give meaning to these contingent encounters. Although these interactions between the users of the programme and their neighbours and the field-level officials often leave the users affectively dissatisfied, the state effects are ethnographically observable in the processes and
practices that precede and are materialised through the activities of state institutions in the territories.

On this basis, and following Bierschenk and de Sardan (2014), what I witnessed and described as ‘state effects’ are temporary concentrations of technologies, actions and procedures exuding state authority, and being experienced as such by the those in direct contact with these everyday decisions – the recipients of state services and benefits. In this way, I have shown how meanings and representations about the state were being stabilised, taking shape and gaining meaning in the course of these interactions. Whether in its desired, neglectful, inconvenient or intermittent version, the state is rendered legible when it is observed through the material practices of those who act on its behalf (or who are identified as such). Thus, having accompanied the field-level officials in their daily tasks in territories often considered as neglected, I was able to access mundane practices of state-making colliding with, and being shaped by, expectations of connectivity and inclusion; innovative and undisciplined practices generated by – mainly because of their difficult to access – years of partial autonomy; and technologies of government.

1.2. Bureaucracy and its technologies

Always present in the background, but regularly brought forward assuming different configurations, this research has dealt extensively with issues regarding how access and flow of resources are intimately related to the deployment of bureaucratic practices. Unsurprisingly, the work of officials under the aegis of central and local government is only made possible by following certain bureaucratic requirements, triggering and employing bureaucratic technologies. Although these elements are evident throughout the work of the field-level officials, and even though they share many of the features and functions of the street-level bureaucrats identified by Lipsky (2010), the type of daily work carried out by the officials and the conditions that determine it generates a scenario in which it becomes complex to classify them as bureaucrats. The predominance of tasks influenced by entrepreneurial management criteria (a focus on outcomes; competition for resources; dealing with users/clients) determined by a flexible and uncertain labour regime, and coupled with extensive work in the field and away from government offices, makes the ‘bureaucracy’ label difficult to apply to PDTI officials.

However, and although several of the principles that shape the so-called entrepreneurial governance (du Gay 2000) define some of their everyday practices and experiences, field-level officials act as public servants in charge of the delivery of public services and bureaucratic technologies which, to a large extent, define their possibilities of action. My point here is that it is essential to approach PDTI officials as bureaucrats who deploy their roles in a neoliberal
context. The bureaucratic devices that formalise, make visible, provide membership and belonging, and designate accountability – leaving a trail of forms and documents, and rendering visible the fundamental role of autographic practices such as signing – mediate the activities of the officials, the outcomes of the programme, and their relationship with the users. In this way, my decision to cross-examine practices in the field and offices as bureaucratic practices was consistent with the centrality of these devices in the everyday activities of the officials. When activated, these technologies gave momentum to the implementation of the policy; and the failure to activate them led only to inertia.

The practices mentioned above allow space for the employment of discreitional strategies. These schemes are intimately intertwined with the need to boost bureaucratic procedures that allow the capture of resources for the execution of projects and the production of evidence (a paper trail) that makes the employability of the officials feasible for the duration of their next employment contract. For this very reason, I argue that the objectives that underlie the use of these technologies, and which allow the policy to be materialised through the programme and the interactions that are developed within its (sometimes blurred) framework, are mainly designed to increase the pressure on the work of the officials, rather than the users’ responsibilities.

Contrary to the literature that suggests that documents are considered objects of desire for some marginalised groups (Gordillo 2006; Ellison 2017), or that the inability of this population to predict the outcome of the production of documents would cause them anxiety (Allard 2012), I have shown that, in this context, it is the PDTI officials who are evaluated for, but also governed by, the correct activation, manipulation and stabilisation of these technologies. In the production of budgets, applications to resources and projects, technical visits, and while carrying out meetings and labour training, the officials must deal with these devices in order to enable processes of accountability. In this way, and against the idea that bureaucrats try to elude responsibility by avoiding the authorship of documents (Hull 2003), the field-level officials must produce a trail of paper that allows them to demonstrate the work done and the outcomes achieved. Needless to say, the users of the programme also assume a certain degree of responsibility in the activation of these technologies, and they are also evaluated according to the requirements imposed by the programme guidelines. However, my argument here focuses on recognising the existence of an asymmetry of anxieties tilted towards the officials – as it is they who mostly who have to deal with the production and effects of these technologies.
1.3. Mobility

This thesis also dealt with the concept of mobility. Its pages describe the flow of resources, trips by motorboat and pick-up trucks, the circulation of documents, a programme that reaches local communities, dreams of connection, and hunting for signatures. All these activities suggest movement – something going from one place (point A) to another (point B). However, my ethnographic approach is also focused on clarifying what happened along the non-straightforward line that connects point A to point B, and not only to describe the consequences of this journey. Therefore, in addition to a focus on the practices used to, for example, activate the circulation of documents, and the results these technologies achieve at the end of their journey, I describe the effects that they leave – and the challenges they face – along their path.

In the course of mobility, regardless of what is moving, various practices and interactions take place. These events, occurring while a technology, field-level official or policy is on its way to point B, determine the result of this movement and, therefore, how its target is achieved. However, what happens during this procedure also influences whether what is in motion has a successful arrival, or whether it reaches its expected destination – accounting for a non-linear process. Thus, during the deployment of the infrastructure of mobility that allows the presence of the officials in the territories covered by the programme, diverse relationships are activated. These are often informal, trigger interactions between different government departments, and validate the commitment and usefulness of the PDTI officials both in front of the users, and authorities and officials in charge of other programmes.

Following Ingold’s (2011) work, as a non-linear process, this entanglement of relations does not operate as a network of connected points (A to B), but as a meshwork of interwoven lines moving in a fluid space. In this way, the meshwork in which the decentralisation of the PDTI, and the relationships, obstacles, and outcomes that are being activated and produced along its path, actualise a contingent constellation of mobility. As specific patterns of movement, the practices that make this movement possible, and the representations that arise from them – that only make sense together – (Cresswell 2010), this constellation plays a fundamental role in the materialisation of the programme and in its everyday operation. Both the different guises of the state being enacted and represented in the sectors covered by the PDTI, and the relations activated by the circulation of bureaucratic technologies rely on the particular configuration of this constellation, particularly frictions, and the emergent entanglements of relationships modelling the meshwork.
The mediating role played by mobility infrastructure in the presence/absence of field-level officials is evident in their dependence on operational motorboats and available and willing captains to travel to the islands under non-ideal weather or infrastructural conditions. However, these in-between events do not only occur in the most visible dimension of mobility: when dealing with mobility infrastructure. Although in the travels of the officials it is possible to observe practices such as mobility strategies, knowledge transfer, and planning, when other technologies are in motion, though in less obvious ways, they generate processes of translations and transformation, and frictions are encountered during their progression. These frictions impose challenges for the mobility of these technologies and infrastructure, sometimes making their movement slower, at other times preventing it, but also giving institutional and/or material sustenance to their flow – being geared by it.

There is nothing new in saying that everything moves, and that on its way this movement faces challenges and recalibrations. Nonetheless, my descriptions and analysis contribute to the literature on mobility when dealing with the ways in which these actions are triggered, facilitated or impeded by the daily practices of the individuals who initiate these flows, but who are also determined by them. Based on the experiences of the officials with whom I worked, mobility is determined by access to resources and, simultaneously, it is motivated by the intention to secure them. These same goals and frames are enabling the mobility of the policy that outlines the programme. In this way, my decision to address this issue in a transversal and unanchored manner is related to my argument that the decentralisation/materialisation of the PDTI, which already implies a top-down movement, depends on individuals dealing with flows and circulations that transcend a linear perspective. On the contrary, based on their knowledge and possibilities of action, the officials must stabilise these movements through the same technologies in motion and which allow them, the officials, to move.

1.4. Precarity

Although the first chapter is the only one that directly addresses this concept, the conditions of precarity in which field-level officials must perform their everyday tasks emerged throughout this research. Following Lorey’s (2015) definition, I understand precarity as a category of order that describes how we are protected against the effect of ‘precariousness’ – a shared and inevitable threat to our lives and our bodies due to their mortal and social condition (Butler 2006). These effects are unevenly distributed, so how we experience precarity is determined by how much legal, political or social protection we have access to against the dangers that our precariousness encompasses. Along these lines, I offered an ethnographic perspective on how
these protections are not homogenously distributed when describing the flexible, insecure and, overall, precarious conditions in which the PDTI officials operate in the field. Although everything could be reduced to the regime of subordination and dependence in which they are inserted, focusing the analysis on the polycentric organisational structure in which they are immersed or on the conditions imposed by the fee contract that frames the relationship with their employers and delineates their main responsibilities would limit the scope of the experiences and practices I was able to access and witness.

In general terms, much has been said about the precarisation of the labour market, and specifically about how new managerial strategies, normally recognised in the private sector, are being introduced into the operations of the state, negatively impacting on the working conditions of public officials (Bach 2012; Doogan 2015; Lazar 2017). However, this discussion reaches a different level when these conditions are ethnographically enriched through practices and experiences highlighting their intertwining with tasks that need to be carried out in contexts that can be defined as materially precarious. In this way, having to travel by motorboat, sometimes under adverse weather conditions, without updated documents and lacking essential maintenance; traveling on their own pick-up trucks through narrow and winding roads, with low visibility and poor drainage; and having to carry out their outdoor activities in the cold and wet chilote weather while being deprived of health and accident insurance, provides an ethnographic and experiential dimension to what constitutes a precarious labour context.

Additionally, the magnitude of their precarious working conditions also increases when new mechanisms of accountability are brought into play. Field-level officials have to make sure that all their work-related actions are generating a proper paper trail that will allow them to justify their presence in the PDTI, facilitating the renewal of their contracts at the end of the year. Hence, and closely associated with the contribution of my work in relation to the role and agency of official (or officialised) documents, their accountability practices allow us to address the production of strategies that challenge the insecurities that are becoming normalised under a labour scheme that imposes a lack of social welfare and job security, and which requires a proactive attitude under material conditions characterised by deficiencies, informalities and hazards. Throughout this research, I have described strategies such as the retrospective stabilisation of projects and budgets, hunting for users, motivation of users and raising demand for fund applications and project implementation, and the collection of documents and signatures. All these practices generate recordable procedures and outcomes that highlight the authorship of the officials, allowing them to be accountable and to deal with precarity.
Finally, this thesis also contributes to this field by providing an account of how the state itself uses and mobilises flexible hiring mechanisms. Thus, these labour regimes cease to be a sole resource exploited by the private sector, and reach a new arena when seized by a public labour market formerly characterised by stability. The field-level officials are aware of their disadvantages with respect to other public servants hired on indefinite contracts that provide them with access to all the social benefits protected by law. Consequently, this self-awareness links them with an emergent broader community of state workers that share these experiences, and have begun to organise themselves in order to improve the conditions under which they are hired – which has been labelled as ‘the precariat’ (Standing 2011; Standing 2014). Therefore, and although it is often connected to experiencing intermittent employment or underemployment, the definition and scope of the precariat can be enriched with the inclusion of individuals under fixed-term contracts subject to potential renewal after assessing the correct performance of the employee under scrutiny: which constitutes a form of job insecurity.

2. On how to go further

As explained before, as with all research, and added to its inductive nature, all the stages that contributed to the development of my thesis were subject to contingencies. For this reason, my encounters, interactions, and methodological and analytical decisions in tackling both my fieldwork and the information that I managed to gather are the products of choices that could have been otherwise. Now, this is not an apology seeking to alleviate my conscience, but the recognition of the many other paths this research could have followed, and the many other avenues it could have explored. Due to these multiple possibilities, rather than identifying limitations, this section looks for tangents that could be addressed to enhance the understanding of a deeply dynamic and multifaceted context.

As I stated earlier, my research is mainly focused on the everyday practices of the PDTI officials. Although there were significant interactions with users of the programme and other inhabitants of the rural sectors in which the PDTI was being implemented, most of my analysis rests on data obtained while accompanying the officials. As I have demonstrated, this decision to focus on the daily practices of this group, and on how they interacted with the users, the territory and the technologies that sustained their actions within the framework of the programme, has value in itself and allows fruitful discussions that contribute to the development of the discipline in different fields (the anthropology of the state, mobility, precarity, and so on). However, and although there is more work to be done from this perspective, particularly in the anthropology/development/infrastructure literature (see the work of Rommens 2017; Di
Giminiani 2018; Bonelli and González 2018; de la Maza and Bolomey 2019), it seems to me that my contribution could be enriched by delving into the expectations, desires and practices of the recipients of these state initiatives. This could be an entry point for understanding how their aspirations and their everyday activities as indigenous farmers dwelling in an archipelago collide with the objectives, standards and processes activated during their relationship with the field-level officials.

Likewise, because my approach was focused on issues related to the operation, decentralisation and materialisation of the programme through the capture and relocation of resources, I did not explore in detail the economic and developmental logic that underlies the objectives of the programme. Although these objectives were named and were always operating in the background, the practical consequences of the development discourse, mainly linked to the inclusion of the small-scale farmers in the market through an increase in their production, were not addressed exhaustively when unfolding the practices of the officials as well as those of the users. This context leads me to suggest that much more can be said in relation to how users resist, adapt or pursue initiatives which seek to incorporate them into the official channels of the local economy of the archipelago, and beyond; and the rationality that motivates the practices of field-level officials. Similarly, and although I do address some dimensions of this phenomenon, more could be said about how state officials mobilise (passively or critically) the principles and concepts behind the objectives of this extension/development programme, and how their practices and their own sense of value are informed by state-validated categories and notions of a ‘good life’.

Finally, by addressing these issues from the point of view of users, a gender perspective could be a productive addition. Considering that in both in Castro’s PDTI and Dalcahue’s PDTI, the majority of the users were women and that there is a gendered division of labour, an approach incorporating conceptual tools for increasing our understanding of these processes, and their effects on the daily life of the farmers, could be fruitful. In addition, an approach that considers the age challenges faced by the programme, by paying attention to the consequences of dealing with an ageing community through developmental reasoning, could provide new ethnographic insights into the real scope of these types of social policies focused on agriculture. By emphasising the role of gender and age when trying to unveil the territorial dynamics and the scope of state actions in a local setting, the tensions that emerge when users’ expectations and practices are challenged – or are triggered or reconfigured – when faced with the practices of the officials and the requirements imposed by the programme, could be addressed in a more
productive manner. In summary, all this together would allow us to go further into an understanding of the political economy of these rural territories.
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