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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Studie befasst sich mit den durch den Bergbau verursachten Umwelt- Sozial- und Territorialkonflikten in der Region Tarapacá, deren Probleme nicht nur mit den Umweltauswirkungen, sondern mit der allgemeinen Behandlung der Natur zum Zwecke des Profits und des Exports verbunden sind. Diese Monographie konzentriert sich auf die Konfrontation zwischen dem Staat, den indigenen Gemeinschaften und den Bergbauunternehmen und beschreibt nuanciert die vielen Beziehungen und Verflechtungen zwischen ihnen. Im Mittelpunkt dieser Arbeit stehen die verschiedenen politischen, wirtschaftlichen, institutionellen und kulturellen Elemente im Zusammenhang mit der Entwicklung von Bergbau und ihre Folgen und Interdependenzen die in den einzelnen Kapiteln beschrieben und dargestellt werden.

Im Rahmen nationaler Umweltvorschriften, die die Entwicklung des Bergbaus und anderer Tätigkeiten mit großen Auswirkungen auf die Umwelt zu regulieren versuchen, generiert der heutige ressourcenabbau bestimmte Vereinbarungen mit den lokalen Gemeinschaften die in der Nähe der Bergbaugebiete leben. Das Fehlen von Vereinbarungen kann zu Konflikten und Widerstand seitens der Gemeinschaften führen. Dadurch könnten bestimmte Bergbauprojekte mit hohen Investitionskosten gestoppt oder verzögert werden. Auf diese Weise werden Institutionen, unternehmerisches Engagement, Partizipation und Widerstand in komplexen Beziehungen miteinander verwoben.

Andererseits haben sich staatliche Institutionen auf die Lebensgrundlagen und die Anerkennung der indigenen Völker ausgewirkt und ihre Organisations- und Widerstandsformen beeinträchtigt. Trotz des kulturellen Verlusts, die die indigenen Völker durch die staatliche Politik des 20. Jahrhunderts erlitten haben, versuchen die Gemeinschaften heute, die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Territoriums und anderer kultureller Praktiken in einem Prozess der Selbstanerkennung wiederherzustellen. Auf diese Weise entsteht ein Prozess der Neuzusammensetzung, in dem neue kulturelle Bedeutungen konstruiert und kreativ performed werden. In diesem Sinne, weißt die Arbeit mehrere Fälle von Konflikten, Verhandlungen und Vereinbarungen auf, um die Konfrontation zwischen indigene Gemeinschaften mit Bergbauunternehmen zu beschreiben und um die komplexe historisch-politische Auffassungen kultureller Differenz und Identität, die durch diese Prozesse entwickelt werden, zu verstehen. Dazu gehören kreative Taktiken und alternative Lebens Projekte die von einigen

Gemeinschaften entwickelt werden, um Unternehmen zum Dialog als gleichberechtigte Akteure herauszufordern.

Die Arbeit integriert auch einen historischen Rahmen in Anbetracht des früheren Salpeterabbaus in der Region und der Entwicklung der Chilenischen Ressourcenpolitik des 20. Jh. mit starkem Einfluss auf die nationale Vorstellung vom Bergbau als grundlegende Wirtschaftstätigkeit für die nationale Entwicklung. Sowohl werden auch die Merkmale des chilenischen Neoliberalismus und die Rolle des Bergbaus anhand einer Extraktivismus Kritik behandelt.

Schlagwörter:

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the environmental, social, and territorial conflicts caused by mining in the Tarapacá region, whose problems are linked to environmental impacts and the general treatment of nature for profit and export. This monograph focuses on the confrontation between the state, indigenous communities, and mining companies and describes the many relationships and interconnections between them in nuanced terms. This work focuses on the various political, economic, institutional, and cultural elements associated with mining development and their consequences and interdependencies, which are described and illustrated in each chapter.

In the context of national environmental regulations that seek to regulate the development of mining and other activities with significant environmental impacts, contemporary resource extraction generates certain agreements with local communities living near mining areas. The lack of agreements can lead to conflict and resistance from communities, and this could stop or delay specific mining projects with high investment costs. This way, institutions, corporate engagement, participation, and resistance become interwoven in complex relationships.

On the other hand, state institutions have impacted the livelihoods and recognition of indigenous peoples, affecting their forms of organization and resistance. Despite the cultural loss suffered by indigenous peoples due to 20th-century state policies, communities today are attempting to restore the original meaning of territory and other cultural practices in the process of self-recognition. In this way emerges a process of recomposition in which new cultural meanings are constructed and creatively performed. In this sense, the work presents several cases of conflict, negotiation, and agreement to describe the confrontation between indigenous communities with mining companies and to understand the complex historical-political deepness of cultural differences and identities developed through these processes. This includes creative tactics and alternative life projects created by some communities to challenge companies to dialogue as equal actors.

The work also integrates a historical framework considering the former saltpeter mining in the region and the development of Chilean resource policies of the 20th century, with a strong influence on the national conception of mining as a fundamental economic activity for national development, discussing at large the characteristics of Chilean neoliberalism and the role of mining.

Keywords:

Indigenous Culture, Mining intervention, Territory, Environmental Impacts, Environmental Assessment Studies, Consultation Processes.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEPAL:	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
CNR:	National Irrigation Corporation
CONAMA:	National Environmental Corporation
COCHILC	Chilean Copper Corporation
O:	
CONADI:	National Indigenous Corporation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DGA:	General Water Directory
ICMM:	International Council of Mining & Metals
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
FPIC:	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
SEA	Environmental Assessment Service
SEIA:	Environmental Assessment System.
SLO:	Social License to Operate
SONAMI:	National Mining Association
WB:	World Bank

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INTRODUCTION

The issue, the context, the aim

Let me start with a short story from an indigenous leader, which sums up part of this book's problem very well. She told me about the state and corporate agents who come to the desert to do their impact studies. She said the desert is a place without much life or meaning for them. In her own words: *"What they don't understand is that, for an indigenous person, there is the pasture in the Altiplano so that their animals can graze. There must be no movement of vehicles or machinery because it will disturb their llamas, goats, sheep, or whatever. But they don't understand. They don't understand that this pile of stones is not just a pile of stones. It has a meaning for a group of people. That's why they come and take it out because, for them, there is nothing. "It's pure desert," they tell you, "there's nothing there."*

This little vignette helps me to introduce a not-so-simple question, when and why does "something" become significant? This anthropological work concerns the conflicts over the various meanings attributed to a damaged environment caused by mining intervention. These narratives of what the desert is and not is, refer to a particular meaning attached to territory from an indigenous perspective. It refers to an overall understanding of land, resources, water, and people. However, much of the conflicts revolve around the fact that from the perspective of state institutions, these resources are "decoupled," becoming tangible and non-tangible resources to control, manage and measure detached from each other.

This research aims to understand the sociopolitical and ecological transformations that mining generates in Tarapacá, Chile. Natural resources are part of the region's history, and the economic importance of mining is the milestone of its weight. It is their reason to be because economic wealth means development, an old dream that crosses Latin-American post-colonial imagination. But development is not everything. Mining activity forges multiple networks that have been generated over the decades. It developed a way of living and perceiving the world and its changes. Therefore it has strong emotional roots that cross people's historical consciences.

In Tarapacá, Mining is part of people's daily lives, and it is breathed in the air of the coast as in the air of the desert. The Atacama Desert, with its millennia-old mineral and nitrate deposits, has been one of the attractors of the international mining sector for more than a hundred years. Some big companies sponsor countless recreational and cultural activities in cities and towns.

These entanglements slowly shape the people's consciousness, impacting their expectations and forging their desire to participate in wealth. But not only... there are important nuances in the opinions of the differences between a company's social responsibilities. While some people tend to put mining in a "big bag" of rather negative perceptions of risks, costs, and impacts, others highlight its more positive effects on regional development, highlighting the economic benefits, supply chains, and employment opportunities. Others also distinguish between the social responsibility policies the three big companies have promoted (some even gave me a sort of ranking of how they think which companies "has done it better").

The root of the conflicts and disagreements is the tensions between economic development and environmental sustainability. This is also a relatively old opposition dramatically renewed in the epoch of Climate Change. Despite the mining industry's constant efforts - factual or discursive - in matters of safety and sustainability, the most critical of mining doubt or do not believe that mining can be done sustainably. They know that there will always be impacts and people suffering from them as has always been. The opposition between development/sustainability opens the field for how territory, water, environmental institutions, citizen participation, and corporate social responsibility are enacted and becomes matters of orientation towards a threatened future. Tsing (2015) has described life in a damaged world and the ruins of life under the ruins of capitalism. This perception of "ruins" resonates with this research when it comes to the fore speak about environmental degradation and ecological consequences of extractivism. I will get into a lengthy discussion on how an already damaged life seeks to generate the living conditions for a livable future. Despite all its promises, mining symbolizes a threat to that future for so many people, which is one of the main reasons people reject mining across the globe.

Much of the literature on extractivism produced in Latin America deals with the different devices of violence deployed by international and corporate capital. Today the extractive frontiers are expanding in the face of sustainability goals and global policies promoting decarbonization and electro-mobility (Flores, et al., 2021). The so-called energy transition is deepening the gaps between the global south and north, with a growing demand for minerals to supply a "green" industry that will help reduce global CO2 emissions. These measures of "environmentally friendly" mining and a supposed commitment of corporate actors to local communities have neither reduced impacts nor conflicts with indigenous communities; quite the contrary: Under the aegis of corporate actors and the flow of capital and investment, new forms of colonialism are forged (Mining Watch, 2020). In this sense, mining becomes part of a

system of over-exploitation of nature that seeks, first and foremost, to enrich capitalist investors. Because what is at stake is not the environment but profit (Sachs, 1999). In this sense, the critique of the dire consequences of mining is also a critique of the global economic system (Antonelli, 2014). Therefore, it is a profoundly political matter. In this sense, mining is not only an expression of the power of capital but as the newer face of neo-colonialism (Pardo, 2012). Mining stands for the opposition between capital and life; it is an oppositional relationship between the financial capital that materialize in extractive projects and the people who live in the places where mining is carried out. The so-called "consensus of the commodities," based on the extraction of raw materials nowadays mainly exported to China, leads to social struggles claiming their place in the territories threatened by mega-mining. The *eco-territorial turn* expresses the broader resistance to the movements of capital.

Svampa argues, "*These socio-territorial networks and movements have been generating a language of valuation of territoriality, opposed or divergent from the eco-efficiency discourse and the developmental vision held by governments and large corporations*" (Svampa, 2012). The conflicts also led to the criminalization of protests and the judicialization of environmental disputes. But for Svampa, the union of ecological activism articulated with indigenous and peasant resistance is significant. In this way, new alliances are forged between local actors in defense of territories and ecological awareness is articulated with indigenous worldviews. In this way, discourses such as "Buen Vivir" or the "Rights of Nature" emerge as responses to the shifting frontiers of extractivism. These imaginaries come from a neo-indigenist and de-colonial perspective that outlines a harsh critique of modernity and capitalism as the main reason and causes for the current climate crisis. This research will close with a more extensive discussion of the new "civilizational horizons" that these proposals entail.

This study is based on the assumption that indigenous communities in Chile are fully empowered despite an apparent "structural" disadvantage predominantly expressed in unequal access to knowledge. Focus on empowerment and creativity leads to abandoning an image of the victimized indigenous, equally harmful as the image of the defenseless "indio" operating in most Latin American countries. An ethnographic gaze allows not only to make the subtle differences between the actors in dispute more complex and visible but also to understand the relationships that are generated and re-made between them. Svampa's and other researchers' descriptions are accurate only to a certain extent since these great oppositions between corporate and local actors leave out of sight precisely the complexities and nuanced differences forged in this context. In conflicts exist a considerable range in-between two irreconcilable

positions. In this research, I will be open to the processes of micro-resistance forged by communities on a day-to-day basis and how they seek to improve their position vis-à-vis corporations. This means that I will open the black-box caricature of David versus Goliath to make visible the margins of movement and the strategies employed by the "powerless. These nuanced differences can be described and traced in the form of "ambivalences" and "contradictions" more than simply "oppositions.

Ambivalence and contradictions

Those who defend mining in Chile are mainly corporate actors, politicians, and the Chilean population who live far away from the mining sectors—people who know little about the caused impacts. Mining has a deep imprint on the national consciousness, as expressed in the well-known slogan "Copper is Chile's salary," which was once defined by Salvador Allende. However, I have not met a single indigenous person who says that mining is good and brings prosperity; everyone knows what mining represents. Despite this open opposition, the resistance is focused and limited to a few communities that do not wish to have any exchange or dialogue with the corporate sector, while others are slowly becoming willing to do so. However, many of the indigenous communities in Tarapacá have negotiated with the companies, and some have already reached an agreement. As we will see in Part II of this work, the same environmental institutions and international regulations point to reach to a consensus among actors as a fundamental tool to avoid future conflicts that could trap mining projects in costly juridical proceedings. These agreements primarily mean financial benefits for the indigenous communities. For the most critical, those communities end up negotiating "sold out" to the mining companies, seduced by the easy access to financial resources in exchange "for a signature." These differences between communities do a lot of damage to the trust and relations between them.

At this point, ambivalence is a basic form of self-reflection and behavior. Describing these processes in terms of ambivalence allows us to move towards less rigid ways to understand the actors' positioning and scope of play in this field of dispute. This descriptive orientation has significant consequences for the ethnographic gaze, as the anthropologist Kieran and Bell comment:

"An orientation toward ambivalence prevents the anthropologist from operating according to fixed positions, which can distort their understanding of social phenomena. Ambivalence means that we have to accept that things are not readily clear, that we need to learn about the conditions under which something may get called an abomination or not, and about how people come to take up variable positions". (Kierans & Bell, 2017, p.37)

Following the ideas of the authors, this work does not recreate the stark polarities that are often drawn when it comes to describing a conflict. Conflicting positions are a clear trend in environmental issues, mainly in the Latin American region where "the people" generally oppose government developmental projects, corporations, or both simultaneously. I will show that ambivalence and contradiction are operating in the ways of thinking and acting in conflict situations. Following David Berliner's suggestion: *"It is worth investigating how actors themselves live with and justify their contradictory thoughts and behaviors"* (Berliner et al, 2016: p.5-6) . However, contradiction is one thing, and ambivalence is another. It is useful here to briefly define both to avoid confusion. contradiction -while an essential aspect of Marxist and Freudian theory -has to do with the opposition of two mutually contradictory elements, as in the case of behavior that contradicts what has been said. But ambivalence turns out to be more complex than contradiction. Ambivalence –related to contradiction- can be understood as an emotional attitude in which contradictory impulses coexist. Although there may be a contradiction, e.g., of two simultaneous opposing feelings, ambivalence shows that these feelings do not need to be "resolved," staying present as part of daily life narratives¹.

Taking different cases, I will try to show that sometimes even radical opposition is not followed by acts of protest but by forms of compromise between these critical actors and the corporations they criticize. The actor's criticism needs to be addressed in this research, in fact they are taken seriously, and therefore it is also seeking to understand why ambivalence seems to be one of the most recurrent attitudes. Although there is an opposition or the often-mentioned idea that mining does not bring the benefits or wealth, it promises. What it leaves for the regions are social and environmental impacts; therefore, mining is not desired. However, given the years of experience of the people I spoke with in knowing how environmental regulations and institutions work, they believe they have little power to oppose these developments. They feel that the state is not supporting the people and that environmental laws and regulations favor corporations. In this sense, our research commitment is to describe how the ambivalent attitudes

¹ Psychoanalysis also has an important reading regarding a theory of "subject," but we will not go into that detail here.

of the actors become integral to a process of dialogue and part of concrete negotiations and agreements.

But ambivalence is not only a manifestation of people's practices and concerns; corporations can also have ambivalent behaviors. Corporations have similarly undergone a discursive shift that places them in an increasingly tricky situation concerning their "social engagement" on one side and their "destructive activity" on the other. But in this process, the auto-proclaimed representation of their mining activity tends to undermine the harmful effects of risks and possible impacts and highlight their positive value and social responsibility.

Aim of this research

This study focuses on the ecological and territorial conflicts caused by mining in the Tarapacá region. Parts of the local population in Chile and Latin America are not mainly resisting individual environmental impacts, but more fundamentally, the extractivist exploitation of nature, which is connected to a problematic change in the local, regional, social, and moral order and expressed in elite formation, capital outflow, landscape change, value change, and cultural loss. But the evil lies not only in the environmental consequences of mining but in the entire profit- and export-oriented treatment of nature (Smith, 2007) and its socio-ecological consequences that are being denounced.

The three main actors involved in this process are the mining companies, the state, and the indigenous people. This monograph deals with how these three actors confront each other, identifying and describing the subtle differences and disagreements. Therefore, I will describe the multiple dissimilarities and entanglements between and among them and other actors.

This work has a relational logic, focused on the various political, economic, institutional, and cultural elements connected to mining. These connections and entanglements will be outlined through the different chapters. To mention only some of them, such as the role of environmental institutions in the legitimacy of mining projects, the transformation of a social responsibility policy from the corporate sector, the position and weight of citizen and indigenous consultation, and the historical change of the indigenous culture that has maintained an important contact with the mining sector.

In this context, this research's first and principal aim *is to describe and understand the multiple entanglements and connections forged by the mining activity in the region of Tarapacá*. To reach this objective, *I will first describe and analyze the intertwining of mining's social, economic, moral, and ecological consequences in Tarapacá*. Secondly, *the research aims to trace the 'cosmological' and 'ontological' differences expressed in socio-environmental conflicts*. And third, *give an account of the interaction between actors, institutions, and law in the context of Chilean extractivism*.

Methodological frame, fieldwork, and situatedness

My approach to Tarapacá has been of a certain familiarity. Although I already knew the city of Iquique and some towns in the interior, (however, it was the first time I was going to study this region). I naturally use Spanish to approach people in the field, a language I feel comfortable with. Before I travel to Germany to begin formally with my Ph.D., I had my first pre-fieldwork visit in March 2018. I stayed some weeks in Tarapacá to explore the field and make some first contacts. A year later, in 2019, I did my first three-month field phase while staying in Iquique. From there, I traveled to different parts of the region, although most interviews took place in the coastal town of Iquique and Alto Hospicio.

The contacts I had made earlier in 2018 helped me find people with some mining experience in the region. It was fundamental in my first days the support I received from a person who, at the time, worked in the SEA and helped me with the contacts with the communities and their advisors. Using the "snowball effect," I constantly broaden my range of contacts and people to interview. In this way, one contact led me to another. In parallel, I began recording interviews with state agents (CONADI, DGA, SEA) and having conversations with the "community relations" officers of the large mining companies. Indigenous leaders were the most interested in sharing their experiences and analysis. I expressly say "analysis" because many of them developed a historical perspective on the mining intervention to interpret the place of indigenous culture in this process.

At the beginning of fieldwork, I thought I would encounter some difficulties, imagining that there would be more reluctance to discuss these issues with an outsider because of the "social burden" of mining. Happily, my experience was very different. People were amiable, and I experienced more distrust with the workers of the mining companies, who were not so sure to

want to talk with me. One day, being with a very talkative person who could speak for hours on various topics took me to another person with the same ability. The tiredness I felt from the constant effort of four hours of "active listening" was incredible. I had to flee the place. I was not capable of listening any longer. People were happy to share their stories with me. In some way, I was lucky.

I conducted about 50 in-depth interviews² lasting between one and two hours. Most of them were recorded, and all of them were transcribed by myself. However, during my fieldwork, after my fifth interview, I put aside my question sheet. I listened freely to what the person wanted to tell me, but by being more open, without directing the interview so much, a number of related topics came up in the conversations. This helped me to raise issues related to mining, such as impacts, indigenous participation, the role of environmental institutions, and Impact Assessment, a. o.

Next, I outlined a brief description of the interviewed persons.

<i>Actors</i>	<i>Number of interviews</i>	<i>Places</i>
Indigenous leaders belonging to an ethnic group and indigenous community of the Tarapacá Region	20	Iquique, Alto Hospicio, Pica
Advisors allies of indigenous communities and part of non-profit organizations;	9	Iquique-Santiago de Chile
Farmers from the Pica oasis area	5	Pica

² Before each interview, I speak about the purpose and aim of the research and ask if they had a problem. I record the conversation and the use of their real name in the study. Only one person asked to remain anonymous, and two did not want me to record the interview but allowed me to take notes of what they said. Regarding their names, I have used synonyms for each person who collaborated in this research to protect their identity and integrity. However, Diane Duclos has argued that more than anonymity alone is needed to mean that one can care for collaborating actors immediately. But in this research, it is necessary to maintain anonymity to prevent any problems that any of the actors may have said. (see Duclos, 2017)

Agents of State institutions such as CONADI (2), DGA (1), and SEA (2)	5	Iquique
Professionals connected to environmental nonprofit organizations (Santiago)	3	Santiago
Agents working for a mining company in the community relations department (Collahuasi & TECK-QB)	2	Iquique and Pica
Workers of the municipality sector of Pica	2	Pica
Miners (one of the sub-contractor sectors and other directly contracted)	2	Via zoom
The Archeologist of the regional museum in Iquique	1	Via Zoom

Other significant sources of information for this research have been a large amount of literature on extractivism, socio-environmental conflicts, and impact assessment. This research has a robust interdisciplinary approach regarding the literature, which varied from cultural and social anthropology, political ecology, critical geography, STS, and other theoretical fields related to social science. Other significant sources have been the digital media, such as national newspapers with opinion columns, reports, and interviews on issues related to the research issue, in addition to information from environmental NGOs and government agencies such as the DGA or the SEA or international institutions such as ILO and WB. However, this work does not include a unified theoretical framework due to the disparity of topics and issues. Moreover, each Chapter presents a particular theoretical approach to the subject under discussion.

I stayed in contact with many interviewed persons during the last few years. During the pandemic, I could continue some interviews online, which allows me to have more than one in-depth interview going deeper into specific topics and following the state of conflicts, as the case of the people of the area of indigenous development Jiwasa Oraje from Matilla. I had three conversations (2018, 2019, 2020) with them about the state of the conflict with the TECK-

Quebrada Blanca Company. I also describe the development of the negotiations of the Chusmiza community regarding their claim to their ancestral territory.

This study was constructed as a multi-sited ethnography for practical and methodological reasons. As many indigenous people no longer reside in their communities of origin, most of them live in Iquique and Alto Hospicio, which led me to have my headquarters in Iquique, traveling from there to other places. As I gradually began to get closer to different people, I slowly began to get access to their problems and concerns regarding mining. I became more aware of the subtle differences between communities regarding their needs and aspirations. The in-depth interviews and the testimonial narratives are the primary empirical sources of this research. Participant observation has been limited to my experience at three public presentations where mining projects were presented and discussed with the interested public. These public presentations were important moments where the various actors, mainly State officials, corporate actors, advisors, and indigenous people, met and discussed the projects (two of them are described in this research).

My gratitude to all the people who collaborated with this research is enormous. Without their consent and willingness to share their views, my understanding process could not have gone far or deep. That is also why I prefer to speak of collaboration rather than using the common anthropological jargon of "key informants." Naturally, each Chapter of this work has its own "protagonists" based on crucial narratives of different indigenous spoke persons. It would take too long to refer to each one and their role for each Chapter, so I only want to mention the tremendous help of all the people who shared with great honesty their extensive analyses, of which this work is the fruit.

This research is far from ethnographic work in the "classical" sense, based mainly on directly observing everyday situations. Unfortunately, I could not conduct my second phase of fieldwork due to the pandemic. As already mention, people's stories are this work's primary source of knowledge, which is also expressed in developing the narrative style. In various parts of this work, textual quotations will appear, quotes that have been translated from Spanish into English. A narrative strategy that allows me to develop my own narrative style by commenting on these stories but emphasizing the importance of letting the actors themselves speak. In some instances, I paraphrase, mixing my account with those of the people, but in almost all chapters, a variety of quotes appears.

Unfortunately, I could not travel to the region between December 2020 and March 2021 because of the pandemic (Iquique was declared "in quarantine" for most of my stay). So I had to rethink how I approached the people for my second fieldwork phase. I spent three months in Santiago trying to move forward. I hired an assistant from the Pica sector, who helped me to increase my "data." So I could realize more interviews from a distance, by Zoom, WhatsApp, or phone. Back in Berlin, I continued to hold discussions via Zoom. The pandemic disadvantaged me in terms of my field phase, but on the other hand, the tremendous social upheaval that Chile was going through favored me in different ways. From time to time, exciting analyses, opinion columns, or interviews with people from the mining and indigenous worlds appeared in the media³. In this sense, the "media" became another essential source of information that gave a significant account of what was happening and what was being discussed in the country. Some of these questions and discussions have been incorporated into my work to complement the construction of the arguments.

Some reflections on data management

After the transcription of interviews, the data were codified through the software program Qualitative Data Management Atlas. Ti. Codification is a never-ending process that requires constant effort to make sense of the collected data. The codification process was key to the writing process. Grouping the codes permitted me to get into specific issues such as "water," "territory," "indigenous cosmovisión," and "consultation processes," a. o. on the ground and starting from the people's narratives. In the end, this "grouping" of different but related codes has guided the writing process of the various chapters of this research. This process of coding and "grouping codes" in an ongoing process was accompanied by writing "memos." In those, I tried to relate the empirical issues of the field to the literature dealing with the topics addressed.

As Codes allow you to provide a label for narrative elements with "something" in common, the difficulty is more on handling the boundaries and making a cut between one and other issues. The codifying process provides an order which leaves out the context in which that "data" was produced or communicated. Reading a whole interview or a code composed of various

³ Many exciting interviews were held with corporate actors in the mining sector because of the discussion about a new royalty, and the interviews with indigenous were held in the context of the constitutional assembly regarding the issue of water distribution and rights of nature.

interviews is different, and the new mediated access to "that reality" is so different. To handle this imbalance between ethnographic description and discourse analysis -somehow implicit in the constitution of codes during the writing process -in some cases, I have to reread the whole interview to grasp the context in which it takes place. Interestingly, this gives me a glimpse of the limitation of the coding process. Coding is beneficial if you manage massive data, but creating a new one takes "data" out of context. This "new context" made for this work consists of reconstructing the various elements at play.

For this reason, throughout this work, I have become increasingly aware of the importance of the order in which codes, i.e., different themes, are brought into contact, constructing a "meaning" through a semiotic process that builds a "relational understanding." That affecting the order in which different codes are presented and connected probably affects the narrative. The particular order and narrative presented here are intended to make the story understandable and easy to follow. The criterion is to build plausibility regarding the narrative, despite the various elements shown throughout the chapters.

Bourdieu urges us to think relationally about reality as constituted in the various relations. Therefore -according to him- we need to build a coherent relationship system that yields real questions answered throughout the research (Bourdieu, 2006, p.268). I am aware of the possible methodological issues this means. Codes allow us to gather under a label, a relatively simple exercise, but this involves a methodological problem regarding the "parts" and the "whole."

In other words, it is constructing a "study object" or a "case" by defining the field. The object of study here is clearly defined as the impacts of mining in a region of Chile. However, it exceeds its object, as it narrates a story that can be situated in other relatively "wider" objects, such as "neoliberalism," "nature-culture relations," etc.

The chapters delve into several relations and entanglements between the actors that define the field. From the triple constellation (State-Communities-Corporations) unfolds a diversity of other actors who come to make the whole narrative more complex. Given that the definition of a field requires knowledge of the various elements at play that define it, and above all, as we can follow an infinitive number of interconnected components, it requires the need to avoid this trap, which we call "holistic."⁴ In other words, an infinite number of connections can be made

⁴ The first time I heard about a "holistic trap" was in a talk by Professor Jonas Nielsen at an IRITHESys members lecture (2021). This made me think about the scope of my work.

and thus get lost in the tangle of data without any "objective justification" as to why these connections should be made and not others, which gives the whole process a particular arbitrary character. I am aware of that trap.

Dorothy Smith points out in her book *The conceptual practices of power* that sociological relational thinking can forge innumerable relationships without formal constraints or intrinsic reason that these connections go one way or another. She called this mystical connection (Smith, 1990: p.49) due to the processes of abstraction that social science irremediably entails. However, her reading criticizes the idea of an underlying structural order that continually operates in sociology, which could be applied to my coding process. They should alert us to the relatively arbitrary character of the resulting relational approach, which is one of the problematical aspects of the coding process.

Positioned truths

Objectivity is much more complex than a simple assumption, especially in the social sciences. As the Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana (1997) said, it becomes an argument to convince others of the truth of your idea. But the exercise of putting on paper a reflexive form of my own field experience, the reflections that emerge from it are situated in a theoretical context and a historical-political debate, which conditions my view and analysis of the issues proposed here. This does not mean applying a grounded theory but recognizing the situated character of the analyses and descriptions of this research. Instead, it is a matter of putting theory and empirical description of the observed in tension, recognizing the inherently theoretical character involved in observing, describing, or coding (Hirschauer, 2008).

As already mentioned, given the fragmentary nature of this monograph and the diverse themes it addresses, I decided not to offer a unitary theoretical framework that would attempt to subsume the various themes and issues presented here into a limited number of debates. The theoretical problems in this research are developed in their exclusive closeness and relevance according to the empirical description. In other words, each part and sometimes Chapter provides a particular historical-political theoretical framework.

I am not interested in telling an objective truth because I do not believe there is only one truth or reality to be objectively reflected or represented (a process that Heidegger called an "image

of the world"). But I am not a postmodernist either. Beyond the socio-philosophical discussions, this entails (see Haraway, 1995; Latour, 2007; Shapin & Shaffer, 2017), I intend to give an account of a melting pot of different stories, which can express different things, that even can contradict each other. Therein lies their value as stories, their contradictory and ambivalent character reflected in the nuanced differences and multiple layers of meaning of the moral and ethical-political conceptions. That is how that story catches up with the Other other's stories in a damaged world... To say that this research is composed of different stories does not mean renouncing a scientific inquiry but abandoning the claim to objective knowledge free of bias. In this way, I understand myself as an embodied subject determined by historical circumstances that led me to be what I am. It leads me to make certain decisions, to read or quote particular literature, and to take a specific ethical and political position on the issues presented. It reflects the situated character of this study and the author. Alvin Gouldner makes an interesting point: *"If every social theory is thus a tacit theory of politics, every theory is also a personal theory, inevitably expressing coping and infused with the personal experience of the individual who authors it."* (Gouldner, 1970, p. 40). This powerful and fruitful tension between experience and theory underlies any process of knowledge production. Similar is Hirschauer's argument which acknowledges the situated and empirical nature of theory. He argues for a creative approach where both dimensions -experience and theory -, separated by the positivist scientific practice, are placed in creative tension, occupying different registers, generating particular mobilities in interpreting data and texts, and tensing the same theoretical material through which one tries to understand reality (Hirschauer, 2008,176-177).

Acknowledging one's own bias with transparency can be an essential step towards situatedness and reflexivity of the own position not only as *homo academicus* but as a human being. Following Bourdieu again, the idea is not simply to objectify the biographical specificities of the researcher but also to get aware of the possible biases that constitute a particular theoretical gaze. And this vision would also allow us to break with the illusion of the "direct" experience that we obtain through fieldwork, which we then believe we can "faithfully" represent in the writing process (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 366-367). Recognizing the place I occupy and the place of this research is not a claim to "see everything being nowhere"; quite the contrary: as Haraway reminds us, only a partial view promises an objective perspective (Haraway, 199, p. 316). This means acknowledging that the viewpoints of the subjugated are not innocent either.

As Haraway says, objectivity cannot have a fixed vision, and it is immersed in the struggles of seeing the world. This research also recognizes its place within the struggles of meanings, in

which "the real" is intertwined with the production of positioned truths and narratives. Adopting a narrative style is an *ethical stance*, transforming the rather instrumental use of informants, "*whose chief role is to spew cultural data for the anthropologist into subjects with complex lives and a range of opinions*" (Narayan, 1993, p.681). To recognize narratives in their testimonial value is to situate my interlocutors in historical and sociological contexts that give them all the meaning and value as situated subjects with situated knowledge. In this sense, we have to deal not only with "partial truths" but with "positioned truths" (Abu-Lughod et al, 1991, p.53). This also means acknowledging our position as researchers in multi-contextual and multi-textual relationships. It is not the interest in the truth, but "*that we do want to know about how things work, how our world is put together, how things happen to us as they do*" (Smith, 1990, p. 34).

I intend to situate this work and myself transparently to contribute to an emancipatory science that seeks to critique a "master narrative" that continually cancels out the presence and knowledge of other "embodied" subjects. This position is further evidenced in the intended use of specific critical categories elaborated within the colonial and post-colonial theory and in the critical inspection of the clash between different knowledge systems. We also become part of the struggles, as our anthropologist work is embedded in power asymmetries. Therefore, I agree with Stenger's suggestion for the need to civilize the way scientists think of themselves (here applied to myself) "*that is to separate them from hegemonic order words such as rationality, objectivity, and9 universality.*" (Stengers, 2018, p. 87). By breaking this duality between hegemonic knowledge and local knowledge, there can be room for an *ecology of knowledge*, as proposed by some decolonial theorists . These tensions are reflected and part of this work.

Building reciprocity

Michel De Certeau once reflects on Levi-Strauss taking a seat in the French academy while the Bororos, whom he studied so much, slowly faced their collective death. Acknowledging this situation led him to write: "*The Intellectuals are still borne on the back of the common people*" (De Certeau, 1988, p. 25). During the research process, I have been looking for ways to make sense of forms of reciprocity as an important methodological aspect and an ethical choice regarding "the back of common people." So I wanted to make the people themselves participants in terms of possible criticisms and opinions they may have about my work, my interpretations, and my analysis. So came up with the idea to organize a workshop, bring

together the people I previously interviewed, and show them some of my preliminary results. This also allowed me to subject my work to their critical scrutiny.

As my second fieldwork had to be postponed several times due to the pandemic, I finally completed the workshop online on August 2020 at 5 pm German time. My presentation lasted about 35 minutes, in which I talked about the various topics and aspects addressed in my research to this day. I present my work in progress through the three articulating axes (water, consultations, and territory) that have allowed me to enter the various data organized through the codification process. We were about nine people, mainly indigenous spoke persons and leaders. Some of them I did not know (this is how I met Patricia, a sociologist, and farmer from Pica with a particular interest in community irrigation practices, who later became my research assistant and friend). The assistants listened to what I presented to them with a very respectful attitude. The comments from the attendants were generally positive and welcomed this type of instance. Above all, an indigenous woman from an Aymara community in Chusmiza said she was pleased to have been part of this presentation because it gave her a lot to think about her life. The fact that she could see things more in perspective also showed her the need to generate alternatives. Since the tone of the presentation and the comments were rather critical about the impacts caused by mining, she said that we should not only criticize but also search for ways to address these issues. Today this activity was more of a ratification of commitment because I wanted to do things differently.

Another form to engage reciprocity from my side has been sharing some of the chapters of this study. These were previously translated into Spanish and sent to some interviewed people. Unfortunately, I haven't had many responses from people. Some have agreed to send me comments. However, it is unusual for researchers to share their chapters in progress in this way. I have shared some with my assistant Patricia who is also a researcher. She always tells me how grateful she is that I share my texts. But beyond her responses, I am satisfied with simply doing it. I don't expect anything. Even as I feel with the people of Chusmiza, with whom I also shared the Chapter that deals precisely with the history of that community, they have told me that they like my way of approaching and interpreting their story. That's enough to put my mind at rest and reassure me that I am not writing nonsense.

Since it is common for anthropologists to give little back to the community, to hand over the studies generated with the help of the communities, it is also because so much criticism of social research, mainly from indigenous people, has been articulated. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's famous

book *Decolonizing Methodologies* begins by referring to the "bad word" that has signified "research" for so many indigenous communities (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, XI). I was already aware that I did not want to repeat the same pattern, which summed up very well in the words of an Aymara woman who once said she was fed up with the "epistemic extractivism" of social researchers (her words). I understood this critique that we should stop using people as "resources of data" to be extracted. If today it is a valuable resource (Gorz, 2004), we should no longer "extract" without giving back at least something useful for the people and communities (Kovach, 2009).

As social researchers, we have an invaluable entry point to people's experiential intimacy. Undoubtedly, many reasons influence this sometimes instrumental use that we make of people and their knowledge. This may occur because of time reasons, academic obligations, deadlines, writing applications, etc. But this finally refers to the crude reality of *epistemic extractivism* as an expression of how the same competitiveness has permeated so deeply into academic circles themselves (Hamm, 2013). In this sense, the instrumentalization of knowledge and people is just one more face of intellectual capitalism or an "instrumental reason" that sees knowledge as a mere instrument (Horkheimer, 2007). As researchers, we are part of neoliberal productivism, which also permeates academia, similar to the individual entrepreneur who seeks to maximize his knowledge to improve his performance and competitiveness (Foucault, 2008; Gorz, 2004). As social scientists, we highlight injustices at close quarters but fail in our moral appeasement, thinking that we contribute something to the world by giving a "voice to the voiceless." But as Tuhiwai Smith and others said so persistently, we only focus on our well-being and success.

Ethnography is just another word for the acknowledgment of other people's knowledge. Incorporating another "dimension" of critical inquiry would strengthen the construction of *matters of facts*, *matters of concern*, or *matters of care* (Latour, 2005; Puig de la Casa, 2011). Yet, these "matters" are still deeply rooted in Western thought and part of a particular epistemological gaze, and it outlines a critique of positivism as a leading research paradigm. However, these approaches, mainly well-intentioned, must be revised for the moral and political commitment necessary to approach indigenous knowledge, rituals, and customs more transparently and honestly (Todd, 2016).

My approach as a non-indigenous critical researcher resonates with these thoughts and ideas. Scientists have not been "objective" or "a-political" in approaching other cultures. And we know that scientists have become accomplices of the colonization process, studying, categorizing,

transforming, describing, destroying, and labeling other people, their environment, and knowledge (DeLoughrey, 2012; Salomon, 2008; Whitt, 2009; Saini, 2020). However, applying specific qualitative research methods can break the circle of epistemic violence and colonialism (Denzin et al, 2008).

Perhaps today, it is no longer enough to hand over a paper, a thesis, or a monograph to the "studied" communities and people. Is this meant for them? Can they make any positive use of it? I think the mentioned workshop was at least a try to give back and build something in common "with them" (Levine-Rasky, 2015). The idea of giving "feedback" to the people I talk with also is a try to enhance my "own" cognitive processes by reflexively blending and illuminating field experience and theory (Hemm, 2013); at the same time as my knowledge is put to the test by people who know and experienced these processes first hand. In this sense, it is possible to generate another kind of collaboration as part of a research ethic that takes these people's concerns seriously. In the end, this situation and discussion of the social role of research need to put us aware of our responsibility to avoid the continuation of neo-colonialist practices that, whether we like it or not, traverse the history of our discipline (Abu-Lughod et al., 1991).

Nancy Scheper-Hughes has made critical remarks on *borderless anthropology*, a kind of postmodern fancy built in the language of deconstruction, culture as text, and other postmodernist devices. Meanwhile, borders are still so real as the violence and dispossession they forge (1995, p. 417). This idea has been articulated according to anthropologists' difficult position in respecting morality and politics (D'Andrade, 1995; Kuper, 1994);. According to Scheper-Hughes, *the primacy of the ethical* calls anthropologist to make clear stands about the violence they observe in their fields; they have to be made "*accountable of what they see or fail to see*" (Scheper-Huges, 1995, p.437) regarding the structural physical, or symbolical violence lived by the people. Those people usually open the door and their hearts to foreigners to talk about their fears, aspirations, and anxieties. However, the stories described in this work are not only about loss and mourning but also about the efforts of the people trying to improve their living conditions as they seek to deploy every possible strategy to make themselves heard, defending their rights as human beings. So, the theoretical lens is focused on domination, power, exploitation, resistance, and creativity. Strictly political aspects –such as law, institutions, and consultation processes- are relevant in this research; on the other side, "pure" economic elements -i.e., incentives, production, distribution, exportation- are present but not predominant for the development of the argument. In other words, the focus of interest is more on the political and institutional instances and their sociocultural linkages than on the exploitation and export

of the mining resources and the economic distribution. However, given the communities' requirements and motives to undertake their resistance-collaboration strategies, these economic elements are considered.

The different studying groups forged by my colleagues and me during the pandemic helped me to look for and be open to other truly "democratic" ways of returning the knowledge generated. Not only understanding it from empty performativity but also showing the degree of positioning as a researcher and human political being. For this reason, I take very seriously the ideas commonly expressed as decolonial and indigenous methodologies (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2009) regarding some reciprocity standards. Although this study cannot be considered part of a "decolonial" research program, it does not mean I do not share the ethical guidelines expressed in this type of research. According to Margareth Kovach, guidelines for analysis based on indigenous methodologies must start in the early phase of research design, involving the community in constructing a research design from the beginning, taking into account their needs (and not necessarily the needs of the researcher). In concrete terms, this means that the community becomes a co-researcher with decision-making power over the research to be carried out. My study would not fall into this category because it must be carried out collaboratively. Still, gradually in the work-in-process, I became aware of how important it is - at least - to incorporate some of these elements gradually⁵. Nevertheless, this research comes close to what Joerg Niewöhner once called "practices of co-elaborating," which *"help to diversify existing notions of reflexivity and critique, thereby broadening the analytical spectrum and adding interpretative degrees of freedom."* (Niewöhner, 2016, p. 82)

My collaborative work

Focusing on such a contested issue as mining in a neoliberal context generates moments of circumstantial activism (Marcus, 1995), which led to various forms of collaboration in which I have been involved in supporting the causes of some regional actors. It makes sense here to relate to the "circumstantial" character, as Marcus calls it, because my collaboration has been

⁵ During 2021- and 2022, we have been discussing these issues in the sessions of the "Decolonial Reading group" and in some of the sessions of the Politics and Ethics seminar (HU-Winter Term 2021-2022), as the application of these participatory and collaborative methodologies. The Ethics Course and the Reading Group have been incredibly invaluable in discussing and deepening issues of positionality, de-coloniality, feminism, collaborative research, co-production, and research ethics.

subject and limited to geographic distance and the effects of the pandemic. However, my openness to these forms of engagements is due to building means of reciprocity.

The first form of collaboration related to this study occurred shortly after my 2019 fieldwork once I returned to Berlin. A couple of consultants with whom we became friends asked me to review the Collahuasi mining company expansion project concerning the "human groups," i.e., the indigenous groups in the area. My friends were advising a small community living near the Huasco Lagoon. I constructed a document that gave an account of the main shortcomings of the impact study regarding indigenous livelihoods and the possible impacts of mining intervention on it. My comments on the Environmental Assessments Study or EIA were then uploaded to the Online environmental assessment system platform. This experience taught me a lot about the *modus operandi* of how communities and their assessors seek to respond to Impact Studies and how "the system" work regarding written documents uploaded by the communities or natural persons. It was the first time collaboration became an essential theme for my position and situatedness as a researcher.

I also entered into a more intense collaborative relationship with one of the indigenous leaders in the Huara area. He has been very active in the indigenous consultation process initiated by the government of Sebastian Piñera to reformulate the national mining policy on indigenous issues (Donoso, Política Minera. 2050 "Pueblos indígenas"). In this context, I wrote and shared some documents based on my research that reflect the relationship between indigenous people and mining companies. This process failed to materialize due to widespread opposition from various indigenous groups in Tarapacá.

The second moment of collaboration with this indigenous leader was in the context of the constituent assembly and the drafting of norms on indigenous territories and natural resources. The leader sought to influence the discussion on standards by introducing a proposal regarding the permanent sovereignty of natural resources in indigenous territory. However, the constitutional assembly rejected the proposal. However, I am highly grateful for his generosity in sharing his vision, experience, and analysis of the historical moment that indigenous people were facing.

Researching open systems

Kim Fortun has developed methodological insights on constructing a study design, using the term *open systems* to discuss how the ethnographic endeavor links different levels of analysis and dimensions of social, political, economic, and legal life. Her ideas apply to this study, allowing us to figure out and connect different empirical elements. "*An open system analysis conjures and temporalities its "objects," both synchronically and diachronically, recognizing diverse forces of change and diverse ways change happens*" (Fortun, 2009, p. 170). Many of the problems discussed in this research concern the historical continuities and discontinuities in the relationship between the Chilean state, the indigenous population, and the large mining corporations. These relations are historically imbued, constituted through failed acts, conflicts, and traumatic events that forge the people's historical consciousness. In this sense, this study is in line with *dark anthropology*, as Sheryl Ortner (2016) calls it, as it seeks to understand precisely those issues that define how life is recomposed under the violent force of neoliberalism and the reactions that this provokes. By including a historical perspective, we consider the more "recent" national history of the last 40 years – as it is the dictatorship and neo-liberal transformation of the Chilean economy. But we also consider a more time "distant" regional history, such as the *Pacific War*, the process called *Chileanisation*, and the rise and fall of saltpeter mining. This work explores the interplay between change and permanence, social structures, and transformation. This is especially important regarding the current historical situation in Chile, where so many things are happening (which we could characterize as a kind of new "transitional" process). After thirty years of neoliberalism in Chile, it seems to be a growing anti-neoliberal tendency across the society (which, however, I would doubt to define as "anti-capitalist") and which, in specific ways, conditions the search for new socio-economic horizons (as the permanent discussion of the different effects of the economy based on raw material extraction). The chapters move between the "national," the "global," and the "local." as a way to understand these accelerated processes of social change and social upheaval. But it also takes into consideration the corporate discourse. For example, in the case of the description of the discursive change of the corporations about their CSR in Chapter Three, these discourses fit within the local context in which community relations are forged to avoid possible conflicts (Welker, 2014). The reception of these discourses changes according to the different realities the local communities live and their experiences with mining corporations (Tsing, 2005).

In his classical paper on multi-sited ethnography, Marcus argues, "*The global is an emergent dimension of arguing about the connection among sites in a multi-sited ethnography*" (Marcus,

1995, 99). It allowed us to relate different empirical elements geographically distributed along the region under study. My fieldwork complications due to the pandemic urged me to forge other research mechanisms like those already described, trying to take the strength of the weakness. As Bourdieu (2006) once said, science is too important to confuse scientism with rigidity. In this sense, I relate aspects that, at first sight, do not seem to be so closely related. To move in and out between different geographical areas and communities, showing, in this way, the diversity of connections and transformations generated by mining, describing the multiple knots held together.

Furthermore, given that indigenous communities, corporations, or the state can be considered homogeneous entities, this research focuses on the differences between these "entities" and actors. Therefore, it focused on communities' interests and strategies, how companies approach communities, and how the state and its agents interpret, enact, and enforce the given regulations. In this way, multi-sited also refers to the diversity of actors in dispute.

This approach was conceived as a fieldwork strategy because I focus on more than one community or locality. If I had stayed in one community, I would have learned more about how communities try to make sense of resistance/collaboration processes and learn about their daily life. Still, I would have lost sight of the different positioning of local communities and how they situate themselves in this process. In this way, what was "lost" was a sense of "dense description" (Geertz, 1983) of the day-to-day community life, -a more classical ethnographical approach-. Still, I tried to "gain" a broader view of the various entanglements mining generates in the territories under its influence. The cases will be presented in their specificity, highlighting their sometimes fragmentary, continuous, and discontinuous character according to the conflicts outlined in this work (negotiations, impacts, territory, water, etc.), but without necessarily developing a comparative view that puts them in contact (Marcus, 1995, 102)

This study follows the conflict or, better said, the different forms of how conflicts are enacted. Focus on conflicts allowed me to delve into their "shades of grey" (Ocakli et al., 2017), manifesting as disagreements, rejections, or collaborative practices. This work deal with conflicts, engagement, and collaboration in multiple forms: Farmers in Pica concerned by the water extraction of mining (outlined in Chapter Nine), the different forms of collaboration as the Aymara community of Cancosa, the Aymara community of Matilla, and the Quechua community of Quipizca (presented as "cases" in Chapter ten). The critique and contested knowledge are permanent elements in the processes of citizen consultation (chapters two, four,

and five) in which I outlined the question of the weight of the indigenous people's claims as active participants in the evaluation of environmental impact studies in the context of governmental institutions.

How stories build different worlds

This work concerns a long history of unfulfilled promises of false expectations of development and welfare. This research's vital place narratives have in their contesting and ambivalent character. Narratives that emerge within the territories intervened by mining activity which is also those most exposed to its constant promises. John Law commented that people had been continually trained in the art of allegory – the art of giving another meaning to what is being said and to what is silenced- that is, the ability to read between the lines, to figure out other possibilities of what is being expressed (Law, 2004, 89-90)— conceiving ambiguities and ambivalences are essential messages of unexpected reality. It presupposes the existence of a plurality of possible worlds that are not exhausted by the authoritative act that expresses a "truth" that tells us something about a single and given reality.

Technical and scientific knowledge plays a predominant role in this work, as they appear as a way of prescribing a singular truth of a unique world. The logical consequence of this particular truth is that *"it tries to deny the possibilities for non-coherent depiction offered by allegory"* (Law, 2004, 92). An issue that will be exposed in the different discussions between techno-scientific and local knowledge, as in the case of indigenous consultations in response to Impact Assessments (Chapters Four and Five) and conflicts over the impacts on water tables due to mining extraction. Moreover, there is an effort to follow a line of argumentation that gives room even for "incoherence" of particular discourses, given the situation of some indigenous groups which manifest their intention to resist while negotiating with the companies. I intend to break with the separation of two apparently opposed acts –negotiation vs. resistance- in trying to show the ambivalent situation of indigenous people. They often have to deal with the expectations of other indigenous or non-indigenous people who judge their collaborative action as a "contradiction in terms" according to their "indigenusness." To grasp this situation, the concept of *articulation* by Stuart Hall is an essential component of my theoretical approach (Chapter Seven). Following a decolonial perspective, i.e., a critique of the different levels of exoticizing expectations to which indigenous groups are subjected. So the emergence of

contradictory and ambivalent discourses by the actors themselves ultimately lies in justifying an action that puts these same groups in a deeply uncomfortable situation.

Moreover, the people I have talked with try to build their future in the face of an institutional framework, law, and capitalist economy, by enacting different modes of livability and life projects (Blaser, 2014). Indigenous people adapt to an institutional environment that is strange, bleak, flexible, and manageable. Much of this work concerns ambiguity and ambivalence as two expressions of living in a world - the Chilean world of institutions, laws, and politics- of prescriptions and rules defined by Chilean politics and state. Decisions become political decisions. People reinterpret their actions in the narratives, blurring the line between morality and politics. If morality helps us to understand the evaluation of certain principles and practices that operate in the social world (Fassin, 2008, 334), the expressly "political" has to do with the intended use of a discourse that founds a choice, a way of life and practice. It gives an account of the complex character of the discourses and practices of indigenous people and their use of the institutional and legal tools available to them. These will appear and be discussed throughout this research as the complex relationship between resistance, contestation, negotiation, and collaboration.

A few words about Chile and me

I was born in Hamburg, where I spent most of my childhood. My Chilean father was a political refugee in West Germany, and my German mother was a human rights activist. In 1985 we traveled to Chile for the first time. My mother was very involved in defending the human rights of the dictatorship's political prisoners. I was four years old when we first traveled to Chile with only a few memories of that time, like the earthquake and the many military men in the streets. While I stayed with my relatives, my mother visited the public prison, where she talked to many political prisoners. Later she also published a book about their testimonies. My childhood passes between Chile and Germany, but we still live in Germany. When I was eleven, we finally migrated to Chile in 1992. I was happy in Chile, happy with my new friends. My Chilean father stayed in Hamburg. As a musician, he built his life in this city, surrounded by family and friends. My family history was deeply impacted by the murder of my uncle Willi, one of the thousand missing people who resisted the military regime.

Living in Chile since 1992, I formed my life in these two cultures. Through the back and forth between Chile and Germany, I experience the social contradictions in both countries. Today, I am very grateful to my mother that, unlike many Germans, we do not move to the wealthy areas of Santiago de Chile, living with similar living standards as those of Germany. Thus, we moved to the periphery of Santiago, Puente Alto, where we built up an important part of our lives. My mother is still engaged in education, and I grew up loving rock music and my music bands. Later, when I started my anthropology studies, I realized that meaningful experiences with cultural differences shaped my life. The situation as a "halfy" is not easy. Your cultural background is different wherever you are. As you feel that you are neither Chilean nor German, these eternal questions of your own "belonging" remain deeply open and shape a big part of my cultural and historical sensibility as a human-earth-being.

I consider myself a leftist by conviction and because of my family history. I cannot simply accept that inequality among human beings is a product of their inherent capacities or a side effect of social life. I believe in specific fundamental values, such as social justice and equity. I was always fascinated and shocked by how social differences are expressed in countries like Chile. It is essential to make this monograph's position and feelings transparent to the reader because these beliefs operating in me can influence, consciously or unconsciously, how I look at and understand the issues outlined in this research. To summarize my personal history is an effort to make my interests and theoretical concerns transparent to the reader.

I carried out this research in a period of significant change and upheaval. Chile has undergone irreversible changes in the years (2018 -2022) that this research has developed. As I write these lines, a renewed discussion is taking place on an old issue for Chile, namely the role of mining in the so-called development of the country. Naturally, this issue is highly controversial, as it recalls the experiences of the past and the possibility that the transformation of both the mining sector and the current mining legislation can significantly affect the country's general welfare. It is expected that something has to change.

I was living in Germany when the social outbreak in October 2019 began. All our Chilean friends in Berlin, most students like me, lived those moments of great intensity from a distance, communicating with friends and relatives and trying to understand what was happening. The outbreak and then the pandemic hit the Chilean economy hard. Today it is expected that the mining sector will "lift" the damaged economy, betting on increasing investment to increase the number of mining projects to be carried out. The discourse has not changed much: "More

investment" means "more mining projects" means "more development." While this happened, the constitutional assembly is writing a new constitution to leave behind one of the most powerful legacies of the civil-military dictatorship. The possibility of nationalizing the mining industry and reforming a new mining royalty is discussed in this context. But they were evoking old and new ghosts. Naturally, these highly political and technical debates refer to the contributions of mining to the national economy and regional development.

This work, in some way, deals with all these elements, especially with a process of transformation that has accelerated since the so-called "social outburst," to the extent that practically everything is being discussed today: from the future Chilean political system to the economic model based on extractivism, from the question if Chile has to recognize rights of nature and if indigenous has to be the "safeguards" of that nature, the status of water resources in a moment of high impacts due to Climate Change, are only some of these debates happening. These debates will probably end when the new constitution is finished and voted in a referendum to ratify it (or not).

The strength of this whole process is that it exposes fundamental political beliefs. The new government of Gabriel Boric, which has just taken office (in March 2022), has been capitalizing on the criticism that arose from the roar of the social outburst. One of which was that the governments of the Concertación since the 1990s managed and administered an economic system that -once praised for its "success"- is today interpreted and perceived as an unfair system with significant consequences for social inequality. Years of economic progress in the country were suddenly "swept away" by a clamor for better economic distribution that considered these supposed achievements not such since real and perceived inequality was forging a deep discontent that finally meant a rupture of the whole "social fabric." This process, as many comments, have not yet been recovered. At the extremes are those who argue that everything is wrong and has to be profoundly changed, and those persons, most of them beneficiaries of all these years of Chilean-style neoliberalism – that think that things have been done well so far and that now Chile needs to return to the same situation before the outburst began.

These events forged a violent re-politicization of Chilean society, mainly after the social outburst. Expressed in the 2021 referendum in the face of the "approval" and "rejection" of changing the political constitution of 1980, after that, the election of the so-called "constituents" had a surprising rise of the independent sectors arising from social protest and environmental

movements. In 2022 the people decided on a reformist path by electing Gabriel Boric as the leader of a new left that sought to incorporate these diverse demands (gender equality, social justice, the transformation of state institutions, etc.)

In this context, we must situate the whole discursive scaffolding of mining as one of the Chilean economy's most prosperous and lucrative sectors. Still, it is also subject to several factors that make it uncertain and highly costly. Much of this work revolves around these factors such as legal certainty, institutionalism, environmental regulations, citizen participation, and high levels of conflict. This work should also be situated as an attempt to understand the mining process as an integrated part of a rapidly changing society.

Overview of the chapters

The work is divided into chapters and parts. The part is the overall umbrella under which the different arguments of the chapters are related.

Part One, Chapter One briefly describe some historical events that strongly influenced a national imagination of mining as a fundamental economic activity for the country's development. First, I trace some elements of the Pacific War's history and the region's annexation regarding the importance of saltpeter extraction. These events forged an early national identity policy that strongly impacted indigenous consciousness and culture. Then I briefly trace the importance of copper in national economic policy, especially during Salvador Allende's government and the structural transformations implemented by the civil-military dictatorship. I also describe some features of Chilean neoliberalism and the role of copper within this context. The Chapter ends with a broader discussion of extractivism in Latin America and Chile.

The second part, called *Consensus*, integrates five Chapters, based on the argument that resource extraction today needs to reach agreements with the local communities; otherwise, conflicts can stop or delay further extractive projects with high investment costs. I outline how institutions, capitalism, corporate engagement, participation, and resistance are intertwined in complex relations that forge the different and specific meanings of resistance and collaboration.

Chapter One will describe the environmental institutions that are part of the procedures for implementing extractive projects. It describes the role of advisors and consultants who work

with indigenous communities to improve their understanding of Environmental Assessments Studies and enhance their position against corporations. The Chapter begins with an ethnographic description of a consultation process in Pozo Almonte in 2019.

Chapter Two describes the change in corporate discourses of mining companies regarding their social and environmental responsibilities. To this end, the discourses of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Social License to Operate (SLO) are described as essential mechanisms to generate relations with indigenous communities to obtain their consent and cooperation. Therefore, this Chapter will focus on the "corporate view" of conflict and conflict avoidance mechanisms as devices of capitalist proceedings.

Chapter Three highlights the relationship between environmental impact studies carried out by mining companies and the contestation of these studies by indigenous communities. Taking the case of one specific EIA, it is focused on its epistemological and methodological biases. This Chapter seeks to understand the kind of knowledge these reports contain and the representation these reports make of the environment and the people affected. It outlined the epistemological and methodological assumptions implicit in such a study, contrasting it with the "counter-reports," which contain the critical perspective of affected communities.

Chapter Four delves into the extended use of international legal tools, such as the ILO agreement 169, which means the right to prior and informed consent (RPIC). The Chapter extensively discusses from the standpoint of indigenous the question about the binding or non-binding character of ILO agreement and its consequences for resistance processes. Although the opinions of indigenous actors are divided, I try to show how consensus is a socio-political device necessary for the "peaceful" implementation of future extractive projects. In this way, despite the often-held interpretation of ILO 169 as the "battle-horse" of indigenous demands, it expresses the political governance that makes resource extraction feasible. The Chapter concludes that the agreement has a critical ambivalence often not perceived by the actors who use it. It means that the agreement, as non-binding, aims to obtain consensus between communities and corporations, i.e., the materialization of negotiations between the actors in dispute. Thus, while the agreement is an essential tool to enforce rights, it does not mean it gives communities a veto over implementing future extractive projects.

Chapter Five followed an in-depth interpretation of some ideas of political philosophy regarding consensus-building practices- as a regulatory mechanism. It considers the socio-political transformations of Chilean society since the return to democracy, given a successful process of

de-politicization that is also reflected in the country's institutions, which seems to live a unique "twist" occurring in today's post-social outbursts.

The third part, called *Territory* delve into how institutions and state policies have impacted indigenous livelihoods and recognition. The overall argument is that despite the cultural loss and mourning because of historical State policies, indigenous are trying to rebuild the ancestral meaning of territory and other cultural practices in a deep process of self-recognition

In Chapter One, I describe the indigenous organization in its possibilities and limitations, tracing the institutional history of the Indigenous Development Corporation (CONADI) and how indigenous leaders perceive it regarding their agency. Indigenous persons must be associated with an indigenous community or association if they want institutional recognition. Only in that way can they forge the path of resistance or collaboration for or against corporations. Therefore, I describe the indigenous communities as "political communities" and as common denominators through which any act of resistance or cooperation must pass.

Chapter Two deals with memory, loss, and re-composition of indigenous cultural life. The Chapter describes the cultural loss of language, ancestral memory, and territorial ties due to migration to the city. It presents the stories of some indigenous leaders trying to recover a sense of their ancestry by implementing various cultural strategies. Finally, it exposes the case of the Chusmiza community claiming their ancestral territory, describing their reflection and cultural recovery process.

The fourth part, called *Conflicts*, introduces the idea of re-composition and constitution of new cultural meanings. It integrates chapters nine to eleven, in which different cases of conflicts, negotiations, and agreements expose how indigenous communities are confronting mining corporations in building a complex historical and political understanding of cultural differences and identity. It shows how indigenous people forged creative tactics to force and demand corporations to sit down as equal actors.

Chapter One deals with the conflicts over water resources, distribution, and allocation through institutional settings. First, provide an overview of a national debate regarding the Chilean Water Code and the consequences of implementing private property over water resources. Then it discussed the implications of Climate Change vs. the social and environmental impacts of uneven water distribution. After that, I delve into the case of the Pica oasis, whose farmers fear water extraction by mining companies, highlighting their observations and concerns about how

the landscape has changed. However, to demonstrate the complexity and ambivalence of these processes, I describe a project that improved part of the irrigation channels in the Pica sector and the transformations of the mining infrastructure regarding the growing use of desalinated water.

Chapter Two describes the negotiation processes between indigenous communities and mining companies and some of their consequences. It presents indigenous leaders' narratives explaining how they justify their willingness and decision to enter these processes. It analyses their strategies to improve their position in an unfavorable institutional scenario. This Chapter delves into several cases, such as Matilla, Quipizca, and Cancosa, regarding their conflicts, negotiations, and agreements with mining companies.

Chapter Three attempts to delve into the question of identity in the context of neoliberal multiculturalism in post-dictatorship Chile. It problematizes the exoticization process of indigenous regarding the idea of "authenticity" from a decolonial perspective. It deals with the problem of radical vs. controlled difference and the discussion that this raises regarding the adaptive capacities of an already damaged indigenous culture in Chile.

Part Five, called *Nature*, is an essay that deals with the fundamental question of nature and post-colonial perspectives of Latin American indigeneity that imagine the possibility of shaping another relationship with nature in the face of an ecological catastrophe. In this sense, constructing the "right of nature" discourses based on the indigenous principle of "Buen Vivir" is presented as an interesting alternative to Latin America's colonial and post-colonial history. This Chapter delves into a broader understanding of these utopian "alternatives" regarding capitalism and extractivism.

1. NATURAL RESOURCES AND HISTORY

“Die Geschichte existiert; beherrscht die Welt,
ihr Reich ist unausweichlich.“

Michel Houellebecq. Elementarteilchen

Historically, Chilean territory has been linked to resource extraction and shifting frontiers, sometimes integrating hidden and non-hidden politico-ontological assumptions that define and circumscribe territories and natural resources. These entanglements are best expressed in the economic history of the place: *Territory, people, and resources* are held together in historical assemblages. These interrelations need to be addressed to comprehend Chilean natural resource management critically. By showing the dynamic of human socio-natural relations, we can grasp the complexity that holds power, wealth distribution, processes of proletarianization, and social inequality together. The interrelation between *territory, people, and resources* will be our coordinates with which I will relate historical contents to contemporary resource extraction, which means holding a diachronic perspective.

In the following I will delineate certain historicity of current environmental conflicts and point out the importance of history for the people's narratives and memories. In other words, narratives, as placed in history, become a memory and testimony of ecological relations that once existed and that have shaped the present. In this chapter, I will try to develop different perspectives on territory across a historical approach, focusing first on the history of the region Tarapacá and then on some historical events on a national level. Highlighting various aspects help to provide a broad understanding of the state management of *people, resources, and territories*. In this regard, it also indicates the Chilean state's role in forging certain regional and national developments promoted by specific political and economic agendas. But before we start, I will provide some theoretical insights.

The meaning of "territory" has been conceived differently across anthropology, geography, historiography, and political science. An interdisciplinary approach will allow us to highlight the differences in terminology and meaning to bring them into a broad understanding of *territory, people, and resources*. I will start guided by how social relations, infrastructure, territorial knowledge, resource control, and heterogeneous livelihoods are related. Despite the theoretical associations between politics, land, and territory, it is possible to speak of a

widespread conception in which "land" and "state" are entangled in different ways, which implies a classical state conception of sovereignty (Foucault, 2006, 1996). From the state's viewpoint, it is precisely a matter of defining and determining strategic territorial boundaries to make population and resources visible and controllable. In the Chilean case, the intertwined relationships between resource extraction and sovereignty using spatial power structures show that certain territorial boundaries can function as political technologies (Elden, 2010). Different socio-territorial environments are shaped and defined by power relations, and power is always a spatial matter. In this sense, Michel Foucault's work has focused on state disciplinary measures on the spatial dimension as an expression of the power-knowledge amalgam: prisons, hospitals, psychiatries, and schools are the infrastructural expression of a modern biopolitical exercise of power in which implementation and control are focusing on the management on the sphere of human life as such (Rose, 2007; Foucault, 2012, 2008, 2002). These infrastructures address the disciplinary force of biopower by the conduct of conduct. However, Foucault leaves the focus on the connections between science, state, and infrastructure regarding the question of resource control needing to be answered. The state takes biopolitical measures, such as birth rates, statistics, or social hygiene, to ensure its control over its people (Foucault, 2006, 1996). But the modern state also creates legibility devices through which people and the environment are recorded, documented, and managed. This interrelation is one of the main features of state management and control. To understand this process mean to take into account the history of the early formation of the state, as Scott note:

"The premodern State was, in many crucial respects, partially blind; it knew precious little about its subjects, their wealth, their landholdings and yields, their location, their very identity. It lacked anything like a detailed "map" of its terrain and its people. It lacked, for the most part, a measure, a metric, that would allow it to "translate" what it knew into a common standard necessary for a synoptic view. As a result, its interventions were often crude and self-defeating. "(Scott, 1998, p. 2)

Scott sees readability, standardization, private property, and resource management as part of the exercise of the modern state. Using forestry, a case where state legibility was first applied, Scott shows how legibility functions in the sense of utilitarian procedures based on controlling and administering natural resources. The state creates its space of intervention through processes of simplification. The forestry development shows how the modern state sees territory and citizens, subject to control through cadastres and mapping of population and land. The diversity of socio-ecological relations to space starts to be abstracted through the application of instruments of state legibility. Therefore, abstraction and simplification reinforce and facilitate

management, control, and standardization. However, other elements are not of a spatial or material nature, fading out by a territorial understanding of state control. In this sense, Andrea Brighenti's work (2010, 2009) points to the need to expand the "modern" interpretation of the relationship between state and territory by including symbolic, mythical, and also emotional aspects in spatial analysis (see also Anderson, 1993). Thus, Social relations determine a dynamic conception of territoriality in its symbolic dimension linked to the emotional aspects of identity. Brighenti's thought is based on the processual and post-structural thought of Deleuze and Guatarri, for whom these territorial processes are dynamic and re-empowered. It provides an interpretation of specific mobility, especially about historical processes of national sovereignty (Brighenti, 2010). However, this dynamic would also allow different forms of territoriality to exist alongside others. On a materialistic level, the work of professor in communication and science studies Chandra Mukerji (1994, 2002, 2006) points to the mobilization of power through material culture and its connections, which play an essential role in state control over territory and nature. As Mukerji shows in the study of early French statehood, the national and state-controlled territory emerged through scientific and technical procedures. Aggression, war, territorial expansion, and landscaping in the form of gardens and "tamed nature" were already present in modern geo-political culture connected by warfare and diplomacy. *"Geopolitics brought the earth to the center of the struggle for power, where techniques of intervention, destruction, and control over nature were no longer in the range of local action but became the business of states and important sources of state power."* (Mukerji, 1994, 672)

These very heterogeneous elements are expressed and make sense to an onto-political dynamic of space appropriation and definitions, highlighting its material, political and symbolical dimensions connecting land, territory, and state intervention. These different connected elements are

1. Creating a "modern state" in the Latin American postcolonial context generally responds to a socio-economic elite's political and economic interests.
2. State power's exercise in controlling borders and land, which can be drawn as the classical topographical expression of State sovereignty, shapes state intervention over land, resources, and people.
3. The local population's historical, symbolic, and political consciousness has been partially formed and artificially conceived (Anderson, 1993), given the territorial occupation of the

Chilean state. The state's exercise of power had dire consequences on indigenous and non-indigenous livelihoods.

In this chapter, I will outline the history of Tarapacá in the light of dynamic notions of territory and according to the three above-mentioned interrelated aspects. I focus on the active fixation of territorial relations and the role of resource appropriation through the political mobilization of state power, which affected and transformed indigenous and local livelihoods. I refer to three historical entanglements regarding the history of Tarapacá and Chile: the saltpeter mining as an important precedent for Chilean territorial resource policy, the "Chileanization process" triggered after the Pacific War, and the possibilities for adaptation and transformation of indigenous culture itself in light of these historical processes. Some of these elements are still very alive in the testimonies and memories of the people I talk with. This shows that particular historically rooted temporalities and symbolisms still exist in the narratives and permeate interpretations of the "current state of affairs." After that, I will give some insights into the national development and the natural resource management policies regarding copper. Finally, provide a general understanding of a question about extractivism and its most important features regarding this research.

1.1. Nitrate capitalism

Used by this time as an essential element for agriculture and the production of gunpowder, the nitrate saltpeter was extracted across the Atacama Desert. The saltpeter industry's most important years were concentrated between 1870 and 1930 until it was restricted due to the invention of artificial saltpeter and the consequences of the global financial crisis in 1929. Resource extraction in the Atacama Desert has been preponderant for the Chilean economy since the early days, "*for the next century, this desert wealth would be the single most important factor in Chilean socio-economic and political development*" (Loveman, 1988, 172).



Fig. 1. The map shows the Chile-Peru-Bolivia triangle and the territories annexed after the war. Source: La disputa territorial entre Chile y Bolivia por el acceso al mar | Bolivia, Economist, Data visualization (pinterest.de)

One crucial event of the whole economic history of the region was the Pacific War (1879-1983). We will not get into the different reasons that led to this war, whose consequence was annexing the Peruvian region Tarapacá and the Bolivian region Antofagasta. However, although mainly in Tarapacá then, a large part of the population was of foreign origin because of the job opportunities in the booming mining industry (Loveman, 1988, 168). Saltpeter was already being shipped to Europe via the port of Iquique in 1830 (Hidalgo, 1989). Nevertheless,

the resource deposits were primarily in the hands of private capital, mainly German, British, Chilean, and French companies. After the annexation, the Chilean state invited international investors to become more involved in saltpeter mining to generate higher revenues for the country. In return, the state pursued a clear liberal tax

policy. "Private enterprise, foreign and national, would exploit the nitrate fields, and export taxes on nitrate would constitute more than 50 percent of all Chilean government revenue" (Loveman, 1988, 177). This development of the saltpeter industry produced a strong circulation of labor and goods from other Chilean regions, as well as from Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina (Gonzalez, 1989). Thus, an "internal" and "external" space was characterized by resource extraction and networked via different routes across the desert (Gonzalez, 2020) From 1880 onwards, saltpeter extraction triggered an immigration process; by this, more and more workers became second-hand, participating in various ways in the resource extraction processes, with the number of workers rising strongly⁶.

⁶ To 464% between 1880 and 1890, according to Gonzalez (1989).

The annexation of the region to Chile had profound consequences for saltpeter mining, as the monopolization of the saltpeter industry rose sharply after the war because of the high investment costs. This led to a reduction in the number of saltpeter offices (Pinto & Ortega, 1991). British, Chilean, and German investors played a crucial role in this economic activity. The international investment offered great profit opportunities, although these initially involved the construction of infrastructures such as railway lines and public services such as gas and telephone. A historian points to three defining elements that characterized Chile's attitude towards international investment. 1. Awareness of Chile's situation as a poor, undeveloped country and that mining was to drive the country's industrialization and development 2. British investors had to deal with the various governments, which had different views on managing saltpeter mining, hoping for solutions to improve the Chileans' quality of life. 3. The social situation of the population at the beginning of the XX century was catastrophic (Soto, 1998). A social context in which diverse racist and social theories of "Chileanness" arise to explain Chilean underdevelopment (primarily expressed in the work of Chilean historians and economists such as Encina, Pinto, and Palacios). The so-called "social question" has been linked to managing the growth of urban dwellers and the rise of poverty in urban slums.

In the big North of Chile, the British capitalists had to consider a worker movement and awareness raising mainly of strongly radicalized mining workers (Soto, 1998, 45-46). Historiography indicates that indigenous also participated widely in the mining process. Aymaras and Quechuas were used as laborers in the saltpeter mines and as trading partners for the supply of needed goods (CVHJyNT, 2008, 113-114; Gonzalez, 2006.) The relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous workers has developed with conflicts, mainly regarding the emerging proletarian movement of mining workers in the big North. Indigenous people often had to submit to the process of proletarianization in which they had to hide their cultural identity. Indigenous were often called "strike brokers" (rompe huelgas) and forced to adopt a more class-conscious attitude (Gonzalez, 2006, 39). Nationalism was also mixed with the everyday racism against indigenous people from Bolivia. This attitude toward indigenous is evidenced in a Senate Report, which describes the hygienic situation of the Saltpeter barracks. This Report shows pretty well how racist contempt connects to classist distinction.

"The Bolivian worker is almost always an indigenous person in a state of semi-barbarism: he lives in common with the animals, he sleeps with them, and when in some offices, special pigsties and corrals have been made, somewhat distant from the camps, to avoid unrest, the worker makes a mockery of the vigilance of the camp's night guards and goes to the corral and removes his goats and pigs to make them sleep in his room."
(Quoted in Gonzalez, 2006, 40)

The history of the big North of Chile, at the end of the XIX and beginning of the XX century, points to the close but tensional relationship between indigenous culture, state policy, and resource extraction. During the XX century in Chile, the change of colonial structures was set in motion by modernizing politics. Nevertheless - as the study of the *Truth, Historical Justice and New Deal Commission* (CVyNT) created in the early nineties to faithfully report the history and situation of the indigenous peoples in Chile), pointed out that indigenous people were systematically excluded from any position of power. The construction of a legal-egalitarian level remained alongside a deep social inequality in the Chilean population. Through these modern transformations, the social elite - called "criolla" - once again secured its power over indigenous people (CVyNT, 2008, p. 117).

The Pacific War (1879-1883), in which Chile, Bolivia, and Peru were involved, was a territorial dispute that occurred because of the control of natural resources (see Castro & Rivera, 2011). Today the history of Chilean victory is still used as a national symbol of the military power and imagined superiority of the Chilean state warfare over Peru and Bolivia. Even today, this historical victory is celebrated in every school from North to south alongside the country, remembering the "heroic fight" of Chilean marines and military, invoking high names of officials as nationalist symbols of patriotism. At the end and after the war, the Ancón Agreement cemented this process of territorial dispossession, with Arica, Tarapacá, and Antofagasta becoming new regions under Chilean sovereignty and becoming important resource frontiers as objects of new territorial configurations.

1.2. Impacts of Chilean nationalistic policies

After the annexation, the Chilean state tried to carry out a modernization process based on a missionary and civilizing spirit and a model imposed according to the values of a dominant oligarchic elite. The Peruvian bureaucratic apparatus in the area was dismantled to bring about a rapid change of political administration and to ensure the rapid normalization of the saltpeter mining industry (Castro & Rivera, 2011, 275). At the beginning of the XX century, the state began a nationalist process focused on the "new regions," where nationalism and patriotism were to be adopted by the population. National identity was forged by the discourse of Chilean institutions (Morong & Sánchez, 2006, 100). The Chilean state officially declared this process called "Chileanization." It meant a turning point when state policy mobilized the rise of nationalism as a form of state cleansing of Peruvian and Bolivian cultural elements (in fact, some historians distinguish between "Chilenisation" and "De-peruvianisation" according to the

violence of its procedures). Before this process began, the social relations between the Chilean, Peruvian, and Bolivian workers were characterized by certain class solidarity, which was then highly transformed (Gonzalez, 2006). Although nationalist elements also played a part in the emergence of the first workers' parties in the North of Chile, the relationship between the two organizational principles, i.e., class solidarity and internationalism, was in growing conflict with the state-promoted Chilean nationalism. This process expresses a historical example of what Althusser has described as ideological state apparatuses: Chilean identity was introduced in the region via the school system as a leitmotif of state-promoted education (Gonzalez, 1995; 2006). Under this authoritarian spirit, the state imposed significant changes through compulsory military service that sought to strengthen nationalist feelings. The Catholic and Evangelical Churches also participated in the ideological cleansing.

These legal, political, and cultural arrangements shape territorial and historical relationships across the country and region. As the example of saltpeter mining shows, resource extraction, in its multiple geographical scales, is anchored in the Chilean history of extractive management of nature. It implies the intimate relationship between nationalist territorial concepts, the rule of law, and economic potential as an important historical feature of specific resource management politics. Today's legislation and social conditions in the country differ from those of the XIX century. However, as the narratives of the positive and negative impacts of mining show, resource extraction is still a fundamental force associated with the growing concern of indigenous and non-indigenous and the growth of social and environmental conflicts.

The history of territorial occupation affected the people living in those territories in many ways. Many people I talk with evoked the corrosive effects that the process of Chilenization had on the indigenous culture. Also, researchers of Aymara culture, such as the Dutch anthropologist Juan Van Kessel (2003), tend to conceive this history as a prolonged process of ethnocide; his central thesis points to the systematic disruption of the Aymara culture in the northern territory. Another researcher argues that Aymaras accepted the Spanish language because it allowed them to claim their legitimate rights as citizens and postulate the ownership of land that the Chilean state has claimed as fiscal property since the beginning of the 20th century (Madaleno, 2009, p. 158-159). However, other historical interpretations - with a subaltern perspective- contested the most accepted historical readings of the passive role of residents, peasants, and indigenous people. These readings highlight the processes of silent resistance through various means of the local population (see Castro & Rivera, 2011; Cadiz, 2013; Morong & Sánchez, 2006). It reflects a persistent critique of official Chilean historiography, which has always given a homogenizing

vision of Chilean identity, eclipsing other identities and local developments. In this way, Chilean historiography was narratively constructed around figures such as the military hero, bravery, love for the country, the harangue, the victory, civilization, the warrior, race, etc. (Morong & Sánchez, 2006, p. 100), narratives and figures that highlight "patriotic values" through the history it tells, associated with saltpeter, the Pacific War and the processes called Chileanization. On the other side, these processes account for a particular ethnic classification at work in the way Peruvians and Bolivians (and indigenous peoples) tended to be classified within the liberal and progressive discourses of Chilean modernity (Morong & Sánchez, 2006, p. 100). This is where all the classifications of Indians as "backward," "ignorant," "cruel," and "drunken" come into play (some of whose appellations are still circulating in people's imagination, even today). Hence, the territorial border also emerged as a cultural border. *"The limits of Chileanness coincided with the demarcation of a political frontier in an attempt to homologate identity and identity practices to the political territoriality shaped by an imposed border limit"* (Morong & Sánchez, 2006, p. 101). The assimilation of the other thus becomes a "civilizing process."

In the long term, the state policies implemented in Chile are an expression of a clash of the country's aspired modernity and development with its counterpart of imaginaries of "barbarism" and "backwardness" of indigenous culture and values (Tudela, 2002; Gunderman, 2018). Various historians and anthropologists have pointed out that modernization constitutes an early leitmotif of Chilean state policy and an ideological motif opposed to indigenous culture and values (Mc Evoy, 2011; Bengoa, 1996, 2004). In this respect, it has not been very different from the history of other Latin American countries, which share similar characteristics of colonial and postcolonial oppression, repression, and ethnocide carried out in the name of "progress" and "modernization" (Castro-Gómez, 2005). Being "modern" means leaving behind the "old," "traditional," and "undeveloped." A development understood only on a "materialistic" level rather than adopting a value system like the one developed in Europe after the French Revolution. This process shapes a not very credible "version" instead of a "copy" of European modernization in Chile. In the end, Chileans never adopt the "spiritual background" that contains it (Bengoa, 1996). Yet this shadow of a "bad copy" has always hovered around developmental ideas and diminished the capacity for self-recognition of a Latin American identity forged and traversed by multiple discourses that unite and fragment it. According to the Chilean historian and anthropologist Jose Bengoa, the urge to modernize has also had a substantial impact on the identity of the Chilean population because he understands the so-called modernization compulsion as an expression of a specific form of modernization. The

decisive question is not whether modernization or not, but the shape of modernization that has emerged in Chile. Bengoa argues that there is a lack of civic culture and that modernization becomes "materialistic" regarding material enrichment, consumption, and appropriation of goods. His reflections attempt to understand the cultural implications of this modernization process focused on the historical period since the nineties. But before we refer to that period, we will continue to outline some elements of the country's economic history.

1.3. Development, economy, oblivion, and death

The second half of the XX Century is known as the developmental "cepalian" phase in Latin America, an attempt to promote development and social redistribution with an important quote of state intervention. With a clear Keynesian spirit, the idea was to create meaningful conditions of internal development through industrialization. One of the reflections is that the Latin American condition should be studied in depth to know and understand the causes of its underdevelopment (See Prebisch, 1963). Since 1950 a general re-orientation of the political and economic reasons for the uneven development led to the ideological defeat of the monetarist position widely held by the US and the IMF. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (acronyms in Spanish CEPAL) was the driving force behind many reformist ideas promoting more significant state planning through domestic policies. Concentrated on changing the structures that keep the conditions of economic inequality between developed and underdeveloped countries, this phase is also known as the "structural phase" of economic development. The historical period reflects the tensions between those positions that defended the free market and those that advocated Keynesian and even Marxist structural changes in Chile over the XX century (Salazar & Pinto, 1999). As Margarita Fajardo points out in her study about the historical importance of CEPAL, although a "leftist theory," it was widely criticized by dependency theorists who saw the attempts to industrialize and develop the region as insufficient. Dependency theory came to take over the Cepalian scheme of a global "center-periphery" logic, deepening the critique of the global market system. (Fajardo, 2022)

In Chile, between 1950 and 1960, the marginalization that had previously been evoked as a menace became an acute problem in the face of the vast mass rural population that began to populate the country's urban centers. During the Frei Montalva government (1964-1970), a broad spectrum of social movements began to take shape in the popular masses, with land takeovers becoming increasingly frequent. In this context, Salvador Allende was elected in 1970, during which the tension between the occupation of spaces through social mobilization

and the liberal institutionalism that cemented the foundations of social inequalities was always present (Salazar & Pinto, 1999, 60-64). Allende's project to build a transition to a socialist society was violently interrupted by the military coup on 11 September 1973. The military regime (1973-1989) led by Augusto Pinochet meant the abrupt end of the socialist government, followed by the bloody persecution of Allende's followers.

The violence and repression of the dictatorship were followed by an economic "shock therapy" which sought to combat high inflation and systematically dismantled the social institutions established during the previous governments of Frei Montalva (1964-1970) and Salvador Allende (1970-1973) (Salazar & Pinto, 1999; Taylor, 2006; Friedman, 1975). In the eighties, the military-civic regime started a wave of reforms, from the political constitution to health, education, pension system, etc., profoundly changing the relationship between state, society, and nature. While current interpretations of the neoliberal reform policies are based on the mined role of the state and its institutions, which was set in motion by the dismantling of the social system by privatization measures, other studies cast a different light on the role of the state in the transformation process of Chile's social, legal and political structures (Brunner, 1981; Taylor, 2006; Klein, 2008). In this regard, according to the Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulian, the power of the state was based on different dispositive, such as the power over the body and the mind (the *terror*), *but also* the power to shape the rules and normative (the *law*) (Moulian, 1997, 22). According to this view, Chilean neoliberalism was a project from the state, in the sense of "social engineering," based on an extreme individualistic philosophy:

"At the heart of the social theory underlying neoliberalism is a specific normative vision of the efficiency and rationality of a society that reproduces itself solely through the mechanism of freely interacting individuals making private exchanges that constitute the market. Markets are seen as natural, efficient, and equilibrating forms of social interaction that express the highest form of social rationality. On this basis, neoliberal political practice represents a project of vigorous social engineering that intends to make this vision of reality by eliminating social relationships that do not conform to the market model." (Taylor, 2006, p. 6)

Chile became a social laboratory and, thus, the first country where neoliberal formulas were applied without any social resistance or political discussion (Klein, 2008). Thus a real "capitalist revolution" was born (an idea held by many sociologists and historians). While the violent persecutions, oppression, murder, torture, and disappearance of socialists and Marxists occurred, the authoritarian regime pushed forward different economic transformations. Analyzing the authoritarian culture in Chile, the Chilean politician and academic J. J. Brunner argue that during the dictatorship, a historical "culture of consensus" was replaced by a

capitalist-authoritarian "bourgeois culture." While the former created a liberal-progressive culture in which the state intervened in the social sphere as a locus and conflict-alleviator to develop various forms of compromise (structural phase). Many analysts draw attention to this interdependent relationship between mercantile neoliberalism and political authoritarianism. The bourgeois culture was based not only on a process of increasing de-politicization but on the philosophical assumption that the private and public (political) spheres should be kept deeply separated (Brunner, 1981). The state was not "dismantled" but "reassessed" based on role and functions. According to Brunner, its role was limited to four main areas:

1. Stabilization is the basis of the economy.
2. Ensuring the concentration of wealth through privatization measures.
3. Ensuring the market's role as "regulator."
4. The economy opens to the outside world, integrating Chile into international capitalism.

The totalitarian character of these transformations forcibly restored the national bourgeoisie through accumulation and communication (Brunner, 1981, 30).

However, the extent of the cultural transformations became evident after the transition period, called the "return to democracy." A democracy born from an authoritarian regime whose symbolical and normative reflection is the political constitution 1980. Unlike in most Latin American countries with military dictatorships, in Chile, Pinochet has never been brought to trial for all the atrocities committed during his time in government. At the beginning of this phase, Pinochet took a seat in parliament. This gives a sign of the nature of the negotiated democracy. Moreover, Chilean society has inherited an authoritarian neoliberal system characterized by the reproduction of social inequalities, a significant concentration of wealth and power, and a political and institutional system that should ensure systemic continuity (Garreton, 2019, 31-32).

The transition process occurred through several negotiations between the moderate political alliance of Christian democrats and socialists united in the "Concertación" and the "junta" of the ruling military. The Concertación undertook the social and legal transformations introduced to profoundly change the entire system under the following governments (P. Aylwin (1990-1994), E. Frei Ruiz Tagle (1994-2000), R. Lagos (1998-2004), and M. Bachelet (2006-2010))⁷.

⁷ However, It should be mentioned that there is a broad discussion on the changes and transformations generated in law matters on the codes and regulations forged during the dictatorship. Such as the argument put forward

The market and consensus function as normative and disciplinary devices intended to bring about the homogeneity of Chilean society by trying to neutralize social forces. The recent traumatic events have to be handled in some way. According to Moulian, the consensus statement discursively expresses the decision to "forget everything" (Moulian, 1997, 37-38). The discourse sustains that the traumatic past needed to be held "into the past" to allow people to look into the future.

The market acts as the new gravitational center of the entire system, over which individual needs are oriented and in which individuals can be socially and hierarchically classified (Brunner, 1981, 33). These social, cultural, and economic transformations have thus also intensified the social and cultural differences between classes. The consumption boom of the 1990s can be understood as the incorporation and consumption of neoliberal individualism in all its disciplining power (Moulian, 1997, 1998). During the years of transition, "politics" was subjected to the mechanization of consensus and proceeded routinely under technical criteria of the administration of "the social" (Richard, 2002, 189). A growing process of rationalization thus reinforced the technical dimension of politics as an administrative concern and thus also confirmed the connection between re-democratization and neoliberalism (Richard, 2002: 190). Neoliberal governance in Chile was an all-encompassing dimension of disciplining and standardization that must be interpreted in its historical dimensions because it denotes adopting a plausible political "transition" to a never completed reconciliation process and neutralizing the traumatic past⁸. The real victim was the memory, the historical and political memory evoked by those persons and families who have suffered political persecution, death, disappearance, and exile. As Moulian comments on the role of forgetting: "*There is a lack of common words to name what one has experienced. Trauma for some, victory for others. It is impossible to communicate about something that exists in their antagonism: coup, coup d'état; military government, dictatorship; good for Chile, a disaster for Chile.*" (Moulian, 1997, p. 31). The Transition period had to pass through forgetting, repression, and silence. In line with this was des-politicization, one of the main political goals of the dictatorship.

by some politicians and lawyers that it is unnecessary to change the political constitution because it had already been extensively modified during the years of the Concertación.

⁸ The Chilean writer Raul Zurita wrote in the early 1980s that it would be impossible to make the transition to an opposite situation without leaving something behind, and this "something" is, according to Zurita, "*as real as death.*" This meant the sacrifice needed to "live on" in a deeply traumatized and divided society, where people gradually dared to talk about politics again.

Privatization measures in the country were part of a general restructuring of the legal basis, primarily intended to secure private property constitutionally. The economy was also oriented towards developing the agricultural industry and extracting resources through draft laws. These indicate the general economic orientation Chile follows, such as the foreign investment statute (1974), the water code (1981), the law of mining concessions (1982), and the mining code (1983). The constitution (1980) guaranteed the "terrain" for a new export-oriented economy to develop. This legal development is based on the role of "legal security" to enable international investment and to provide a secure foothold (Bauer, 2002, 16).

Therefore, the development of mining needs to be placed in this historical and institutional context based on three significant pillars: 1. complete legal security of mining concessions, 2. Significant fiscal and commercial advantages. 3. Lax and flexible environmental legislation and control (Machado, 2010). These transformations should make resource extraction, production, and transaction more efficient (Bauer, 2002, 16, Budds, 2013; Taylor, 2006). Over the past thirty years, Chile has developed a so-called "successful" experience of neoliberal extractivism.

1.4. Chile's copper resource policy in the XX century

Measures relating to the copper policy played a significant role in Chilean history in the XX century, as seen from certain historical milestones. Here I want to highlight three well-known historical events regarding resource appropriation and the discussion of the role of the state: Under the government of Eduardo Frei Montalva (1976-1970) were carried out the "Chilenization of copper," a series of reformist measures that allowed the Chilean state to recover part of the resources that were in the hands of foreign companies. Through a process known as "agreed nationalization," the state acquired important per cents of the shares of the Chuquicamata, el Teniente, La Exótica, and Andina mines. In addition, joint ventures were created with state and private participation. During this process, CODELCO was created to administer and manage the production and sale of the resources. Then, the Allende government (1970-1973), with the full support of the chamber of deputies, carried out the definitive "Nationalization of Copper," a series of expropriation measures that allowed the total control of the mining resources. The extraction of copper resources has always depended on the flow of market prices and global changes. In his book *The Battle for Copper*, Eduardo Novoa describes copper's various price fluctuations during the 20th century and exposes the historical path that led to the nationalization of copper in 1970. An approach reflected in a simple estimation: the foreign companies that until 1970 had copper production in their hands did not leave an equivalent of wealth that could be considered fair according to the enormous profits they took out of the country year after year (Novoa, 1972).

Although the military dictatorship privatized the vast majority of the previously nationalized companies, selling them at "egg prices" and enriching actors close to the military elite at the expense of all Chileans. CODELCO remained in State hands, and the military enjoyed a share of State funds earmarked for military expenditure⁹. These three –briefly outlined- historical moments –"chilenization," "nationalization," and "privatization" of copper- set crucial directions regarding the appropriation of natural resources and how they should contribute to the country's development and people's well-being. They show the primordial place that copper

⁹ The so-called reserved copper law was enacted by the government of Carlos Ibañez del Campo in 1958 and modified during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Its objective was to obtain 10% of the total income generated through CODELCO's sale of copper for military financing, i.e., for the acquisition and management of armaments. Its status as a secret law was revoked in 2016 by a group of parliamentarians who echoed a general call for greater transparency. Several financial scandals involving high-ranking military officers led to the law being criticized by various sectors of Chilean society. It was also considered an anti-democratic remnant of the dictatorship.

has played in Chilean national politics regarding the role of national and transnational companies that extract, export, and benefit from the mining resource.

In Latin America, an important change in the mining sector followed at the end of the 1980s, driven by new stabilization guarantees for the private sector to ensure relative stability for foreign investment, labor flexibility, and liberalization of capital, goods, and services markets. According to a study by CEPAL, Chile, unlike most other Latin American countries, introduced a legal regime to regulate mining. In contrast to other countries in the region, the role of state regulation has been systematically minimized, reduced to specialized authorities of resource management, and initiated through technically defined procedures.

Since the 1990s, private copper mining has grown; as a study by ex-senator shows, between 1990 and 1994, the worldwide increase in copper production was solely and exclusively generated by foreign private companies located in Chile. This overproduction caused a 20% drop in the nominal world copper price between 1989 and 1994 (Lavanderos, 2001, 21). The study also refers to the low financial contribution that private mining has made to the country, claiming a change in the legal and financial tax regime for large-scale mining. Something that is still widely discussed today because the tax payments are on the base of declared utilities. The "Lavanderos study," published in 2001, demonstrates how different foreign mining companies arrange their profit declarations to avoid paying taxes in the country. A basis for the current discussion on whether royalty payments should be based on the right to extract irrespective of the financial outcome of the companies. The counter-argument of those who defend this system is that foreign and national investors needed a secure political and social base algae to invest risk-free. In any case, these development shows that under the post-dictatorial governments of the "Concertación," these regulations and conditions have not been changed regarding the development of mining, despite continuous criticism of the low taxation regime (Alcayaga, 2005; Acuña y Fuenzalida, 2011). At the end of the 1990s, Chile was a safe country for foreign investment because of its legal situation and one of the countries with the lowest tax payments in the mining sector.

Today, Mining in Chile is one of the most important productive sectors, accounting for about 11.8% of the total GDP between 2011-2015 and about 58.9% of total exports (COCHILCO, 2016a; Acosta, 2018). This development has several reasons, as Acosta comment

"Chilean mining – especially copper mining – solidified its prominent position on the global scene in the 1990s. During this period, copper mining experienced

unprecedented exponential growth driven by Chile's stable regulatory framework and favorable environment for private investment. This expansion stabilized between 2005 and 2015 during a worldwide upswing in copper prices." (Acosta, 2018, p. 181)

In the case of copper mining, the numeric characteristics are even more pronounced: with a 38% share of the total export economy (Meller, 2014), figures that evidence Copper mining's importance for the whole economic sector. However, this also reflects the social and economic contradiction between the situation of CODELCO, whose dividends are one hundred percent paid to the state - (hence the term "Chile's wages" or "wealth") (Meller, 2014; 1983), while the private mining sector, with increasing investment intensification, comparatively meant only small revenues for the Chilean state (Sturla et al., 2016; Correa, 2016; Lavandero, 2001). Despite the intensive debate that repeatedly leads back to the question of how the private mining sector should be taxed, Chile is presented in foreign policy terms as a positive example of modernization and development within the Latin American region (WB, 2011).

Therefore, copper's role and importance are indispensable because of its economic potential. Despite narratives of successful extractivism, mining represents a problem of national sovereignty. Since long ago, the Chilean development model has been based on extracting natural resources as the primary force of economic growth. But the other side of the story is that Chile mainly depends on raw material exports, despite its economic stability and growth (about 4% since 2000, according to a study by OCDE). Despite economic growth, this dependence gives the country a particular weakness based on the dynamics of commodity prices. In the cited study, the role of mining as a strategic branch of Chile's economic growth is once again ratified (OCDE, 2018). Others argue that a varied commodity export makes GDP grow persistently, but this also depends on the infrastructure of the exporting countries (Agosin, 2009). However, In Chile's case, the economic ties to renewable raw materials are particularly significant. According to the economist Gino Sturla, the growth rate of the Chilean economy is affected mainly by three components:

1. deterioration of the ecosystems that support the extraction of raw materials,
2. little or no diversification of the productive matrix,
3. More royalty payments from private companies that extract the raw materials (Sturla, 2018).

The first point is related to economic and environmental inequality and injustice, which we will be able to trace by looking at the water issues and other environmental impacts in the region focused in this study. The second point refers to a widely discussed global division of labor of

countries participating in international trade by exploiting and marketing their natural resources. In contrast, the third point relates to the legal basis, which allows private companies to pay low payments to the state.

Through these three points, we can draw attention to some characteristics of Chile's natural resource politics and policies united under the frame and issue of extractivism.

1.5. Questions on Extractivism

In the regional and global context, extractivism can be traced back to the early face of Spanish colonialism. In this regard, the narrative of Latin America as a "plundered region" is best evidenced in Eduardo Galeano's book "The open veins of Latin America." Galeano traces the extraction of resources such as gold, silver, nitrates, and biological species across the Latin American region. The labor force organization during the colonial period responded to the needs of the administrative power to have at its disposal the "human resources" of natives, mulattos, and black people. A situation that did not change much during the period of independence, but rather the measures of expropriation and conquest against the indigenous populations and territories were reinforced (Ødegaard & Rivera, 2019). Extractivism *"may refer to modes of accumulation based primarily on the removal of large quantities of 'raw' materials (...) which are either not processed or are processed but only to a very limited degree and which are extracted, in particular, for international markets"* (Ødegaard & Rivera, 2019, p. 15) Extractivism, refers to an all-encompassing phenomenon that must not only be historically grasped but also understood in its local-global ever-expanding networks and assemblages. However, the term used as an analytical category refers to how nature is treated under the capitalist and neo-colonial imperative of cheap nature (Moore, 2016). Some researchers try to broaden the term precisely to address other phenomena that account for the new forms of production of value from nature understood as "raw material," phenomena such as bio-piracy and bio-prospection associated with the development of the biotechnological industry (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017; Cornejo, 2017). As Rivera and Ødegaard comment:

"Such a broad understanding of extractivism may draw attention to different dimensions of how capitalist projects extract value from a range of different forms and areas of life not previously part of capitalist commodification and accumulation, revealing how extractivist dynamics may embrace and affect all aspects of life." (2019, p. 16)

Some social scientists have pointed to the "securitization" process, in which resource extraction is linked to global interests and the region's militarization process. In this sense, Latin America's

geo-political role is interpreted as a source of natural resources and a critical element of US political and economic interests (Delgado, 2020). After the collapse of the USSR, the "Realpolitik" of the USA was focused on securing strategic resources, achieved through a policy of expropriation and re-appropriation of resources with extreme ecological and social consequences (Delgado, 2020). In the context of global restructuring of geo-political machinations, therefore, de-industrialization and re-orientation towards export should be understood as two intertwined phenomena (Machado, 2010). This historical process is an expression of what Maristela Svampa has called the new *consensus of commodities*: The placement of Latin American economies based on the extraction and export of their raw materials is not only an expression of global environmental inequalities and economic dependence but also part of a neo-colonial machinery (Pardo, 2012; Antonelli, 2014; Machado, 2010). It also expresses the Latin American drive for development (Escobar, 1995, 2014) in newer global contexts and local-global interconnectedness.

In this way, extractivism causes important environmental and social consequences, mainly where resource extraction occurs. Therefore, it becomes part of a broader debate regarding environmental justice (Martinez-Alier, 2001; Martinez-Alier & Guha, 2000), whose primary empirical expression is the growth of global ecological movements. In a global market, countries such as Chile are exposed to the economic interplay of supply and demand and the subsequent price fluctuations of the extracted raw materials. Although Chile is one of the most copper producers in the world and has one of the wealthiest copper reserves worldwide, the power of the country's economy has yet to determine the copper price. These various aspects of the asymmetry between commodity "suppliers" and "buyers" have already been examined by the theory of dependence that emphasizes different aspects of these asymmetric global power relations. This theory focuses on various characteristics of the relationship between "developed" and "undeveloped" countries. The global-local connections and inequalities also take postcolonial history as an essential cornerstone to understanding these historical dependencies. These elements are also present in the literature and research on extractivism that address the economic and financial inequalities and asymmetries between countries and continents, focusing on the environmental costs of resource extraction.

Extractivism is not a neutral term in grasping the amalgam of political, ecological, economic, and cultural relations that forge environmental and social justice, economic dependence, and development fantasies. Therefore, it becomes an analytical and heuristic category through which all these diverse elements can be described and analyzed.

1.6. Extractivism, development, and environmental conflicts

Conflicts caused by extractivism and particularly by mining activity are widely documented in social and environmental research, as in the field of anthropology of mining (Godoy, 1985; Nash, 1993; Taussig, 1993; Ballard & Banks, 2003; Weiner, 2004; Benson & Kirsch, 2010; Welker, 2014; Kirsch, 2017), the Latin-American debate around extractivism (Acosta, 2016; Antonelli, 2009; Bebbington, 2009; Bebbington & Bebbington, 2011; Garcia Linera, 2007; Gudynas, 2009, 2012; Machado & Merino, 2015; Machado, 2015, Svampa, 2012, 2016; Zibechi, 2011), and also in political geography (Blomley, 2003; Bridge, 2004, 2001; Burry, 2004; Castree, 2008, 2002; Harvey, 1998; Robertson, 2004; Soya, 1971; Porto-Gongalves, 2015). These different analyses, perspectives, and research areas highlight many socio-environmental elements reflecting the interconnected world's complexities. Undoubtedly extractive projects affect the local population in various ways, like water consumption and environmental pollution, but also criminalization of protests and resistance (CIDSE, 2009), a. o. They reflect the entanglements of geographical locations to global dynamics implied in resource extraction processes.

It is well-known and documented that extractivism causes diverse socio-environmental conflicts across the Latin American continent. As the network Observatory of Environmental Conflicts in Latin America (OCMAL) shows, conflicts are persistent regarding mining activity. At present, 293 mining conflicts are listed, and most are reported in Mexico (54), followed by Chile (49) and Peru (42). In the region of Tarapacá, the four most significant mining operations are also associated with specific local conflicts. In these, the specificity of each mining installation's "territorial character" becomes evident because it stresses the local conditions of existence. However, the greater the number of extractive projects more frequent seems happening conflicts and resistance movements of the local population (Bebbington, 2014, Conde, 2017).

Facing the question of the usefulness and benefits that resource extraction could mean for a country is also to account for the "global" fluctuations that lead to these questions. As is the case today, where it is discussed that Chile is eventually facing a new "super cycle" of copper prices, the discussion about creating a mining royalty that "really" contributes to the country's development is once again at the forefront. As expected regarding these issues, voices differ considerably, showing their narratives as politically motivated. While some conjure up the specter of a new nationalization of copper, others point to the industry's current contributions to the country through jobs and supply chains. This debate also reflects the diversity of

knowledge at stake to legitimize positions, indicating levels of economic growth, employability, or actual contributions to the Chilean state in the form of private and public mining income. Sometimes these discussions are reduced to debates between expert economists who know how a national economy should be run. While those voices calling for nationalization or less radical measures are sometimes dismissed as ignorant or "ideological," which almost amounts to the same (see Li, 2015). A tendency to separate the technical aspects from the political or ideological ones. An issue such as mining and its revenues, called by the socialist president Salvador Allende "Chile's salary," is highly complex, political, and deeply emotional. The ghosts of the past, from the nationalization of copper in 1971 to the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet to the return of democracy and its neoliberal policies, are all historical events dramatically intertwined in the mining issue. Some believe that mining has contributed to the country's development; others believe that it has not contributed enough and that it could contribute better to improve people's well-being. However, Chile seems far from being a neo-extractivist country -an account of other phases of extractivism -used to promote better wealth distribution erected as a political measure by some leftist and progressive governments. Some authors also criticize neo-extractivism because it deepens the unequal global relations between countries that extract raw materials (without much-added value) and the more powerful nations that buy these resources. This happens while the environmental costs of such a decisive intervention in nature remain in the territories and localities. Chile needs to implement these regulatory changes. Some social groups aspire to a neo-extractivism whose revenues could finance more government programs and promote state-driven social justice. Especially nowadays in times of the post-October 2019 outbreak and the Covid 19 pandemic, which according to future projections, will lead the country into a difficult economic situation. More than ever, concerns about fair wealth redistribution and capturing wealth produced through natural resource extraction strongly influence current debates.

The difficulty of getting an answer to the question of the "real" benefits for the local population is one of the tasks of this work. Because it seems that this socio-natural configuration always implies winners and losers, although the figures for Latin America, in general, show a positive balance in terms of regional development (Buchardt, 2017); however, it cannot be ignored what the adverse effects of these processes are, considering the measures to promote social and environmental justice.

However, in Latin America, governments and private entrepreneurs often perceive the protest and rejection of mega-mining projects as rejecting modernization and development (see Li,

2015; Garcia, 2007). This view is reflected in the short treatise "Síndrome del Perro del hortelano" by the former president of Peru, Allan Garcia. In this text, he attacks the opinion that he prefers not to mine and "leave" resources rather than use their extraction to develop the country through investment¹⁰. Garcia's ideas resonate with other arguments from the opposite political spectrum, such as those of Bolivia's former vice-president Alvaro García Linera, who attacked environmentalists for not wanting to understand that wealth must first be generated and then redistributed. Also, in Bolivia, even under the government of the indigenous President Evo Morales, the extractive project was carried forward with a strong emphasis on social issues and directing policies towards generating surplus value, as is the case today with lithium in that country. Chile has been at one of the balance poles due to its neoliberal policies since 1990. The firm anchoring of the developmental discourse is still strongly present in Latin America, always hand in hand with exploiting natural resources.

The last point to mention is that one of the supposed reasons why people voted to reject the new constitutional draft (62% rejection to 38% approval) in September 2022 was that the new constitution would put too much emphasis on environmental protection and higher environmental standards which, therefore, would slow down the investment in mining.

It is the economy, you stupid!

¹⁰ Like the multinational mining company BHP Billington is placed in Pica, Teck-Quebrada Blanca in Huatacondo, Dona Santa Ines de Collahuasi also in Pica) and Pahuanta in Huara. (OCMAL, 2019).

2. CONSENSUS

International law has played an increasing role in the self-determination of indigenous rights (ILO, 1985; Owen & Kemp, 2013). In this context, the promulgation of ILO Convention 169 has been a cornerstone in the reclamation and defense of indigenous culture, especially regarding extractive projects located on indigenous territory (ILO, 1985). Chile signed the agreement in 2008 by committing to minimum guidelines for indigenous people's treatment. Within this non-binding normative framework, the exercise of indigenous consultations must be situated today as instances where the decision-making power of communities is at stake (Fulmer, 2011). Consultations are only sometimes considered effective in generating consensus among participants nor developing an effective counter-power to the economic interests of corporations and the Chilean state (Whiteman, 2001; Owen & Kemp, 2014). Community members face inequality in resources and knowledge when confronting powerful multinational companies. Although indigenous consultations are based on regulations required of the state and not of companies (Donoso, 2014), the "private sector" can be affected by legal and administrative decisions based on ILO agreement 169 (Matta & Montt, 2011, 192) and have therefore been adapting to the new scenarios. Indigenous consultation tends to be conceived differently: for some, these communicative spaces only legitimize social acceptance of extractive projects, while others think that consultations represent an essential tool for the legitimate defense of territorial intervention.

The main task of this part and its chapters is to outline, problematize and discuss the role of citizen and indigenous consultation processes. The issue of consultations has been addressed in legal studies on the nature of regulations regarding indigenous rights (Carrasco, 2016; Carmona, 2013, 2009; Yrigoyen, 2011); the free, prior, and previous consent (Owen & Kemp, 2013; Morris et al., 2009; Marcus & Ferrari, 2007), normative issues regarding collective vs. individual rights (Carmona, 2013, 2009); ethnographic studies on the drive and effects of indigenous consultations in Latin American countries (CIDSE-Red Murqui, 2010, 2009; Walter & Urikidi, 2015). Empirical studies have been focused on citizen consultation in Peru (OXFAM, 2019) and indigenous consultation in Peru (Ruíz, 2012; Fulmer, 2011). Guatemala, (Fulmer, 2011), México (Monterubio, 2014), Chile (Sanhueza et a, 2013; Donoso, 2014; Cuadra, 2015; Yañez & Molina, 2014b). Other studies have highlighted the tendency to stop

further extractive projects to conduct consultation processes as part of environmental governance and as a conflict resolution device (Astorga, 2019; Donoso, 2014).

Indigenous consultations are a complex issue in which international and national regulations come into play, highlighting the limits and contradictions of Western multiculturalism and legal pluralism (Carmona, 2013). Who represents indigenous communities, whether they should be considered "individual" or "collective" entities, and what happens when indigenous representation falls on traditional institutions that do not resonate with the principles of Western democracies are questions that highlight the difficulty of applying and reconciling the universal notion of human rights and indigenous collective rights (Anaya, 2011; Stavenhagen, 1992; Yañez & Molina, 2014b). As one of the Chilean experts on the intersection between anthropology and legal studies, note: "*The point is to take seriously the fact that consultation is a collective right, whose holder is the indigenous people through their representative institutions, as a collective subject of fundamental rights.*" (Carmona, 2013, p. 326.) However, we are not concerned with delving into the legal and normative discussion of the right to consultation but rather with describing how these rights and devices are experienced and interpreted by local communities.

According to Walter & Urkidi, 68 community consultations were held in Latin America from 2002 to 2012, mostly about large-scale mining activities, "*challenging centralized decision-making procedures*" (2015, 1). *Consultations* become a strategic tool of social movements performed by indigenous groups to participate in "high" state decisions that may affect their lives and territories (Walter & Urkidi, 2015, 2).

In the case of Chile, an interdisciplinary research group provides a systematization of all consultation processes already carried out in Chile (Castro et al., 2018). According to the study, by 2018, 129 Consultas had been held, 87 of which have been completed, and 42 are in progress¹¹. The study gives a clear account of the main consultation problems, such as the high distrust of state authorities by indigenous groups and the failure to adapt Chilean regulations to the new contexts and commitments agreed upon according to ILO guidelines. As we will see, both issues are mentioned in this research.

¹¹ According to this study, the region of Tarapacá appears with 9,9% of the total amount of Consultas: 3 in Pozo Almonte, 4 in Pica, and 3 in Huará. Nationwide, the rural area appears the most consulted, with 59,2%, and the urban area, 21%. The most consulted indigenous groups are Mapuches, with 30,4%, followed by Aymaras, with 17,7%, Rapa Nui, 11,4%, and Quechua, 0,6% (Castro et al., 2018: 65-72)

The present chapter will closely examine indigenous and citizen consultation processes concerning mining projects. Mining as an economic activity crosses the threshold of the economic dimension and establishes itself as a transformation process expressed as an "idea," an "experience," and a "culture." I think the testimonies in the form of stories are the best example that denotes this relationship between experiences and ideas, which means that the experience of having lived in a "mining region" is often told analytically. What I mean is that I am not dealing with "raw" stories but with interpretations and analyses of people's life circumstances. In this way, I recognize some "degree of expertise" in each person who gave me their insights and told me their stories. Therefore to understand the connection between ideas and experience, performed by historical-cultural life projects nourished and affected by own and others' experiences (shared), by those and others' ideas, by those and others' histories. I have tried to understand the critiques, contestations, desires, and aspirations of the people I confront with. I wanted to know how mining is perceived, how people in the region assess the effects of mining, and how they live with them. Since historically, the territory of Tarapacá has been crossed and formed by resource appropriation and extraction (González, 1999; 2006; Loveman, 1989; Van Kessel, 2003), the historical formation of the territory sometimes makes things to be accepted as a historical destiny. Somehow, things have always been driven that way. Resource extraction deeply crosses the region, leaving some traces, marks, and wounds. Not infrequently, I have sensed this tone of resignation in people's stories. Collective and individual memories are expressed in interpretations of colonial times and the time of saltpeter resource extraction, providing meaningful indications of the strong links between the mining industry and the local culture.

Whether these opinions are for or against, some highlight the environmental impacts, and others speak of the regional and national development promises. However, the profound socio-cultural implications of resource extraction in Tarapacá are undeniable. *How do people perceive their possibilities for action, contestation, and resistance for or against mining? What is the role of "Consultas" (consultation processes) in the general assessment regarding collective resistance actions? What are the gaps left by the law or the tools it provides to people to defend their rights and territories?* These will be the guiding questions of this and the following chapters. Contestations, law, resistance, and negotiations are issues that appear strongly in the different discourses and the practices set in motion through environmental institutions; one of its aspects is public consultation processes, the gravitational center of this chapter.

Past, present, and future are intermingled in many ways. The past allows people to learn from their own and others' experiences, which grandparents, friends, or relatives tell. In this way, the experience of others can also be a record that counts. Having experience allows humans to build coordinates toward the future. It gives them orientation; it enables them to form a discourse and an ethic and can guide their actions for unforeseen events. Different discourses are set in motion, handled out and weight, of what has been declared by technicians and experts, what will happen in the near future, and how much the territory has already been affected. These experiences contribute to forming an opinion and a standpoint. As Didier Fassin wrote: "*What people say or hide and what governments do or assert can be understood only in the light of their views of the past and their politics of memory.*" (Fassin, 2004, p. 319).

Past and present meld together in the visions of people. People began to live with those effects that experts did not consider. They experience it closely. It is fair to wonder who will care for them (people and environment). The answer is charged with negativity because the experience told them that the Chilean state will not. Despite environmental laws and participation processes as consultations, it will not be the state. These experiences sharpen the gaze and form the consciousness.

For this reason, this way of saying that I recorded through the testimonies is fundamentally partial and goal-oriented. It depends mainly on the motivations and the places where it is spoken and the experiences these places already have. In this way, environmental concerns do not respond to an "ecological conscience" in the broad sense but are part of real problems. These concerns are based on close and material, environmental, and territory experiences. For this reason, it always matters where you speak, so the notion of territory in Chile is not a "neutral" but a "political" category infused with life experiences. The past allows the construction of a "sign of warning," which evokes uncertainty and distrust of what experts say and what the mining companies usually declare. The Chilean environmental system works based on self-declaration and environmental assessment studies, which means that the corporations communicate how, when, and where they will impact. There have been significant errors in these declarations, but often when mistakes are accepted as such, it is too late. Sometimes the consequence of that is the destruction of whole ecosystems. But people remember, and they remember well. They do not hesitate to claim the immense responsibility of corporations or the state, destroying the sites, lagoons, or wetlands or permitting them to be destroyed. The people know...

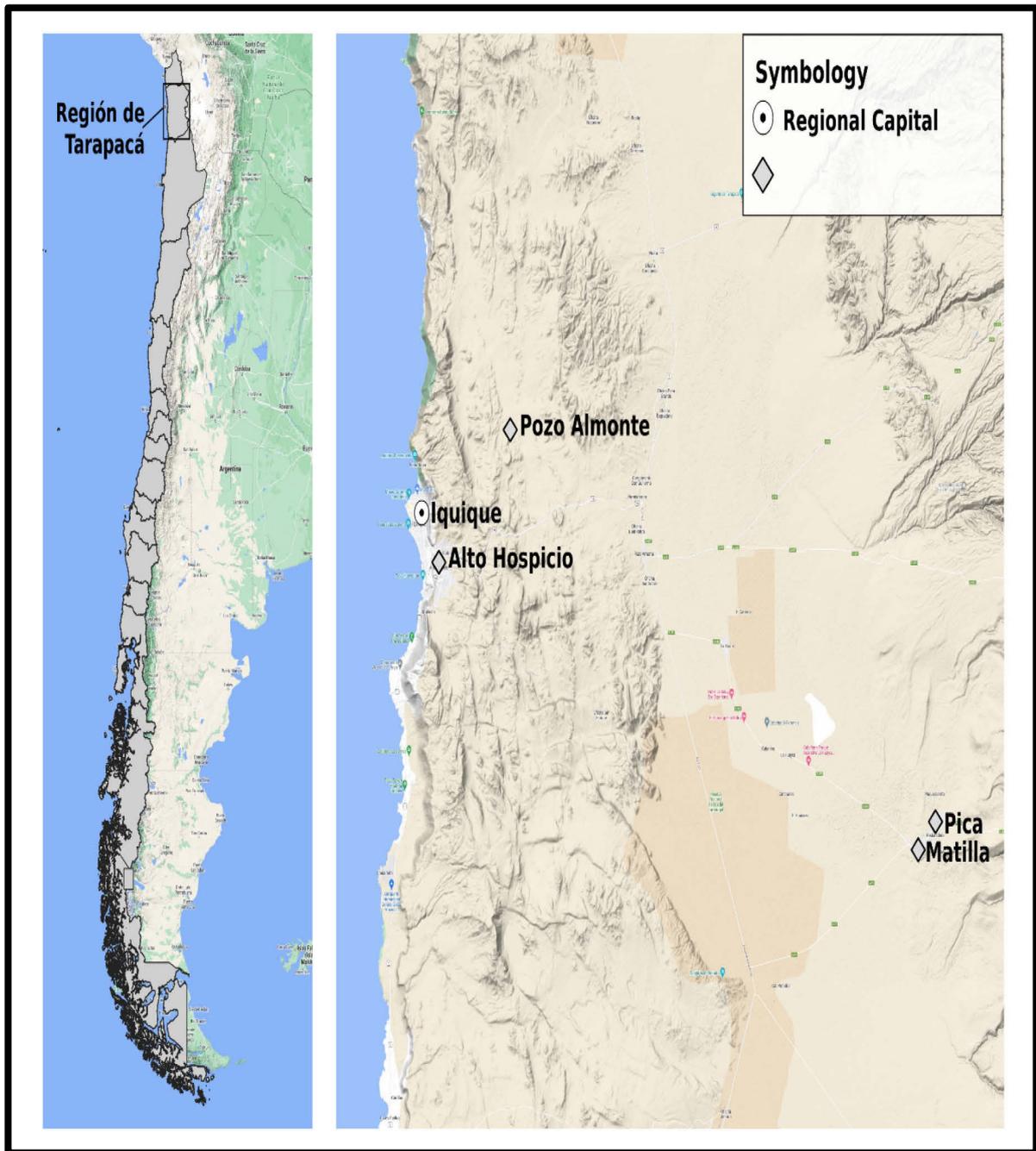


Fig. 1. The mpa shows the two main cities of the Tarapacá Region: Iquique, and Alto Hospicio, also the Desert town Pozo Almonte.

2.1. Institutions and consultancy

2.1.1. Witnessing a DIA presentation in Pozo Almonte

I am in the coastal city of Iquique, and I breathe the fresh air of the Pacific Ocean. Like the air, the history and mood of the Atacama Desert are always present in this coastal city. Their relationship is fundamental, the reason for the progress of the region. This history has been deeply entangled with the development of the city and the meaning of mining for the entire country. The history of saltpeter mining is today one of the main tourist attractions, with the visit of the old and abandoned saltpeter towns. Some of these, such as Humberstone, are real ghost cities today. Reminding the splendor of the saltpeter industry at the beginning of the XX century, the nation-state has nurtured the symbolic connection between mining, development, and progress. Today mining workers no longer represent the most exploited sector of Chilean society as once saltpeter workers.

Moreover, mining stands today for economic opulence, although the adverse health effects that this work leaves in the long run on the miners themselves. Instead, working in the mining sector today is a "privilege" for a few. Only mining gives the possibility to earn more money than other productive activities. Even better if one is a professional and directly hired by a mining company. Some even talk of miners as a privileged working class, a "worker aristocracy." Despite apparent differences in the mining world, mining has an omnipresent splendor in the region, perceived in Iquique, Pozo Almonte, or Pica. In the taxi conversations, it turned out that the driver had often had some experience working in a mine.

For my travel to Pozo Almonte, I had to take a van in front of the Santa Maria school and the market of Iquique. Every time I pass by that place, something stirs in me: the history stained with the blood of hundreds of mining workers. At the beginning of the 20th century, a strike of saltpeter miners ended in a massacre. Hundreds of miners were shot when they were taking refuge in the school. These were the beginnings of workers' organizations and part of the history and rise of the communist party in Chile. Today, the renovated school no longer seems to recall the sad story that made it the epicenter of a tragedy. This memory is now part of the historical imaginary, mainly of the left wing, where politics and protest connect with social demands for better working and existence conditions.

The song "Go Woman" by the Chilean folklore band Quillapallun tells the story of the strikers' journey through the desert, of their hopes and fears, evoking that tragic story of death:

"Come on, woman, let's go to town / There'll be many nice houses; you'll like it."

Come on, woman/Let's go to town/ Everything will be different/there's no doubt about it.

There's no need to doubt /trust; you'll see/ because in Iquique/ everyone will understand.

"What's going on? /Tell me/don't shut up anymore." (Quillapayún. Vamos mujer.)

Also, the Chilean writer Volodia Teitelboim described in his novel *Hijo del Salitre* (son of Saltpeter) the intense feeling of the miner Elias, a survivor of the massacre, when he returned to the school after a year.

"...came the ghostly voices moaned the handmaiden. They came from all angles and flooded the front of the Santa Maria school. (...) There was the death of that day. The wounded, the agonies, the search for Brother Luis. All that rubbed impressed his eyes anew. It came back like a bitter dream, the nightmare that repeats itself with open eyes. All that was a painful solicitation, a pain not to the heart but to the conscience. His heart was not gloomy. There was a fierceness in it. He walked around the building. He was hoping for something. He stopped irresolute. He had an impulse: to enter the school, but the doorman stopped him with bad words. What want that man with the bag under his arm? (Teitelboim, 1968, p. 366)

Something in me compels me to take this history as part of my own. Maybe because my grandfather was born in this region in a saltpeter installation; this is my more recent family history linked to the development of the political mobilization of the left under the political regime of Salvador Allende. The political struggle at the beginning of the 20th century was mainly about improving living and working conditions, and the mining sector is an example of this struggle. The massacre at Santa Maria school was one of many. And it is only the idea that so many people were shot because they demanded better living conditions. As an ethnographic approach to these events is not possible today, I nourish my interests by reading the history of that time, especially literature (such as the beautiful novels of the Chilean writer Hernán Rivera Letelier).

The past and the present intertwine and forge joint histories and testimonies that can change according to memory and time. Today I am part of another and the same story.

Here I am in front of the school. I take the bus and leave my sadness aside momentarily, feeling how my expectation grows with the journey's beginning. The van starts, and I see through the window the city houses, no trees, the people walking. The van is moving out of the Iquique, up the hill, towards the desert. Observing the land, I see the landscape passing by from my window, and everything becomes increasingly monotonous—Earth, sand, and sun. The plains become

more and more open, and the spaces are immeasurable. I suspect heat's thermal sensation does not vary much from season to season. Every day of the year seems the same. Despite the monotony of the landscape and the high temperatures, I have always found this journey fascinating. It allowed me to intuit the depth of this cross between geology and human culture: the immensity of the desert and its "ancestral geology," the antiquity of the rock formations, the enigma of the geoglyphs, and the ancestry of the open desert. By observing this kind of entanglement, I perceive the different meanings of the desert as empty or full space. The full significance of ancestry and the sacrifice of no-man-land (an essential narrative of extractive landscapes). Would our Western thought be capable of apprehending the texture of this all-encompassing desert without its eternal fragmentations? Here everything seems to be closely united, formed by a chain of relationships, meanings, and matters unified by bonds of complementarity. Can Western fragmentation and analysis cope with the texture of the desert?

Yet my thoughts are just that, thoughts overlooked by abstract understandings of the world or what I think the world is.

Anyway...



Fig. 2. Andean iconography

(Photo by S. Cornejo)

The journey takes me through sleepy villages like La Huaica and La Tirana. La Tirana is a town that, year after year, receives thousands of visitors for the famous Fiesta de la Tirana, a religious festival in which hundreds of dancers and musicians honor the *Virgen del Carmen*. But throughout the rest of the year, it is just a desert town with hardly any people to be seen on the dusty streets. I move towards the

desert to participate in a public presentation about a change in a Mining installation. It is challenging to dissociate desert and mining, especially when, historically, there is already a

symbolic link between them. Is mining the price to be paid to achieve the much-desired development? If the answer depended on the national history of resource extraction, it would be answered positively.

After more than an hour, we arrived at Pozo Almonte, a dusty city in the desert. I arrived in the afternoon, a few hours before the presentation started, time enough to have a quiet meal at one of the many restaurants on the main street. I chose one that passes through the small town. A place similar to the others. There are almost no trees; only the main square and the dusty roofs of the shops provide some shade. At that time of the day, only a few people walk down the street, sleepy, tired, and dazed by the overwhelming sun. Still, the street is the commercial sector of "Pozo." Bazaars, restaurants, bakeries, and other shops are on each side. Like all cities in the desert, mornings and afternoons are the moments of most activity, and, like in other towns and villages, the critical hour is in the afternoon when the sun burns more than ever.



Fig. 3. The invitation to the workshop
(Photo by S. Cornejo).

I arrived in Pozo to witness a public presentation of a DIA, a "Declaration of Environmental Impact," organized by the state authority SEA. In this presentation, the mining company Quebrada Blanca presented the most critical features of the Declaration as minor changes in the mining installation. A DIA assumes no significant impacts concerning any improvement or infrastructure project. On that day, up to 20-25 participants arrived at a facility of the city administration. The

presentation took place in the conference room of a big white building, the main one for city administration. When I arrived earlier, I walked around the building to take some photos and look at the murals depicting miners and Andean iconography.

The activity follows a given protocol: general information is provided by the SEA team on the various functions, standards, and stages of the environmental assessment system (SEIA). They



Fig. 4. The citizen participation workshops are organised by the company and the SEA (Photo by S. Cornejo).

explained the procedures to follow if citizens want to submit critical questions or observations of a project. To take the proper steps, everybody needs to know this information. Therefore, this first lesson is a form of "training" in which the participants get general information about how the system works and what steps to take if someone would like to contribute comments or criticisms to the project.

After the introduction, according to the protocol, the company's management team Teck Quebrada

Blanca speaks about the changes and expansions of their mines in the highland areas. This presentation also took around 45 minutes. After the presentation, time is given to handle questions and comments from the audience, which are often critical. In some cases, they also show the mistrust and disillusionment of the people towards these kinds of projects. During this Q&A section, the social role of companies and the role of the state were broadly criticized and discussed. Several social leaders from Pozo Almonte intervened, saying they were highly desperate with their social and economic situation. They noted that many people are unemployed and therefore enrolled in their organization. One person explained that they came to the presentation because they were trying to find work in the mine and hoped that Quebrada Blanca would offer the people jobs. The discussion continued about the perceived absence of communication between people and mining companies. It turned out that they were all participants in this citizens' organization called "Fuerza Minera" (Mining force)¹². In another intervention, an advisor of an indigenous community said that he came to know what the project was about, perhaps even to ask critical questions. But he said that asking questions would not change the situation at all. The project evaluation finished when the company got the final

¹² This was one of the few organizations not interested in talking with me about their work.

environmental permits, called RCA. As this already happened, there were no significant changes, whether they liked it or not.

Many of the people present that day were hoping for job opportunities. But despite their general claim for jobs, their frustration grew during the discussion when people realized that the presentation did not mean the offer of work opportunities¹³. Since the project had already been approved, there was no need for further compromises between companies and the local population. The timelines of each project are of utmost importance as these are the different instances where negotiations, agreements, or demands can be forged, and mining companies can commit themselves to contribute to solving local problems. For this reason, it is crucial to know the deadlines to build instances of leverage and contestation in a specific time frame. The anger and frustration of those present grew as people realized that "everything was already sorted out."

In my field notes, I tried to capture the desperation and anger of those present during that day. These reflect an essential character of the local impact of mining. These sentiments of rage and frustration are evident in that day's different answers and opinions. They said how mining companies deal with the population: "*You, as mining companies, should respect us!*". They also referred to the environmental damage caused: "*We do not want the same things to happen here that have already happened in other regions!*" But above all, many people expressed certain helplessness regarding extractive projects in a general sense. As one woman said: "*Law is the law. We have no rights. We are impaired because you use our water. You don't care because you do not live here!*" Nevertheless, the criticism was directed more and more to the official who represents the state Authority SEA, than to the mining company itself. As people were interested in getting jobs, the frustration became concrete criticism and anger against the laws, politics, state regulations, and institutions. "*The law is the law, So I have no power to change anything.*" This critical assessment of state policy and legislation was often expressed. However, when it comes to difficult decisions, either to protect the environment or to create job opportunities, the costs of the environmental impacts are generally accepted regarding the creation of employment. The discourse often oscillates between the creation of wealth, work opportunities, or the "protection of the environment." Citizens' consultations, as already indicated, are

¹³ According to data from Chile's central bank, the level of unemployment in the Tarapaca region has been fluctuating between 6 (July 2019) and 15 (July 2020) percent. It reached its peak in July 2020. https://si3.bcentral.cl/siete/ES/Siete/Canasta?cbFechaInicio=2018&cbFechaTermino=2021&cbFrecuencia=MONTHLY&cbCalculo=SIN_SELECCION&cbFechaBase= (Acceded. 27.05.21.)

embedded in an institutionalized system of environmental assessment standardized as a democratization process. Democratization as concerned actors are informed and should have the right to object to decisions that may affect them (Campbel, 2012; Boutilier, 2017).

The activity lasted longer than planned, and I had to run to the bus to travel back to Iquique. Once on the bus, I recorded a memory protocol. Here is briefly quoted: "*The problem I see is the lack of opportunities and the power and decision-making of citizens to confront these types of projects. These projects are submitted to the SEA, and then relevant observations are made and everything that goes with them, (..) but in the end, this is subject to the government authorities under technical criteria. But the citizen cannot stop a mining project, with no power position against it. And that was very much in evidence today*" (Field notes, Pozo Almonte, 2019).

The development of public consultation can only be foreseeable if it is independent of which persons, stakeholders, or community members will participate in them. The different work expectations generated by mining expansion express part of the conflicts with the local population. The environmental issues emerged later when there was widespread anger that work expectations were not being met.

Days After this experience, a Quechua leader from Pica commented on his appreciation of these processes -because the Quebrada Blanca mining company was also in Pica to present the DIA -. He summarized what I was testifying after the DIA presentation: "*But what can we do about this? We have lost our voice*", he said. "*Unfortunately, today mining is guaranteed by the Chilean state or the laws (...), to be a judge and a party to its procedures.*"

Beyond State regulations, there are other ways to pressure the mining industry, as are voluntary commitments by mining companies. In the literature about the growing application of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), commitment and standards give normative assumptions about the importance of taking the concerns of affected people and territories seriously. It shapes different grades of pressure on the impacts assessment and company reputation according to their "corporate behavior". The compromise of mining companies with sustainable development is often highlighted in the construction of a social narrative reflected in annual mining reports. In these reports, mining companies often present themselves as the "heart of the communities" (Jenkins, 2004), as if "they know what people want." Years of continuous and cooperative work reinforce these bonds of mutual interdependence and express a shift in the "corporate culture." Mining companies have been establishing different connections to the people and

municipalities, sometimes revealing the high degree of material interdependence between the local population and the companies.

Three different aspects should be distinguished regarding the course of the recorded discussion. On the one hand, the time frame in which participation is possible is through public presentations as described here or through the production of written documents that expose critical observations of a project—this knowledge of the process functions regarding various practices. Secondly, environmental awareness is not at the "forefront" of citizen demands. The brief quotations of the described consultation show that expectancies are more often linked to the local population's material well-being and are directly linked to mining activity. Thirdly, citizen consultations, as we will see, help to build claims of cultural difference, in which indigenous livelihoods, their claim for their indigenous rights, and territorial demands become an essential motive that offers different possibilities for action.

Before we outline this discussion about participation and resistance, we focus on the existing environmental institutions that govern these participation, critique, and contestation processes.

Recurso de Reclamación

Existe una instancia de reclamación, donde cualquier persona natural o jurídica que haya realizado una observación y que crea que ésta no fue bien considerada (respondida), puede presentar un Recurso de Reclamación dentro del plazo de 30 días.

Los plazos se cuentan desde que se notificó con la Resolución de Calificación Ambiental (RCA) a la persona natural o jurídica observante.

Proceso de Participación Ciudadana

Los proyectos podrán ser consultados en el sitio web del Servicio de Evaluación Ambiental www.sea.gob.cl (opción "Búsqueda de Proyectos").

Conforme con lo establecido en la Ley N° 19.300, cualquier persona natural o jurídica podrá formular sus observaciones ante el Servicio de Evaluación Ambiental a través de su sitio web, registrándose en la opción "Ingreso Sistema SEIA Electrónico", o bien en papel en las respectivas oficinas de partes de sus direcciones regionales o de la dirección ejecutiva.

IMPORTANTE

Para ejercer el derecho a que su observación sea considerada y también para presentar un recurso de reclamación, Ud. deberá indicar:

PERSONA NATURAL

- Su nombre, RUT y domicilio.
- Nombre del proyecto.
- Los fundamentos ambientales.

PERSONA JURÍDICA

- Nombre completo de la persona jurídica y domicilio de su representante legal.
- Acreditar personería jurídica vigente y representación, adjuntando documentos correspondientes.
- Indicar los fundamentos ambientales.



Todas las observaciones ciudadanas deben tener fundamentos ambientales relativos, por ejemplo, a: Turismo; Paisaje; Salud; Calidad de Vida; Flora, Fauna, Agua, Aire, entre otros.

Para mayor información acérquese a las Direcciones Regionales o visite la página web del Servicio de Evaluación Ambiental: www.sea.gob.cl



PARTICIPACIÓN CIUDADANA EN EL SISTEMA DE EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL



Servicio de Evaluación Ambiental

¿ Por qué participar en la evaluación ambiental de proyectos o actividades?



La participación de la comunidad es fundamental dentro de la evaluación ambiental, porque permite que las personas se informen y opinen responsablemente, acerca del proyecto o actividad, como también, que obtengan respuesta fundada a cada una de sus observaciones.

La ciudadanía aporta información relevante a la evaluación ambiental lo que transparenta la revisión de los Estudios de Impacto Ambiental (EIA) y Declaraciones de Impacto Ambiental (DIA), otorgando solidez a la decisión de las autoridades.

La Ley Sobre Bases Generales del Medio Ambiente N° 19.300, establece en el marco de la participación ciudadana para EIA / DIA:

- Obligación del Servicio de Evaluación Ambiental (SEA) de establecer mecanismos de Participación Ciudadana (PAC).
- El derecho de la ciudadanía de conocer los contenidos de los EIA y la DIA.
- El derecho a formular observaciones sobre los contenidos de los EIA y la DIA.
- El derecho a recibir respuestas fundadas a sus observaciones.
- El derecho a presentar un recurso de reclamación si considera que su observación no fue bien considerada.



Plazos de la Participación Ciudadana

Para los EIA el plazo de participación es de 60 días hábiles. En este período se desarrollan las actividades de PAC y se reciben observaciones ciudadanas las que serán respondidas en el proceso de evaluación.

En el caso de las DIA el proceso de PAC debe ser solicitado en un plazo de 10 días a partir de la publicación del listado de los proyectos en el Diario Oficial el primer día hábil de cada mes.

Esta solicitud debe ser presentada por escrito al SEA por a lo menos dos organizaciones ciudadanas o diez personas naturales directamente afectadas.

Dicho proceso tendrá un período de 20 días hábiles.

Las observaciones ciudadanas son consideradas en la Evaluación Ambiental de los proyectos o actividades.

!!! PARTICIPA !!!

Fig. 5. Informative tripticon that explains the importance of citizen consultation in Chile and features of the environmental law and citizen participatory processes.

2.1.2. Environmental Institutions in Chile

At a Latin American level, Chile has always stood out in the operation of its regulations, reporting sustained economic growth over time protected by a solid institutional framework. Politicians have expressed not without a particular pride that "institutions work," that regulations are clear, provide the regulatory framework, and set clear, defined, and precise rules; therefore, investment projects are handled with some legal security. To establish technical procedures that have nothing to do with political colors but obey the call of economic growth, technocracy, and development, generating employment and improving infrastructure. Indeed, all this has been achieved in Chile to some extent. When someone walks around Santiago in the east sector, you may think they are not in Latin America anymore. Where are the poor people, of which so much is spoken? The poor population in the *poblaciones*, the delinquency, the domestic violence? Large malls and hypermarkets show that the modernization process since the 90s had a clear trend towards an *American style* focused on consumption and high living standards. As an environmental NGO activist told me when we met for an interview in this sector in Santiago, el "Barrio Alto" (high-towns) where the rich people live, "*Look around you. This is where the wealth of the north ends*".

It is well known that Chile's productive sector is based on the country's comparative advantages, strongly focused on extracting raw materials. In the case of copper, mining accounts for around 10% of GDP and 50% of total exports, and an investment directly linked to natural resources accounts for 35% of the total (Astorga, 2019, 23). Even in times of pandemic, the mining sector is growing. The Chilean institutional framework was constituted to achieve big investment projects nationwide. The promotion of a developmental agenda began in parallel with implementing environmental institutions. These latter are necessary to give foreign investors minimal guidelines and juridical security.

The governments of the *Concertación* -a center-left political coalition -had to start from scratch regarding environmental regulations wholly ignored during the dictatorship. After the dictatorship, the promotion of a weak environmental policy happens in order not to hinder economic growth. Furthermore, to reinforce it. The *status quo* was maintained, and this shrank the hope of some environmentalists who thought the beginning of democracy would mean more responsible environmental policies (Silva, 1991, 3). However, pressured by external economic agents and a growing internal environmental movement thus, by 1997, produced an operational

environmental, institutional framework in line with neoliberal resource extraction (Rivera, 2010). In a study about learned lessons from ecological conflicts in Chile, the authors wrote:

"Companies have had to learn that citizens weigh the environmental, social, and cultural costs of projects differently and that economic benefits are not always sufficient to compensate for them. In turn, they have been forced to modify their usual project design, appraisal, and procedures for project design, evaluation, and implementation incorporating not only the environmental dimension but also citizen participation." (Rojas et al, 2003, p. 23).

But there is agreement among researchers that despite specific regulations, these were not "good" and "clear" enough to avoid the number of socio-ecological conflicts that have plagued the country over the last 30 years. Social and environmental dimensions need to be sufficiently incorporated into the development criteria, which have to do with the quality of life and territorial impacts of extractive projects (Astorga, 2019). Chilean public policy has promoted a narrative that puts economic development before other social or environmental criteria, which is widely recognized. This narrative states that *"ecological issue as a complete reconciliation between 1) economic development understood as an exploitation of nature, 2) modern public institutions as a broadening of citizen participation, and 3) environmental protection as a duty of citizens"* (Campos & Larenas: 2012, p. 49). With this, some authors note a gradual process of de-politicization of the socio-environmental conflicts themselves, which in turn has had repercussions on the processes of deliberation and the continued reduction of the public and social character of the ecological debate (Campos & Larenas: 2012, 49; Carruthers, 2001). Some authors go even further in their critical assessment, arguing that *"the modernization of environmental institutions in Chile consolidates the informal oligarchic networks that have traditionally connected its main actors: investors, State, and experts"* (Pelfini & Mena, 2017, p. 252). Environmental policies are subordinated to the priority economic and social objective, the development agenda driven by gradual economic growth (Pelfini & Mena, 2017, p. 255). Here is where the visions in Chile begin to show their clear political colors regarding a "country project" based on the wealth of natural resources and the development of forestry, fishery, agribusiness, and mining. After thirty years of Neoliberalism that has gone hand in hand with weak environmental institutions, the current situation faces essential changes. In the last years, it has been recognized as a "structural failure" of the Chilean system, given the country growing inequality. Still, the role of environmental institutions as a legitimizing process of an export and extractivist economic model has been harshly criticized. As far as the situation after 18 October is concerned, the political right wing, and in general, defenders of the "neoliberal system," continues to interpret the cause of the outburst as being fundamentally economic reasons, such

as stagnation in wages and a slowdown in investment, hence in the creation of jobs. It shows excessive confidence in what the economic indicators say about Chilean society (Larrain, 2020). For those economic groups, in straightforward terms, Chile was on the right track. Even right-wing sectors continue to argue that the problem in the country is not inequality but political corruption (linked to an inefficient state administration). So, one of the main problems was the stagnation of the Chilean economy, which has to do with economic growth.

Here, I take the work done by Astorga, not as the official version of the current government of Sebastian Piñera (2018-2022), and the political and economic sector he represents, but as close to them. That is to say, the concerns expressed should be taken as a diagnosis and a warning to the business sector to deal with the environmental issues that concern people. In his work published in 2019, the author points out the cost of environmental conflicts (expressed in monetary terms). The research indicates that investment has shown an upward trend but also mentions that around 46 investment projects worth US\$57.87 billion were halted in 2016 (Astorga, 2019, 26). The referred document does, however, point to the importance of generating an economic plan that emphasizes environmental measurements to prevent future disputes from arising and jeopardizing future investment. However, this is already done through implementing an Environmental Assessment System (SEIA), but not effective enough. "The environmental authorities and the technicians in charge of administering the SEIA argue that the SEIA is not designed to reject projects but to improve them environmentally. During the life of the SEIA, more than 95 of the projects submitted for assessment have been approved" (Rojas et al., 2003, 24). So, environmental governance cannot be disconnected from the primary goal of reaching development in a context of a neoliberal institutional framework.

Regarding ecological impacts, the country's environmental agenda is foremost reactive, "*that intervenes to advise, justify or mitigate the undesired effects of pre-established agendas related to productive or extractive investment projects*" (Pelfini & Mena: 2017, p. 257). Other observers as David Carruthers, comment that the framework of environmental law is "*infused with idealistic norms of prevention, participation, gradualism, and the 'polluter pays' principle.*" Despite well-intentioned administrative rationalism put into practice after the dictatorship, environmental frameworks have only been limited in their efficacy, "*they have been constructed and put into practice in a polity and society in which elitist and neoliberal principles, practices, and priorities prevail*" (Carruthers, 2001, p. 349). According to this author, the prevailing

neoliberal principles governing Chilean society are the main legacies of Pinochet's dictatorship¹⁴.

One of the technical devices conceived by environmental institutions is the elaboration of Environmental Assessment Studies (Spanish acronyms: EIA), technical instruments that help "to *decide whether to move forward with a proposal, based on an understanding and assessment of the environmental consequences of its implementation*" (Espinoza, 2007, p. 22). These environmental tools of "legibility" (Scott, 1998) align with the spirit of sustainable development. These reports are extensive and interdisciplinary as they cover various fields of knowledge. A single EIA can consist of several volumes, integrating multidisciplinary knowledge: from a characterization of flora and fauna, hydrological, geographical, geological, and anthropological knowledge is widely exposed and described. Accordingly, this profusion of diverse expertise gathered in a single report creates significant difficulties for people interested in knowing what it says about the environment, the culture, or the territory and the impact it foresees. For this reason, it is not easy for concerned people to understand, question, or criticize these projects.

In 2019 I witnessed in a public consultation that a SEA agent tried to guide the reading of these Studies. He recommended that people start by reading the "Executive Summary" of the project and then going to the chapter of most interest. An indigenous spoke person answered that this kind of study is incomprehensible even for those who had studied at a good university in Santiago. He also criticized that the deadline for the pronouncement needed to be minimal. In other words, the communities only have little time to assemble their responses or critical observations. During his speech, he made critical observations that point to the same processes "*There is an absolute inequality in procedures, and in the end, they end up complying with this citizen and indigenous participation as a simple formality*" (Fieldnotes. Public Consultation. Pica. 2019). Procedures and knowledge are integral parts of these processes that clearly indicate that everything established as characteristics of a territory or an ecosystem must be slowly investigated, given its particular character. Knowledge is fundamentally specific and partial in these reports, although a mantle of technicality covers it. (An issue that will be deepened in chapter Four, regarding the implication of an asymmetric positioning of knowledge systems as

¹⁴ Carruthers note, "Neoliberalism leaves its mark in several ways. Globally, it informs environmental discourses ranging from 'free-market environmentalism' at the libertarian end of the spectrum to the less ideological 'ecological modernization. In the former, environmental degradation is a side-effect of excessive government and poorly specified property rights. The solution is not regulation or management, but instead the creative expansion of private property rights into the remaining commons (land, air, water, species)." (Carruthers, 2001, 349)

the sociotechnical and local knowledge.) I will make the point here that knowledge becomes a disputed and, therefore, political field since it shows that different concerns and orientations connect antagonism toward the future. Thus, various semiotic, scientific, and cosmological elements can be combined around these projects and entered into dispute and discussion processes.

As already described, public consultations are spaces where knowledge is commonly disputed, but finally, a criterion prevails, and that is what the law gives. That criterion gives the final cut to any discussion. Especially in my first weeks on the field, I was surprised that so many people not only knew what the indigenous law said, the ILO Convention 169, the water code, or the environmental law, but many quoted whole paragraphs from these laws and regulations. Of course, they have to know the "framework." But my surprise was just a sign that I did not yet understand the effect these regulations and laws have had on people and their livelihoods.

2.1.3. Ecologies of expertise

Indigenous peoples are today essential actors in the normal functioning of mining companies because communities are located in the proximity of Impacted Areas by mining. Consultation processes are crucial to normal relationships between indigenous groups, state authorities, assessors, and the company's managers. These diverse forms of encounter are mediated through environmental institutions and framed through techno-scientific language. One primary role of indigenous community advisors is to evaluate the various knowledge fields of the projects (EIA), making them understandable to the communities.

An assessor explained his experience working with indigenous communities as follows:

"I had the experience of informally advising a community in the second region. And, of course, you see the platform (of the SEA) and the documents and do not fully understand them. Then you have to translate these documents for the people. You indicate what legal steps they might develop. At the same time, they may have private conversations with the company. It's part of the rules of the game. Because there is also the possibility of obtaining "fresh resources." But as the community processes deepen, disagreements can also arise." (Consultant, Iquique, 2019)

In the last decades, a new work branch has thus emerged in the region, focused on building advisements to the indigenous communities regarding extractive projects. One crucial point is the asymmetry of power relations between companies and communities, as the latter often need the financial means for hiring consultancy. The governmental authorities have funds to finance

consultancy services that the Communities can request. However, according to some consultants, is not enough money to provide "good" and long-term consultancy. This is why the communities prefer to negotiate directly with the companies to obtain funding for a required consultation, a problematic issue, as it is intended to contribute to a better understanding of the projects and thus strengthen the strategic position of communities vis-à-vis mining companies.

For the consultants (or advisors), negotiations with the corporate sector are part of the regular proceedings. It is the purpose of the consultancy process, at least in some cases, to make the voice of communities heard as affected communities and territory. The person quoted above also told me about consulting processes' importance, role, and impacts on knowledge production. This quotation refers to various important issues elaborated on three main ideas.

1. Consultation processes as a field of tension in which different knowledge and ontological claims are handed out also understood as translational procedures,
2. Consulting processes become a guide to various options for action to be taken by indigenous communities, and
3. The reference to institutionalized "rules of the game" allows for different negotiation procedures between private actors in a standardized context of Chilean environmental governance.

It requires entire interdisciplinary teams of consultants to assess the overall impact of a project broadly. But the growing interest of affected people can be related to a general concern about knowledge and expertise, while the knowledge has a clearly "technical" functionality. As an indigenous leader comments: *"Because even if you read it (the project), you do not understand it because it is composed of different areas (...) You cannot understand it all you want. I have tried to educate myself on a few things as a leader. However, I still do not understand everything"*. (Indigenous spokesperson, Matilla. 2018/19)

Regarding these reports, the consultation process underlays dynamic assumptions about accountability and "right" and "wrong" knowledge. How deep and accurate should that knowledge be to support a project of a magnitude like a mining project? Indigenous people often demand more precise knowledge that integrates the relational aspects of territory and water. But the managers of the mining companies are also aware of the problem regarding a holistic understanding of ecosystems, territorial entanglements, and hydrological connectedness. In a consultation process, one of the mining managers said that they know that "things" are connected in many ways, but as project "holders," they need to respond to the

requirements given by Chilean law. So, things need to be presented in separate terms. In the end, mining companies and consulting firms only follow what the law dictates on the expert knowledge it shall contain.

Assessments for the communities mean that technical and scientific knowledge must be translated into a more "understandable" language as part of a dynamic relation between knowledge acquisition and power asymmetries. Some leaders try to counteract these asymmetries through educational efforts to improve their technical skills. These issues overlap with translational processes in which technical language is the right. If people are willing to understand or criticize that knowledge, they must accept the technical standards of environmental rules and speak (or write) the required language. However, they are also part of democratic participation bodies in global societies, where the processes of legitimation open space for interaction, communication, and resistance among actors within different power relations (Callon et al. 1, 2009; Jassanof, 2004). In other words, translation and democratic participation are both parts of a political field of identity and indigenous rights claims. Public consultation represents different tenses of the same process giving shape to spaces of interaction for criticism and contestation.

In this context, translational processes become an essential component of indigenous reflexivity regarding how indigenous knowledge is incorporated into a "specific" ontological register (e.g., into a scientific language) and vice-versa. Therefore, bringing the focus to translation means becoming aware of an operative radical alterity underlying language, practices, and meanings. However, the diversity among indigenous claims needs to be fixed and substantiated (De la Cadena, 2016). Also, despite situations where asymmetries and uneven power become apparent, the open spaces allow for a certain freedom of action and practices in which tactics and other strategic measures can be undertaken (De Certeau, 1988).

In an interview with the director of the regional museum of Iquique, he told me about his view of indigenous knowledge and worlding practices. With a high sensibility for indigenous understanding, he criticized the colonialist character of these techno-scientific procedures as part of Chilean environmental institutions: *"It is as if the voice of the communities has no value and they have to have a valid interlocutor, another scientist. But that also concerns the coldness and lack of soul with which the system operates"* (Archeologist Iquique, 2021). The neo-colonial character has to do with the impossibility of indigenous groups expressing themselves on their terms. Environmental institutionality, such as the Environmental Impact Assessment

System, is handled exclusively in "scientific" terms, i.e., "technical." In chapter Four, I will develop a close reading of these EIA and critical reports that collect and translate the voices of the communities. In these processes, diverse knowledge based on traditional practices converges with the techno-scientific languages mediated by the work of professional and technical advisors who handle the languages and knowledge tacitly accepted as the right one. Beyond the position that these advisors may have or for whom they work, the knowledge seeks to cement a particular vision about territory, about what "affectation," "contamination," and "impacts" mean.

Significant financial resources are needed to sustain a reasonable and responsible consultancy process for the communities. Before, I indicated that the government has an amount of money given through the SEA platform; in this way, the communities can obtain financial resources to pay consultants and advisors. Nevertheless, many interviewed think that the resources offered by state authorities need to be more comprehensive to ensure an interdisciplinary approach to the EIA or other technical interventions of mining companies. Thus, some interviewed professionals told me they had presented interdisciplinary models to the SEA to include them in the existing procedure officially. They say that this would allow more participation and a multidisciplinary focus, as otherwise, it would not be possible for communities to understand the different dimensions of a given project¹⁵. However, according to some of the most critical indigenous visions, the central role of consultants is still to negotiate and conclude negotiations between indigenous and mining companies and not to stop the projects. One assessor described to me their role as professionals:

"Our role is to try to orient them (the communities). We always try to enforce their rights. What every community is looking for is discussed from the beginning. We can say "No!" or "Accept this or that." But in the end, we (only) give advice. We accompany them, but only they decide what to do with their land, water, and animals. (Consultant, Iquique. 2019)

As trained professionals, consultants are hired by the communities to give advice and guide possible future actions. However, their role is limited to that because, in the end, it's the community that decides whether negotiations are possible. However, interpretations of what

¹⁵ This idea is based on the following statement by a consultant: "And I have made formal proposals to the SEA from multidisciplinary teams, (...) with a clear timetable and everything that should be done accordingly, and they have always rejected it because of the costs because they don't understand that this has to be multidisciplinary teams, people with certain professional backgrounds. In the end, you have only one alternative. Then you work on a settlement. Usually, it forces you to go for that alternative, an agreement between private individuals."

that assessment ultimately stands for can vary widely regarding advice. An example of this is what an employee of the governmental Agency SEA said. He criticized the role of consultants for exploiting or aggravating certain conflict situations instead of alleviating them through dialogue. In his words:

"For many professionals, an important niche has been created to advise indigenous communities. But it has not met indigenous peoples and the Service (SEA) expectations. Because it was expected that the Service would do more conscious work and everything to bring the issues closer to the people instead of looking for weaknesses (of the projects) and attacking them. This is not the spirit" (Official SEA, Iquique, 2019)

Following this statement, what is the "real" purpose of consultancy, the official calls their "real spirit"? This statement is remarkable regarding the definitions of the ILO convention regarding the general sense of consultation processes, understanding them as democratic procedures for reaching consent between conflicted parties. However, in the real world of confrontation, interpretations may differ from what the "ideal" world of rules dictates (See Valverde, 2003). The political positioning of the different assessors is also highlighted in other studies¹⁶. The situatedness of assessors can influence the whole assessment system, mainly regarding the critical inspection of the projects.

Consultants are not neutral actors. Therefore, it becomes clear the different meanings of assessments and consultancy: from the perspective of some actors, guidance should mainly help to speed up the completion of procedures. For others, negotiations are mostly there to facilitate agreements between private companies and communities. While another group of actors believes guidance should knowingly strengthen communities to stop extractive projects or criticize their weaknesses. The last one is the "extremist" position criticized by the SEA official quoted above.

Communities can have different reasons for criticizing, accepting, or rejecting a project. This will highly depend on the degree of internal cohesion, identity, and resonance within a plethora of interests of community members. In this game of confrontation between different interests, consultation processes also function as a space of translational procedures. Consultants and advisors are a constitutional part of contested knowledge and knowledge production, and their

¹⁶ A study about the systematization of perception of the different State services regarding indigenous consultation processes mentions that one of the main problems is the difficult position of assessors. Several state agents have a critical opinion about the role of consultants and their work with the indigenous communities. (See Castro et al. I, 2018)

strategic function as translators makes them an important piece in the political game. Knowledge becomes political in its agonist feature and mobilizes in favor of particular territorial and identity demands.

So far, I have described some issues related to the consultation processes. I made a historical overview of environmental institutions in Chile and how it has tended to favor the extraction of natural resources in promoting economic growth and development. I have developed the role of professional consultation and assessment as a necessary procedure for criticizing and commenting on extractive projects presented as environmental impact studies. We have seen wide divergences in considering the role of the consultancy in working with communities to represent their views, fears, and concerns. Before we delve into these complex arrangements forged by consultation processes, the next chapter will describe corporatist public engagement in the mining business sector.

2.2. Capitalism and Corporate public engagement

"The business of business is business."

Milton Friedman

During the seventies and eighties, several legal reforms changed Chile's economy opening to foreign investment with strong incentives for foreign capital and implementing a low tax regime (Taylor, 2006). One crucial economic analysis made by a group of Chilean economists at the beginning of the seventies, during the Allende government, argues for the need for "structural changes" in the Chilean economy. Regarding the issue of state control over the country's economy, the study states:

"A general argument for unrestricted state intervention is the need to plan the country's activities as a whole. We agree with this need. Nevertheless, it is necessary to clarify that planning must be carried out with clear growth objectives and targets and that indirect mechanisms and incentives can be used to guide productive resources. In Chile, planning has been a word lacking in content or precision to establish control mechanisms, whose only objective is to control for control's sake and not an efficient orientation in using productive resources". (CEP, 1992, p. 31)

This document, today known as "El Ladrillo" ("The Brick"), constitutes a recipe book of economic policies to stimulate economic growth and development. It recommended guidelines implemented during the dictatorship and continued during the democratic transition from the 1990s onwards. It constitutes a manifesto of faith in the freedom of the market in the most explicit Friedmanian spirit. *El Ladrillo* analyzes all the "vices" of the planned economy of the *Unidad Popular*, such as excessive state control in all productive spheres of society, low efficiency, bloated bureaucracy, high inflation rates, and politicization of institutions, among others (CEP, 1992, p. 30-33). It set the tone for developing an efficient economic policy free from the "shackles" of a socialist state. It also reinforces this blind faith in human progress based on economic growth as the overriding factor for social and political well-being¹⁷.

Driven by an authoritarian state, laissez-faire became the guiding principle of the new market economy in Chile. However, as Andrew Gamble once suggested that *"the problem with the term*

¹⁷ Interestingly, this faith in both the market and economic growth remains intact in Chile's agents of political and economic right wing sector. It defends the economic model from its increasing attacks since October 2019, giving support to the idea that the social protests were a product of the economic stagnation of the Chilean economy during the second term of Michele Bachelet (2014-2018) (thus also indirectly blamed for the outburst) (See Larrain, 2020).

laissez-faire is that it suggests a quiescent or inattentive state. Capitalist states have never been that." (Gamble, 1979, p. 5). According to Gamble, the dividing line between state intervention and laissez-faire is not as clear as commonly assumed because, in the end, nobody defending the "free economy" has ever suggested that capitalism can function without a strong State (1979, p. 5). Or rather, beyond its fuzzy boundaries, has been the crucial aspect of the policy focusing on those areas in which the state should and should not intervene. An example of this policy application has been the gradual construction of laws favoring specific economic sectors. This issue is recognized as one of the main critiques during the Chilean popular uprising of 2019. In terms of the German sociologist Norbert Lechner, this problem is framed in the paradox between "modernization" and "democratization" processes in Latin America since the neoliberal reforms took place. While modernization is subordinated to the growing rationality of the market (and the pressure to ensure a globally oriented economy), on the other side, the democratization process is based on the principle of self-determination of civil society as the free election of political representatives, and decision-making processes based on law. Both imperative, according to Lechner, respond to competing principles. He notes: *"The democratic principle of a deliberately created order according to collective self-determination is contradictory to the principle of the market principle as an unintentional equilibrium resulting from the free exchange between individuals. How can the two processes be reconciled?"* (Lechner, 2003, p. 2)

According to Lechner, the deliberative political order resulting from that tension has increasingly depoliticized Latin American societies. The national articulation between policies and economy put resource extraction at the center of a "country project" in which mining has always been a critical axis. In this scenario of a positive vision of economic growth and human progress, the role of the state and private companies is a fundamental alignment to understand the discussions and tensions that the articulation of economy, law, and politics acquire in specific moments as the current disputes about the tax status of private mining. As is the case with a sustained rise in the price of copper and the disastrous economic effects of the pandemic (2020-2022), the questions regarding the state's role are widely discussed, mainly regarding the rents obtained from resource extraction. However, lobbying corporations pressure politics and public opinion. The corporate discourse emphasizes that mining wealth should not only be expressed in terms of income captured by the Chilean state but also in the value, supply chains, and infrastructure (SONAMI, 2021). Similarly, when discussing the wealth generated and obtained by the Chilean state, one can appreciate the plethora of ideas, opinions, and notions that encourage specific sectors of the political class to change the regulations that rule these

procedures. Chilean society has changed from a citizenry that has been increasingly empowering and becoming aware of the political decisions that affect territories and people.

The general claim for "more state," state responsibility, and accountability is echoed in several ways across Chilean society (summarized in the claim to move from a "subsidiary state" to a "state of rights"). Different governmental areas have been the focus of criticism. Since 2011, the various protests for the right to education and other social demands have been increasing, focusing on environmental damage, hydrological projects, the war against Mapuche communities in the south of Chile, and the existence of the so-called "zones of sacrifices." These, among many other issues raised in the last ten years, the disconformity of Chilean society and the general de-legitimation of Chilean law and government finally exploded in October 2019. In this sense, the criticism of the absence of the state has permeated the public discussion. For some, it represents an actual "minimum state" situation, which has allowed the existence of a normative "functional vacuum" that has favored the implementation of extractive projects that have seriously damaged the environment and affected the local population in many ways. Despite the vast geographical difference of a country like Chile, there is a shared experience where the power of major corporations is confronted by affected citizenship. An affective reaction that many times turns into anger. Under these experiences, the citizen claim is configured under the notion of "human rights": the right to education, the right to live in a healthy environment, and the right to water access.

Having described the relationship between consultations and environmental institutions, approached people's analysis and perception of how environmental institutions work, and discussed the role that citizen and indigenous consultations play in the discussion of extractive projects in the framework of Chilean environmental regulation, now we will provide an approach to the corporate culture regarding questions of sustainability and responsibility.

In a globalized world, evaluation and critique are articulated in different ways. What happens in a specific part of the world can make world news and significantly impact public opinion. Knowledge about the effects of mining has also become globalized as a growing research field because of the critical work of environmental NGOs and media (Kirsch, 2017). In this context, there have been substantial changes in the social and ecological standards of global mining, expressed in norms and guidelines such as IRMA, ISO, and the OECD's human rights due diligence guidelines.

During my fieldwork, I had some difficulties talking with the managers of the mining companies. I tried to approach mainly the workers of the departments in charge of "community relations". However, I could only interview one person from the Collahuasi company, which had an office in Pica. It was a reasonably fluid conversation, but to more "critical" questions about contamination or water use, my interviewee rapidly changed the topic of the conversation. It was even more challenging to approach the company Teck- Quebrada Blanca. From the beginning, I was not allowed to record the conversation with one of the community relations officers in Pica. Before the conversation started, the interviewee said that I could not expect from the conversation with her anything that I could not already find on the company's website. Ultimately, I took this "recommendation" seriously, as much of the corporate perspective I will outline here derives from sustainability reporting and some of the ethical standards that now guide much of the international mining business. So, in this chapter, we will delve into the "corporative perspective" outlined with the help of environmental reports and various regulations that promote different forms of community relations and engagement. I will discuss these corporate policies as forms of corporate behavior and CSR. It is important not to lose sight of these efforts. Of course, we are talking about economically powerful companies with the financial and human means to promote a "better image" of themselves and their activity. Focusing on the relationship between mining companies and the local population allows delving into the corporatist perspective, mainly about their self-declaration devices, intermingled, especially in people's accounts when there is already an experience and a moral counterbalance of what should be done.

So, the main target of this chapter is to understand the series of relationships generated from a corporate approach to community engagement, looking closely at these approaches about the ways how capitalism is set in motion by integrating the population's demands and making them participants in "common interests" of corporations. For this, we will delve into *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) approaches and the *Social License to Operate* (SLO) as discourses, lines of action, and commitment declared by companies.

Beyond whether these changes of a corporatist approach respond to global pressures -like the engagement with a global environmental agenda of sustainable development- over time, more companies have adopted procedures to improve their social acceptance. Under this context, mining companies have widely delivered CSR discourse because of pressures to adopt international standards and regulations in line with the current discourse of sustainable development. These processes are often interpreted as a change in the corporate culture of

mining corporations based on declared environmental, ethical, and moral standards and particular concerns within the affected population. Here I want to question how CSR is handled in local contexts and how it relates to democratization processes regarding knowledge and public participation in decision-making practices.

2.2.1. Developing "good" corporate behavior

Why is corporate engagement necessary, and how does it conceive its role in promoting local development? In the framework of the elaboration of a national mining policy (PNM2050), the expert on mining José Donoso elaborates on the various guidelines, regulations, and experiences of the different ways mining companies have been approaching local needs, especially those of indigenous communities. The indigenous population plays a crucial role in the temporary sustainability of mining projects as these projects are located in indigenous ancestral territories, increasingly under pressure because of the expansion of the resource frontiers. Socio-environmental conflicts tend to grow, and also the number of legal disputes and the deterioration of mistrust towards the state, its rules, and the mining sector itself. These factors imply various challenges for companies that have become more aware of these problems.

Moreover, mistrust is generated by continuous wrong decisions and the exclusion of affected actors from decision-making. As the Japanese political scientist and philosopher Francis Fukuyama argues, trust is an all too important element for the health of any capitalist system, and it lies in the intersection between "culture" and "economic development" (Fukuyama, 1998). Therefore, one crucial task is to enhance trust in the corporate sector. Mining companies are proposing possible solutions, and facing that sustainable mining industry over time implies committing to new proposals for action toward communities and their territories.

Implementing a national mining policy in Chile attempts to address these problems by proposing solutions and some orientations. Its idea is to create an "inclusive" mining industry as a national goal:

"Our mining is integrated with society and its communities and works collectively on its challenges and opportunities (...) Our mining has managed to build stable collaborative relationships with the communities and native peoples that inhabit the geographical areas where they operate, based on trust and mutual respect, jointly enhancing territorial development" (Quoted Donoso, Política Nacional Minera (PNM). 2050)

The main focus is on three aspects as

- *Maintaining a permanent relationship between all stakeholders through effective, transparent, and independent information, communication, and participation mechanisms.*
- *Achieving collaborative territorial development agreements and defining the mechanisms required for monitoring and evaluation.*
- *Promote productive linkages, entrepreneurship, and local employment generation". (Donoso, PNM 2050.)*

Affected communities need to be able to receive the benefits and positive externalities of mining, promoting better participation mechanisms for general citizenship, indigenous communities, and women (gender parity). Such statements of good intentions are commonly expressed in the Reports of several mining conglomerates. For instance, the document "Mining Companies and Indigenous Peoples in Chile: Good Practices for Building Mutually Beneficial Relationships" (2014), prepared by the government of Chile and the World Bank, seeks to identify, promote and share good practices in terms of relations with indigenous communities, a condition for the implementation of responsible mining. The study states:

"Today, mining companies increasingly undertake actions that change their organizational culture with neighboring communities. In many cases, this change has contributed to improving the quality of life of the communities with which they share space and generating development in the regions where mining projects are located. (...)

Developing viable mining projects in indigenous territories requires a different starting point from how these initiatives are traditionally executed. The project will be more feasible if community leaders and investors are willing to cede part of their considerations for a shared goal" (Chilean Ministry of Mining, 2014).

This document emphasizes the types of practices that mining companies implement and should implement to approach the territories where the mines will be installed. For this, it establishes recommendations on geographical and territorial linkages, generates effective communication channels, implements measures to protect cultural and natural heritage, and supports local development and value creation in the community.

Other corporate bodies, such as the ICMM (international council of Mining & Metals), have also produced good practice guidelines in which indigenous rights, traditional values, and the disadvantaged situation of indigenous people are widely recognized. For example, the ICMM report states:

"Indigenous Peoples have historically been disadvantaged, discriminated against, and dispossessed of their lands, and continue to be disadvantaged relative to most other sectors of society. They are also likely to be more vulnerable to the negative impacts of development, particularly those that negatively affect natural resources and culture. On the other hand, Indigenous Peoples potentially have much to gain from the positive effects of a mining project if the projects are properly addressed. Managing these issues requires special attention to the interests and rights of indigenous groups at all stages of the mining project life cycle". (ICMM, 2015)

The same document recognizes the importance of complying with ILO Convention 169 and the beneficial situation for the "responsible" companies if they comply with those requirements.

There are already some cases of shared benefits with indigenous communities in Chile. In his contribution to a national mining policy 2050, Donoso cites a final report by the National Lithium Commission, where it is stated that

"ILO Convention 169 establishes that indigenous peoples must participate in the economic benefits of productive projects established in their ancestral territories. For this reason, the Atacameño community has requested to participate in a proportion of the sales and royalties collected by the Chilean Treasury annually, in a proportion of no less than three percent, without prejudice to the possibility of entering into collaboration agreements for mutual benefit between the Council of Atacameño Peoples and some of the companies that benefit from the Salar de Atacama. The Council of Atacameño Peoples proposes that the income received by the communities is used to improve the quality of life of all the indigenous people of Atacama and to promote the development of each of the communities that make up the Council of Atacameño Peoples." (Quoted in Donoso. PNM2050)

As noted above, monetary compensations are becoming more and more frequent. The agreement with the mining company and the council of Atacameño people is perhaps one of the most significant agreements regarding payment. In chapters nine, ten, and eleven, I will look more closely at monetary compensation's impact on the indigenous culture.

Other documents aim to improve the capacity for information sharing and dialogue between indigenous peoples and mining companies. International corporate conglomerates are interested in promoting closer ties between corporations and indigenous communities, and the Canadian government has contributed to the elaboration of documents to reach that goal. The *National Mining Policy* takes up the experiences and recommendations that corporate bodies have made based on past experiences. The role of the indigenous is recognized as central for new extractive projects because of their cultural particularities, which are widely acknowledged and mentioned across these different reports, documents, and guidelines. However, the empirical evidence gathered during the multiple conversations in the Tarapacá region indicates other stories and

issues despite companies' more significant commitment to meeting the people's environmental and social requirements.

2.2.2. Voices that disagree

After briefly examining the statements and commitments of prominent corporate actors, I will focus again on community members' and local leaders' perceptions and ideas about these relationships. Many critics say that they had nothing against mining "itself." Moreover, the region has been socially and culturally enriched by mining activity for more than a hundred years. Therefore, the issue is not to be understood as a complete rejection of all mining activity but rather the question and demand for better and responsible measures by companies and legal regulations. Nevertheless, facing the question of the degree of rejection, acceptance, or collaboration with mining is where the local population split into their visions, moral judgments, and analysis.

As we have been drawing, "community relations" is an essential aspect of the social meaning of mining companies to generate close communication and connection with locals. Corporate policies indicate a degree of social (mainly financial) engagement with local communities—a meaningful interrelation for the further approval of future projects. An indigenous leader gives a critical assessment of this: *"The mining companies are interested in having their projects approved... their approval is linked to the relationship they have with the community as a social business relationship, but also with this issue of indigenous consultation"* (Indigenous leader. Matilla. 2019). Another interlocutor who works in the cultural area of the Pica municipality has a much more critical idea about this: *"But the mining companies also make "fantastic lobbies." They work with the communities, and the communities only want to obtain something from them."* He refers directly to the role of financial resources often associated with negotiation with the companies. He continues: *"But still, all they can give is just crumbs, the balances of production and profits, what they spill here. They are also protected by laws (...). So I think they give insignificant contributions compared to the wealth they produce."* He compares the situation with the Spanish conquerors looking for gold, changing it for "crumbs." *"So, the story that the Spaniards offered little crystal balls...they (mining companies) also deliver mirrors. When they give ten computers to a school, lights in the street, or money for a festival, they are just crumbs"* (Pica, Municipality. Pica. 2019). The conception of what is 'fair,' or what the companies should give back to local communities for what they have taken or destroyed, is still part of a broader discussion.

During my fieldwork in 2019, I witnessed a presentation made to the Regional Councillors (CORE) by the team of the Collahuasi Company. The company presented the main feature of its social engagements and different social projects across the region. Most of the Regional councillors praised the company's work in regional development. When it was time for Q&A, only one of the Regional Councilors commented critically that the mining companies only make "small contributions," such as the different projects they presented. He asks why Collahuasi does not do "bigger work," such as the construction of a hospital as another mining company did in a neighboring region. Mining associations repeatedly highlight the importance of mining for the local economy as an undeniable fact. A recent document published by National Mining Society SONAMI states, "*Mining is inserted in the economic system as a whole, associated with suppliers, innovation, quality employment, human development, infrastructure, high standards, sustainable operations, regionalization, and other similar concepts, generating social and cultural value beyond the economic one.*" (SONAMI, 2021, p. 20)

Despite an apparent disagreement on how much the mining company contributes to the region and how much it actually should contribute, the social consequences of the interrelation between mining companies and local communities is a topic that generates divisions among people and families. Protecting the environment or obtaining financial income from mining are weighed against each other. A person from Pica explained: "*Some want to protect, and some want to win. Then there are divisions and conflicts within the communities. The mining company only talks with the family that wants to earn something and leaves the others aside. Then they make the families fight between them.*" (Worker of Pica Municipality. Pica. 2019). The quoted person works in the environmental sector of Pica's municipality. In our interview, he mentioned that he knows the problems the communities face. He pointed out that concerns of indigenous people can vary across the generations of whole families regarding their interests and values, as well as their identity and connections to the threatened territory. During the interview, he compared the indigenous people of the neighboring region of Arica with those of Tarapacá. In Arica, there are farmers with important connections to the land where they live, which contrast to the people in Tarapacá: "*Many people may no longer be interested in their place, which no longer makes them their own, and no longer take on the value it should be. Where they were born or where their ancestors lived. So maybe this is the leading cause of disinterest in the place and the search for monetary benefit.*" (Worker of Pica Municipality. Pica. 2019). People are aware of companies' effects on human and ecological relations. For these reasons is that the degree of resistance to mining intrusion seems to depend as much on community and identity

ties as it does on identity and the eco-political meaning of territory (see chapters seven and eight).

In this light, compensation payments and development for shared projects within communities are interpreted as social control related to mining intrusion in the indigenous territories (Jenkins, 2004). Community relations become integral to a general "business approach" from a shareholder's perspective (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Kirsch, 2017). However, since the negotiations are based on voluntary agreements, they are not exercised under any pressure from state institutions. In this situation, there are communities with the will to enroll in developmental programs financed by mining and those who, for several reasons, decide not to be part of any negotiation process.

As previously discussed regarding *consultas* and consensus-building practices, these relations mean that a degree of voluntarism is the basis for any agreement. However, the denial of a community to negotiate only affects the overall process of the projects if the disagreements end up in the environmental courts.

The state provides the institutional framework for mega-projects, expertise, criticism, and contestation. We have already described these different layers, different forms of arrangements, and agreements negotiated between private parties. Accordingly, the state is only responsible for releasing the correct information, but what happens afterward is no longer in the hands of state authorities. In this context, social acceptance mechanisms and indigenous rights claims are essential elements of negotiation strategies. However, the role of the state and the existing legislation is repeatedly criticized. An indigenous leader expressed it as follows: "*The grievance felt by the people of Pica ("Piqueños") is directed against the lack of concern for government policies about how our territories are treated nefariously. Especially for a territory like Tarapacá, which is like a Pandora's Box: Tarapacá or the Tamarugal are areas that are infinitely rich in culture.*" (Indigenous leader. Pica, 2019). An official of the governmental Agency SEA also makes rather critical comments about the role of the state in environmental policy: "*Over the last 20 years, it has not been the community but the state that has always been a burden to the region. Our regulations have too many loopholes that make us lose entire ecosystems.*" (Official SEA, Iquique, 2019). These ideas are generally directed against a legally based policy of neglect, in which extractive projects are promoted despite environmental pollution, even if the local population is usually opposed to implementing and executing these

projects. Promises of jobs, economic outcomes, and advantages are balanced out against the well-known ecological consequences of mining.

Through multiple examples, testimonies, local narratives, and discussions regarding the implementation processes of mining projects, we have seen that the state of regulation has significant legal voids that have favored transnational companies, as in the case of tax payments. It has also been seen that a large part of citizen discontent is due to these regulations that leave the indigenous and non-indigenous citizens sometimes defenseless in the face of the advance of extractive frontiers. However, their situation is never one of total helplessness. These people are victims, but that does not mean they have no options, which is reflected in the critical attitude of many of my interviewees. They often mentioned the "common game" that the state and companies seem to play. Both are on the same side. However, the "absence" of the state regarding its citizenry is overlaid by the agency of the regulations that allow for institutional stability to attract foreign investment and reach a degree of social legitimacy. It refers to the interesting double face of state institutions, in which absence and presence seem to shape the horizon of the Chilean state's responsibilities and neoliberal subjectivities.

2.2.3. "Responsible Capitalism" and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The case study presented by Ignacio Farias about a city's reconstruction after the 2010 earthquake in southern Chile assesses the socio-political effects of the Consultation process. It connects them to the emergence of CSR discourse in Chile. Based on the discussion of technical democracy in science and technology studies (STS), Farias focuses on the tensions that can arise in deliberation processes as it occurred in the small town of *Constitución* after one of the most violent earthquakes the country has experienced in the last thirty years. Regarding *hybrid forums*, the author draws on the process's different features, difficulties, and contradictions. *Hybrid Forum* is a crucial concept in STS that delves into the complexities of sociotechnical controversies when the local population does not trust what experts declare to be scientific findings supporting decisions. Nevertheless, decisions have to be made. Despite declared scientific facts, the local population widely recognized uncertainty, which deepened the distrust of experts, politicians, and technocrats (See Wynne, 2003). Callon et al. propose the following definition of hybrid forums:

"forums because they are open spaces where groups can come together to discuss technical options involving the collective, hybrid because the groups involved and the spokespersons claiming to represent them are heterogeneous, including experts, politicians, technicians, and laypersons who consider themselves involved. They are also hybrid because the questions and problems taken up are addressed at different levels in a variety of domains, from ethics to economics and including physiology, nuclear physics, and electromagnetism." (Callon et al., 2009, p. 18)

Thus, hybrid forums represent a space where citizens, engineers, and experts come together to assess a specific theme, an increasingly conflicted and complex issue. The case presented the reconstruction process of the small city of Constitución, severely damaged by the earthquake and tsunami. In this case, Farias observes that these hybrid forums held to discuss public issues had little to do with the expansion of representative democratic procedures but with participation, e.g., the democratization of knowledge production. The author highlights their procedural instrumentalization critically in attention that citizen participation has been yet used by private management to discuss technical controversies. He mentions the danger of trivializing hybrid forums, not only regarding political decision-making but also in the production of uncertainty (Farias, 2016, p. 551). Based on the work of the Chilean sociologist and consultant Eugenio Tironi, Farias gives a critical insight into the procedures and development of a hybrid forum initiated by Tironi & Asociados. The key problem Farias poses is using an STS-influenced construction of a framework in *conflict mitigation* as a form of consultancy tool (Farias, 2016, p. 554). I want to emphasize Faria's point on the political effect of these public spaces because, in his terms, this consultancy tool does not try to promote a "technical democracy." However, instead, it tries to contain it because of the given procedures and rules of the game. Therefore, the possibilities for action are determined from the outset. With this description, the author highlights the problematic character of *hybrid forums* in their ambivalent phenomenology: despite a relatively open and "theoretical abstractness," they only occur under specific and empirical contexts and are thus dependent on who is in charge of them, as in this case, private companies.

This case is interesting for my approach because it points to the difficulties when private entities begin to figure in and lead consultation processes. This evidence is a "fragile" character that seeks to create spaces for participation with the help of devices not free of political and economic interests, just as scientific models can be "calibrated" according to the information they are fed. Forums like these can be managed or manipulated to favor particular political or economic agendas. Hybrid forums can be a powerful tool for developing communicative spaces and strengthening confidence among actors with divergent interests, especially bridging the gap

between the skills and knowledge at stake. However, the case presented by Farias gives an account of the instrumentalization of this kind of device. Similar is the point we made regarding *Consultas*, which is the problem of growing uncertainty and the use of scientific knowledge. Here to quote again, Callon et al.

"Contrary to what we might have thought some decades ago, scientific and technological development has not brought greater certainty. On the contrary, in a way that might seem paradoxical, it has engendered more and more uncertainty and the feeling that our ignorance is more important than what we know. The resulting public controversies increase the visibility of these uncertainties". (Callon et al., 2009, p. 19)

However, how do companies handle uncertainty? If "scientific facts" are insufficient to "calm" the local population to ensure security and safety, how do mining companies promote the other devices? In practice, how these companies approach people and the environment can strongly influence the social acceptance of a particular company or mining project. Scientific facts explain how territories can be affected with their necessary mitigation, compensation, and reparation measures; it is supposed to keep the population calm: Things are in the "hands of experts," who are the ones who "really know" about impacts and risks. It becomes striking that scientific evidence is used one way or the other. In the end, it seems more to be a "matter of belief" than a "matter of proof," sustained by some economic groups which defend the idea that mining can be sustainable in ecological terms. It seems that the problem lies not only in the quality of the knowledge supporting a specific definition of "risk" according to the interest of the economic actors behind these procedures.

For other Chilean scholars in CSR matters, the discourse of public cooperation between companies and civil society within the CSR discourse is in the process of transformation. The authors see a clear shift from a "utilitarian conception" of capitalist enrichment ventures -those without any commitment to the people or the environment and motivated solely by the thirst to profits-transforming the discourse into a more "public-oriented" engagement of private companies. The authors interpreted this discourse as a new moral conception of capitalist responsibility, applied not only to the pressure exerted by social environments but also, especially in the case of the extractive industry in already polluted areas (Tironi & Zenteno, 2013, p. 318-319). One of the critical aspects of CSR is that companies should consider local development and environmental protection as part of their responsibility, something widely recognized in the different sustainability reports of mining corporations. The annual sustainability reports of mining are evidence of these entanglements of ecology, mining, and communities. Here are exposed some brief quotations from a yearly report of Collahuasi:

"Another of our sustainable objectives is to contribute to the social development of the communities in our area of influence, promoting education, health, entrepreneurship, tourism, and the cultural identity of the different human groups. During 2019, social investment reached US\$ 15.5 million, or 4.5% more than the previous year; implementing 132 (social) projects. We also signed 20 new agreements with communities and 20 new agreements with indigenous communities, totaling 69 working agreements". (Collahuasi, Sustainability Report. 2019)

In a report of 2018 of the same mining company, it is said:

"Collahuasi builds its relationship with its stakeholders within the framework of a culture of transparency and respect, continually seeking to generate common value and build a better society. Based on this framework, the company has reported its contribution to sustainable development for the last 12 years. This work is based on industry best practices" (Collahuasi, sustainability report. 2018).

In the global report of BHP, the primaryholder of Cerro Colorado, you can read:

"Social value is the positive contribution we make to our workers and collaborators, our surroundings, the environment, and the economic development of the countries and regions where we operate. It is an essential part of our beliefs as a company, a guide to conduct our business, the relationship with our suppliers, and our actions in the territories and communities we are part of.

We are a company that is connected and responds to global challenges based on our purpose of "Bringing people and resources together to build a better world." (BHP Sustainability Report, 2019)

Through the reports, mining companies present their activity in "friendly" terms, arguing for their approach in terms of "sustainability" and "respect" for people and the environment through the different normative guidelines and community relations. The "science" behind the impact studies corroborates this "disinterested" approach to the disputed territories becoming a matter of technicality. However, the series of critiques also from "science" places the question of knowledge in a contested, ultimately political space, as we shall see in chapter four. These statements resonate strongly with the series of corporate reports outlined at the beginning of this chapter, which urge multinationals and extractive companies to generate diverse ties with local communities. It is well studied that the absence of such relations would imply losses in social acceptance, which would also impact the material and financial sphere and outcome (See IRMA, 2018).

These devices, such as Sustainability Reports, community relations departments, agreements, and shared financial benefits, are all promoted to gain the acceptance and confidence of the local population. Ecologically *sustainable mining* acquires new meanings regarding sustainable

development and community collaboration within these practices. Mining in Chile is projected to be sustainable "in time," as demonstrated by the new mining projects that enter the environmental assessment system every year¹⁸. Without a doubt, mining has a future, but one should not be naïve and consider that "ecologically sustainable mining" is possible, ignoring that it necessarily produces impacts and sacrifice zones. Some people argue that "sustainable mining" is an oxymoron. Having in mind the "pits" and "holes" that so many people are concerned about, not to mention the numerous tailings areas that are abandoned throughout the Atacama Desert (See Ureta & Flores, 2018).

Moreover, the described corporatist strategies aim to strengthen ties with local communities. Tironi and Zenteno, in their "positive" assessment, argue that CSR policy strengthens local communities and leadership and creates environmental awareness. Therefore it goes "against" a capitalist-oriented view that only focuses on profit (Tironi & Zenteno, 2013, p. 319).

Let us stress this argument: These assumptions of a declared "public commitment" of powerful private companies can be seen as a response to a "neo-liberal worldview" or, on the contrary, also as a new face of today's "capitalist spirit." It is this point that we want to discuss below. Complexities inherent in the various forms of capitalism coexist, mainly regarding their institutional settings (Amable, 2003). There are apparent ambiguities about the term "capitalism" itself (see Delanty, 2019). However, an image of capitalism as a production "machine" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and capitalists as "vultures" appear strongly in anti-mining and anti-corporate campaigns (Machado & Merino, 2016; Gudynas, 2016). These ideas connect imaginaries of life and death: capital and resource extraction has been widely outlined by Latin American political ecology (Martinez-Alier, 2001; Leff, 2004; Blaikie, 1995; Harvey, 2004b) and a plethora of environmental NGOs and activists (see OCMAL, 2019; OLCA, 2013). Mining capitalism reflects a hegemonic economic and political project for the political left and right. Especially in Latin America since the 1990s, the so-called *commodity consensus* (Svampa, 2012) has reconfigured Latin American economies in terms of their role as suppliers of raw materials, increasingly stressing the places and territories where extractivism takes place (Robbins, 2012), giving shape to numerous protest movements against these developments. This trend is what the Argentinian sociologist Maristela Svampa called the *eco-territorial turn, in which the indigenous community matrix, the language of territoriality, and*

¹⁸ According to SEA estimates, between 700 and 900 projects are submitted yearly in various areas, such as infrastructure, fisheries, energy, forestry, mining, etc. There was a clear drop in mining projects in 2019 from 126 to 89 in 2020, and in 2021 appears, only 32 projects. (see www.sea.cl accessed 05.06.2021)

the environmentalist discourse converge (Svampa, 2012, p. 16). Following Svampa's argumentation, indigenous and local culture has persistently resisted extractive projects in alliance with environmentalist movements. Therefore it is understandable that this rhetoric of "mining as death" is not only eco-leftist propaganda because it is a livelihood based on local life expectancies with profound territorial and bio-political implications (Machado, 2016; Povinelli, 2016). In this sense, e.g., material availability as water resources is a crucial question regarding the environmental effects of mining. "Nature" in its multiple socio-natural assemblages not only stands for a "resource" outside "there" (See Latour, 2005) but as a material condition for human life itself. It seems *common sense* for the local population that mining wealth creation and value chains connect with mining territorial destruction (Prieto, 2015; Perrault, 2011; Yañez & Molina, 2014a).

Although in, the different cases already described show that the relations between communities and mining companies are much more nuanced (Ocziaki et al., 2020) due to forms of cooperation and financial ties. Undeniably, the anti-mining discourse's persistence is still deeply rooted in the idea of defending local life and culture. In such a conflicted field, it is, however, necessary to be aware of the "danger of a single story" (Adichie, 2009) and attach all the "evils" to mining itself. With this reference, I mean the very simplistic idealization of the capitalist that enriches itself at the expense of the people and the environment.

The capitalist mantra states, "*the business of business... is business*" or "*the social responsibility of business is to increase the profits*" (Friedman, 1970, 2012), famous sentences by the economist Milton Friedman whose dubious economic proposals were imposed in Chile by the civilian allies of Pinochet's dictatorship without any restrictions. I think they give an account of this extremist type of capitalist ideology that today no longer has the power to stand independently because of the questioned nature of mining activity. As seen insofar as the area of natural resource extraction has gained increasing attention from international and national actors (NGOs, ILO, and environmental institutions). Even more, those companies must obtain their social license to operate from the people not only because companies declare to be "concerned" and "conscious" of the damage they cause but because of international pressures, norms, and minimum environmental standards they must comply. Other matters are how they do it, how they get it, and what strategies corporations deploy.

I agree that CSR tries to respond to this crude profit-oriented ideology by declaring an "engagement with society." Nevertheless, following a hypothetical notion, CSR is more in line

with a transformation of a "capitalist spirit" under the scope of public engagement and sustainable development discourses. As a commentator of Friedmans' business mantra states, the aim is much more to do the business "right" and satisfy the commercial and social aspirations that do not contradict them (O'Donohoe, 2018). Here the issue is more in line with creating new confidence in a society crossed by profound class distinctions, environmental injustice, and growing distrust towards the business sector. In addition, the historical relationship in the development of the supposed successful "Chilean-style" neoliberal capitalism is strongly related to the role of the state and its presence-absence procedures. As already discussed in the second chapter, the state makes itself present through its regulations and regulatory agencies, which, for many people, need to be stronger to safeguard the interests of the local population suffering from policies of neglect. This relative lack of rules may increase corporate actors' performance and social responsibility pressure. As evidenced in the field, it is not easy to distinguish between distrust of the state and the corporate business sector¹⁹. The boundaries need to be clarified, sometimes not even for people who oppose mining, as this opposition often becomes opposition to extractive policies promoted by politics and handled by state institutions and their authorities. The state's role is to regulate the operations so that social and environmental concerns are addressed and incorporated as environmental and social measures. Under this context, CSR becomes a form of *regulated self-regulation* whereby companies must follow a set of issues, mainly on their terms. Due to low regulations, the companies set their standards, which may even be "higher" than those given by law. As a mining agent commented in a public consultation, they commit themselves to mitigation measures "beyond their responsibility." Therefore, we can venture here the hypothesis that in the relative absence of state regulations, the procedures have focused on conceiving new mediations and negotiations between "private parties." In the following subchapter, we will continue to discuss the importance of social acceptance in the connection between social license and CSR.

¹⁹ Researchers have shown that there is a "revolving door" between State agents, politicians, and business agents, who "move in and out" of the public and private world. In this way, they end up becoming a tiny political and economic elite. This phenomenon makes it difficult to distinguish between politicians, whose primary function is supposed to safeguard and work for the common interest, and a business sector that naturally seeks to maximize its profits. This process has been "densifying" (in terms of "networks") over the last 30 years. It has been described as a growing oligarchy networking of politics and business due to the neoliberal process (see Cárdenas et al., 2014).

2.2.4. SLO as a device for conflict mitigation

"It is not enough to have all the environmental permits, and mining companies must now manage their social license to operate."

National Commission of Productivity. Chilean Government. 2017

The social license to operate is the mechanism under which mining companies approach the territories, generating various material and financial relationships with local indigenous and non-indigenous communities. Its most explicit expression is the community relations departments mentioned above. As some authors have suggested, SLO becomes the government mechanism "by default," in which the degree of state presence or absence plays a vital role in the legitimation processes of private companies (Boutilier, 2017). The growing normative assumption is that companies can only operate with the government's permission and public support. Therefore, mining companies cannot ignore the claim of the local communities (Cooney, 2017). It often forms benefits sharing, community participation, and partnership for development (Kemp & Owen, 2013), something visible in the given situation of Chilean environmental law, which offers an open space for further negotiations between "private" actors. Although in broader contexts, SLO is more likely to be understood as an unwritten contract (Paragreen & Woodley, 2013).

In Tarapacá, companies accept signed agreements that blur the distinction between "benefits" and "compensations." However, other researchers have strongly criticized these practices as greenwashing (Kemp & Owen, 2013; Kirsch, 2017). These are necessary to improve the relationship between communities and mining companies, building mutual trust, and strengthen the legitimacy of mining projects in the eyes of communities. As the above-quoted document of the Chilean government states in this mutual interest spirit of SLO:

"In summary, the sector's relevance is recognized in the country, but there is mistrust of both companies and the government. This implies hard work to build the necessary trust and greater legitimization of the mining company's operation to obtain its LSO. This increased legitimacy can generate wide-ranging benefits for communities and companies, enabling active projects' continued operation and new expansions." (National Commission of Productivity. Chilean Government. 2017, p. 215)

In a series of interviews held by the Chilean news platform El Mostrador, in the context of the urgent debate about mining Royalty, the role of the mining industry in the post-pandemic

situation, and the writing process for a new political constitution, the president of the Mining Council (Consejo Minero) said about indigenous and mining:

"(Indigenous peoples) must have constitutional recognition. Moreover, this will allow us to have a legal, administrative, and regulatory framework that is based at least on three things: one, the recognition of the rights of these native peoples, what they are, what they consist of, what their scope is, and the identification of territories. This is very important in countries where the problems, conflicts, or challenges native peoples represent have been resolved with development. They have identified the territories. A conflictive matter that requires a lot of (good) will, but we have to face what this means in the end, what recognition of the culture of the original people means, what recognition of their traditions means, and what it means to respect and promote them. This is an open debate that should be based on the basic principles of the Constitution itself. The state must recognize indigenous. It is the duty of all of us who live in this territory to live in peaceful coexistence with these native peoples and to build a culture that allows for healthy, mutually enriching coexistence." (Villarino, 2021. Interview with El Mostrador. Acceded 04.10.21)

The mining council brings together the largest mining companies in Chile and, therefore, the most economically powerful. Companies want the same things as the communities. Everyone wants to live in harmony, coexist peacefully, and promote development in the mining areas. Mining companies declare a solid will to avoid conflicts that may arise. Still, the only way to do this is by offering the possibility to negotiate agreements before the project installation starts. In the face of the declaration of impacts expressed in the EIAs, monetary compensation payments and reparation and mitigation measures are implemented for ecological recovery. Monetary compensations are often negotiated behind closed doors, bringing other issues, such as mistrust between local communities. At the same time, mitigation and reparation measures are often interpreted as insufficient to regenerate already damaged ecological conditions.

In a broader context, the SLO discourse is not a disinterested approach. Instead, it is a different approach entirely along the lines of resource extraction but from somewhat diffuse notions of environmental and social sustainability. Insofar as the appropriate and recognized technical notions support and legitimize the idea that mineral extraction will not have an impact beyond what has already been declared in EIA, and social sustainability, insofar as the local population manages to benefit from these processes in one way or another. However, as Tironi and Zenteno have argued, SLO has an inherent paradox: The problem is that SLO functions as an instrumentalized version of CSR, in which the main goal is the continuation of capitalist procedures under a kind of "social" disguise. By this apparently "responsible" commitment, obtaining the social legitimation of possible affected communities becomes essential for any extractive endeavor. Thus, it should respond to a plethora of common interests between different

social actors who, in principle, have disparate interests. In the end, the common denominator of this type of procedure is money, which becomes the condition for the possibility of bringing distant positions and different interests closer together. When this happens, "the dance of millions begins..." as commented by some of my interviewees²⁰.

This process has also been highlighted by anthropological studies of mining corporations and their procedures regarding the emergence of new economic institutions and corporations promising sustainable resource extraction.

An overview article about the anthropology of mining describes the discursive process by which mining should function in the sense of sustainability. In this context, it describes the role of CSR: "*The response by corporations was to engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) through programs and other initiatives that benefitted the people who were being impacted by resource extraction*" (Jacka, 2018, p. 64). *The author* describes how researchers critically evaluate this process of presenting mining as sustainable as Stewart Kirsch, from whose perspective CSR policy extends and legitimizes the power of companies. Kirsch's research explores how mining companies deal with criticism from affected communities and environmental NGOs and the strategies developed to prevent "dangerous" criticism. Kirsch focused on the environmental conflict caused by the OK Teddy Mine and how affected communities networks with other transnational actors, such as NGOs, to make communities' voices heard internationally, transforming their situation into a matter of legal procedures and public attention (Kirsch, 2017; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Fortun, 2001). He writes, "*I argue that the underlying dilemmas associated with the capitalist mode of production can never be completely resolved; they can only be renegotiated in new forms.*" According to him, corporate culture is always shifting and adapting to newer contexts of contestation and criticism: "*The dialectical relationship between corporations and their critics has become a permanent structural feature of neoliberal capitalism.*" (Kirsch, 2017, p. 13). Criticism of corporativism is not only a neoliberal phenomenon. Nevertheless, in neoliberal contexts, changes in corporate culture have introduced new configurations of responsibility, the ability to respond to ecological disasters, and other kinds of demands. Under the scope of a transformation in corporate culture, SLO is an essential mechanism for the creation, installation, and social legitimization of different projects with huge investments.

²⁰ An expression attributed to the Chilean lawyer and researcher Nancy Yañez

I have tried to understand the role of private companies and their apparent change of perspective oriented to the "common good" as a commitment to the responsibility for their possible and unforeseen environmental effects. In other words, such community relations are necessary to implement future projects and avoid conflict between companies and communities (Astorga, 2019, see Donoso PNM2050). An attitude that is mainly voluntary without more aggressive pressure from the state to demand proper corporate behavior. Such as the so-called "neighbor relationship" between communities and mining companies would mean building a trustful relationship between "partners. "Nevertheless, many of these attitudes do not go beyond declarations of good intentions, which can reflect the contradictory relationship between companies and communities. Contradictory, because companies know that their activity has an impact, they still care *what* they say and *how* they say it because a simple declaration can affect their public image.

In the face of all this discussion involving the state's role as an essential driver of natural resource extraction, it becomes clear the importance of a regulatory regime that pays attention to socio-ecological aspects, mitigation, reparation, and compensation measures regulated by the environmental institutions. As we will see in the next chapter, these procedures are already part of the Environmental Assessments Studies (EIA), but are also tied to voluntary commitments. Conversely, a better fiscal regime could lead to less centralist measures that are fairer to regional development. These issues are already on the table in the discussion about mining royalty, and they are not the most controversial²¹. From the different aspects described, we must recognize that an institutional framework already exists that functions. The question is how to improve participatory processes and make them more democratic. Specially, concerning the very different lifeworlds of indigenous and their legitimate rights to other development options.

²¹ Rather, the royalty application whether to the companies' profits (as is currently the case) or a tax for the right to extract the resource from the land. The various mining associations are resisting the last proposals, arguing that it would disadvantage the "weaker" mining companies and thus discourage investment in the sector.

2.3. Seeing like an Environmental Impact Study²²

*„Der Mensch teilt im Prozess seiner Emanzipation
das Schicksal seiner übrigen Welt.
Naturbeherrschung schließt Menschenbeherrschung ein“.*

Max Horkheimer. Zur Kritik der Instrumentellen Vernunft²³

During my fieldwork, I attended a public presentation of a major new mining project by a mining company in the Tarapacá region. In this meeting, an indigenous spokesperson commented that the mining company was not addressing Climate Change issues, even though they talked about it. He pointed out that there was no mention of this crucial issue in the Environmental Impact Study (EIA) that the company was presenting. He asked how the mining company intends to deal with future problems caused by Climate Change. This question, which was more of a statement about the mining process in general, reflected the concerns about the environmental measures proposed by the project. These echo the questions about corporate responsibility and the extent and importance of uncertainty regarding whether the knowledge is sufficient to give an adequate "picture" of the impacts. This reference to concerns about Climate Change introduces the questions that will guide this chapter, which will primarily seek to understand what an Environmental Impact Assessment is about, the type of knowledge it integrates, the legal support that defines it, and the reaction generated against it. Putting these cases into question: How do these assessments seek to address possible future problems? Can they ensure that unforeseen environmental impacts will not occur? These questions will guide this chapter.

The literature on the consultation process in Latin America has been concerned with the specific role of these broader resistance processes against extractive mining projects (Owen & Kemp, 2013; Walter & Urkidi, 2015; Paterson et al, 2003). A common denominator among resistance processes against multinational mining is the use and flow of information, knowledge, and networking between different social groups (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). These consultations in Chile are based on various national and international legal foundations (ILO Convention 169, Indigenous Law, Environmental Law).

²² For their essential contributions to the development of this chapter, I would like to thank Adina Dymczyk, Jorge Vega, Itzel Torres, Dan Durrant, and Patrick Bieler. I would also like to thank Soledad Araya for her remarks and text's proofreading.

²³ P.110.

The reference to Climate Change should be considered here only as a locus in which local particularities can be "balanced" by integrating them into more general considerations on the global effects of human activity on the planet. However, the intention here is not to discuss the generalities introduced by the impact of Climate Change in the face of its anthropogenic origins but rather to enter the specific field of what an EIA is as a control and legibility device in the context of a broad business approach to handle possible "externalities." To research EIA means to confront whether it can or should balance the effects of humans on a given environment, including and excluding specific types of knowledge²⁴. To do so, I will investigate its structure and semiotic processes regarding what it "illuminates" and what it leaves out. The hermeneutic exercise I will carry out considers these questions as a theoretical background concerning global-local assemblages.

Furthermore, I will focus on specific territorial circumscriptions as in the case of the defined impacts and measures. On the other hand, I assume that some regional specificities can no longer be considered local i.e., by integrating relatively arbitrary criteria of when and where what we call the "local" begins and ends. This becomes a problem of scales and relative arbitrariness of borders regarding the definition and delimitation of "impacted areas." Territorial delimitation favors a particular way of conceiving the territory and its resources (Ong & Collier, 2004).

Another related issue is the critical approach to "knowledge" contained in this report. "Knowledge," in brackets, does not consist of "normal science" but tends to reduce complexities according to pre-established criteria. These are problems regarding the prediction and the definition of possible impacts. Knowledge is presented as if it is "scientific," "methodical," and "unbiased." Prediction is an issue that occurs when a disaster happens, and people try to prove who is responsible for the damage. Even if damage already happens, it is not easy to prove causality. Lawyers know about the problematic relationship between knowledge, risk, and uncertainty. As Kim Fortun mentioned in her study about the Bhopal disaster in India, *"Corporations are expected to think objectively, technically, financially, and legally. Both demonstrate rationality. Citizens are not expected to be rational. Their 'frame of reference' is subjective, intuitive and experiential"* (Fortun, 2001, p. 11). Following Fortun's ideas, the task is to follow the complexities inherent in knowledge production and the use of evidence standing for a particular interest. It is a matter of priority for many indigenous communities to respond

²⁴ I will thank Dan Durrant for this idea.

to the socio-ecological impacts of extractive projects because of the threat these represent. People do not need disasters to happen to feel already threatened. There will always be a precise balance between the positive economic effects of mining and their mistrust that disaster can happen every time. As developmental researcher Elspeth Young comments regarding indigenous people in Canada and Australia:

"They (indigenous) recognize that in its conventional form, the development process can bring benefits, such as redressing socio-economic disadvantage, providing better access to opportunities arising through technological advancement, and enhancing both political and economic power. But they also recognize their negative implications. These not only include environmental degradation but also cultural and social destruction and the rupturing of the intimate relationship between human beings and their natural environment. Since, for them, development is a process that promotes not only their economic advancement but also their social and cultural vitality and which emphasizes long-term sustainability rather than short-term gain, such cost may be unacceptable. This view of development will often conflict with the industrial ideology". (Young, 1995, p. 1-2)

It is well known that development has this problematic feature mentioned by Young. Not all benefits in the same way. Hence, various scholars still widely contested this intense ideological gaze and scope (Khotari et al. 1, 2015; Escobar, 2011, 1996; Gudynas, 2020).

We are dealing with more than thirty years of intense mining activity in the region since the multinational mining companies began to operate (actually, we can go back in time, taking into account the saltpeter mining extraction). Much water has flowed under the bridge, and different slow disasters already happened (Bonelli & Dorador, 2021). The awareness of mining impact has grown and been shared by the local population; as discussed in the previous chapter, Indigenous demand better responses and more concrete measures to possible negative consequences. They assess the damages through their experience of environmental changes and understand these as being due to anthropogenic actions. I think the key to understanding how experiences and fears are articulated is to do with a projection of the future: On the one hand, people want to prevent unforeseen impacts from occurring, and on the other hand, if they do appear, people want adequate mitigation measures. This *future possible* is perhaps the critical point about the idea of Climate Change and the uncertainty immanent in these evidence-building processes. However, it is a valid question whether (or not) mining companies should be held responsible for something such as Climate Change. Is not mining an integral part of a worldview that has caused all this disaster? Or is it that unquenchable thirst for profit that promotes new extractive projects in the name of progress and development that no longer enjoys the same credibility as twenty or thirty years ago? (See Moore, 2016; Boccardi et al, 2008) If

we assume that Climate Change is an effect of anthropogenic actions, as already recognized by the IPCC, we must be able to assign appropriate responsibilities. This presupposes certain catastrophism, in which human action and force of transformation are already conceived from its "disastrous" and "gigantic." Above all, the "uncertain" dimension on a planetary scale, thus shaping our imaginaries associated with the risk of living in so-called "modern societies" (Beck, 1996). What was once the fear of nuclear disaster (Beck, 1991) and the unforeseen effects of genetic engineering (Rifkin, 1999), today, "climate awareness" seems to have moved into the totality of everyday life (Beck, 2017). This kind of thing is present in indigenous consciousness. Nevertheless, this representation also assumes that this planet, currently projected as a "globe" in its eco-political dimensions, implies also re-uniting humanity despite its unequal living conditions and life-historical experiences. In other words, this experience of a common threat across countries and continents will unite us all in the same sphere of "humanity" despite the permanence of such uneven living conditions and living standards between the global "north" and "south" (Chakrabarty, 2012; Martinez-Alier, 1992). Somehow the discourse of Climate Change has managed to re-compose the unity of the world across classes, genders, cultures, modern, non-modern, human, and more-than-human... all this, under the sign of general fear and confrontation of the possible effects of environmental catastrophes. This seems to be one of the representative experiences linked to the so-called Anthropocene, i.e., in the face of the climate threat, "we" (the human species) unite efforts to undermine its disastrous effects, ignoring the question of divergent ecological responsibilities. Who did what no longer matters, but we are all equally affected now. So I suspect this situation means maintaining neo-colonial structures disguised as a supposedly "common" concern for a slowly crumbling world. In this way, the argumentative background of this chapter has to do with the everyday world we inhabit in which modern and non-modern communicate, coexist, and coeval (Viveiro de Castro, 2004, 471-472; Law, 2015; Ingold, 2018). In the last part of this chapter, I will address these issues.



Fig. 6. The volumes of the EIA by Collahuasi and ARKADIS Photo taken in the SEA office in Iquique (by S. Cornejo, 2019)

We must face the difficulty of taking responsibility for our actions (being aware of what it means to speak of a "we.") The point here is that the quoted claim made above during the consultation is not only understood as a manifestation of a concern, but also a response to the impact of mining in this specific part of the world: Mining as such would not only represent a particular -and at the same time- "dominant" form of representation of the world and nature, but also transformation, manipulation,

extraction, and control. For this reason, it is crucial to carry out the semiotic exercise of the representation made by an EIA because precisely this "vision" is behind, supporting, and legitimizing decisions about territory, people, and the environment. It takes for granted that technology goes hand in hand with science and that this is the only legitimate way to conceive knowledge and what "rationality" means (Blaser, 2019, p. 68).

2.3.1. What is an EIA?

EIA is a *"technical document of an interdisciplinary nature that is intended to predict, identify, assess and consider preventive measures or correct the consequences of the environmental effects that certain anthropic actions may cause on the quality of life of man and his environment."* (Coria, 2008, p. 126) Their technical character is reflected in a particular way of understanding, describing, and analyzing the world, forged in the spirit of *audit culture* and managerial forms of accountability (Strathern, 2000). They are the most precise expression of growing technocratic concerns about environmental issues. The Chilean environmental law distinguishes between an Environmental Impact Declaration (Spanish acronyms: DIA) and an Environmental Impact Study (Spanish acronyms: EIA) as two forms of environmental reports

that consulting firms formulate. In general terms, a DIA²⁵ declared no impact at all, contrary to an Impact Study. EIA should provide a solid basis for predicting, identifying, and interpreting environmental impacts and describing measures to prevent or minimize their significant adverse effects²⁶. Therefore, an EIA will explain the various trade-offs with the environment, the affected population, and the process of mitigating possible environmental impacts of the project²⁷.

EIA are devices of legibility, often associated with projects such as mining, forestry, and energy. They align with the shift of corporate spirit described in the previous chapter, which tries to harmonize the drive for economic growth by developing new extractive projects and a more "friendly" engagement with possibly affected local populations. EIA is at the heart of the developmental discourse, trying to solve the contradictions between economic development and the protection of the environment (Martinez-Alier & Guha, 2000). In this part of this research, we want to highlight that contestation happens because of hegemonic language, which means techno-scientific knowledge connected to sharp distinctions between expert and lay knowledge. The supposed opposition between technocracy and politics has been often studied (Kreimer & Zabala, 2016; Villena, Arcibar, 2015; Ruíz, Jurado & Castaño, 2020). Within this field lies an implicit idea that it is possible to separate "data" from the production context

²⁵ In a DIA, a company explains relatively "small" changes in a larger project. This also requires less preparation time, implying a "lower" degree of environmental intervention. Moreover, through these declaratory mechanisms, the company states there will be no impact.

²⁶ These impacts are a) Risk to the health of the population due to the quantity and quality of effluents, emissions, or wastes; b) Significant adverse effects on the quantity and quality of renewable natural resources, including soil, water, and air; c) Resettlement of human communities, or significant alteration of the living systems and customs of human groups; d) Location in or near populations, resources and protected areas, priority sites for conservation, protected wetlands, glaciers and areas with value for astronomical observation for scientific research purposes, susceptible to be affected, as well as the environmental value of the territory in which it is intended to be located; e) Significant alteration, in terms of magnitude or duration, of the scenic or tourism value of an area, and f) Alteration of monuments, sites of anthropological, archaeological, historical value and, in general, those belonging to the cultural heritage. (Law 19.300. Art. 11) <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=30667> (Acceded. 02.08.21)

²⁷ Article 12 of the Environmental Law 19.300 establishes the different matters that an Environmental Impact Study must contain: a) A description of the project or activity; b) A description of the baseline, which must consider all projects with a resolution of environmental qualification, even if they are not in operation; c) A detailed description of those effects, characteristics or circumstances of Article 11 that give rise to the need for an Environmental Impact Study; d) A forecast and assessment of the environmental impact of the project or activity, including possible risk situations; e) The measures to be adopted to eliminate or minimize the adverse effects of the project or activity and the corrective measures to be adopted, if applicable; f) A monitoring plan of the relevant environmental variables that give rise to the Environmental Impact Study. e) The measures to be adopted to eliminate or minimize the adverse effects of the project or activity and the corrective measures to be adopted, where appropriate; f) A plan for monitoring the relevant environmental variables giving rise to the Environmental Impact Study g) A plan for compliance with applicable environmental legislation. (<https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=30667>) Last Access: 23.11.2020.

(Weinberg et al., 2020.) However, because of the economic interests at stake, the complicated relationship between the "technical" and the "political" urge us to revise "scientific neutrality" (Sorensen, 2017; Sismondo, 2017; Latour, 2007; Haraway, 1995) as an assumption grounded on positivism. As a black theorist and researcher critically pointed out regarding positivist science: "*By following strict methodological rules, scientists aim to distance themselves from the values, vested interests, and emotions generated by their class, race, sex, or unique situation and in so doing become detached observers and manipulators of nature.*" (Collins, 1989, 754) This kind of *un-situatedness* is expressed in the *ethos* of techno-scientific devices, evidencing their positivist spirit (and here "positivism" stands as "science" itself). This will be discussed further regarding procedures and gaps between "data collection" and "data presentation", something which does not overcome the difficulties of increasing suspicion and distrust of lay people regarding "expert knowledge". Thus, how to solve these disputes, when no external and neutral entity that relies on the truthful character of data used in EIA, mainly, when even the state is an active participant and "stakeholder" in that situation of disagreement. As Jasanoff asks regarding the use of scientific data: "*In cases of disagreements over regulatory science, who should be designated as final arbiters of quality: the agency, the courts, an independent scientific body?*" (Jasanoff, 1994, 21) The cases in her book *The Fifth Branch* highlight the complexities of truth, science, politics, and power. Controversies over the correct data or the proper interpretation of data analysis evidence how political interests are part of scientific interpretations embedded in a complex relation with scientific institutions, industry, and state agencies, she notes, "*(w)ith the accumulation of evidence that "truth" in science is inseparable from power, the idea that science can speak truth*

Scientist responsibility

In a discussion about environmental issues and the need for a new political constitution, an important Chilean scientist condemns his colleagues: "*We have been henchmen, we have been accomplices, and I tell you that the companies have co-opted us... I am not going to hide. I have done it knowingly, knowing that if they throw me out of a university, they will hire me in another one.*" Naturally, his statements generated reactions from other scientists, leading Jaksic to moderate his previous statements again. The issue is interesting as it exposes the difficulty of equating "scientific knowledge" and "scientific objectivity" with political neutrality and economic interest. Jaksic says in his brief self-critical commentary that scientific knowledge plays a problematic role in legitimizing extractive (or energy) projects in the clear financial interest of certain power groups. What is troubling is not so much the use of scientific knowledge for that purpose but their supposed lack of "ethical neutrality" and "scientific responsibility."

Some Reflections on Science and Decoloniality

I do not think that all scientists behave in the same way, nor that all scientists resonate with the "neocolonial arrogance" that sometimes permeates the sciences themselves. One example is that some scientists seek to incorporate other views that are difficult to translate into techno-scientific languages. In my conversation about this issue, the archeologist Luís told me: *"So our role is to help things to be done correctly, presenting the background, and providing data to see the plausibility or feasibility of a project. Suppose it is feasible or not. Therefore, when we are going to take on this aspect, which is the human population, we are obliged from the sciences, whether from biology, anthropology, from an infinite number of sciences, to consider how the other, who is in this place, construct their reality concerning biology, water, and dust."* (Luis, Iquique, 2021)

These reflections delve into the normative dimension related to our ethical choices. Following Isabel Stenger's idea resonates strongly with my understanding and engagement of science and scientist in other worlds. *"I began to envisage the need to "civilize" the way scientists think of themselves, that is, to separate them from hegemonic order words such as rationality, objectivity, and universality"* (Stengers, 2018: 87). The intersection of environmental science and anthropology teaches us that any decolonization project needs to be pursued by scientists too. Science still has hegemony over other knowledge systems. Anthropologists do not have any privilege in this, but anthropological sensibility aloud the recognition of *a world in which many other worlds fit-* (Escobar, 2011). Ultimately, these visions are related to our own ethical choices.

to power in a value-free manner has emerged as a myth without correlates in reality" (Jasanoff, 1994, p. 17)

Some researchers have highlighted the participatory nature of EIAs (mainly state agencies and corporations); others consider EIAs as tools that seek to promote state-driven development rather than genuinely engage with the people that may be negatively affected (Leonard, 2017). Therefore, Its supposed impartiality has been called into question in studies echoing the concerns of affected groups (Ramírez-Monroy & Piraquive-Aldana, 2018, p. 240). In the case of mining in Peru, Fabiana Li argues that companies and their technical associates often dismiss criticism as "interested" and "politically motivated" (Li, 2009). Similar is Stuart Kirsch's account of what he -called "corporate science" reflects how mining companies use scientific knowledge to deal with criticism (Kirsch, 2017). This implies using scientifically grounded evidence that claims that environmental interventions will not be harmful as communities often fear. People's

concerns are often based on fears and emotions, but with no scientific ground to support them as claims to be taken seriously. However, their "veracity" lies on another ground (Cornejo & Niewohner, 2021). For other researchers, EIA has become an important entry point to re-imagining territorial politics to understand how environmental discourses are situated and contested in techno-political terrains (Spiegel, 2017, p. 96). The construction of evidence is fundamental in estimating the degree of veracity of what is claimed. The basic assumption is the political neutrality of scientific knowledge. However, this has profound political connotations because it becomes a tool of persuasion. Supposedly it is not the company that says "this" or "that" but science (with capital S) speaking through these instruments of legibility, making risk visible and accountable (Li, 2009). However, persuasion gives way to mistrust, not directed to scientific work but regarding these technical reports that provide scientific legitimacy to mining interests. Two Chilean researchers comment, "*Scientific experts have a direct and privileged role in defining and assessing environmental problems, even if non-expert social actors also explicitly or tacitly use this type of knowledge.*" (Parker & Perez, 2019, p. 8). Moreover, the denial of other knowledge systems has an evident neo-colonial character in Latin America (Aparicio & Blaser, 2018). Even so, there are several cases of a "science of resistance" that seeks to respond to these reports from their "other" knowledge systems (Sánchez, 2019), forging *hybrid knowledge* constructed through participatory modeling (Li, 2015; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012).

Case studies on EIA in Chile have proposed other distinctions between technical and scientific knowledge showing the inherent tensions between science, industry, and academia (Barandiaran, 2015). In Chile, science and scientists have been controversial in legitimizing projects with a high environmental impact. This has shaped a complex relationship between knowledge, power, and finance in which scientists do not play on a "neutral" ground precisely because of the economic interest behind the processes currently necessary to achieve investment projects. So, in the end, the importance of shared ethical standards, which, however, are different for all members of the scientific community, is becoming increasingly evident and problematic. In other words, it matters a lot which scientists work for whom and from whom they receive funding.

2.3.2. "Epistemic agonism"

In this chapter, I will speak of techno-scientific knowledge roughly to contrast it with the local and indigenous knowledge involved in this situation of epistemic friction. These technical devices in Latin America contrast with other local and indigenous knowledge systems. This is a simplistic distinction because these binary oppositions do not always turn out to be entirely accurate when these phenomena are studied empirically (Agrawal, 2002).

The antagonistic character of the construction and use of scientific knowledge is expressed in what I have called "counter-reports": written documents presented by indigenous communities that contest and criticize the EIA projects in the Environmental Assessment System. Most of them are written in very technical language, relating the hydrological and geographical reality to the cultural and social changes of the indigenous communities themselves. Many counter-reports contempt science-oriented arguments; others handled a legal-based argumentation or focused explicitly on the "holistic" impact of the project, highlighting the consequences it will have for the fragile ecosystems of the Atacama Desert. In some of these counter-reports, scientific knowledge supports a "holistic" worldview, trying to see, expose, and explain the world from the perspective of indigenous communities involved. However, it is also evident that indigenous communities have only one way of responding to these technical devices besides using the same language. In some sense, it shows the growing capacity of indigenous peoples to mobilize data and knowledge that has been used against them. A careful review will also be necessary to establish and manage the differences in the use and purpose of the exposed knowledge.

As already exposed, science becomes an essential element of this process because of the use and appropriation of scientific knowledge. To give that a name, I would propose, in more aggressive terms-, a *mobilization of knowledge* because, in this process of mobilization, the field in which knowledge is produced, presented, and judged seems more like a battlefield in which arguments presented in technical and scientific language have to reach particular purposes²⁸. Arguments are often outlined and used to attack or delegitimize the definitions and circumscriptions of intended impacts. It also implies questioning the epistemological and methodological assumptions of the procedures that made them visible.

²⁸ See discussion on the issue of facts construction and matter of care and concern, in EASST Review Volume 36(1) 2017, with contributions of STS scholars like Sørensen (2017) and Verran (2017). See also Latour (2005) and Puig de la Casa (2011).

One example of *epistemic friction* can be found in the critical report of the Indigenous Association Hijos de Wilque. The report distinguishes between *ethnoscience*, practiced by indigenous communities, and Western *technoscience*, within their engineering language. In this counter-report, the conflict is presented in terms of formal logic: The Counter-report states that while the Western "way of thinking" is epistemologically based on the principle of identity ($A=A$), it is opposite ($B=B$) and the "excluded third" ($A=B$ can never be), the members of the indigenous communities have a linguistic system based on three central values: False, True and Uncertain. The latter involves *the principles of complementarity of opposites*, and the *third is excluded* (the logical possibility of $A=B$) (Hijos de Wilque Community, 2019). Despite the abstraction of this very theoretical positioning, this differentiation raised questions I will address in the following pages. Since the work of Hellen Veran (2001), we know that when we talk about "logic," we are talking about more than one system of abstraction with universal pretensions (See also Bateson, 1998; Levi-Strauss, 1999, 1998). As some of her highly inspiring work on Yoruba logic shows, more than one mathematical system can coexist; because of the imprint of the history of colonial imposition, teaching is constrained to "choose" between one and the other logical system. However, in the case mentioned above, we are not dealing with a system of abstraction such as Yoruba mathematics and its counting system, but with a way of reasoning that projects the Aymara being into the world around him, a world that, in a certain way, integrates it and is integrated through that "way of reasoning." So, what does this "difference" in the dimension of "logic" mean about the definition of environmental impacts? Why take into account this epistemological difference between "modes of thought"? According to this logic, where does an impacted territory begin and end? Putting these questions in these terms, explicitly the uncertainty regarding indigenous experiences would help better understand how life in an interconnected territory is projected in terms of this cultural difference²⁹.

The collected evidence and the criticisms and counterarguments often depend on the nature of their production and evaluation. They were also conditioned by the type of ends the knowledge wishes to support. In this sense, they involve antagonistic and competing "worldviews": a particular way of "seeing" while other life projects are systematically left out of sight. As Scott noted in the case of maps regarding their study of state simplifications: "*they represented only*

²⁹ I will not give a "straw man" version of Western science, easily criticized, without taking into account the very efforts of some scientific disciplines to address the "epistemic question" of difference and integrate it into models of analysis. Concrete cases exist from the critique of hydrogeological models and socio-hydrology, which seeks to integrate these other "visions" into standardized models of explanation (see Tengo et al., 2014; Torso et al., 2020; Sanchez-Plaza et al., 2021).

that slice of it that interested the official observer" (Scott, 1998, p. 3). My argument is similar in that simplification and visualization of resources, people, and territories are in some way "represented" in these Reports and respond to the projects of extractivism.

Indigenous people have to contend with a historical asymmetry of power and clearly uneven levels of a "playing field" concerning knowledge and its legitimization processes (see chapter two). In this sense, the influence of professional advisors within the communities is a way of leveling the playing field, theoretically assumed in environmental law and ILO Convention 169. This means joint coordination in knowledge construction between scientific and indigenous knowledge. However, as indicated, using technical knowledge is the only way indigenous people can say something. In this sense, this process is not only a way of generating an uneven intercultural dialogue of expertise but also a specific taking of the epistemic weapons of the Western techno-scientific worldview mediated by the work of consultants.

2.3.3. The need to evaluate knowledge

There are two instances where communities or individuals (natural persons) can comment critically on these projects. These can be verbally expressed in public debates when EIAs or DIAs are presented to concerned citizens and indigenous. They can also upload them as drafted documents to the Environmental Assessment System (or SEIA) platform. Indigenous communities and their consultants/advisors have produced most of the existing records. We will address issues related to both the project and what I call "counter-reports." As already outlined in previous chapters, the assessors play an essential role in constructing knowledge; they can be professionals from different areas capable of understanding, interpreting, analyzing, translating, and responding to these reports. These counter-reports contain a valuable source of information because they expose other technical and scientific arguments that seek to critique and respond to these extractive projects. Much of their information is reflected in the debates generated during the public presentations and consultation processes.

Despite an evident inequality in financial and human resources, some communities have more than one consultant to learn more about a particular project to assert their position. I have heard many critical opinions about the large amount of concrete and specialized knowledge that goes into these projects, making it difficult to understand their actual impact. This also implies different levels of suspicion, leading to the second problem that despite the very different "branches" of knowledge included in the study, they are not presented holistically or

interconnected enough to comprehensively address the complex ecological relationships, especially in the Atacama Desert. In other words, people argue that EIA provides a simplified view of reality without being able to account with due responsibility for the adverse effects that any environmental impact can trigger. Therefore, this is another critical source of suspicion that this knowledge is not "good," neither "complex," nor "reliable" enough to foresee future impacts on the environment.

This confrontation with the multi-disciplinary character highlights the relative complexity of the knowledge that projects contain. Something that can also influence indigenous leaders' decisions on shaping their future professional orientations and their training process. This leads to the fact that some leaders are continuously training themselves on rather technical issues to improve their understanding of these projects and processes and thus gain better skills to improve their leadership performance. Some belief communities mistake "relying" too much on their advisors to understand these projects.

Partnership or (alliance) with professional advisors is in tension with their salary or personal interest. In some cases, communities cannot finance lengthy assessment processes. Thus, the hope for subsequent financial compensation from mining companies is determined by the success or failure of the arguments that support communities' claims. In other cases, this also involves co-optation, as companies providing financial resources for community assessment could influence decisions about which assessor communities should work with. Other "independent" evaluation companies offer interdisciplinary teams which can understand the "whole" of the project in all its "dimensions" as a team of different professionals explained to me the services of their assessments.

"...We provide services in different areas. Not just one. For example, the people and the working groups that advise the communities are lawyers. Not to belittle (...), but a lawyer (...) (sic) does not know how to take care of a wetland. Or what a wetland is, which the lawyer probably does not know. Or if it is a matter of destruction of a heritage site, you cannot ask a lawyer what it means, how old it is, or why it is so important. He is not going to know. That is why this company makes such a difference. This issue (...) that communities live with their environment, I see it according to the way people are. All people are different, so all communities, even though they are all indigenous and sometimes live in the same sector, are all different and see their development differently. Some people are interested in safeguarding the environment by staying there. Others have already changed to "Western" values, as they call it; they know it can be protected as much as necessary and possible." (Assessor, Iquique, 2019)

The contestation of knowledge can be a decisive element of resistance and is also essential for claiming subsequent negotiation processes. The type of strategies to be pursued will depend on

the levels of the internal organization of communities, their advisors, their areas of knowledge, and the various interests pursued by community members. A municipal official told me about his understanding of the indigenous position vis-à-vis mining companies:

"Look, I have been very close to an indigenous community here (...), which speaks a lot about the internal divisions generated within their communities. Some want more than others, and some want more background and information, but others are not very interested because they do not even live here; they live in Pozo Almonte, so they are not very interested in the place. So, the mining companies still take advantage of it". (Municipal official. Pica, 2019)

The people involved may or may not live in the places, and the degrees of territorial ties they may have are important considerations influencing negotiating decisions. This is also reflected in early consultations when constructing the "baselines" for the EIA of extractive projects. As an indigenous leader characterized this process:

"They (consulting companies) deal only with certain people, and others are left out. Because of an issue of interest, maybe they listen to them more or give them information more quickly, giving them certain facilities in the evaluation process. They are very interested in these first consultations. Many families say: "No, I am not going to sign (...) this because this is for early consultation". Others say: "No, just sign because we have spoken with the mining company, and they have already agreed, and they are going to finance us for this. So we have an agreement". Then the dispute between them starts a bit. Because maybe one wants one thing and the other wants another. Many conflicts are generated there" (Municipal official. Pica, 2019)

The above narrative suggests that disputes may arise at the beginning of the construction of "baseline," a process of information gathering, called here "first consultation," concerning those communities involved who are more likely to provide information to the mining or consulting companies. Communities must make important decisions regarding how to position themselves vis-a-vis companies. Thus, communities are positioned through their expertise and the "mobilization" of their arguments. Moreover, there is much more involved in these claims than just resistance because contestation involves a wide range of knowledge underlying ethical and moral assumptions. In this way, knowledge is attached to forms of self-affirmation and self-definition of the specificity of indigenous culture.

2.3.4. Methodological features and objectives of this chapter

To start taking a closer look at the "*Collahuasi Infrastructure Development and Productive Capacity Improvement Project*" project submitted to the Environmental Assessment System (SEIA) online on 7 January 2019. It obtained its final approval or RCA on 21 December 2021

as one of the many "mega-projects" that enter the system each year with an estimated investment of US\$ 2.3 billion. This project is "bi-regional," as it extends to two neighboring regions (Tarapacá and Antofagasta) to improve the current Collahuasi mine facilities to optimize the use of its assets and extend the life of the operation until 2040. The Environmental Impact Study was prepared by the consulting firm ARKADIS and is available through the SEIA online platform³⁰. The complete project can be downloaded from the website, and various documents are available on the main page dedicated solely to the project³¹.

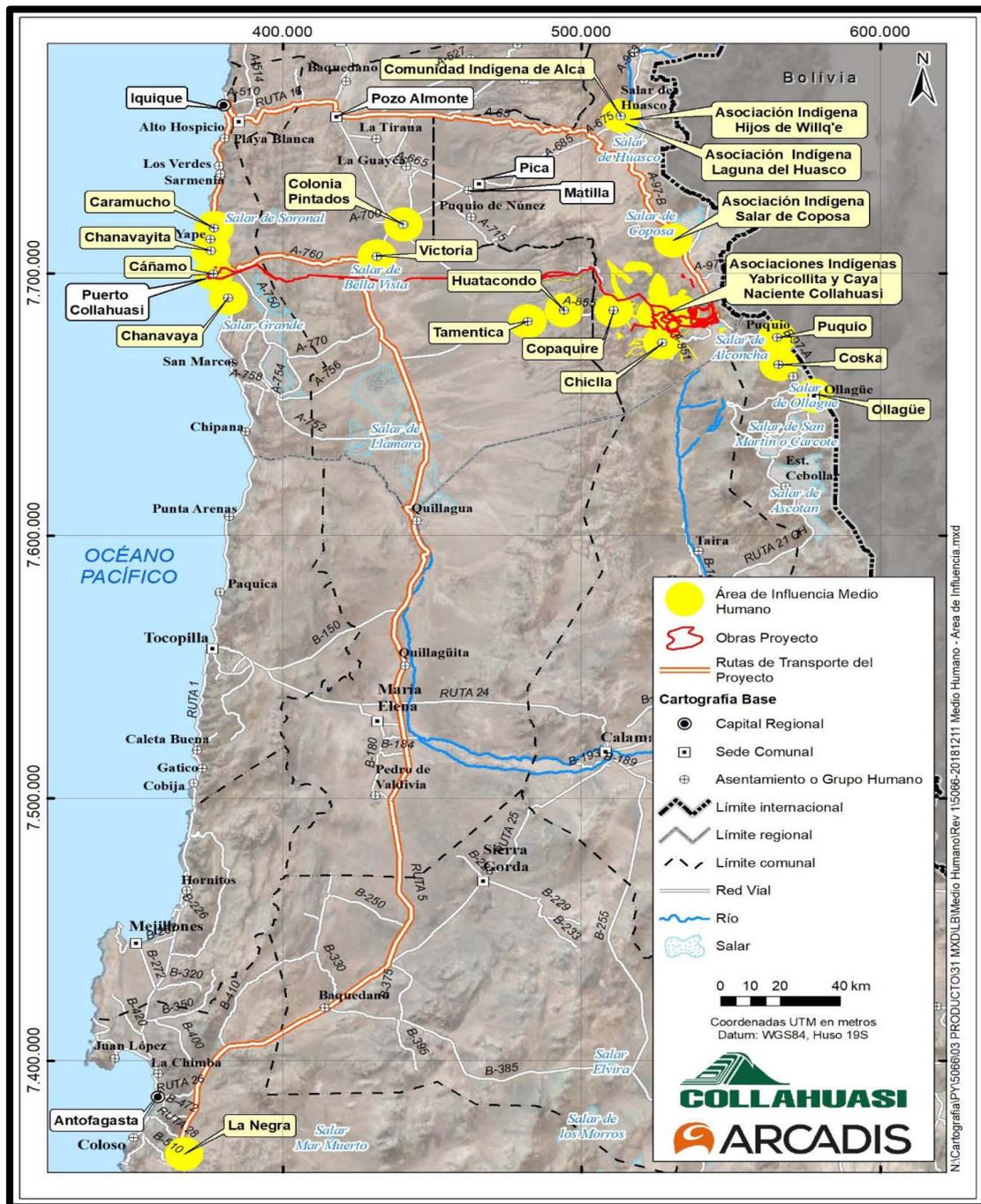
The citizen and indigenous consultations phase have been underway since 2019.

This critical exercise is to be understood closely to James Scott's work (1998) and the processes of visualization of the population and natural resources by the state and its institutions. The managerial spirit requires techniques of legibility and visualization according to risk assessment, that is, of applied knowledge, to make risk visible, accountable, measurable, and manageable. In this sense, the report presents a case for legibility and visualization tools or devices framed through the Chilean environmental guidelines.

³⁰ <http://www.sea.gob.cl/>

³¹ All activities, public presentations, observations made, evaluation reports, etc., must be uploaded to the system and are available as public documents. If you click on the link "Evaluacion Ambiental" (environmental evaluation) page, three links will appear the "Environmental Impact Assessment File," "Citizen Participation," and "Indigenous Peoples Interview Process." In the first one, 144 documents are uploaded, which primarily provide information on the understanding between the different state authorities and give information on the project evaluation status.

Fig7. The map shows the different communities in the Impact Area defined by ARCADIS. Communities and infrastructural changes are clearly defined. The various indigenous communities are shown in yellow; the project works are in red; the transport routes are white and red.



EIA deals with different areas and disciplines to fulfill the extensive "knowledge" list that needs to be contained. I will mainly focus on the chapter dedicated to the representation of "indigenous culture"³². Then I will also focus on how the EIA (hereafter "the project") is contested by indigenous groups, considering different arguments and criticisms elaborated and presented by the communities. In this way, I will construct the content of this text from multiple voices, namely: the written voice of the project; the 'living voices' heard in public consultations or during my interviews throughout my field experiences; the 'written voices' of the counter-reports, which elaborate on the argumentation outlined by indigenous communities, their leaders and advisors; the voices of the assessors; the managers of the mining companies and the voices of public officials. The interplay of voices, arguments, and knowledge brings us to the fundamental purpose of understanding how techno-scientific knowledge is mobilized, translated, and contested for or against future extractive projects. Questions that resonate with the abovementioned issues about impacts, responsibility, and the shape of an imagined future.

Contestation is an integral part of the whole consultation process. Indigenous focus on these studies' epistemological and methodological weaknesses and biases, trying to obtain a better position against mining or stop the development of new extractive projects. Our primary research objective about the knowledge produced for an EIA is to *understand the kind of knowledge these reports contain and the representation these reports make of the environment and the people affected*. Delving into the epistemological and methodological assumptions by contrasting this with the "counter-reports" also means problematizing how EIAs' knowledge is contested and criticized. Next, we will look at the already-mentioned project of Collahuasi to describe its main features. The project was almost three years under a review process by different state agencies and interested citizens (such as "evaluators," "assessors," "indigenous people," and "Chileans"³³).

³² Chapter 3, called "Human Groups". Because it corresponds to my own "area of expertise" as an anthropologist.

³³ I make the distinction between "indigenous" and "Chilean" here only to indicate the cultural differences at stake, based in turn on cultural policies in the context of ILO Declaration 169 and the indigenous law. Herein lies the complexity of the cultural and ontological differences between "indigenous groups" and "Chilean society" as a whole, as discussed in previous chapters.

2.3.5. Defining territory and human groups

In spatial terms, the project is carried out where the different operation of the mine is currently taking place: it is divided into three geographical zones, Cordillera, Pipelines, and Collahuasi Port sector. Chapter 3, "Human Groups," is presented as the result of an anthropological field study characterizing all the different groups and communities in the impact area.

The chapter describes the main features of cultural practices and livelihoods of permanent or semi-permanent settlements and the geographical location of the different communities and associations. It also indicates the methodological characteristics of the chapter on how information was obtained.

The report characterized the livelihood patterns of the human groups in the Impact Area (IA). A wide geographical scale of the project integrates the people who live in the surrounding areas considered part of the IA. The project distinguishes between those settlements with permanent houses in the Cordillera sector. It recognizes that there are also territories within the Cordillera sector that have temporary use, inhabited when the climatic conditions each year allow it. It also acknowledges that some Indigenous Associations regularly go to the Cordillera sector for a day or occasionally for one or more nights to carry out a traditional activity. However, their members live, work, or study in other localities.

“The following characterizes the different ways of life and settlements, divided in the Cordillera sector; where mainly indigenous people live, also divided according to their geographical location and distances to the mine. Their way of life is characterized by non-permanent living in the Cordillera sector.” (ARKADIS, chap. "human groups." 2018, 17)

The methodological features of the study distinguish between the "demographic," "geographical," "anthropological," and "socio-economic" dimensions of the human groups studied. Considering that these groups are primarily indigenous, data collection focused on previously established topics, such as "use and exploitation of natural resources," "cultural practices," "organizational structure," and "appropriation of the environment" (medical use, food preparation, etc.), "indigenous cultural heritage" (places or sites where manifestations of their culture or folklore take place), "meaning of the identity of the group through cultural elements," "value systems," "community rites" (social meaning of the rites), and "symbols of belonging to the group." (ARKADIS, chap. "human groups." 2018, 17). Each community and association is characterized in these terms, following the given structure of the

operationalization of data, widely distinguishing between "dimension," "indicators," and "elements to be described."

The different impacts are previously visualized and defined respecting the territorial location. The territorial extension implies that the project will interact with diverse human groups with particular ways of life expressed in differentiated territory uses. Potential impacts on human groups are defined according to the mining activity to be carried out, which in the Cordillera sector is related to the expansion of the mine pit, the enlargement of the tailings dumps, the expansion of the processing plant, new road construction, and desalination plants, among others (2018, p. 13). The potential risk is related to the possible modification of pastoral activity and associated cultural practices due to the loss or reduction of grazing areas. Potential decrease of water sources for human consumption and agricultural activities in the Huinquintipa-Huatacondo ravine. Due to the growth of the Rosario tailings dump, possible modification to the site's environment of cultural significance and alteration of ceremonial practices. (2018, p. 14) The study recognizes that the indicated human groups are considered part of the area of influence of the other human groups that graze in this vast territory due to their transhumant condition, making extensive use of this vast territory. The study recognizes that baseline information on all the grazing areas of the human groups is necessary to have sufficient information to rule out impacts. The study seeks to understand and define the settlement patterns of the groups in the mountain range area, pipeline, and port sector. The study uses ethnographic methods to learn about the life of indigenous peoples, with particular attention and respect for their "ancestral ways of life," "identity," and "cultural practices" (2018, p. 24).

2.3.6. The applied methodology

The criteria for this methodological application are defined in the Regulation of the Impact Assessment System of 2014 with a legal basis in Environmental Law. The main idea of this division is to relate the urban to the rural and the interaction between these geographical scales. In explaining the methodology followed, it reports on the different meeting sessions held with the indigenous communities and associations and the discussed issues, such as who will be the informants in the communities and the duration of the field campaigns. A table lists the different "kick-off meetings" (p. 26) in which 17 sessions were held with diverse communities and associations. For data collection, mainly semi-structured interviews were conducted, and prior consent was obtained from the interviewees, emphasizing particular concern for the time available to the leaders and indigenous representatives. About 60 people participated in this

study. Other methodological approaches were the use of maps ("talking maps") and "ethnographic guides": *"Through this activity, it was possible to identify and describe; the most significant sites, landmarks or findings for each human group, which made it possible to understand and interpret the community territory from an "emic" perspective."* (ARKADIS, chap. "human groups." 2018, p. 31).

After the first phase of data collection, other meetings were organized to present the data and information to the communities as a final stage of validating the collected information. The methodology also involved a feedback process that provided a report synthesizing the information already collected. This process was called "Early Citizen Participation," which allowed the baseline indicators for this study to be refined and improved. "Early" refers to an early phase of information gathering with the help of communities willing to collaborate. *"Specifically for indigenous communities or human groups, the methodology makes emphasis on relevance through an intercultural approach that seeks to be respectful of their worldview, their times, and their forms of organization."* (ARKADIS, chap. "human groups." 2018, p. 12) The details of the applied methodology highlight the use of the *emic* perspective. However, despite this apparent concern to achieve an "anthropological perspective," i.e., "from the indigenous point of view," the project has provoked many critical reactions from the communities.

2.3.7. Some critical assessments

The first thing that stands out in the chapter "Human Groups" reading is the effort to systematize and give methodological background to the applied data collection. The over-systematization of the qualitative data becomes extremely visible, as in the case of the operationalization mentioned above via "dimensions" and "indicators." Nevertheless, despite this pretension to supply an "ethnographic description," the study has several methodological biases that mainly concern collecting information through interviews and focus groups.

I focused on the questions outlined in the appendix and the bibliography to evaluate this chapter. Through critically examining these questions, I wanted to look "behind" the data collection. In the EIA in question, each dimension and variable has related questions that aim to obtain the desired information. For example, seven questions on the "settlement pattern," five questions on "land use and environmental valuation," four on "land ownership," seven on water ownership and use, etc. Through this inspection, I hoped to understand the study's central focus and how

previously framed indigenous knowledge was "integrated" into the study. These approaches to indigenous culture collected relatively "respectfully," given the early participation, feedback, and validation processes, indicate how the community's concerns were integrated into the study from the early phase of the baseline construction.

What does bias mean? Here bias has a very particular connotation, which refers to a certain way of presenting things. All knowledge, scientific or not, can be scrutinized and therefore criticized for "X" reason. If there is one thing we can say for sure about science, it advances to the extent that its postulates are criticized and falsified. (On this point, Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn would agree). So the problem is not that something is criticized but does not detract from its value. The problem is when something is presented in such a way as to eclipse elements that it is convenient not to expose, not to take these into account, and to put them out of reference as if they were not a problem at all. This deliberate ignorance shows a lack of transparency, a bias, as I am trying to understand and explain here.

As John Law (2009) observed in the case of the European Barometer Survey enacted, the people in a pre-figured way. Surveys presuppose several things about the respondents, and the setting of specific questions can lead to pre-expected results. That is why, in my case, by focusing on the questions, I gained some insights into the orientation of the report's content (previously contained in these questions). During the inspection process, I pointed to missing empirical elements that could also contrast with my field experience in Tarapacá. In my contribution (see story), I emphasized the methodological bias of this study, which is already evident in the questions of the semi-structured interviews. There was no reference to any perception of the people already affected by the mining process. I focused on the thematic gaps between human and non-human actors, such as water, land, indigenous values, and territory, to show this.

Regarding the construction of the baseline and its epistemological limitations, the lack of any critical reference or questions about the already-produced negative impacts of mining is an important issue. As Tania Murray Li comments about expert discourses, "*such are devoid of references to questions that cannot address, or that might cast doubt on the completeness of their diagnosis or the feasibility of their solutions*" (Li, 2007, p. 11). I want to point out that the baseline on human groups draws a de-politicized picture of indigenous reality. The effort of hyper-systematization of the described reality is fundamentally simplistic in its disconnection from the relevant features of indigenous life and livelihoods. For this reason, these Reports are not anthropological research following academic standards but a form of technical reports that

attempt to understand the life of human groups without any reference that obscures the vehicle to obtain their consent. In this sense, their meaning seems more *pragmatic than scientific*. The context of goal-oriented natural resource management also orients the efforts to comply with different instances of legitimization (Barandian, 2016, 2015).

2.3.8. Making meaning of counter-reports

The observations of counter-reports about the biases and gaps in the EIA resonate with various communities and consultants' critiques in the consultation process. Perhaps the issue of bias is even more significant, as counter-reports are often biased in their way. They gather and present scientific evidence but in a fundamentally critical way. Counter-reports do not seek to establish the project's positive aspects but focus primarily on the weaknesses and biases³⁴. In these critical readings, the Impacted Area (IA) is one of the most contradicted assumptions, and they try to highlight the arbitrariness of these boundaries and the definitions of supposedly "impacted" and "non-impacted" areas, becoming evident in the example of the uncertainty involved in the impact of water flows. Within the scope of various observations, the community of Huatacondo criticized the use of hydrological information that would give an erroneous picture of the flows in the area. According to them, the study omitted relevant information and emphasized the supposed hydraulic disconnection between various aquifers in the Huatacondo stream. At the intersections of knowledge, historical experience, and the construction of hypothetical models, uncertainty seems to go beyond epistemology:

"The models proposed for the distribution and functioning of the system of streams and groundwater are hypothetical models and, therefore, do not allow us to identify with certainty, exhaustively and conclusively the non-affectation of streams and groundwater in other basins of the territory. The community reiterates its mistrust of water resource management based on our history and relationship with this critical resource and its impacts in these 25 years of mining intervention. For this reason, we demand that the community can count on independent studies on our waters. That would allow us to know the real state, the quality, and the impacts on water associated with CMTQB's (mining) intervention. The future sustainability of the waters is necessary for our ancestral productive territory of Huatacondo and to establish follow-up and monitoring measures for their safeguarding. This would demonstrate an act of good faith on the part of the project owner; which, to date, has not been verified." (CIQH, 2019.)

³⁴ I would like to thank Dan Durant for his comments on the text, which led me to take into account this balanced consideration of biases.

Questioning the epistemic basis of the report, the Huatacondo community's counter-report asks: "*On what scientific basis did Collahuasi define the impacted area in terms of the hydrological and hydrogeological situation?*" After describing the different problems of the study and presenting their measurements and calculations, the community points out that "*the limits established for the hydrological and hydrogeological area of influence are arbitrary and forced*"(CIQH, 2019). To explain this, they evoke the precautionary principle, which considers that "*the impact is in perpetuity in the most significant area of the basin. It requires a tight program of control, surveillance, and mitigation not to affect the downstream communities who subsist on an agriculture-based economy.*" (CIQH, 2019.) The community argues that the report gives a biased picture of the highland sector's complex hydrogeological reality, which has been affected for more than 25 years by water extraction by mining companies (something not acknowledged in the questions nor the data).

Furthermore, it points out that the report omits considering water extraction's impact. These critical considerations are complemented by other suggestions on how a "good" study has to address a complex reality: "*We demand that the company develop independent studies of our water situation to know the actual state of these waters and the impact generated by the extraction of mining waters. Also, to establish monitoring programs for their protection. It would demonstrate an act of goodwill on the company's part*" (CIQH, 2019). On the contrary, the "lack of information" on the different issues of the project is interpreted by the community as gross negligence and an act of "bad faith."

Similar criticism of the information can be found in counter-reports, such as the Aymara Association of Coposa. Coposa criticized the project for its biased approach, lack of information, and the use of erroneous data and contradictions regarding the volume of water extraction. The Aymara association also argues that the critical limit of the hydraulic flow of the Jachucoposa watershed is already impacted by Collahuasi's water extraction, which needs to provide correct information on the subsequent mitigation process. Because of this omission and misuse of data, the company cannot offer convincing arguments to legitimize its water extraction. Therefore, the community demands better studies on the chemical composition of the hillside (Asociación indígena Aymara de Coposa, 2019, P. 5-6).

Other significant omissions are attributed to the 'double' environmental impact of the QB2 mining facility and that of Collahuasi, which - from the communities perspective- operates in the same territory. QB2 has already obtained an Environmental Qualification Resolution (RCA)

that allows the company to start the execution of the project (second phase of Quebrada Blanca). However, indigenous leaders argue that the Collahuasi Report needs to consider the effects of both mining operations. Although both operations are placed in the same territory, the sum of impacts is ignored, and instead, they are presented without any territorial (or hydrological) connection.

Something similar occurs with road use which refers to the concern of people who keep their animals in the mountain range sector. While both mining operations use the same roads, impacting the living space of the animals, which are run over, drink the contaminated water, or eat the rubbish left by the truckers. However, these forms of behavior of truckers do not seem easy to resolve, as mining companies subcontract companies that are not under their direct supervision (and therefore do not share their "sustainability" objectives). This lack of control, thus, highlights an issue concerning the "good" conduct of mining companies and respect for the territory and indigenous life itself. It also demonstrates, once again, that the differences in knowledge are not gratuitous since both "indigenous" and "corporations" seem to define different boundaries, which in turn influences considerations of possible impacts.

It is not easy to distinguish the different positions represented here. We cannot judge which is "wrong" and which is "right" without having the technical expertise to reach our "own" conclusions.

We have sustained a critique of the EIAs, which we then reinforce with other community criticisms. However, I would not be able to say who is right because of the complexity of the knowledge at stake and weighed against each other. I want to point out that it is not the intention here to play the judge but much more to describe the forms and proceedings of how this knowledge has been judged and contested. I wanted to expose the difficulty of translating indigenous groups' concerns into an EIA's requirements. Translating, not because Western knowledge is dismissed by indigenous because of its colonial legacy, but above all because of the strategic use of techno-scientific knowledge as a device and mechanism to make indigenous concerns prevail. As seen in the case of criticism regarding water use, the argument of Huatacondo and Coposa considers the territorial interconnections at stake as something that the study has to take into account due to high levels of uncertainty. In this sense, we cannot simply argue that "both positions are perfectly valid" in their respective terms. One side urges the other to be "more accurate," "more (inter)connected," and "more holistic," i.e., to be "more scientific" and, therefore, more "responsible" in defining a comprehensive rank of possible impacts.

For this reason, one of the critical questions is related to the extent of responsibility and the effect of limiting the impacted areas. While the mining operations process constructs a highly fragmentary type of knowledge -not only because of their forms of analysis indigenous groups experience required-the ontological effect of these epistemic procedures is the fragmentation of reality itself. They live it as another imposition with clear neo-colonial features, while their concerns are not acknowledged. Therefore, these ontological assumptions significantly impact people's livelihoods and are of severe socio-cultural and political matters. These fragmentation procedures are not considered regarding the dimension of human life as one of the most recurrent critical assessments concerning future water supplies in the Atacama Desert (see chapter nine). These procedures draw clear lines and limited definitions of environmental impacts on ecological systems understood and lived as interconnected (Cornejo & Niewöhner, 2021), also a consequence of environmental regulations designed to manage the fragile balance between the extractive industry and the potential environmental impacts caused by it.

2.3.9. Territorial Fragmentation

It has already been mentioned that despite extensive documentation of territorial impacts caused by mining worldwide, especially in Latin America, there needs to be a reference to this in the EIA. This omission is significant because it casts doubt on the reliability of the study. In this way, the report omits data on the 30-year impact on the territory and communities. This data could have been easily obtained by asking people, but it was not even contemplated in the questionnaires. Many of the counter-reports reviewed have in common that they represent criticism of the project, but a critique that turns out to be of a more comprehensive rank. They denounce significant omissions and conclude that the project does not provide a correct "picture" of the complex reality of the territories. In this sense, these biases do not seem casual, as they respond to the interests of the company that finances these studies. Economic interests are put before reliability, and responsibility towards ecosystems and territories, and socio-technical knowledge supports this direction. The problem is that this knowledge needs to be more neutral and apolitical. Nevertheless, the interest noted here has other normative dimensions that we want to delve into concerning the definition of an impacted territory or area of influence.

As established by Environmental Law 19.300, extractive projects must indicate the geographical extension and visualize the possible spatial consequences of their development. To this end, the law establishes the need to define the Area of Influence (AI), which projects

the boundary and extent of geographic zones. In other words, it defines differentiated, geographically delimited areas of impact. In environmental law, the IA is defined as the geographical area whose attributes must consider natural elements and socio-cultural issues to determine whether the project or activity generates any of the effects or circumstances enlisted in Article 11. An impact is any environmental alteration caused directly or indirectly by a project or activity in a given area.

In the case of mining, it can also influence nearby areas through the construction of infrastructure and transport, transforming territories and landscapes into a human environment. As noted above, the definition of IA refers to a geographical sector identified as "affected" but limited in its impacts. These geographical criteria project precise boundaries limiting the possible effects and claim to foresee what potential impacts the project can cause in the near or far future. For this reason, several things could be improved by defining boundaries and territorial limits. It is clear from Ulrich Beck's works on reflexive modernity and risk society that risk becomes an integral part of modern proceedings based on science and technology. However, risk implies the common field of certainty and uncertainty. This definition of risk means defining how to control and foresee something shaped by technical expertise. In Beck's terms, it is a reflexive understanding of the limit of human control and response-ness. In this sense, the definition of an Area of Impact is the projection of space under techno-scientific control: environmental measurements, mitigation, and compensations are their devices. It is up to the producers of the EIA to define what constitutes an AI under specific criteria. Nevertheless, for many people, these definitions are not transparent and give rise to multiple suspicions, as they may result in certain groups not being recognized as affected and thus excluded from possible negotiations or claims for compensation³⁵.

Law and institutional settings define delimited spaces-territories configured according to technical criteria, justifying their fragmentation and socio-technical appropriation configured

³⁵ A clear example of this is the case of the "Area de Desarrollo Indigena" in Matilla, which was not included in the new environmental impact study of Quebrada Blanca (the second phase of Quebrada Blanca "QB2"). This happened although they had already had earlier agreements with the mining company, so the community was also part of the AI of the first phase of the project (Quebra Blanca 1). To respond to this decision, the indigenous leaders objected to the SEA. However, they were not included in the AI of the new project. Despite their opposition to this decision (an "arbitrary decision," they say) and their different strategies to achieve inclusion, neither the company nor the SEA saw sufficient reasons to include the community in the AI. By this, defining an AI means assessing and narrowing down possible consequences of a mine geographically and recognizing affected groups that live in these territories. It also shows the agency of state services like SEA, which can be essential because it can include *a posteriori*, excluded communities as "affected groups."

as spaces of extraction. Technicality is not a neutral device because it allows seeing, making visible, defining, and controlling. Procedures are subjected to political criteria rather than technical ones. Defining and drawing "lines on a map" (Varzi, 2016) is always an arbitrary movement, distinguishing one territory from another. To draw boundaries where there were none before. The critiques outlined in the counter-reports show how other current territorial configurations compete with the territorial hegemony of the state (Brighenti, 2010a, 2006; Haesbert, 2013; Porto Gonçalves, 2015), which involve definitions and constructions of boundaries, defining limits of a territory, making visible an arbitrary construction of an impacted space. These spatial measuring and management form shape an ontology of space pre-configured according to the Western development narrative (see Mukerij, 2006, 2002).

2.3.10. Dialogue of knowledge

Focusing on the methodological assumptions in constructing the presented "facts," there seems to be a gap between the information collection and the material inscription of the information provided by stakeholders. This general case is how information and data are organized and presented. The information construction process involved in consultation implies a degree of cooperation between companies and communities in "common knowledge construction." It means the definition of common goals and commitments. One indigenous leader, during a public presentation challenging a mining company, expressed it:

"I do not see this being considered. Moreover, I do not know what you do with all your consultations. You listen to us, but the documents do not reflect our words. This is our concern because I mean two very different forms of perception and sustenance. Furthermore, this is not reflected in the reports. These are issues that can be detrimental to us. It is a problem of the dialogue of knowledge that you are not taking up accordingly. We have a way of life that you do not recognize as such, with the necessary responsibility" (Indigenous leader in a public consultation in Pica. Personal Field notes, 2019).

As the EIA methodology points out, in terms of engagement with the declared "affected communities" involving knowledge construction procedures through ethnographic techniques, the cited comments refer to the construction and presentation of the report. During the construction phase of the baseline, the human groups provide data for the consulting company. Data are "extracted," and thus, the information is used, filtered, and presented in the report's final version. In this final phase, knowledge is "mobilized" to achieve the concrete objective: the construction and materialization of the project itself. Perhaps the information required to detail an indigenous approach to their reality is communicated but filtered as it is materialized

in this specific EIA with the gaps mentioned above, which means “neutralized politically.” Precisely because of this and despite the recognition and claim of the cultural difference of indigenous peoples, the report fails in its claim to neutrality because it ignores indigenous territorial claims, fragments the territorial understanding of landscapes, and thus simplifies the complex reality, undermining the impacts of mining extractivism.

This attempt to give an account of a depoliticized vision of the reality in northern Chile has considerable resonance in the environmental management of national regulation.

Simplifications favor a specific account of a reality devoid of conflicts and antagonisms. In this way, the report constitutes an act of knowledge and engineering that evidences its political sense (that tries to hide). The question is anchored in the irreducibility of indigenous cultural-political positions, which in this case, leads us to a very extreme "all or nothing" position. Therefore, it makes sense to ask whether recognizing epistemological and ontological differences would ultimately make the materialization of a given project impossible. If we understand indigenous livelihood as opposite to Western development strategies (as sustained in studies as *Paradigm wars* (Mander & Tauli-Corpuz, 2006) and the literature on extractivism in Latin America (Svampa, 2016; Acosta, 2013). However, there already exist many cases of deals and compromises between indigenous and corporations. These commitments can range from financial payments to devising better compliance standards and participation to higher environmental commitments from companies (more on these issues in chapters ten and eleven). As noted in the previous chapter, there is already widespread recognition from the business sector and the state that extractive projects cannot succeed without the consent of communities. Here I make the point regarding *the translation* that Irreducible difference does not mean deaf dialogue. Therefore, the claim of many indigenous groups to be recognized as “impacted human groups” is framed within the general claim of their right to decision-making within mining companies operating in a territory understood and experienced as their own. This resonates with their claim to be recognized as “equal actors” despite a given and structured power imbalance. Knowledge becomes a “battle-horse” through which indigenous people can claim their right to negotiate and be recognized for who they are, even though the whole configuration of the Chilean environmental institutions inhibits them from expressing themselves on their terms.

2.3.11. Holism

A conceptually significant case that many community members have highlighted is that despite the declaration of a "respectful" approach to indigenous livelihoods, the project fails to understand the complexity of indigenous life and its ecological basis. "Holism" is often understood as a "relational category" and a key element of "aboriginal philosophy" as explained by the anthropologist Oullette:

"Holistic knowledge is about the interconnectedness of all of creation. Holism is the idea that all is connected, that all living organisms, inanimate objects, living animals (humans), plants, the soil, the air, the community, nations, and the metaphysical have a spirit and are connected into relationships of interaction creating a matrix offering a (dynamic) sense of order or (dynamic) equilibrium." (Oullette, 2010, p. 98)

The contradiction between different values has been analyzed and described in an influential book (Mander & Tauli-Corpuz, 2006) that delves into the fundamental differences between the economic growth paradigm, contrasted to a holistic and spiritual indigenous knowledge, summarizes very clearly the idea of the incommensurability of both, the indigenous and western worlds (see also, Blaser, Feith & McRae, 2004). Undoubtedly, we are dealing with very different ways of conceiving and living. This is what the literature on interculturality has called *indigenous science* (Oullette, 2010; Friesen & Friesen, 2002; Kawagley, 1995; Canadian Council of Learning, 2007). However, recent contributions of anthropology have been concerned with these "worlds" that communicate, transpire, and interact, despite supposedly fundamental ontological differences between them. Blaser states, "*Knowledge is knowledge in context; it is relative.*" (2004, p. 40). Indigenous knowledge has no universalistic claim. Much research on Western vs. indigenous science is based on a characterization of indigenous knowledge that must consider the holistic feature and indigenous spirituality (Kovach, 2009). It not only means taking a post-colonial point of view regarding the hierarchical ordering of other-co-existing but subordinate knowledge. It also means adopting a relativistic point of view, i.e., one that does not prioritize one over the other (see Veran, 2001).

I want to underline here the importance of a holistic approach, which appears in many of the criticisms of the indigenous groups regarding the technical knowledge presented in the EIAs. I will return to the translation questions in the last part of this chapter.

Considering these ontological differences, let us return to why these reports are so criticized.

One possible line of interpretation is that the characteristics of these reports are circumscribing the area of impact under specific geographical criteria by applying a target-oriented approach, in which the space and scales involved are intended to give a "scientific" view of the possible impacts while being selective about what kind of data are presented and which not. Therefore, the claim to scientific "neutrality" and "objectivity" is problematic. The problem lies in the general rules of Chilean environmental legislation, as already discussed, which assumes that the responsibility for declaring their possible impacts lies in the hands of the company itself. However, the report is reviewed by citizens and indigenous people and the different governmental agencies defined as pertinent to do such work. One might believe that relevant state agencies' reviews are more thorough. However, this is not in line with reality, as the "realism of time" often prevails. Agencies do not have the time to provide a careful reading of projects. Ultimately, the procedures aim to ensure compliance with specific institutional procedures rather than assess the study's quality and the conclusions drawn. However, by self-declaration, companies become "judges" and "parties" to these processes because it is up to them to foresee and declare possible impacts and measures. This "voluntary" character can be seen in many of the approaches of mining companies and local communities. In other words, in the absence of more precise control, other "good practice" devices come into play, such as the willingness of entrepreneurs and financiers under the scope of CSR.

Another line of interpretation that follows a "holistic approach" seems to suggest that, despite the scientific pretensions of these reports, knowledge is applied in a fragmented way to a socio-cultural, spatial, and natural whole reality, compartmentalized into multiple scientific "branches" (as a chapter dedicated to "hydrogeology," other to "indigenous culture," "geographical features," "archeological sites," "flora" and "fauna," and so on). Although these studies aim to meet specific criteria of "comprehensiveness," delving into so many different disciplines and areas may compromise the project itself. Nevertheless, given this structure, these reports fragment and simplify the affected reality, as the affected territories involve complex and fragile ecosystems. This way of proceeding also fails to account for the complex socio-ecological conditions of indigenous life and culture. Although the form of sectorial procedures is specified in Chilean law, this seems reason enough to deny the right to demand a more complex socio-ecological model instead of "individual parameters." I may be able to give some clues as to how to approach a possible answer from a critique of Western epistemology.

To maintain the focus on the historical usurpation suffered by indigenous peoples in the northern territory, the accentuation of the role of knowledge as a semiotic-political tool leads

us to other exciting considerations about modernity and science. With 25 to 30 years of experiencing the environmental impacts of mining, indigenous leaders try to ensure better environmental standards and criteria for the definition of possible risks to which they can be exposed. Local expertise is grounded in their cultural experience of a changing territory, environment, and landscape. So, their reflexivity has a profoundly experiential and materialistic ground. In this light, risk and uncertainty reflect the dynamic mining ecology, reflecting fears and hopes that “things” can be done better.

Through contestation, socio-environmental conflicts become visible and onto-political issues regarding other knowledge systems in which “other” territorial and ecological relations are presented as complex socio-natural configurations. In these, the sphere of the "human" is only a tiny part of a complex "web of life" (Capra, 1998). The critique from a holistic perspective reflects the ideas of French philosopher Edgar Morin on Western thought and knowledge. For Morin, the deepest cause of the error is neither a logical nor a factual error but the way human knowledge is organized, an idea that resonates with the presented analysis. Morin argues in favor of *complex thought* instead of the *paradigm of simplification*, which he sees expressed in Cartesian philosophy characterized by disjunction, reduction, and abstraction (Morin, 2005, p. 29). One of his signs is the hyper-specialization that an arbitrary cut is made on a reality, which is fragmented, a procedure that Morin calls "blind intelligence." Although Morin's proposals can be classified in the field of epistemology, Fritjof Capra's work is based on the development of a holistic paradigm, which is in line with an ecological world vision inspired by the deep ecology of Arne Naess, cybernetic theory, and the works of Humberto Maturana and Ilja Prigongé. Capra contrasts a systemic vision with an analytical perspective that requires differentiating and separating the dimensions of reality to subject them to scrutiny (Capra, 1998, 49.) At the end of his in-depth study of the new non-positivistic trends in the natural sciences, he also drew economic conclusions linked to our understanding of the “non-human” world,

"in this case, the lesson for human communities is evident. One of the main conflicts between economics and ecology stems from nature being cyclical, while our industrial systems are linear. Our businesses absorb resources, transform them into products and waste, and sell those products to consumers, who, in turn, will produce more waste by using them. Production and consumption patterns must be cyclical, similar to natural processes, to be sustainable. We must fundamentally redesign our business and economy to achieve such cyclical patterns. (Capra, 1998, 309).

I will delve into these considerations and debates reflected in indigenous cosmopolitics and notions such as Buen Vivir in chapters eleven and twelve. Indigenous are not alone in their critique of positivist thought.

2.3.12. *Fragmentation vs. holism*

In a world of differences, territorial disputes, and competing worldviews, ontology becomes political. Nevertheless, do the counter-reports cited above seem to account for a "backlash" of indigenous ontology supporting life projects in response to territorial fragmentation? In the case of ancestral water use, the Huatacondo community gives an interesting perspective. There is consensus that the traditional use of water by indigenous communities is a concept articulated with their cosmovision, considering that the use of water resources - historical and current - is closely linked to these indigenous peoples' social, cultural, economic, and spiritual activity. (Huatacondo, 2019) Ancestral use has been recognized by Chilean legislation (Water Code, protection of indigenous water rights, protection of wetlands) but not without tensions (Yañez & Molina, 2014a). Different court rulings (such as Toconoce v. ESSAN) have demonstrated the recognition of practices based on ancestral and customary use. The Huatacondo report gives different arguments in favor of their protection of traditional water use. They say the state, then, through the competent public services and its courts of justice, has recognized indigenous patrimonial water and land ownership.

In a similar sense, the Taira community also perceives that the project in question endangers their culture and territory:

"Consequently, the approval of this project puts at risk the very existence of the Indigenous Communities that have also observed the affectation of their territory in the present process, seriously altering their ways of life. Since not only are we being deprived of our lands but also -in the specific case of Taira- of our water sources, making the development of our economic, social, religious, and cultural activities unviable. Our ancestral rights, beyond our rights as indigenous people, but mainly as human beings, have not been respected by the authorities, forcing us into displacement and eliminating our People. We hope this is not another example and that this environmental authority can adopt the appropriate measures. (Community of Taira. Observations. 2019)

Appropriate action regarding knowledge building and environmental characterization is also linked to recognizing indigenous rights and specific cultural livelihoods at risk. However, the community says they can only expect more responsibility from the Chilean state and its agencies. However, here again, the different "grades" of interest are at stake, and very uneven protection for the environment, endangered species, and people. In this equation, national development, economic well-being, and the so-called "progress" seem to have more weight.

It is also important to mention that the holistic value of the environment implies forms of cultural adaptation to an already impacted environment and the implicit fears of other unforeseen impacts (see Sahlins, 1983).

“Holism,” in this light, is only an inexact denomination for non-western knowledge within the growing uncertainty regarding the possible impact of a specific but dominant form of human activity in the world called “extractivism.” The point is that it treats the human dimension as a category to be approached differently. We need to be aware of an ontological difference in the uses of the world and how we make sense of it (Yusoff, 2018, 2016; 2015; Povinelli, 2016).

Taking the different cited counter-reports seriously in their critiques and claims for appropriate and holistic measures: "appropriate measures" really mean appropriate measures, i.e., taking the responsibility of the extractive process for the wide range of effects and affectivities seriously. As seen, this range of impacts is profoundly uncertain despite territorial circumscriptions. The content of affectivities lies in the emotional and livelihood dimension of people who felt endangered. Taking seriously is not a declaration of sympathy for a minority. Still, it is evidence of the clear neo-colonial policy the Chilean state has deployed since its constitution. In this sense, the affective dimension with the territory is not only part of cultural heritage, of a shared “common past,” but of a political struggle first for cultural recognition and then for the prevalence of their ways of life linked to water and territory (see Cornejo & Niewöhner, 2021).

It is usual in Western imagination to perceive the desert as an "empty space" (*terra nullis*), in line with the old narrative of extraction (Povinelli, 2016). However, the territorial connection is based on the historical livelihoods of indigenous people living in the desert. How they understand the multiple links are constructed regarding ecological niches, aquatic landscapes, fragile vegetation, and fauna. What Chilean law and policy have fragmented as "natural resources," "water rights," or "impact area" express the current capitalist drive to expand resource frontiers. Nevertheless, as we have seen, this is already widely contested and resisted by indigenous people arguing the interconnectedness of these "things." It does not mean that "things" (such as water, territory, land, and borders) cannot be perceived, managed, or handled differently. If ontological differences exist, they are also dynamic and hybrid, as the history of colonialism and cultural imposition of five hundred years leaves important traces. Much of this colonial past has also strongly influenced the current relationship between humans and non-humans, shaping new discourses and resistance modes that are sometimes problematic,

contradictory, or even paradoxical (Cornejo, 2020). The desert is not an "empty space" but an expression of hybrid and contested landscapes shaped by socio-natural and historical imaginations, a place where beyond the continuation of the violent extractive project, a shared future, a life project sustained by the myriad of human and non-human relations might be possible when reviewing and contrasting various technical arguments and other visions emanating from different life experiences, which in turn are difficult to translate into technical languages. A crude neo-colonial reality becomes evident.

To some extent, the opening reference to this chapter of the indigenous leader's concern about Climate Change offers a stimulating contrast to the techno-political arguments. Where and how should we draw the boundaries of an impact? When is uncertainty but another word for the "unforeseen" and the "possible"? What happens when the "cold shock" of reality brings us back to the fact that choices are to be made? To paraphrase Marx: power will decide when equal rights are at stake³⁶. As another advisor said to me on the importance of international investment, *"You will find all over the country: with forestry, salmon farming, fishing, with mining, no service is going to be sliced up by all the regulations because a lot of it represents relevant income for a country that lives off its resources. So, there is always a pressure situation."* (Assessor. Iquique. 2019).

In the previous chapter, we argued that community concerns have been gaining increasing recognition from large mining corporations. In a way, the usual way of operating without regard for the people has increasingly fallen out of use. There is no sustainability report from any mining company that currently does not consider working with the communities necessary to build trust and cooperation. More than one mining expert has also pointed out many resources lost due to socio-environmental conflicts. As noted in the previous chapter, community relations

³⁶ Various environmental NGOs are rejecting two highly conflictive projects. One is the *Dominga project*, a highly conflictive mining project that would be installed in the Coquimbo region, affecting a wide range of marine flora and fauna. Scientists associated with FIMA and the TERRAM foundation have extensively described and studied this. The other project is located in the far south of the Magellanic region. It consists of widening the Kirke River to allow larger ships to pass through a narrow corridor, bringing the promise of "more tourism" by improving accessibility for large boats, which would favor the salmon industry. This project is also rejected by indigenous groups (Kaweshkar) because they have not been consulted beforehand. Both projects have considerable flaws in their EIAs, as indicated by several scientists who seek to fight against their realization due to the high environmental costs that both projects could generate. These examples, only briefly mentioned here, show the evident contradiction between a citizenry that seeks to stop these processes, despite all the promises of "development" that accompany them, and the economic groups that pressure the environmental authorities to give their corresponding permits.

focuses on "doing things right." This is the premise on which the belief that mining can be sustainable is based.

2.3.13. *When worlds transpire: The Problem of Translation*

The anthropological theory has undoubtedly been nourished by post-human ideas of symmetrical anthropology and the parliament of things in Latour's sense, Haraway's multi-species perspective, and Stenger's view of diplomacy. In ethnographies of the last decades, authors such as Eduardo Kohn, Phillipe Descola, Marisol De la Cadena, and Ana Tsing move beyond an anthropology of the human, in which culture ceases to be the gravitational center of the "anthropological question." "Nature" (in brackets) and its innumerable human and non-human interconnections become the focus of these ethnographical accounts (and a critique of modernity) that meticulously describe human-non-human relations, more-than-human earth beings, mushrooms, runa kuna, and the way how multiple relations and entanglements forge them. Given the persistence of life, living in a damaged world, fruitful connections between the world of STS and political ecology also generate new approaches to prevent "old" dualisms by mobilizing different accounts and semiotic tools (Blaser, 2013). In this way, these ethnographies make it possible to figure out other ontological horizons in the Anthropocene and Climate Change, looking closely at the meaningful entanglements of indigenous knowledge with other entities which enter slowly into the realm of "politics."

Focusing on knowledge production under specific historical and place-based conditions means integrating the socio-political and cultural implications persisting in neo-colonial and extractivist contexts. Maintaining a de-colonial perspective implies considering a robust theoretical development in Latin America and is reflected in the discussion on extractivism and post-extractivist from a political ecology approach.

Following the thoughtful ideas of Ghassan Hage (2012), I would connect two approaches that followed distinct paradigms of critical thought. On the one side, rooted in sociological thought, the whole debate about post and de-coloniality is historically connected to a leftist tradition in conceiving power and economic asymmetries between global "north" and "south" as a persisting element of our "common world" (Maldonado-Torres, 2014; Mignolo, 2007; Grosfogel, 2007; Castro-Gómez & Grosfogel, 2007; Quijano, 2000, Wallerstein, 1998; Gunder Frank, 1967). The other tradition has to do with the possibility of thinking of a radical political

thought based on radical alterity, approached within the theoretical background of the latest anthropology³⁷.

It means to take seriously the idea that other worlds coexist, worlds that are fundamental to each other. Therefore, the idea here is to confront two theoretical frameworks which sometimes seem to contradict each other about the preconceptions about the world(s), but which, however, can enter into dialogue: One that can highlight and provide insight into the epistemic and ontological differences at stake when the diversity of worlds come into contact or as Mario Blaser pointed out, "*characterized as the dynamics through which different ways of worlding sustain themselves even as they interact, interfere, and mingle with each other*" (Blaser, 2013, p. 552). The other post-colonial theoretical approach must consider persisting historical and structural violence. However, I think both approaches can be related in a creative and tensional way, highlighting their mutual coexistence and difference. The starting point can be the crucial question about the world we share: considering the multiple connections that intermingle with "mining," such as *Consultas*, environmental institutions, EIAs, critical reports, participation processes, a. o. In simple terms: are we living in one or many worlds?

Let me here quote a story told by an archeologist which refers to the more-than-human relationship and the difficulty of expert knowledge to grasp them:

"When you talk about plants and animals, and that you are going to protect them in the context of environmental legislation, and that you will gather information to understand the whole issue. How do you get to the point that a tree, for example, is no longer a tree but is considered a human being? So that tree is not subject to your will. It is subject to its own will. And the machi (Mapuche "healer") has to consult that tree about its opinion. How is this scientific apparatus going to dialogue with that tree? There has to be a total deconstruction of how we perceive reality. And often, the academic, the scientist, or the professional approach these realities through participation. But we are prevented from understanding these realities because we start from a positivist construction in which the tree does not speak and is not a person. So an asymmetrical relationship begins, because of this denial alone, of saying that the tree does not speak and that the tree is not a person as we define the human animal that speaks, a subject that can speak by itself. We do not have that relationship. Our sciences are based on this animal that speaks, the human being; therefore, all other living beings do not have that capacity. And therefore, an asymmetrical relationship is already constructed, an asymmetry opposed to the asymmetry that also exists in the indigenous world but

³⁷ Viveiro de Castro has recognized the critical contributions of authors such as Pierre Clastres. His fruitful ideas about radical alterity in societies "against the state" give insights into a radical political thought also nourished by the philosophical influence of Deleuze and Guatarri in their nomad and minor philosophy (see Introduction by Viveiro de Castro to the work of Pierre Clastres).

differently. The tree can speak, the tree is older, and the tree can teach you a lesson. And therefore, I do have to consult the tree." (Archeologist, Iquique. 2021)

To expose another story, let me use the beginning quote already exposed in the Introduction: This was the idea expressed by the indigenous leader who made an essential point regarding the difference between the desert perceived by the indigenous and the engineer of mining companies. She said the desert is a place without much life or meaning for them. *"What they don't understand is that, for an indigenous person, there is a pasture in the Altiplano so that their animals can graze. There must be no movement of vehicles or machinery because it will disturb their llamas, goats, sheep, or whatever. But they don't understand. They don't understand that this pile of stones is not just a pile of stones. It has a meaning for a group of people. That's why they come and take it out because, for them, there is nothing. "It's pure desert," they tell you, "there's nothing there."*

Both narratives tell us about possible worlds³⁸. Of worlds that are happening but are hard to understand following the "great division" (Latour 2007): where does nature end and culture begin? (see Cornejo, 2018, Escobar, 1999). The "lack of understanding" is characterized as the "positivist" referent, which difficulty can recognize that there could be non-human voices that count and are worth hearing; or the desert describes as an "empty" zone, a "sacrifice zone" due to the expansion of natural resource frontiers. Engineers in the desert do not understand that something there can matter to a group of people. These stories have another meaning not conceivable from "normal science" based on calculation and measurement. This configuration in which meanings intermingle with practices also implies various contradictory concepts of "space," "territory," and "nature."

Faced with these differentiations, we might be tempted to oppose a nomadic science, a science of flux, dynamics, and the indeterminate. And oppose it to the state's science, that of static spaces, the determinate, and measurement (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Although this philosophical consideration of Deleuze and Guattari has an anthropological substratum (the work of Pierre Clastres and the notion of the *war machine*), they have the great merit of

³⁸ I cannot take for granted a particular definition of what I mean by *ontology* because it is a discussed terminology, moreover, its counterpart, the concept of culture. From Blaser's (2013) perspective, I understand ontology as narratives as performative acts that generate and recreate a diversity of worlds or, in Blaser's terms, worlding. What does this diversity of worlds mean? Indeed, what is a "world"? We will seek to answer these questions in the following chapters, engaging in a political ontology that describes forms of "radical alterity" and cleverness (Povineli, 1995; Fabian, 1983). *"Worlding is a contested, arduous, and not entirely coherent process and never takes place in a vacuum without connections to other ways of worlding. Yet the connections do not cancel their radical differences."* (Blaser, 2013, P. 558)

projecting the reason of the state onto the reason of science. In this sense, we are talking about the only and ultimate reason, and there is no other reason than this one. In this way, measurement, calculation, control, and exactitude are devices of a society of control (Deleuze, 1992) deployed in a universe that does not tolerate otherness (Viveiro de Castro, 2010, 28), that is to say, the ontological radicality of Other(s) thought.

However, regarding knowledge and practices, we are confronting more than a language or a symbolic problem. An issue deeply rooted in semiotic and symbolic devices on how we know and make sense of the world. As the point enounced above regarding a shared *world*, how are these different worlds communicated and intermingled?

Let me here delve into some recent contributions of anthropological thought to this debate: The Amerindian perspectivism supposes the inversion of the Western naturalism bound to multiculturalism: "one nature, many cultures," "one single meta-physical ground, many possible perspectives, interpretations, or worldviews" (Latour, 2007). Applying multiculturalism to our example, desert as "something" or as "nothing" would only constitute different meanings based on "cultural differences." So, we are still captive of an eternal dualism between Nature and Culture, where the interpretation of a single nature varies. With this consideration, multi-naturalism inverts this relation implying the "conjugation of the multiple" (Viveiro de Castro: 2010a, p. 57), forging a radical ontology. Contrasting Amerindian perspectivism with the Western mode of thought provides the common ground by nature (universal nature). The difference for Amerindians does not reside in the spirit (do Indians have souls?) but in the body (the body of the shaman, the jaguar, the body of beer or mandioca). Amazonian multi-naturalism implies different "grounds" or different "natures." Because the "background" which nourishes the world and its play of similarities and differences is the soul, "*the difference is given in the specificity of bodies*" (Viveiro de Castro 2004a, p. 474).

In contrast, the soul remains "universal." "(T)he Amerindian conception would suppose a *spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity*" (Viveiro de Castro, 2004b, p. 6). Animals and spirits see themselves as humans; they are anthropomorphic beings in their houses and villages sleeping in their beds: humanity is always the point of reference (2004^a, p. 466). As beings with a soul, they necessarily have a point of view, an agency. From this reading, it would not be unusual for the *Machi* to consult the tree. This is the proper condition of shamanic knowledge to reveal the mighty agency of beings, *the maximum of intentionality* (2004^a, p. 469). But as Hage (2012) points out, following Katherine Swancutt's explanations, the body "is not just

flesh"; it encompasses a multiplicity of "forces," "energies," and "talents" (Swancutt in Haghe, 2012, p. 299) *"In being the site of a multiplicity of forces and energies each body constitutes a multiplicity of bodily modes of engagement with its surroundings. It is this multiplicity of bodily engagements which in turn produces a multiplicity of realities or 'natures' that the notion of multinaturalism alludes to."* (Haghe, 2012, p. 299). In a world of relations, every being can have an agency; this is not only a condition of "humans." Amerindian perspectivism is a kind of "game of views," of perspectives, but not of relativism in the modern sense, but of different worlds that coexist, as such coexistence, all the entities of that world can be persons, so the jaguar, so the shaman, so the tree. *"When I say that the human point of view is always the point of view of the reference, I mean that every animal, every species, every subject occupying the point of view of reference will see itself as human... even us."* (2013, p. 23)

Vivero de Castro's ideas have influenced a generation of post-human anthropologists trying to understand how non-moderns and indigenous people perceive, live, and dwell in and through their environment and territory. Nature is no longer a given thing or a common ground of an anthro-philosophical perspective (e.g., Freud and Hobbes). Anthropological researchers such as Eduardo Kohn develop an ethnographical approach to a semiotic interaction between more-than-human entities. His ethnographic experience in a Mayan village focused on how people live and engage with their environment *"What we share with non-human living creatures is not our embodiment, as certain strains of phenomenological approaches would hold, but the fact that we all live with and through signs. (...) in doing so sign make us what we are"*. (Kohn, 2013, ' . 9). His semiotical analysis put the attention on other ways of being as a kind of alter politics (ref-Hage, Kohn, 2013, p. 14), an account of how *"the human is also a product of that which lies beyond human contexts"* (Kohn, 2013, p. 15).

Another example of these approaches is Marisol de la Cadena's ethnographical account of an ecological relation between signs, names, and places. In her book *Earth Beings*, she described the various entanglements of meaning and relating to the life of Peruvian indigenous Mariano and Nazario Turpo. De la Cadena describes the knowledge process through multiple conversations, reflecting the ethnographical approach as a complex knowledge translation process between indigenous and ethnographers. De la Cadena gives an account of the indigenous peasant life, Nazario Turpos's work as an "Andean Shaman," their relationship with the earth being Ausangate, the holy Mountain, which intimate existential relation is beyond western semiotic: *"...no separation exists between Ausangate the word and Ausangate the earth being; no "meaning" mediates between the name and the thing"* (De la Cadena: 2016, P. 25) De

la Cadenas' book provides a beautiful description of how different worlds, modern and non-modern coexist and the place where these worlds gravitate together in permanent spaces of translation.

Other ethnographic approaches, such as Tim Ingold's work, have also developed possibilities linking environmental surroundings and perceptions. Based on the idea that ways of acting in the environment are also ways of perceiving it (Ingold, 2000, P. 9), counteracting the beliefs of a strict separation between biology and culture, where sensory and perceptual stimuli are translated into the language of signs or, to put it schematically, the transfer of the natural environment into cultural codification. In the end, this separation works like the separation between natural and social sciences. However, the anthropological idea of perceptual relativism is based on the "authoritative account of how nature works." Following Ingold's critical assessments, these separations maintain others rooted in the scientific belief that indigenous peoples cannot access the secrets of nature because their sensory and cognitive faculties are rooted in tradition and custom. He notes: "*In effect, the sovereign perspective of the abstract reason is a product of the compounding of two dichotomies: between humanity and nature, and between modernity and tradition.*" (Ingold, 2000, P. 15).

These considerations on communicating world and translation, in turn, imply delving into the implications of knowledge concerning worlds that converge and communicate and that, through specific practices, become hybridized: different worlds flow together. In the various cases present in this chapter, knowledge is handled as a techno-political tool that builds a specific understanding of reality as in an EIA. Our critiques of techno-scientific expertise can be seen as more finished analyses of the mode of re-presentation of the world (or of a single nature "out there") as a broad critique of the activity of the modern state. However, knowledge-in-practices as consultation process and EIA implies a severe difficulty because "*making public these kinds of other-than-human is difficult for those who live with them; translating their destruction into a political issue is often impossible and even disempowering.*" (Blaser & De la Cadena, 2018, P. 2) It implies making visible other relationships that, under positivism, would be put in the shad, hidden under the reductionist explanation criticized by authors such as Morin (See also Capra, 1998).

In this kind of relationship, in which knowledge becomes a sign of other ways to live, knowledge meets politics. It is difficult to avoid the problem of modernity based on the basic assumption of mono-naturalism and multiculturalism. Whether this world is one world that

varies only the interpretations of the same world; on the contrary, the diverse practices associated with contested knowledge also indicate that diverse worlds exist and coexist, communicate, and transpire. These different forms, to-be-in-the-world, are signs of other worlds that coexist and coeval (Escobar, 2011; Law, 2015). However, the Western critique of modernity is still profoundly modern, in which different "perspectives" collide while hierarchies are still performed (Star, 1995). This means that even though other worlds may coexist, the strict separations between science and non-science, the differences between "valid" and "not valid" knowledge remain intact as part of the structure of scientific knowledge itself (what Boaventura de Sousa Santos called "the abyss") (see also Castro-Gómez, 2000).

The question is not only about the coexistence of different perspectives but also about what kind of worlds are lived through them as languages, signs, perceptions, translations, and communication³⁹. Here we can mention that this hybridity has existed for many years of (post-)colonial reality in Latin America. The colonial world has not only divided the waters between the "worlds," the European-white-dresses world and the Indian-brown-naked but has also given shape to other subjects, already immersed in both worlds, indeterminate colonial subjects as the mestizo (De La Cadena, 2005). Santiago Castro-Gomez described this process as the point of "placeless-ness" from which Western rationality has been forging its hierarchical understanding of the world. Because Western knowledge has no place at all, therefore it is universal. And it has characterized and given meaning to the world of the "Other," impacting the roots of their structures of knowledge (Castro-Gómez, 2005). Since Latin American colonization, people have been living in "the middle," "halfway," being neither White Spaniards nor Indians (Bartra, 1987). Through this interaction of "modern" and "non-modern" worlds, this does not mean that the Indians are becoming "white," but rather that the *"differences are not over, but that they have become measurable because they inhabit the same space and have thus increased their potential for differentiation"* (Vivero de Castro, 2013, P. 20).

³⁹ Once Vivero de Castro was asked how the Amerindian perspective is reflected in the lives of today's indigenous Brazilians, he told an anecdote where different indigenous groups accused each other of witchcraft with the necessary mediation of a local newspaper of Sao Paolo. According to the narrative, a young man who died a few days ago had been bewitched into killing two people because he believed them to be animals. The bewitchment reversed the perspectives, revealing the basis of the perspectivist thesis, *"that animals do not see us as humans and see us as animals. And, on the other hand, they do not see themselves as animals, but as we see ourselves, i.e., as humans."* As already said, the common background of Amerindian mythology is humanity, whereas, in the West, this is given by the common animality (see e. g. Hobbes).

Knowledge implies multiple relations to the world and ourselves. In the sense of Hellen Veran is a need for an *epistemic demeanor*, a particular way of confronting knowledge and meaning, related to the figure of the knower: "*about what they know and how, and how they know they know, and why they value that particular knowing.*" (Verran, 2018, P. 127) However, Veran's concern is related to cosmopolitics and the coexistence of different epistemic registers. I have been arguing the idea of a strong neo-colonialism still operates in the processes of knowledge construction, in which indigenous understandings and cosmologies have no place within the techno-scientific languages. They take place in a mediated, intervened, and translated form. Therefore, it is crucial to understand translation as an onto-political problem that does not mean abandoning the utopian pretensions of possible indigenous *cosmopolitics*. However, not all is determined by a hegemony of rules and techno-scientific expertise. Inspired by the Hegelian dialectic, I would argue that the creative burden is on those colonial subjects who must continually empower themselves because their structural disadvantage forces them to do this (this is also J. P. Sartre's argument in the preface of Fanon's *Wretched of the earth* (1961)). One could argue, as Bolivian anthropologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui that indigenous people are more modern than the Latin American oligarchy that keeps them subjugated because indigenous has recognized the more-than-human world surrounding them, a world that transpires with them. They became the subjects of cosmopolitan construction; they have to apprehend those languages, those signs erected against them from the spaces of hegemony and power—these forms of translation rest in the mixture and connection of different ontologies that transpire.

I wanted to describe affected and concerned people's confrontation with the institutional sphere and how codes are grasped and re-appropriated for their benefit and political claims. Institutionalism denotes the field of symbolic conflict where communities use regulations, norms, records, institutions, and laws to strengthen their position. It also implies complex dynamics for the appropriation of meanings and definitions. Despite the historically rooted suffering of old fashion bio-cultural racism in Chile (see chapters seven and eight), indigenous people are not lost only in mourning. However, the practices and constellations of complex power relations lead us to understand that power is never "in the hands of" people, institutions, or the ruling class but much more enacted and performed through micro-power-practices underlying relations and processes of subjectivization and identity claim. These will be the described issues in the next chapter.

2.4. Contestation, adaptation, and resistance

2.4.1. Witnessing a public consultation

Public consultations or *consultas* are frequently done in regions with new investment projects to be carried out. Participation is an absolute right of citizens and according to international rights, especially for indigenous peoples, because many of these projects are planned in or adjacent to indigenous territories. We will introduce one of these public consultations in the Bernardo O'Higgins Hall of the municipality of Pica, with 20 to 25 participants. The presentation and following discussion will be wholly paraphrased based on my field notes, without any interpretation from my side. Therefore, I will try to reconstruct the different issues and lines of argument that appeared that day. The main objective is to provide a close ethnographical look at public consultations.

During my first fieldwork in 2019, I testify three of these events, and they had all very different results depending on the concerns and criticism of the participants. As I could follow, the participants were mainly indigenous Chilean citizens, assessors, state officials, and managers of mining companies. These consultations are organized by the state institution, SEA, which coordinates the environmental assessment at a national level, in which all investment projects (mining, energy, forestry, a. o.) enter a process of review and evaluation by different state agencies. Therefore, Consultation processes are part of these proceedings and constitute an informative procedure where observation and critical remarks can be made and answered by the "owner" of the project.

In the following story, the "owner" was represented by a team led by managers of Collahuasi and the consulting firm ARKADIS, which presented the project's main features and then responded to questions or critiques. The low participation in these activities caught my attention; however, the number of people increased as the activity progressed. An issue discussed during the debate, but clearly, the convening mechanisms of the SEA agency do not seem to be the most effective.

The timing for this instance is well framed. The SEA officials present the procedure to every project that enters the system under an evaluation process. The procedures to be fulfilled and the institutional guidelines also indicate the opportunities for citizens to generate criticism and "upload" their doubts, observations, and inquiries in online forms and documents to the "system" platform. It is interesting to note the relationship between these "informative" public

presentations and the production of written documents that often counteract the position of the mining companies and their consulting firms. Both “moments” of environmental assessments are closely linked, and in this chapter, we will observe some features of the entanglements of the participatory process.

Regarding the ‘moments’ already mentioned, the part of the public presentation lasts approximately one hour. In these, a state official explains the rules of the environmental system every time a new project is to be revised, the deadlines for the project itself, and people’s assessments and observations. After that, it is time for the company consultants and technical team to present the project in question. PowerPoint slides were projected in front of the hall while a speaker explained the different mining project changes while people sat and listened. Various aspects were pointed out, such as generated impacts, tailing dams, mitigations measures, a. o.

The following is an account of what happened during the presentation of the EIA presented by Arkadis on behalf of the Collahuasi mining company and what followed next in the debate. Here I follow the presentation of the company's director of environmental management, which makes the introductory summary of the project, the more general issues and scope, the overall concept of the *human environment baseline*, the impacts, the measures plan, and the voluntary environmental commitments according to those impacts.

2.4.2. The description of the project



Fig. 8. The presenter showing the main features of the impact study (Photo by S. Cornejo)

The project's main objective is to ensure the continuity of the Collahuasi operation for 20 years, from 2021 until 2040. The total investment is around 2,200 million dollars. The main goal is to increase the treatment of the ore by 22%. The speaker explains the scope of the “interregional project,” which, in this case, will affect both neighboring regions, Tarapacá and Antofagasta. The affected locations are kept separated to improve the clarity of the presentation. The project presents three

differentiated zones, the port, pipeline sector, and mountain range sector. The regional zone where the public consultation was carried out, the locality of Pica, corresponds to the last sector. So, a large part of the presentation shows the impact that focused only on that sector (mountain range). The presenter shows the main facilities, the mine, the open-pit Rosario, and the deposit of the tailings through images projected on a PPT. Then, he indicates changes that the project would mean in the same facilities and infrastructures, such as expanding landfills and pits. The routes leading to the mine were other issues mentioned.

Similarly, the manager explains that the products to be extracted will be transported to different destinations, the copper cathodes, molybdenum, and copper concentrates. He adds that some of these products will go by land to Antofagasta to a foundry of Glencore, while others, like cathodes, will descend from the mountain range to the port of Iquique through pipelines.



Fig. 9. The presenter showing the features of the impact study (Photo by S. Cornejo)

Then the manager continues explaining how the “baseline” of the study, applied to the “human environment,” was built in conversation and interaction with different communities previously involved in that process (see chapter four). The speaker explained that the project integrated community recommendations and suggestions, and he presented a dynamic and open consultation process while constructing the project's baseline. The baseline was built through ethnographic fieldwork with the surrounding communities, including conversations, interviews,

and “ethnographic tours” of the various sites with symbolic importance to the people. Also, they developed a PACA process, “Anticipated citizen participation,” where the communities shared data.

According to the evaluation of impacts, information is collected in many other areas such as marine environment, hydrology and hydrogeology, fauna, roads, archaeology, terrestrial, aquatic ecosystems, human environment, noise and vibration, paleontology, air, vegetation, and

flora. All this evidence was obtained in conversation with the communities and other information sources, like scientific research. The manager explains that these recollected knowledge and data represent the “basis” for defining impacts and measurements. These have already been approved and validated by the authority and the communities participating. The evaluation of the impacts is defined depending on their relevance. This evaluation determines which impacts are “significant” and which are not, defining the necessary measures. He explains that in these cases, according to the law, non-significant impacts will not demand mitigation, reparation, or compensation measures. However, some mitigation measures were implemented despite being defined as having “non-significant impacts.” Therefore they are part of the voluntary commitments of the company to be included in the EIA. Then he explains that significant impacts involved a chain of diverse elements, especially in the case of the enlargement of the Rosario pit. The most significant impact is on water, soil, vegetation, and fauna, and together with all that, the effects on the human environment. All these considerable impacts have concrete measures described in the EIA and defined as “mitigation,” “reparation,” and “compensation.” The mitigation measures are applied to reduce the impacts created, such as the efforts to restore the water source near the Rosario pit. The effects on the water bodies above obviously affect the water availability below, affecting seven wetland sites as indicated in the projections—likewise, other measures to rescue fauna with low mobility, like amphibian and reptile populations. In the case of those impacts which cannot be mitigated, they must be compensated. e.g., with the growth of landfills that affect entire meadows. These floodplains are lost without any possibility of mitigation because rocks and soil cover them. Compensation seeks to recover vegetation, including the plantation, reforestation with Queñoa⁴⁰, and creating a protected conservation area. It also will rescue the archaeological wealth of the place and make a book about the mining history of the Collahuasi sector (archeological vestiges indicating that there were already mining works by the year 1000 BC). These measures are also part of the compensation plan.

In this respect, Collahuasi also takes on voluntary environmental commitments, but once the resolution approves them of environmental qualification (RCA), they become obligatory. For this reason, they are called "voluntary" only in the presentation because there is no legal obligation to present them. Compensation, mitigation, or remediation measures must be

⁴⁰ The keñua or high altitude queñoa (*Polylepis tarapacana*) is a species of flowering plant of the Rosaceae family (Rosaceae). The species is distributed along the Andean Cordillera in the Altiplano of Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina.

submitted for previously identified impacts. So, the manager explains that there are already voluntary commitments regarding environmental monitoring and the participatory water monitoring system. Communities' participation improves a sense of trust concerning the data, analysis, and conclusions. Other measures include material heritage research in the Cordillera sector, which shows that the project has been modified not to impact the archaeological sites in the Collahuasi sector. Finally, permanent air monitoring is another action to respond to concerns and questions about the quality of air produced by the suspended dust.

The presentation lasted about 40 minutes. After it, the attendants asked questions and critically commented on the project, and the speaker responded.

2.4.3. The debate



Fig. 10. People listened and discussed what the presenter showed them as the main impacts (Photo by S. Cornejo).

The first intervention was a woman from the Aymara Association of the Coposa Salar. She was concerned about expanding the landfill near Coposa and that an extension of this site had already been presented in 2014. She explains that they are suffering the effects of the proximity of this dump since there is garbage scattered over the territory, like plastic bags. They have also found surgical bags and gloves in the bellies of their animals. The manager responds that this point has been identified in the study as a “non-significant” impact but should

lead to mitigation due to the pressures they are seeing. Then another indigenous leader complains that the presentation does not talk about these details and that they have only focused on the impacts near the Rosary pit. The manager responds that the EIA is effectively represented in the presentation process. Yet, it instead presents those significant “changes” that the project has and those impacts that, within the defined methodology, remain “significant” without giving an account of many details. Then he insists that despite being described as “non-significant,” the indigenous association can enter their observations “into the system” and lead to changes in the project’s definitions. He claims that observations made by the indigenous community will

be part of the first ADENDA and ICSARA⁴¹. These latter are instances for the authorities and communities to ask questions to the company. He explained that they must respond to all those inquiries.

Another indigenous person enters the discussion and says that it is disrespectful to report these issues once the project is finished and done. The manager responds that they did a lot of previous work with the communities, involving them in this process. However, the indigenous person replies that this was not done in Coposa, and the manager responds that it was done in Coposa, then follows a controversy as to whether this previous study was done in Coposa or not. Later the same woman from the beginning commented that there needed to be more information about the project's changes. She says that when they came to do the “ethnographic tours,” they (the ARKADIS team) did not want to go to the Coposa sector because they would take out the information about the sector from the Quebrada Blanca study QB2. They decided that this previous study would be their source of information.

The woman said: *“But since we know what modifications, what interventions they will have on our territory if they do not inform us beforehand.”* After that, the manager insisted they make a PACA informing and incorporating all the communities, including Coposa. He said that this activity of previous information and communication was “voluntary” and that he did not see any reason why they should not inform about the essential aspects of the project. He says he understands the inhabitants' vision and how it affects them. He also declares that when the process was already closing, the issue of the landfills appeared.

The woman responded: *“Yes because we hadn't the knowledge before.”*

The manager: *“Yes, because of this, we are talking now (...), and that difference is what we're going to have to resolve now in the ADENDA. I don't see any other alternative”.*

⁴¹ The “Informe Consolidado de Solicitud de Aclaraciones, Rectificaciones o Ampliaciones or ICSARA is built from sectoral and citizen observations made during the evaluation process and the Formal PAC (Citizen consultation and participation). On the other hand, the so-called ADEDAs consist of the responses that the companies or licensees submit to the observations, questions, and queries contained in the ICSARAs. In turn, the response periods for the Addenda last between 90 and 120 days, although there may be extensions. Once issued, the Addendum is re-evaluated by the services, and each consultant confirms whether they are satisfied with the response or require further clarification. In the latter case, the new observations will be consolidated by SEA in a new ICSARA. (<https://www.aminerals.cl/media/3841/antofagasta-minerals-proceso-evaluacion-ambientallospelambres.pdf#:~:text=ICSARA%20La%20sigla%20responde%20a%20Informe%20Consolidado%20de,de%2060%20d%C3%ADas%20adicionales10%20d%C3%ADas%20desde%20calificaci%C3%B3n%20ambiental>. Accessed: 16.05.22)

Then an official from the SEA and another company manager insisted on the importance of these issues being entered into the evaluation system so they can be “properly responded.”

In like manner, another question points out the concern about the increase in vehicle traffic since two large mining operations simultaneously occupy a single road. Two big mining projects have been presented in the region; the already approved Quebrada Blanca 2 (QB2) project is currently being constructed. To this issue, the manager responded that both projects do not coincide since Quebrada Blanca would be finishing its construction stage when Collahuasi started. He said that the concern is very legitimate and that both companies would have to join and apply measures to control vehicles and their speed to reduce the frequency of accidents on the road.

In connection to the abovementioned issue about Climate Change, another indigenous person says that nature is more unpredictable, e.g., because of Altiplano (highland) rains, which can severely affect the routes. The manager said this was the case and mentioned a route cut-off in 2000 or 2001. The company is working with the responsible state agency (Vialidad) to improve the roads. But any projected changes in the routes must go through that agency's approval: “*They are the ones setting the standards,*” he adds. Then another manager of the Collahuasi team enters the scene, explaining that they are implementing a climate projection model of the catastrophic events that prevent problems with the road. He describes it as a warning platform that allows one to know in advance if rain is coming that could endanger the road.

Then the debate moved to more global issues when another indigenous leader referred to Climate Change, and the project did not take on that vital issue. Climate Change is a reality that is now coming, “*and you seem to ignore it,*” he said. The second theme he mentions is the “dialogue of knowledge” that he does not see expressed in the study either. He asked the managers: “*What have you done with the consultations you hold? And all the meetings? Yes, you listen to us, which is not reflected in the documents. That is why I talk about the dialogue between two different life forms. And that is not reflected, and they are detrimental subjects to us*”. He says that the company is not taking due responsibility for their indigenous culture, the Quechua and Aymara culture, and the people living in the north. “*We have a way of life, and you are not assimilating it. With that responsibility, that is deserved*”. He mentions a situation a few years ago when an impact study was presented for Jachucoposa, one of the lagoons that were strongly impacted by the extraction of water by that same mining company: “*And you know what happened in Jachucoposa! With all this background you have, I see that our*

concerns are not reflected." The manager responds that concerning Climate Change, the project has no way of taking care of that issue. However, it has already been mentioned that measures that are not associated with the project but with the company's regular management have been taken. Within the usual steps, community relational management has helped to solve problems such as the case of the roadblock that left the community of Huatacondo isolated. However, they can do little about Climate Change, but they can take measures and control risks concerning the conditions that could generate these changes. For example, the usual rainfall system. These things can impact Climate Change but have nothing to do with the project. It has to do with the management that Collahuasi usually does. He adds that not only Collahuasi but also other companies do. Yet, the indigenous leader insists,

„It is not that you cannot afford it. You can respect nature and its natural course and not intervene in the environment. One day, he said, nature will claim what is hers. Always. Humans have not yet mastered nature and will never do so. (...) Because we think we are superior, we intervene in the territories and do what we want, and then there are big disasters. So, we can. The dialogue of knowledge is vital because we are not listening to each other". (Indigenous leader. Field notes. Pica 2019)

The manager's response to the idea of a “dialogue of knowledge” was that they have been doing citizen participation, which is a “kind of dialog,” and have been doing these dialogs for a long time. Then, another manager points out that they may not have the dialogue he would like to. Still, they have advanced how projects are developed, presented, and evaluated. The manager indicates that the presentation is introductory and very technical, aimed at showing the essence of the project but avoids showing it in a “holistic” or global way. A water impact, he said, cannot be seen as an impact on water only. It must have a holistic vision, encompassing what is happening in nature: *“If I have an impact associated with water, I will also have an impact on vegetation, livestock, wildlife, and domestic animals.”* It will also mean meaningful impacts on the human environment and people. To be able to protect their customs and their intangible heritage. Nevertheless, the study and analysis demand that this is done separately. Impacts in one dimension will mean impacts in other dimensions. *“That is the vision that one can have.”* However, the “system” forces companies to evaluate each impact separately, but in the end, it is all intertwined. The manager mentions that this holistic way has to do with territory, but the models demand "setting limits": *"You put limits on the model. “A model, he explains, represents reality with the elements available. That's what a model is”.* He highlights that the company has made many measurements. They know the limits. Still, they have also developed that holistic understanding demanded by inhabitants. Defining “non-significant” impacts as “significant”

has to do with that: *"We're not saying, this is not significant, so go away. We're taking it (seriously), and we're proposing measures."*

Then one of the SEA officials reminds the audience that the project is available for reading in the municipalities of the affected areas, as well as the regional offices of the SEA. He recommends starting with the executive summary and then moving on to the chapters of interest to the reader. Afterward, the speaker-manager continued that the company has tried to give some communities a way to have better access to consultancy for understanding the more “cryptic” parts of the project.

Then the transport issue is questioned again because of the increase in transport per month and the projected mitigations. An indigenous woman points out the problems generated by speeding and animals being run over by trucks. She says she is asking the company to review this impact and consider it significant because it is accumulative. To this, the manager responded that it is necessary to take measures with the other mining company and that they are aware of the importance of this point. Then it begins a dispute over speeding and Teck's (mining) apparent commitment to limit the speed of its trucks. The manager explains that this does not depend on personal decisions, but the road, signage, and accidents are not generated only by speeding. Still, much of the responsibility lies with careless truck drivers.

Then follows a controversy over the definition of impacts, where one indigenous leader points out that he has a very different way of looking at events and that he couldn't prioritize one impact over another. To this, the manager replies that he had tried to show the series of impacts according to the increase of the pit, but he had not attempted to lower the relevance of one or the other. He comments that it is the applied methodology that allows them to define impacts as “high,” “medium,” or “low” but that their vision as indigenous people should be reflected in the project's observations (the ones which are entered into the SEIA system). Then he explains the significant impacts on the human groups, the impacts associated with the loss of shepherding and grazing areas, and specific sites related to cultural customs.

An “Environmental Impact” is defined as the “alteration of the environment caused directly or indirectly by a project or activity in a given area.” It is important to note that an element of causality establishes the relationship between a given impact and a given activity, which demands a cause-effect relationship. This causality is relevant in impact prediction and assessment. On the other side, “Risk” is not defined in the normative body of law 19.300 but is defined in a Guideline document by the SEA as “proximity or contingency of harm, contingency being understood “as the possibility of it happening.” So “risk” consists of the possibility of “something” happening and generating damage. (SEA Doc., 2018).

Afterward, another indigenous leader mentioned the concept of “significance” in terms of impact in light of the norms of ILO Convention 169. He said that significance’ or impact is not a concept that depends on the project’s owner (in this case, Collahuasi) and not on the public but on the social group affected. He continued by saying that this argument is supported by a decision of the Comptroller General of the Republic in the case of the mining firm BHP and the indigenous communities affected by this mining project. Therefore, it is up to the affected human groups to determine the concept of significance. He continued responding ironically to the SEA official, that he had pointed out the “great thing” of going to read the projects

available in the municipalities. Then he recalled the time they studied Teck’s project; it was an “animal thing,” he said, “incomprehensible, even for those of us with higher education and the privilege of having studied at one of the best universities in Santiago.” And the deadlines they are given for replying are minimal. He continued, “Sometimes, I am astonished because there is an absolute inequality of procedures, and in the end, we end up complying with this citizen and indigenous participation as a simple formality to achieve an objective that, in one way or another, (...) is already fixed”. Then he questions why these critical meetings are held simultaneously when many other essential meetings are happening. He says this impacts the people’s participation, and you can see it right now in the number of participants. In such an important issue, the people of Matilla and Pica are risking their lives because of water. He insisted that developing a better convocation to carry out these types of meetings with better representation and legitimacy is necessary.

To this hard criticism, the SEA official seemed to feel strongly challenged. He said that since this is a bi-regional project, the coordination was done from Santiago and that the public agencies must be coordinated. Therefore, essential meetings may be held simultaneously. The indigenous leader replies that he understands this situation but that beyond his indigenous

condition, at this time, there should be many people who, like “Matillanos” and “Piqueños,” have the right to be informed. Because the state must seek the common good, he said. The SEA official responded that the “significance and definition of impacts” is given “*in the law.*” That there are regulations that dictate the procedures as they are done.

At that moment, another indigenous leader from Pica enters the scene, harshly accusing SEA officials of managing outdated databases on communities and of selecting those communities to participate in these activities. He urges them to end these "bad practices" and then encourages the "Collahuasi people" to work more with the communities. The SEA official responds angrily that the SEA, not Collahuasi, is organizing the activity. Then another indigenous leader comments that the state wants to do nothing more but comply with these procedures. He remembers the struggle some years ago against Pampa Hermosa, which, despite the opposition to the project, it was approved anyway. He said that this happens because the state follows the philosophy of a neoliberal model. *"We recently celebrated the world day of the earth, the day of water. And we are destroying our mother earth. The vital resource is water. Look how we have it today. The state is responsible for this and doesn't take care of it because it obeys that ideology."*

Then an indigenous woman, who spoke at the beginning, introduced the question of desalinated water and why the project does not contemplate the full use of desalinated water for its installations, knowing the impact already generated in the Jachucoposa sector. They should do that to help maintain the whole Jachucoposa ecosystem. She commented that it was a shame to see Jachucoposa today. They (indigenous) have told the assessment services repeatedly that the injection of water into the ecosystems only generates partial positive impacts. Still, it does not recover in the rest of the affected sides; it does not recover. To this, the manager responds that he understands the concern well but that the project contemplates desalinated water in two stages, one that begins in 2024 with 525 liters and then in 2028 with another 525 liters. Thus, he says, continental water would be gradually replaced by salt water. In response to this issue, the indigenous leader who attacked the SEA officials so strongly mentioned the “gesture” that represented the return of water rights by Quebrada Blanca and insisted on why the mining company did not contemplate using desalinated water from the beginning. Because while the project is going on, the environment and the territory will continue to be damaged, like in Coposa. He believes they should reconsider the project and start using desalinated water. The manager replies that the projects are different and involve different procedures, even other types

of minerals. He understands the concern, and maybe that "gesture" Collahuasi could do too, but the decision is in the hands of others.

Then a person asks about the tailings dams, which will increase during the operation. He said the project must consider using new technologies that allow reuse of waste material. Then he asks what will happen to the "miner's water," the water that emerges within the mining sector, which belongs "by law" to the company. The manager responds that the project has increased the "height" of material deposit so that it does not continue to expand superficially. Then he explained that the miner's waters would be extracted in the pit and reused to inject them into the water courses below the pit, and this has to do with the mitigation measure that refers to the replenishment of stream waters.

After almost 3 hours of exposure and intense debate, the company's team presentation ends. At the end of this activity, we were invited to a generous cocktail financed by the company. We all at this presentation and debate could enjoy delicious meat pies while the managers asked the indigenous leaders about their families and grandparents. Some conversations continued in more friendly tones. Not everything is discussion and disagreement.

As we will see, much of the discussion that emerged during the debate, which I have tried to reconstruct narratively, is central to this and other chapters. Issues such as the demand for mitigation measures, the dialogue of knowledge, and the role of Climate Change, are all related topics that will appear (or already appear) in this research.

2.4.4. Consultas: What for, and for whom?

Citizens' consultations in Latin America are carried out through two different procedures (Red Muqui, 2010). *Consulta Ciudadana* and *Consulta Indigena* have in common that they constitute participatory bodies where citizens can have a say on certain decisions (Castillo & Avila, 2009). From a legal point of view, both bodies are based on two different directives. Whereas citizens' consultations are based on the recognition of the right to participate and the freedom of expression of every citizen, *indigenous consultation (IC)* is based on the recognition of indigenous culture, their ancestral territories, their specific cultural characteristics, customs, norms, and beliefs (Fulmer, 2011; Morris et al., 2009; ILO, 1985), at least in theoretical terms. In this context, the IC is intended exclusively for indigenous peoples and is also based on international law (Red Muqui, 2010; CIDSE, 2009) fed by various regulatory provisions such

as ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Although non-binding, both guidelines establish recommendations to governments to implement indigenous consultations when they may be affected, mainly in the case of natural resource extraction. The main topic of this chapter is the discussion about the range and scope of these procedures.

In Chile, *Consultas* are mainly run by the state and mostly in the context of new extractive projects. These are commonly organized by the SEA. The law about environment 19.300 sets the standards and definitions of sustainability according to the declared “right to live in a healthy environment” (art.1.). In Art. 4, it is said: “*The state must facilitate the participation, allowing access to the environmental information and promote educational campaigns for the protection of the environment.*” Then, it goes on to say that the state, through its agencies, should aim at the adequate conservation, preservation, and development of the identity, language, and cultural traditions of indigenous peoples by the law and ratified international agreements and treaties (Law 19.300 Art. 4). But even more than the Chilean environmental law, the ILO Convention 169 emphasizes the indigenous FPIC⁴². This international agreement is highlighted in my various conversations as the cornerstone of any consultation and participatory process. The ILO agreement not only emphasizes the right to consultation but that it should be exercised on an “equal footing” in terms of their rights and opportunities (Article 2.2.a), given the socio-economic differences of the indigenous population (2.2.c). It establishes the means for the interested indigenous to participate freely in deliberative procedures. It also states that the consultations must be conducted in “good faith” and appropriately to agree on the proposed measures (art. 6). A UN Report summarized some recommendations made in the ILO declaration for the Chilean experience:

1. That the consultation should be prior;
2. It should not be exhausted by the mere presentation of information (representing a mere formality with no significant effect);
3. It should be done in good faith;

⁴² During my discussions on these issues, strangely enough, no one mentioned the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, where Article 19 says: “*States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.*” (UN, 2008: 8-9)

4. It must also be carried out with adequate indigenous representation (taking into account the flexibility and diversity of the indigenous organization by their customs and ancestral laws),
5. And finally, to highlight the scope of the consultation processes.

Although the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) provides minimum communication standards and a respectful approach to the indigenous people, I could observe a strong distrust of consultation processes simply because the Chilean state carries them out. In this regard, an indigenous leader says, “*Any consultation that comes from now on, I will stop it because it is in bad faith. Because if the state does it, it is bad faith on the part of the Chilean state. Because Chile has not made these changes to its legislation, there is bad faith. I am already thinking this way. To force these Chileans so that we can settle this issue.*” (Indigenous leader. Santiago-Iquique. 2021). As the indigenous leader points out, the main reason for his mistrust is based on the fact that Chile has never adapted its regulations to the commitment made at the time of signing ILO Convention 169. This could lead to a situation where rules governing extractivist policies may clash with the right of indigenous peoples (see Carmona, 2013).

In this sense, it would be appropriate to ask what the final role of IC is. There is no single answer to this question, which depends on the concerns of stakeholders, their position, their interest, how they interpret the law from there, and how it will guide the actions to be taken. For this reason, it is realistic to distinguish two intertwined dimensions of consultation: the device and the right. A vital point of all disagreements about this question is the ultimate role of consultations, framed in an environmental policy that promotes resource extraction rather than protecting specific cultures and endangered ecosystems. These phenomena are part of a broad process of globalization that tends to link extractive projects, citizenship, and science (Leach, Scoones, and Wynne, 2005). In line with this, this chapter works at this intersection between citizen activism, different knowledge, livelihoods, and environmental institutions. These communication tools are based on the institutional establishment of a space of interaction between actors with other interests and ways of living and understanding the world. It means that the socio-technical controversies or hybrid forums held about impacts, risk, and uncertainties through the spaces of indigenous consultations are previously adapted to pre-established ways of saying and ways of doing. However, *Consultas* are instances of encounter and conflict resolution (or avoidance), but their complex character also indicates that this space is interpreted and assessed in many different ways. Additionally, the ambiguity of their

approaches and applications leads to difficulties. It needs to be clarified whether consultations promote the protection of indigenous culture (right) or become instances of legitimization for future extractive projects (devices).

UN reports on indigenous matters have already referred that *Consultas* should not be seen as giving indigenous peoples a “veto” power about the decisions that may affect them but, instead, that the ultimate purpose of consultations with indigenous peoples is to generate consent.

However, many indigenous organizations and leaders interpret the FPIC obligation as a genuine right of veto and further interpret Convention 169's consultation obligation in light of the Declaration's consent standard. *Suppose consultation does not imply a right of veto (...). In that case, this is important regarding the relevance of processes of dialogue and negotiation that may take place directly between indigenous peoples and their communities*” (Donoso, 2014, 13) In this way, the discussion and interpretation of the right to be consulted lead to different outcomes concerning the practical relevance of the indigenous voice. In Donoso's understanding, indigenous communities' absence of a veto reinforces the importance of dialogue and negotiation. Within the framework of development strategies, the institutionalization of these participatory bodies is anchored in national environmental governance. This latter seeks to align economic development strategies with the generation of consensus among the affected indigenous populations. In this sense, the discourses of the UN, the ILO, and the national environmental regulations point to this combination of procedures to achieve a more “sustainable” and “accountable” development. However, this given form of standardization and bureaucratization about deliberative and participative bodies should be considered more closely regarding its real political effects and subtle forms of exclusion and *structural violence* (see Farmer, 2004; Graeber, 2016). Beyond this legal frame and its procedures, our task is to make sense of a closer distinction between these participatory devices. It is about how participation is framed and how deliberation and criticism become integral to a communicative process without affecting the outcome. As an expert in the field comments, *"Consultation constitutes an 'obligation of means and not an 'obligation of results."* (Donoso, 2014, 13)

At this point, it would make sense to put the question at a more “risky level,” asking how much weight can have rejection during the consultation process. What dynamics does the mobilization of knowledge generate in the face of these projects, and what socio-cultural, normative, and moral effects does it involve? Indeed, consultations bring different knowledge, making them “weigh” each other. Arguments respond to other arguments, but not all of them

are technical. Through a description of what happened in these *Consultas* and regarding EIA, it is clear that knowledge cannot be understood as a “neutral ground” of free deliberation. On the contrary, knowledge is produced and handled differently and has different agencies, evidencing a significant power imbalance between actors. These different degrees of “legitimate knowledge” also affect the democratic character of these procedures because it is previously framed according to access to professional

What say UN special Rapporteur?

The UN official James Anaya wrote in a report, “consultations are negotiations for mutually acceptable arrangements and held prior to the adoption of decisions on the proposed measures, rather than consultations in the form of mechanisms to provide indigenous peoples with information on decisions that have already been taken or are in the process of being adopted, without allowing them to have a real influence on the adoption process of decisions.” (2008, 18) The Special Rapporteur later elaborates on the idea that this mechanism should not be misunderstood: “The Special Rapporteur regrets that in many situations the debate on the duty to consult and the related principle of free, prior and informed consent has been raised around whether or not indigenous peoples have a veto power that can be used to stop development projects.” (2008, 18) “These principles are designed to create a dialogue in which States and peoples can work in good faith towards achieving consensus and seriously seek to reach a satisfactory agreement.” (2008, 19).

assessment. It means, above all, having financial power. So how “democratic” these procedures may be is difficult to answer. For this, we must take democracy not as a given thing but as a process in the making.

In like manner, following my field experiences of consultations, I will shed some light on the appreciation of the local population on the “real” political meaning and effects of consultation processes. Therefore I will discuss the political implications of these processes as expressions of neoliberal environmental governance.

These socio-technical controversies are often perceived as more wide democratization processes. By this, the often-called arrogant attitude of experts should be minimized and be brought into a joint discussion with non-experts to discuss uncertainties and possible consequences of political decisions based on techno-scientific knowledge (Irwin & Wynne, 1996; Jassnof, 2004; Leach, Scoones, & Wynne, 2005; Callon et al., 2009)

Several processes coincide and are highly entangled. Consultations can run parallel to the same work of the communities in constructing critical reports on EIA. Given our description of a

mining ecology, the idea is to avoid unraveling but to describe the threads that co-form the weft without losing sight of the whole.

2.4.5. The weight of Consultas and the voice of communities.

The intensity of the debate that we have just paraphrased indicates the diversity of tensions and points of conflict expressed by the community members. Also, in my interviews, many people I spoke with have expressed distrust, assuming that these communicative spaces' statements, opinions, or criticisms carry no real weight. According to this critique, in the end, these become instances of legitimization without no real political effect on decision-making. Therefore, they cease to make any sense. This sub-chapter will discuss this issue, considering the different voices of indigenous leaders who have already participated in these interaction spaces. It is a thought-provoking topic because it allows us to conceive the differences between what is pre-written as a norm (of what it should be) and how these instances are perceived in their mediated and empirical reality (experience). We need to approach the complex relationship between law and action, i.e., how the spaces for action that both national and international regulations have configured are used and perceived (See Valverde, 2003).

During my third field stay, I tried to delve deeper into the issues regarding consultations and their binding character. One of the people who helped me the most in this process was an indigenous Quechua leader from the Pica area, the president of his community⁴³, and a lawyer with a position in the public sector in the commune. Don Juan has been highly supportive in sharing his analysis and reflections with me. After the first interview, which focused on his perspective as an indigenous leader, he offered to give me an interpretation as a specialist and lawyer of Declaration 169 regarding indigenous consultations. After sending him some questions, he sent me a document analyzing these issues, this time from his position as a lawyer.

Regarding the binding character of *Consultas*, he wrote: "*We can point out that Indigenous Consultation is an obligation of means and not of results, i.e., governments are required to use*

⁴³ The Quechua community of Pica is not recognized by the CONADI agency that provides institutional recognition to the indigenous communities. This point of conflict concerns the so-called "Aymarisation" denounced by the Quechua of this sector. The idea is that the Aymara, who comprise the CONADI agency, deliberately delay or deny recognition to the Quechua communities. At least, this is how several of my Quechua interviewees put it. In this way, inter-ethnic conflicts are mixed with forms of classism. Furthermore, concerning the mining issue, Aymara and Quechua blame each other for "wanting to profit from the mining companies."

all reasonable efforts to reach agreement or consent - acting in good faith - but the lack of such agreement or consent does not affect the validity of the Consultation if it complied with the standards of Convention 169.” (Indigenous leader, Pica. 2020). Don Juan points out below that if a dispute ends with an agreement, that agreement is binding. But if such a consultation results in disagreement, it is not binding nor implies a right of veto. As heard in a public consultation, when representatives of the mining companies point out that they have included mitigation measures to which they are not obliged, in doing so, they are trying to show their "goodwill," not just complying with what the law requires of them. However, as the mining company managers point out, these "voluntary" measures will become mandatory once the final resolution (RCA) is obtained. From this point of view, the "corporate responsibility" perspective connects with social and environmental declarations and commitments.

The brief quote by Don Juan has a normative approach and a judicial interpretation, but how this is perceived and managed by concerned indigenous groups is another issue. What happens if consultations, usually defined by ILO as a *platform for consensus building*, are not understood in these terms? In other words, when there is a total rejection of new investment projects promoted by environmental institutions but with no power to counteract already defined technical decisions⁴⁴. What happens when consensus is not reached, and other mechanisms begin to run, leading to specific choices? As Don Juan comments to me in an interview:

“So, the indigenous world in our country faces these processes on a footing of enormous inequality. Enormous. Because it has neither the means nor the time to meet these processes. Because curiously enough, they have defied the spirit of the norm, this Consultation in good faith, imposing on the indigenous world times that are not ours. In other words, I can understand the interest that economic exploitation, in this case, extractivist mining, may require a certain amount of time. Still, an indigenous consultation of this magnitude is impossible if you review the deadlines, contents, and regulations.” (Indigenous leader. Pica. 2021)

Don Juan refers to the time frame imposed on indigenous communities to closely and deeply read a project. In this context, for him, a meaningful contestation is impossible. Indigenous

⁴⁴ It is necessary to mention here that the supposed imbalance of power that "ordinary" people often highlight contrasts with the perception of some professionals close to the government of Sebastián Piñera. As a 2019 CIEPLAN study points out, about the amount of investment "halted" in 2016, 43 projects of various kinds (energy, mining, and others) are currently in this situation. It means a halt in investment, where the mining industry is contemplating 27 billion dollars in 2016 alone. The study distinguishes between "paralyzed," „abandoned," and "delayed" projects. Among the causes mentioned are "internal" causes that have to do with decisions taken within the companies on whether or not to continue with the project or "exogenous" reasons that have to do with a growing judicialization and opposition from the public to particular projects. (Astorga, 2019, 25-34)

people move between institutions, knowledge, criticism, and law. Expertise is weight against non-expert and local knowledge, challenging the assessment of how mining could impact land and territory. These processes indicate that the problem of *worlding* is expressed in practices, knowledge, and the mutual coexistence of different worlds (Kothari et al., 2019). As already described during the consultation process, some indigenous leaders pointed out that these procedures are mere "formalities" carried out to fulfill the obligations the state itself committed to. These comments raise the question of to what extent these forms of Consultation enable and enhance participation, providing a space for possible rejection and resistance of citizens to any extractive project. And here, I think it is essential to draw a nuanced picture of what actually "resistance," "negotiations," and "criticism" means.

The advisory and consultation processes have thus become a space for what an indigenous leader calls a "dialogue of knowledge." I will make conscious use of this idea because I refer to the high degree of uncertainty the local population feels, which in many ways is mobilized to demand adequate and holistic knowledge about possible territorial impacts. These approaches should be included in the EIAs because of the significance of the unforeseen effects on human groups and the environment. Scientific knowledge is supposed to eradicate any uncertainty that may appear in the extractive process regarding possible ecological effects. However, these are based on narrow definitions of risk and uncertainty. Incomplete knowledge tends to be treated in risk management (Stirling, 2010). "Accuracy," "responsibility," and "quality of knowledge" is, in some way, the "content" of the debate in indigenous consultation processes (and also in the "counter-reports" as seen in chapter four). Previous experiences with ecological impacts provoked by mining show that mitigation and repair actions are often insufficient, resulting in monetary payments for the affected human groups. However, taking the precautionary principle seriously and not only regretting ecological disasters would mean showing the *incompleteness* of sound scientific practices (Stirling, 2007a, p. 312) involved in the EIA and discussed through these interaction spaces.

The consultations become a space of critique where diverse realities and contested life projects converge. They also represent a place for dialogue, exchange, and learning. As an indigenous leader has commented, at the beginning of the *Consultas* in Chile, these were also a "new thing" for indigenous and mining companies.

„The company was also learning from that experience of dialogue. Well, what started with us, the company also generated relations with the other communities during the productive period and other relations before the evaluation process ended. Therefore,

some communities could count on resources for independent advice. Still, some communities could not do so because of the deadlines; they did not react in time to this process because there was a negative perception and reaction that made some actors and communities resist these processes. And it is natural because nobody likes it when someone comes and digs a hole outside your house. But the Cerro Colorado Company was there already. So, when we started to demand rights, they were already there. So, it was a waste of time in a negative dialogue because the state would give them a permit anyway. Economic and political power always go hand in hand when facilitating these extractive projects.” (Indigenous leader of the Quipisca community. Iquique, 2019).

As the indigenous leader points out, it makes a big difference if the mining is “already there” or if mining operations are in the review process for a future operation. In a way, this shows the value of consultations regarding the possibilities for action. Although there is some dispute about this, especially their binding nature, I have not perceived any criticism of the consultations themselves because they are considered an important mechanism for articulating specific resistance within the institutional process. The assessment is generally positive regarding a "before" and "after" the existence of these mechanisms.

Today, the law established that every investment project that declares an impact must pass through different institutionalized procedures. As the quote indicates, environmental institutions were formed after the beginning of the mining operation of Cerro Colorado, long before indigenous consultations became compulsory⁴⁵. So, the leader recognized what the indigenous people have gained with these institutional changes. Another case from the literature that illustrates the previous situation where environmental governance based on consultation processes still needed to be created is described by the Chilean-Dutch anthropologist Juan Van Kessel (1985). Based on an extended interview with an Aymara community member, Van Kessel reflects upon the problematic situation of the indigenous people in defending their territory and water against the Cerro Colorado Company.

Given that the law tends to favor these mega-companies, the indigenous people feel it challenging to generate resistance to the changing natural resource frontiers. The indigenous leader tells of his defenselessness in constant mining pressures. The communication channels between the community and the companies were informal and subject to the whim of the mining managers. Looking at these cases in perspective, it becomes clear that the formality of communication procedures gives more transparent and precise rules of engagement between

⁴⁵ The quoted indigenous leader represents a community negotiating with Cerro Colorado mining company. Today this mining installation is about to lose its extraction permit due to several legal suits, and one of these is being pursued by an Aymara community in the sector.

communities and mining companies. A situation that, at first sight, may favor indigenous groups in their demands.

Through my conversations with indigenous speakers, representatives, and advisors, I became more aware of how different the positions of indigenous organizations are regarding negotiations and agreements with corporations. The different attitudes, such as criticism, rejection, or acceptance of possible negotiating opportunities by communities, reflect a cultural transformation process and highly diverse perceptions about opportunities, risks, and collective actions. The various situations of the communities show the problems they must face, such as cultural and territorial change and identity loss. Nor can the communities be seen as homogeneous entities since their differences persist. The number of their members can make reaching a consensus within the community difficult. Coupled with this, also, generational differences between "young" and "old" can give rise to different attitudes since these imply life projects of individual community members (see chapters seven and eight on this subject). This situation leads to a wide range of positions among members and their expectations towards mining. It also produces a process of isolation between and among communities. Under this light, mining becomes a Janus's head. It represents a threat, opportunity, or ambivalence inherent to many developmental projects with unintended side effects. But the tensions between a "future-oriented" development and "past-oriented" protection of the ancient territories are strongly affected by economic expectations from the communities. "*Some communities constitute themselves to protect their ancestral territories. Others only form themselves to see how they can develop*". (Consultant, Iquique, 2019) This quote from a consultant provides some insights into how the protection of ancient territories has to be understood. "Development" is this kind of buzzword used in one way or another. Here, development symbolizes the progress of communities at the expense of their territory, lost little by little. Therefore, the necessary step to this so-called "development" is to renounce the land that identifies and distinguishes them as indigenous (See Young, 1995). Something also expressed in the quote of an indigenous leader: "*People have to come out so that development comes in.*" (Escobar, 2016) Regarding the dynamic character of cultural processes, communities may also change. An interviewed manager of a mining company is also aware of this.

"Yes, there are some locations where there was no contact before, no contribution, (...) but today, society has been changing. Society generates permanent change. And it is also empowering for people because there is more access to communication. (...) These new investment policies must base on new proposals in how we relate. In the face of this same action and empowerment, we have to dialogue or resolve concerns and doubts that do not necessarily go with the need to provide some financial input but also to take

care of the requirements so no irregularities are committed for environmental compliance.” (Head of Community Relations, Collahuasi. Pica. 2019)

According to the manager, new mining projects should not only be limited to providing financial support to communities but also help strengthen their organizations and identity. This is problematic when much of the indigenous identity is linked to land and water, the primary resources that mining activity endangers. However, mining managers think that, in this way, they can improve relations between communities and companies. A vision that highly resonates with a decisive change in the “business perspectives” of how future projects deal with social agents and their needs. The work of a Chilean expert is indicative of the need for transformation of companies’ stakeholder perspective to deal with indigenous communities, their needs, and expectations:

“It is unthinkable that in Chile, a project of any kind, invasive like this one, which has a significant impact on a community, should have to start with an agreement. It is not enough to mitigate damages; it is necessary to reach an agreement with the community and to see how to do business together. In other words, doing a development project together means co-creating value, which is the changing paradigm in companies. The important thing is to change the gaze; the person in front of me is not an enemy, they are another actor as valid as me, and we can create wealth together” (Quoted in Astorga, 2019, 20).

I develop the "corporate culture" shift in chapter three regarding collaborations and "community relation" practices. Here I want to highlight the importance of that shift according to which transnational companies declare to engage with people within the spirit of sustainable development. The described current legal regulations of the environmental procedures favor and shape communicative processes between companies and communities; nevertheless, as already discussed, an agreement is not required between the parties involved as a condition for advancing extractive projects. The economic potential that mining represents for the region is too much to be dismissed⁴⁶. Against this backdrop, we face diffuse resistance without greater articulation between the different communities.

The possible interpretations of this situation are due precisely to the strong institutionalism with which mining projects are installed, passing through a series of procedures framed by the Chilean environmental institutions which provide legitimacy through the series of citizen and indigenous consultation processes. Yet, the supposed legitimacy is not always evident, as we

⁴⁶ The mining company Doña Santa Inés de Collahuasi alone has invested around 28 billion dollars in improvement projects by 2018. It represents four times the budget allocated to the Tarapacá region

will see; consequently, communities feel ‘abandoned’ by the state. In their growing defenselessness, they seek to establish other figures and formations of a *possible future*, although this implies direct contact with the mining companies. On the other hand, concerning the state, there is a strong feeling that there is no interest in protecting the inhabitants and the communities or territories⁴⁷. What seems to matter is to implement these projects with specific environmental standards. If problems arise, they can be resolved among private parties through negotiations and compensation payments, contrasting with state officials' perception of the consultation processes.

A SEA official has a much more nuanced vision regarding possible negotiations between stakeholders and their attempts to steer these negotiations.

“Because the communities often come to the Consultation to have economic agreements, and we don't tend to do that. We favor (...) that, for example, if the community finally documents its impact on its heritage, there will be an investment in this heritage. And if there is an investment by the company in terms of enhancing the value of the current heritage, that allows the community to benefit from this enhancement rather than from an economic contribution alone. An investment that focuses on improving an aspect, be it heritage, social or productive, to make up the project impact on the community”. (SEA official, Iquique 2019)

In conversation with two of the official state workers of the SEA, I could see that they regret that indigenous tend to come in economic negotiations leaving aside the concern for an affected environment which is the real reason for negotiation, given possible compensation payments. This makes it challenging to unravel the relationship between practices of financial support, mitigation payments and measures, cooptation, and what some indigenous leaders call “buying consciousness.” State authorities' disbelief level is high⁴⁸, and with this, their possible influence on the community's decisions on what they should do. The mistrust of state institutions is often directed against the people who work for these institutions. I have exposed some of the reproaches these public servants must respond to during indigenous consultations. Another significant rejection of state authorities and policies is due to the state administration's unequal footing of the indigenous population, based on a “structural feature” of state institutions. From a historical point of view, it is understandable that the indigenous distrust the Chilean state not only because of the history of the Tarapacá region itself and the incidence of the state promoting

⁴⁷ As already pointed out, 95% of the project in the SEIA System were approved.

⁴⁸ This is also one of the conclusions reached by Castro et al. 2018 on the systematization of the perception of all State services regarding indigenous consultation processes.

Chilean “cultural values” to the detriment of the indigenous and Peruvians. This is due to the gradual promotion of mining extractivism, especially from the 1990s when private mining began to take hold in the country.

2.5. Consultation processes and the question of the political: A discussion

Reaching this part of the research, I have widely described what Consultas are about as formal communication procedures between different actors. Also, we have described the role of consultancy in the improvement and position of indigenous communities. Then, we get into a general discussion about CSR and SLO integrating theoretical approaches to the case. The debate permits us to approximate a characterization of an environmental government built in the neoliberal context of Chilean legislation. We will focus again on the discussion of citizen participation, questioning, and criticism, arriving at the core question regarding practices of resistance, possibilities for action, and negotiations that flow together under individual and collective efforts. In the following lines, we will use the examples, descriptions, and testimonies cited above to move the discussion to a more theoretical and abstract terrain, i.e., the questions of political philosophy on the meaning of politics and the political.

Before, I mentioned the idea often maintained by sociologists about the de-politicizing process of the dictatorship and the successive center-left governments in their attempts to consolidate the neoliberal project with new forms of political exercise and institutions. In this sense, research about the "third way" of Chilean post-dictatorship politics argues for the attempt to bring the neoliberal economy in line with specific social-democratic policies (Taylor, 2006). Some of these political arrangements have already been discussed. Indeed, the "question of the political" acquired preeminence due to the events of the last four years in Chile, drastically changing the country's political landscape and Chile's image as a "successful" example of Latin American neoliberalism.

2.5.1. Citizen participation revised

Let us now look at consultation procedures with the help of other theoretical proposals. In a very influential article, Sherry Amstein sketches an abstract but 'overseeable' topology of citizen participation, allowing us to problematize the "political effects" of *Consultas*. Amstein proposes an 8-step ladder in which "Informing" and "Consultation" are followed by higher participation levels such as "Partnership," "Delegated Power," and "Citizen Control." "Consultation" is placed on the lower part of the scale compared to other forms of participation. As Amstein notes, they can often have the effect of "empty rituals" in which the appearance of participation is somewhat deceptive:

"When powerholders restrict the input of citizens' ideas solely to this level, participation remains just a window-dressing ritual. People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions, and participation is measured by how many come to meetings, take brochures home, or answer a questionnaire. What citizens achieve in all these activities is that they have "participated in participation." And what powerholders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving "those people." (Amstein, 1969, p. 219)

The construction of "evidence" that accounts for the participatory processes and the number of involved people and communities is crucial as they become instances of legitimization by the very fact that they take place. As already seen, *Consultas*, as an institutionalized form of participation, is framed following pre-established rules. So, contestation also needs to follow these pre-given rules. Regarding this approach of different "degrees" of participation instances, it seems reasonable to understand the described forms of framed participation as protocol-like procedures with an informative character. Nevertheless, the Chilean guidelines stipulate that participatory bodies must be established to give the projects legal and public legitimacy. Also, the environmental law and ILO Agreement 169 specify the right to participation and consultation. However, as already pointed out, the ILO declaration highlights the possibility of agreement and consensus as a real opportunity for indigenous people to claim their rights. However, participation implies involvement in consensus-building processes rather than dissent. In this way, the political meaning of *Consultas* expels the antagonism of the very practices of deliberation. No alternative projects are presented as "real" possibilities of choice⁴⁹. As a result, participation, opinion, and critique are established in the "way of doing," i.e., "how it is done," but in no way "what is done." Alternative projects should be present in the discussion.

Otherwise, when it comes to resolving disputes, e.g., about environmental damages, these still have an essential effect on the discussed project, it is *mitigations* and *reparation measures* as forms of risk management and taking into consideration the criticisms made to the project, as seen in the case of the Collahuasi consultation. Therefore, the communities' possibilities were also more open to generating change. They were included as "affected communities," proposing other mitigation or reparation measures that can meet their "own" cultural and environmental criteria. On the other hand, the case for building trust is an issue, as seen in the case of the

⁴⁹ An example of what I mean by the inexistence of other projects is the complaint made by an indigenous leader at the public meeting described at the beginning of chapter 4. He criticized the mining company for not proposing measures against climate change, to which the company's managers replied somewhat stupefied that climate change is beyond their capacity to act. To which the indigenous person again replied that what they really should do is not to extract, to leave the natural resources where they are.

Consulta held in Pozo Almonte (described in chapter two). This latter has shown that being informed about an already approved project is not enough to generate instances for trust-building between companies and the concerned population. The promise of development that mining represents can create a series of expectations that will only sometimes be fulfilled. These different issues connect in a very tensional sense: the weight of participation and criticism of non-expert people, the role of law and state agencies promoting investment, linked to the promise of job opportunities and life projects anchored to these future orientations. All these elements give different insights into the question of the real political effect of *Consultas*. The following subchapter will try to respond to this question.

2.5.2. The expel of dissent

For the political philosopher Chantal Mouffe, the sphere of the political is the area of conflict between opposing interested bodies, which, deliberately, democracy attempts to defuse (Mouffe, 2005a; 2005b). For Mouffe, the common understanding of a democratic political view is based on a process of depoliticization, which means alleviating or lessening conflicts in a common political sphere. An effect of the individualistic character of Western liberalism, which only recognizes the individual as the subject of political deliberation, thus ignoring the collective character of human sociability (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 11). Mouffe's argument, following Carl Schmitt's ideas against liberal democracy, is helpful in this context, as it criticizes methodological individualism as an inherent problem in the definition of deliberative politics in liberal democracies. By denying the affective dimension of collective identities, this understanding of democracy denies politics as a field of antagonism between different life "projects."

However, these described deliberative instances presuppose that actors involved in these democratization processes are free to participate, equally informed, and equal in rights. However, the cases presented and discussed indicate that this image of consensus building falls short due to a series of procedures that hinder a level playing field. We must remember that we are discussing neo-colonial societies in the permanence of specific power structures that delimit the area, restricting deliberation and discussing alternatives. In other words, there are no alternatives beyond "yes" or "no," considering that outright rejection does not imply significant risks for the project. In this way, it becomes evident that the extractivist project is hegemonic

as other alternatives do not exist or are ignored. Like the series of discussions that have taken place in the Latin American context, the real "alternatives" seem to be somewhere between "usual way" extractivism, which historically has favored foreign companies, and post-extractivist once promoted by progressive governments that attempted to capture rents for more significant socio-economic re-distribution (Gudynas, 2012a) (implicit in some way in the current discussion about a mining royalty). Thus, the realistic alternatives that can be glimpsed as political horizons are the path of the liberal right (extractivism) and the path of the progressive left (neo-extractivism), but by no means the way out of this productive matrix based on dependence on the global market and over-exploitation of nature. However, as its harshest critics have pointed out, these approaches from the Latin American political left, as already mentioned, do not go beyond the usual dependence of the country as raw material exporters, which means going beyond an extractivist matrix (Svampa, 2016). Given the absence of other non-extractivist projects or the relative marginality of different discourses that plea for alternative socio-environmental configurations such as "Buen Vivir," perhaps, for this reason, those deliberative procedures are interpreted as mere formalisms. A checklist to fulfill and, in the broader sense, part of a "neo-colonial project"⁵⁰.

What I am proposing is an essential difference between what is, supposedly, the global understanding of "liberal democracies" criticized by Mouffe, which is, however, strongly euro-centric. Latin America has been constituted by an inherently unequal situation of its dependent economies. Its political formations within the post-and neo-colonial and historical situation have aligned with their productive dependencies and the persistence of developmental discourse (Gunder-Frank, 1967; Escobar, 1996). Projects that today stand against particular hegemonic political and economic agendas can also be integrated into projects of de-colonization (Gudynas, 2009; Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007). Although many of these ideas are today expressed in the "modern" languages of human rights or/and rights of nature (so-called rights of "second" and "third" Generation), they constitute alternatives to be taken seriously, given the differentiating processes across Latin American societies. For this reason, although this "European model" reflects the sociological debates of that continent, it is interesting to follow because of its definition of the political as a disputed field between adversaries, in other words, irreconcilable life projects beyond modernity (Beck, 1996).

⁵⁰ See e. g. the concept of *internal colonialism* developed by the Mexican scholar Pablo Gonzales Casanova (2006). See also Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010, 2018; Svampa, 2016).

Chantal Mouffe's ideas try to respond critically to the post-political situation that some European thinkers imagined we were arriving at and, with it, the dissolution of the old categories of left and right at the end of history and the entry into a post-modernist era (See Lyotard, 2000; Fukuyama, 1992; Beck, 1991). Some of these theoretical models indicate the persistence of a post-political situation, where it does not exist real dissent between groups struggling for political hegemony. In other words, post-politics means emphasizing the dissolution of radical differences through dialogue and consensus (Povinelli, 2001). Thus, emphasizing the agonistic model proposed by Mouffe means illuminating the political field as a pre-eminently conflictive dimension of political struggle. According to Mouffe, the conflict becomes domesticated under the spirit of a supposedly democratic agenda regarding deliberation, dialogue, and consensus. Thus, it is assumed that all disputes can be resolved this way, which means rationally (too much affection and emotion can be dangerous or, in Beck's terms, "counter-modern"). Moreover, alternative projects should be included in the space of deliberation.

In this way, the very situation of equality-in-law regarding indigenous becomes a formalism with various practical connotations contingent on the hegemonic order. Despite this situation, inequality regarding information and resources is implicit in this social configuration⁵¹. As Mouffe comments: "*Every order is political and based on some form of exclusions*" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 18).

I have already discussed the "lack of adjustment" of the various regulations in Chile regarding the ILO Convention 169 concerning the water and mining code, a. o. This kind of "legal pluralism" tends to generate situations where the different legal bodies contradict rather than complement each other. As an expert in legal anthropology comments, in the case of water regulation in Chile, Chilean regulations' strong neoliberal orientation contradicts indigenous legal protection⁵². This situation indicates a political will to leave things "as they are" rather

⁵¹ As the poet and philosopher Sayak Valencia argues in her book on "Gore capitalism," regarding the collapse of the nation-state and the emergence of a nation-market, "*The liberalist appeal to create a lax state in its responsibilities towards society and its subjects establishes a relationship of subjects "subjected" unidirectionally within the framework of the law. That is to say, the demands that this system imposes on the individual by making him responsible for himself, making the negotiation of his economic relations social and intersubjective and, in a way, private, do not consider those subjects who lack the power to negotiate from a position that does not put them at a disadvantage*". (Valencia, 2010: 29). Valencia describes *Gore Capitalism* as a state of systematic violence that prevails in the 'third world constitutive of contemporary neoliberal reality. (See also Castro & Quiroz, 2011)

⁵² Like in the case of hoarding water rights given the ancestral use of the resource or the implementation of extractive projects in indigenous territories.

than generate greater concordance between these regulatory bodies, which can reinforce demands for the socio-ecological responsibilities of the Chilean state⁵³.

2.5.3. The argument for depoliticization

We will follow a line of argument here: consensus-building processes through techno-scientific controversies have a "de-politicizing effect." At first sight, the antagonisms seem defused because discussions occur based on technocratic and legal language (Swyngedouw, 2005). However, it evidenced their political character regarding the meaning that knowledge acquires in this process. Knowledge becomes political because it is not enclosed in abstract bubbles but "situated knowledge" (Haraway, 1995) containing vested interests favoring specific agendas and life projects. In this context, a description of an ecosystem or a range of impacts on the territory cannot consist only of "neutral knowledge" –as an accurate description of empirical reality- since it obeys certain production conditions. To believe in the un-political features of knowledge in these circumstances would imply, paraphrasing Marx, fetishizing the conditions of knowledge production. These considerations lead us to consider more closely the epistemological status of this knowledge expressed e.g. in EIA, by asking who does or does not benefit from this knowledge and what decisions will be made based on it.

Here I will pick up Mouffe's ideas about the relation between *antagonism*, how Carl Schmitt understands the connection between "friend" and "enemy," and how Mouffe would read the notion of *agonism*. The political philosopher is trying to build an idea of democracy that does not expel dissensus and radical conflict. In Mouffe's political-philosophical language, a diversity of adversaries is thus confronted. Instead, the conflict, although tamed, is played out on the terrain of knowledge and technocracy. In this way, political elements, which have to do with life projects and development alternatives, are overshadowed and ignored. Likewise, the effect of *Consultas* outlined in the Chilean law of environment frames limited the possibilities of contestation, which must pass through structured procedures and a specific language. Although *Consultas* have no binding character, they are an integral part of indigenous resistance processes, and their effects seem more symbolic, leading to public legitimation (Fulmer, 2011).

⁵³ Chile's government has intense pressure from environmental groups to sign the Escazu agreement. Although Chile has been one of its promoters, the current government of Piñera has not signed this agreement, arguing that the diversity of environmental protections it promotes is already established in the country's laws. Once this agreement is signed, it may generate new ecological protection tools, thus clashing with other interests. The new President, Gabriel Boric (2022), finally signed the deal, which promised environmental protection and no more "sacrifice Zones."

Although Swyngedouw (2005) refers to the emergence of newer neoliberal forms of "governance" mainly in Europe, we must nevertheless draw on the structured forms of participation that have emerged in our case, not "beyond the state," as Swyngedouw suggests, but precisely about state resource policies and the necessary regulations. However, some crucial elements of Swyngedouw's analysis are also relevant to Chilean environmental governance.

"...governance-beyond-the-state is embedded within autocratic modes of governing that mobilize technologies of performance and agency to discipline forms of operation within an overall program of responsabilization, individuation, calculation, and pluralist fragmentation. The socially innovative figures of horizontally organized stakeholder arrangements of governance that appear to empower civil society in the face of an overcrowded and 'excessive' state may, in the end, prove to be the Trojan Horse that diffuses and consolidates the 'market' as the main institutional form." (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 2003)

Swyngedouw criticizes the device of a "horizontal" neoliberal management of people's concerns. On the side of the institutional procedures, the "figures of horizontality," as Swyngedouw calls it, are embedded in not only the democratic but de-politicized processes of citizen participation and state management of risk procedures and environmental impact assessment. These technical imperatives are mobilized for further land control and imply *resource politics* based on disaster anticipation framed under technical criteria (see Stirling, 2007, 2010).

The technocratic model requires that impacts be defined, counterweighted, contrasted, and balanced through compensation and mitigation measures. I want to highlight the political effects of this "imagined territory" under dispute. The interplay between science and technology gives fundamental meaning to new territorial configurations under extractive procedures and constraints. What Mukerij calls "material culture" can be drawn from the definition of the natural world and natural frontiers (Mukerji, 1994). It implies a specific form of management and legibility developed by modern state institutions (see also Scott, 1998). In this regard, Joyce and Mukerij wrote: "*When things can be more easily measured, they are made objective and abstract, and so more easily governed, at least in theory*" (Joyce & Mukerij, 2017: p. 4). Administrative procedures require high levels of abstraction and simplifications, which in this case are framed under specific goals regarding resources and territorial control (Scott, 1998, p. 22-23). However, at this point, it is clear that technical knowledge has been used as an essential tool for the objectification (and measurements) of territories and resources.

Additionally, it has mobilized under a goal-oriented-expertise with important effects of fragmentation on disputed territories, neutralizing their political and cultural meanings. We have described these technical criteria framed in the Chilean Law of Environment and provided explicit definitions of an impact and its geographical range. As a result, "knowledge" becomes highly controversial, evidencing diffuse boundaries (Broitman & Kreimer, 2018). Therefore, conflicts that arise during the consultation processes can or need to be previously managed and controlled in techno-scientific terms rather than political. As Eric Swyngedouw notes: "*depoliticization takes the form of the increasing domination of a series of inter-related managerial and technical forms of governance aimed at maintaining and nurturing growth and understood as the uninterrupted accumulation of economic wealth*" (Swyngedouw, 2014).

Regarding the issue of depoliticization, also Mouffe criticized authors like Beck and Giddens and their ideas of a supposed fundamental shift of the political question, no longer expressible in terms of "right" or "left" (the famous "third way" by Giddens). In this way, these authors follow the thought of a post-political world due to the global reconfiguration at the end of the 1980s.

I have described the different mechanisms through which taming conflicts occur, whether through environmental institutions, corporate culture, the state, or the market. However, the message seems the same: "The game has to continue." It seems the moment where bureaucracy meets market solutions as described by David Graeber: "*The power to create money is one that, by definition, the government can only grant under carefully circumscribed (read: regulated) conditions.*" (Graeber, 2016 p. 16). Of course, any conflict is disastrous for the development of extractive projects that aim for relatively peaceful mutual coexistence, but this is not a good reference for state institutions either. Legal security is needed to ensure long-term investments. In this sense, Graeber's critique points out that the opposition between market and bureaucracy is illusory, rather false since they shape each other.

2.5.4. Police and politics

As we have been describing, when high technicality meets indigenous ontology, the dispute situates in knowledge production, legitimation, and the potential agency of technical tools. Here we can draw a Bourdieu-style field of tension, where the conflicted social area is marked by the relation between language and social system in an *economy of linguistics acts*: Who is talking? Who is articulating the discourse? Who does receive it (Bourdieu, 1985)? Similarly, Ranciere

thematized questions like, "Do you understand me?" A question that arises from the enunciator but established hierarchical power position. It supposes a field of intercommunication, the use of a common language, and understanding. A field of communication that is only accessed from and through different power positions. According to Ranciere, this place of enunciation simultaneously uses two languages: the "language of understanding" and the "language of command." A division that makes perfect sense in a continent and a country marked by epistemic violence (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2014). The issue seems beyond a common shared language that allows for communicative exchange and overcoming conflict. In this view, the political field is fundamentally conflictive, determined by the heterogeneity of language games that multiply and voices that speak or make noise. This heterogeneity of voices is constitutive of politics (Ranciere, 1996, p. 70), the field in which noise can become voice (e.g., the importance of assessors in the consultation process).

I have described a realm of tension within an institutional sphere that figures the political, giving it a framework to operate without signifying a "real" counterweight to the state's developmental project. Ranciere's distinction between *politics* and *police can be helpful*. While *police* integrate the sphere of the "positive" of the inscription of the devices that figure a field of action, framed and, at the same time, enclosed. Moreover, what is generally called "politics," as the "*set of processes by which the aggregation and consent of collectivities, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and functions and the systems of legitimation of this distribution are affected*," is instead what he calls *police* (1996, p. 44). This represents, by essence, the law; it implies a way of ordering the sensible; it is an order of the visible, and it means the definition of the visible and the invisible.

While the political is the place of the heterogeneous that puts pressure on the police order, "*which unravels and recomposes the relationships between the modes of doing, modes of being, and modes of saying that define the sensitive organization of the community*" (1996, p. 58). In contrast, the political is *pure negativity*, which cannot exist by itself (it has not a real object, for this reason, there is no political philosophy according to Ranciere) because the field of the political is that of fundamental equality:

"There is politics because those who do not have the right to be counted as speaking beings are counted among them and institute a community by the fact of putting the distortion, which is nothing other than the confrontation itself, the contradiction of two worlds in one world housed in one: the world in which they are and the world in which they are not, the world in which there is something "between" them and those who do

not know them as speaking and countable beings, and the world where there is nothing." (1996, p. 42)

The conflict separates these two worlds, at the same time relating both. In this sense, politics and police imply two different logics, two worlds in a dynamic and conflictive relationship. A political group is, therefore, a group that imposes its voice that gives a counterweight to society (1996, p. 58) and which can construct polemical scenarios. A group that provides visibility to a contradiction between two logics (1996, p. 59). Ranciere's ideas allow us to approach the question of politics differently, delimiting the field and, thus, distancing from the idea that "everything is political" (See Candea, 2011). Instead, differentiating between spaces of political contestation and spaces which, because of their prior configuration -their hierarchical structure, their implicit language, and knowledge- end up being rather "simulations" of politics (Baudrillard, 1991). In the space of public consultations, the political takes and does not take place, in the sense that the conflictive parts appear as a horizon of meaning, as a fundamental critique of a "country project." Still, it is also neutralized by the series of procedures that make this game of confrontations of knowledge and life expectations a place of agreement. The agreement, consensus, and dialogue are evoked as figures of "civility" as rationalist philosophers tend to interpret it (See Taylor, 2004); however, they end up imposing a uniform and mono-cultural vision on a diversity of actors who perhaps do not want to "resonate" with these projects. Still, they are obliged to do so (this will also be the topic of chapters ten, eleven, and twelve about indigenous cosmopolitics and multiculturalism). Given those prefigured spaces in which dialogue, consensus, and agreements seem to alleviate the clash of different worlds (not only of different meanings), the agonistic aspect of political confrontation is excluded from the sphere of action of politics itself. Here we found some similarities between Ranciere's and Mouffe's theoretical models, as their radical critique of the expulsion of radical conflict, or as Swyngedouw suggests: "*The political is an immanent domain of agonistic practice.*" (Swyngedouw, 2014: "Depoliticization ('the political'")

The articulations between language games, politics, technocracy, and knowledge are not to follow by causal explanations and simplistic schemes of "powerful-subordinate." As we have seen, the picture is much more nuanced. Because despite the ongoing cultural assimilation of indigenous to hegemonic Chilean culture, different expressions of cultural and political resistance are held by indigenous communities taking place in very dynamic and intermingled ways. Therefore, we have noticed the complexity of sociocultural relations and configurations mobilized in contesting and critiquing a mining ecology. It pressures our understanding of

politics and *political* as a field in which new actions and voices meet and can give origin to new agencies.

2.5.5. Re-politicizing Chilean society

For this ending section, I will delve into the meaning that the notion of state responsibility is acquiring in Chile due to the series of transformations that have accelerated in the wake of the social outburst in October 2019. In our case discussed above, on the one hand, responsibility is demanded from the state since the Chilean economic path framed by the Pinochet dictatorship re-shaped the state and left the "social" responsibility to the invisible hand of the market. The long-term effects of this have also been observed in the wake of a growing social protest for more fundamental changes in the education, health, and pension system. In this sense, it cannot be ignored that social protest was already being expressed in various "areas" (health, education, environment, inequality) and that the explosion was when this diversity of demands made by various actors in Chilean society came together. On the other hand, as already discussed, the issue of responsibility reappears in corporate discourses as a voluntary issue of commitment and engagement. We have described a situation as a corporate reaction to the lack of state regulation on specific issues and the rise of different conflict situations with local communities. Herein lies the gulf between responsibility as an individual or corporate act and responsibility as a right i.e., to demand care for one's life, body, and environment.

This process also transferred the responsibility to those who felt this vacuum most painfully, namely in territorial "sacrifices zones." The existence of these zones is not only a sign of the abandonment of a poor population that does not have the money to move elsewhere but also a practice of systematic denial of the human rights of the poor population by the Chilean state⁵⁴.

The term "sacrifice Zone" is coined by civil society to designate the reality of urban areas heavily contaminated by various highly polluting industries, such as thermoelectric, copper refineries, and coal plants. Most of these areas are located on the country's coast since high volumes of water are required. The coastal city Quinteros has four coal-fired power plants, Tocopilla has six, Huasco five, Mejillones nine, and Coronel three. The most considerable carbon dioxide and carbon contamination falls on over 90% of these industries. In Quinteros,

⁵⁴ In a document, the National Human Rights Institute (INDH) gives recommendations to safeguard the health of the population of Quintero-Puchuncavi, affected by the intoxications that took place in August 2018. (INDH, 2018. Acceded. 19.07.21))

the industrial complex known as Ventanas caused massive gas poisoning in 2018. Despite a decontamination plan for the Quinteros site, new environmental disasters occur in the bay from time to time, affecting the resident population. The term "sacrifice zones" has recently been used to build other heuristic and conceptual tools to understand the interrelation of uncertainty and risk in highly polluted areas. As Holifield and Day put it: "*Although the term has no fixed definition, it frequently reflects the notion that the health and way of life of communities—often low-income or minority—have been permanently sacrificed for some other interest, whether the "common goods" of security or development or simply the private interest of short-term profit.*" (2017, p. 269) It is necessary to be clear about the connection between sacrifice zones and environmental justice, in a way giving whole meaning to the idea of "socio-environmental" conflicts because it is through these cases that the ecological dimension connects with the social: Reaffirming one of the strongest arguments of political ecology, that environmental conflicts cannot be detached of social conflicts.

However, I want to highlight that environmental justice's main "issues" meet with *aporophobia*, the contempt for the poor, as a sign of slow but effective biopolitics of neglect. It makes visible the relational, institutional, affective, and legal borders within society (Biel, 2005, p. 17). The sentiments of neglect are experienced in deep community and family ties. "*It is in family complexes and technical and political domains, as they determine life possibilities and the conditions of representation, that human behavior and its paradoxes belong to a certain order of being in the world*" (Biel, 2005, p. 17). Biel's research on *Vita* profoundly describes an abandoned life in the context of health care by Brazilian institutions, delving into their deep affective dimension. An affective dimension is reflected in the term "sacrifice" itself (it even reminds Ursula Le Guin's story of "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"). In our case, however, this practice of abandonment by the state is reminiscent of Elizabeth Povinelli's characterization of the Australian state's approach concerning its indigenous population. Povinelli distinguishes between an active "killing" and a slow "letting die" (Povinelli, 2011). This type of territorial biopolitics in Chile refers to the "sacrificial" abandonment of the state and regional governments. A sacrifice in pursuit of progress through growing and polluting industrialization systematically denies the people's right to live in a "healthy environment" and the state's responsibility to ensure that right. In neoliberal societies, it becomes the denial of the common good (See Povinelli, 2011).

Interestingly, this notion of sacrifice is articulated in the self-understanding of individuals living in mining regions. Even if these are sometimes subjective estimations of self-adjudication, like

"We live in a sacrifice zone." Given the disciplining process that the market and consumerism have played in Chilean society, individual acts are necessary to change life conditions through strongly individualized and de-politicizing social bounds. However, forging visibility of these claims and demands through protest is a form of making the environment a political question requiring a politics of visibility.

Politics has long been seen as a dangerous business in Chile. As sociologists have shown, this had important effects on almost thirty years of military dictatorship, where deaths, active killing, repression, and fear of talking about this dangerous issue formed the consciousness of a whole generation (See Moulian, 1997; Rojas et al., 2003; Taylor, 2006). The growing wave of demonstrations initiated a process that can be hypothetically called "re-politicization" of social concerns as collective actions as clear public and popular responses to thirty years of neoliberalism in Chile. One of the main slogans of the whole protest was "It is not thirty pesos, but thirty years"⁵⁵. These protests did not have a clear partisan purpose. Still, they were a collection of diverse demands from civil society: from the rejection of the pension system to the environmental question, the scandals of political and institutional corruption, and the broad claim for social and environmental justice that pierced the solidity of a social pact negotiated in times of dictatorship.

Ultimately, everything pointed to the need to tear down one of the most powerful legacies of the Pinochet dictatorship, the 1980 political constitution. It represents the legal and normative foundation of an increasingly differentiated, unjust, disintegrated, class-based, selfish, consumerist, and distrustful society. Nevertheless, the social outburst did not only mean confrontation between students and politicians. The police shot plastic bullets, wounded protesters in their eyes, and people were killed under unclear circumstances. There was much violence between protesters and the police. But the upheaval was a collective surge of growing concerns for "politics" that had not been seen that way before. In this light, the protest wave implies new agonistic forms of politicization and territorial demands that unite concerned and angered people. Although these demands are so diverse, the emergence of a political consciousness under the slogan "Chile awakens" should at least make us reflect on the possibilities of the power of collective action and demands (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). However, the question remains concerning the political capitalization of rage and anger to inform the

⁵⁵ "No son 30 pesos, sino 30 años." refers to the reason why the whole outburst was "exploited" because the government had announced an increase in student fees by 30 pesos.

newer sociopolitical meaning of the Chilean historical situation (See Sloterdijk, 2008⁵⁶) and the possibility of constructing and offering other economic and political projects. These issues are being debated today in a country whose citizenry critically responded to the neoliberal project of the military-civilian dictatorship—this series of processes made visible the substantial differences in the demands of Chilean society⁵⁷.

Almost two years after these events, the work of the Constituent Assembly to write a new constitution began in 2021. As the elected president of this Assembly, the Mapuche woman Elisa Loncón, when asked about the possibility of Chile becoming a "plurinational State" like Ecuador or Colombia, replied:

"the majority (of the constituents) has installed the issue of plural-nationality. For indigenous peoples, this means that the collective rights of our peoples are incorporated; these are self-determination, autonomy, territorial rights, linguistic and cultural rights, have a different history, and also different identities (...), but there are also demands of women, the rights of regions, the movement for water, the movement for sexual diversity, so we are a plurality, and this demand for pluri-nationality is going to favor the installation of this diversity in the (new) Constitution." (Loncón, 2021b)

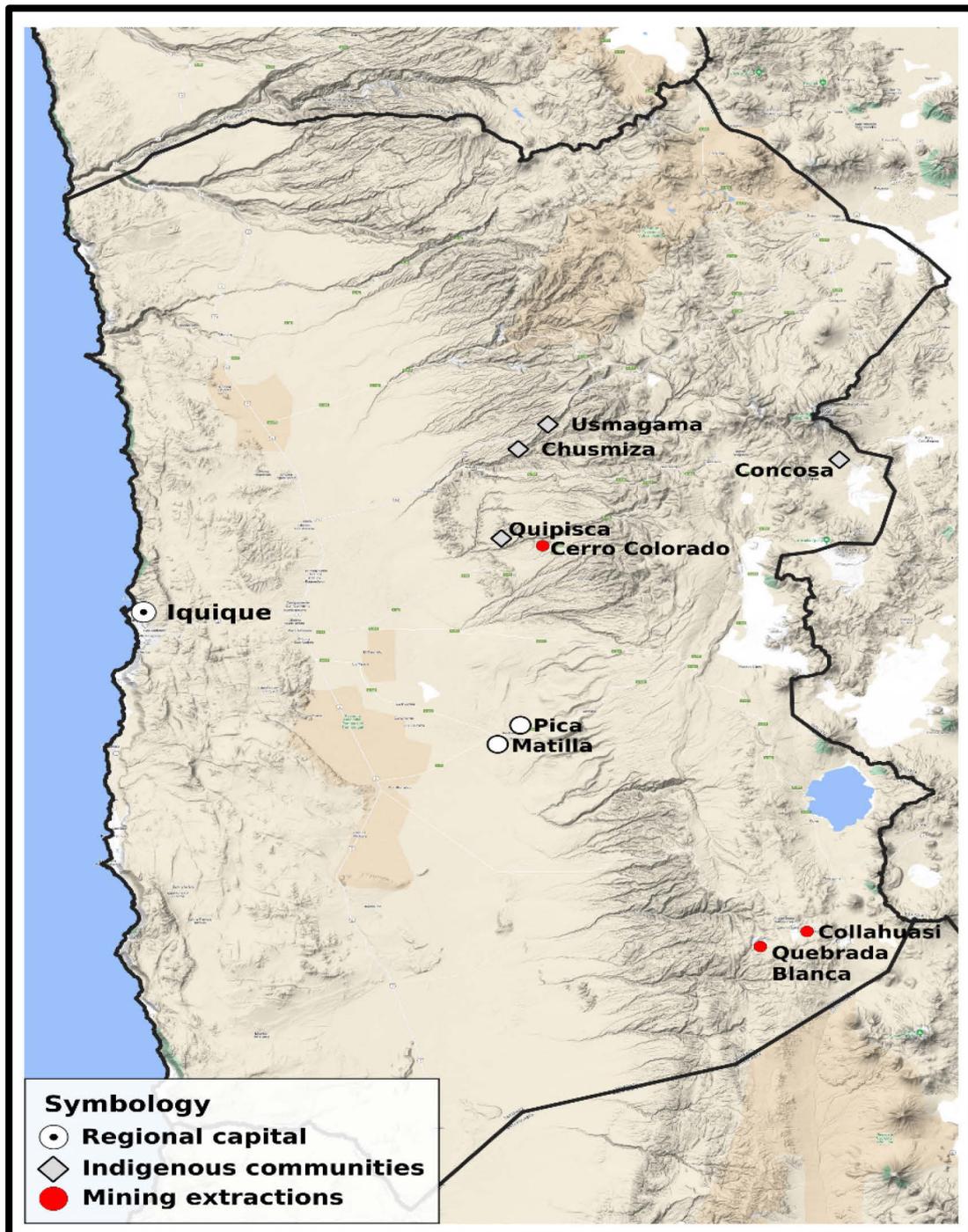
I argue for a reading of the social protest in Ranciere's terms as the irruption of the political, that is to say, that radical idea that was beginning to sizzle in various sectors of society demanding structural changes. The Constitution is one of the many changes many people are waiting for. However, the political and its relation to police, as Ranciere calls it, makes evident where new political formations are beginning to take shape not against but parallel to the already established rules of political participation. Further claims from civil groups emerged as the demand for a new "popular sovereignty" that accompanied closely and permanently the process of writing the new political Constitution. This idea of citizens "accompanying" this process is already a change in the way of perceiving the role of the 155 people who build this new legacy of social protests. It remains to be seen how much of this will translate into substantial changes, but there is no doubt that politics "from the street" has exposed the elitist ways of how politics have been done so far⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ Through the concept of "rage bank," the German philosopher analyzes Marxism and Christianity as successful examples of capitalization of rage, an exciting idea regarding who can capitalize on social anger.

⁵⁷ It makes increasingly evident the opposition and contradiction of a political class, especially the right wing, whose incomprehension of what was happening in October 2019 can be summed up with the phrase of the first lady: "This looks like an alien invasion (...) we are going to have to reduce our privileges and share them with others".

⁵⁸ I recognize with certain irony and sadness the very optimistic tone of this last sub-chapter regarding the structural changes in Chilean society. Because our hopes were suddenly destroyed, at least momentarily, when

3. TERRITORY



in September 2022, the choice "reject" won the referendum, with more than 62% of the Chilean population voting for the rejection of the new proposal for a political constitution, leaving Chile with the old Pinochet Constitution of 1980. Despite that, I think that my reflections and analyses still fit with the Chilean reality despite the "hopeful tone "which was not fulfilled.

The previous chapters described the faces of resistance, rejection, and criticism of mining projects and the Chilean state institutions. The following chapters, which integrate part III, will approach the issue of cultural transformation, cultural loss, and cultural reconstruction of the Aymara and Quechua people in the region today, particularly regarding identity, language, and territory. The next chapters delve into the particular issue of identity formation regarding indigenous communities as political groups and the socioeconomic characteristics of indigenous nationwide and in Tarapacá. I delve into perceptions and testimonies of Indigenous about the role of the State Agency National Indigenous Corporation (CONADI) regarding the recognition of Indigenous representation and the formation of communities; then delve into theoretical elements of Stuart Hall's concept of articulation. Then I investigate the issue of cultural loss and the meaning of cultural elements such as heritage, transhumance, and language. Then expose a particular case of territorial claim of an Aymara community and their life projects. Although this chapter does not deal with the mining issue in particular, it is inserted into the general narrative, contributing with new elements to the discussion on indigeneity, sovereignty, identity, territory, and ancestrality, all critical features to understand the social and cultural configuration of resistance and collaboration with or against mining extractivism.

3.1. Communities and Articulation

3.1.1. Indigenous Communities in the post-colonial Context

"Then we have to enter into a fight against the State, and it is a fight against the State."

Indigenous leader, Matilla.

As we have elaborated elsewhere, the historical consciousness of indigenous people in Chile during the post-dictatorship period was strongly influenced by the cultural politics of the early 1990s. The "Indigenous Law" of 1993 has been an important milestone in this identity process, just as the ILO Convention 169 has brought the territorial relations of indigenous culture to the fore, used today as legal protection against extractive projects. While Chile's indigenous law reinforces their rights to land and the preservation of ancient customs and beliefs, the ILO Convention highlights the importance of territory, state responsibility, and equality. In the case of Chile, this meant a step away from the subsidiary role of the state toward its responsibility for the rights of indigenous people. Community formations articulate the different points of reference -like territory, water, land use, ancestral culture, and identity)- attached to the issue of

indigenoussness. In this process, the political role of indigenous communities is a noteworthy feature. Consequently, this chapter will connect and articulate communities, cultures, and territories.

As we already problematized, communities in Chile have been forged as political projects embedded in grassroots structures. As the Chicano researcher Miguel Zavala commented, they "*not only represent radical collectives and decolonizing experiments in community self-determination, these are spaces of recovery, healing, and development*" (Zavala, 2013, p. 56). Communities represent the spaces of recovery from colonial domination. In Chile, their political character has been reinforced by the institutionalization of indigenous through institutional recognition. In this regard, a group of researchers in the field of mining extractivism in Chile commented:

"The communities are political organizations and therefore subject to the same dynamics as other organizations in post-dictatorial Chile, which try out democratic practices with different levels of participation, which correspond to networks of local and even regional power, and which can establish different types of relations with the state and mining companies. Their interests vary between political, class, ethnic, gender, and ecological elements, which the historical socio-ecological transformations of northern Chile have shaped." (Romero; Videla & Gutiérrez. 2017, 239)

This description emphasizes the dynamic character of indigenous organizations, taking a performative view of their dynamics in a political-institutional field (i.e., "openly" trying out other paths) and recognizes the differences between the various communities based on their historical and territorial dimension. This issue will be addressed and discussed according to their view of cultural transformation processes. The different narratives give clear ideas of how the people interpret their indigenous position and future expectations.

It would be erroneous to look for a dualist logic of resistance vs. collaboration in the various pressures and tactics of indigenous people trying to defend their interests, reducing the specific sociopolitical field of action to a one-dimensional black-or-white- good-or-bad scheme. As outlined in the previous chapters, the social field is loaded with agonistic intensities in which the social actor sometimes places themselves within these logics. However, looking behind the ambivalent feelings and reasons mining provokes people's consciousness, the picture becomes unclear and uncertain. The complex articulation of discourses, meanings, strategies, and cultural claims are related to the historical position and significance of indigenous culture today in Chile. Instead, I am trying to avoid "romanticizing" indigenous resistance showing their

inherent ambivalence and contradictions produced by the intense relationship between indigenous and mining companies.

It also means avoiding a conception of indigenous communities as spaces beyond "modernity" and its overall traces beyond the agency of the market or state power. On the contrary, the Chilean State has encouraged the formation of communities since the 1993 indigenous law, which allowed indigenous people to access state funds for their territorial development. In this way, the communities are fully involved in the State's territorial control logic regarding the institutional recognition of indigenous culture.

Miranda Joseph points out in her book *Against the Romance of Community* (2002) that communities are not situated beyond the market's action but rather collaborate in new formations of capitalist subjectivities that obey the imperatives of production dictated from outside. My argument is similar to Joseph's, as communities present themselves as problematic entities where conflict and disagreement abound. To recognize its conflictive character is precisely to highlight its political nature as a necessary instrument and strategy to generate any resistance to (or collaboration with) state action or mining companies, even more so in the neo-colonial logic of the Chilean state towards native peoples. Joseph's analysis focus on the new corporate strategies of building artificial communities of workers who must identify with their workplace. According to Joseph's Marxist analysis, the existence of communities does not resolve the contradictions between labor and capital but instead deepens them by creating and re-creating new capitalist subjectivities (2002, 45-44).

In our case, these frictions are related to the daily ambivalences regarding resistance/collaboration practices that connect with future-oriented projects. These practices and discourses are contingent phenomena but also historical, as most of them respond to structural racism and the history of an "evolutionist" state policy, in which the perception of indigenous connects to a wide range of racist imaginaries that cross Chilean society. The idea is that indigenous people stand in the way of development. Therefore, it is necessary to consider their historical characteristics and institutional environment that have always influenced social processes. On the side of communities, practices such as negotiation strategies or other means of exerting pressure can, despite some evident contradictions, express different forms of resistance. I understand resistance, not as the opposite of negotiations. The easy way is to assume this opposition needs to be more robust, but this undermines the nuanced differences in discourses, strategies, and tactics, part of indigenous people's subordinated demands and needs

in their everyday lives. The comprehension of "resistance" should integrate the political role of indigenous communities as a noteworthy feature. In this process, the political role of indigenous communities is a remarkable feature in line with Betasamosake Simpson (2011) as the physical persistence of subordinated groups as indigenous. Their biophysical presence and biopolitical claims are strong, clear, and powerful enough to consider it an act of resistance to the long history of physical extermination. The process described in Chapter Five, paraphrasing Povinelli's reflections of "slowly letting die," is anchored in these state presence/absence procedures (Povinelli, 2011). It is in this context of a "slow" institutional violence that "cultural assimilation," "acculturation," "westernization," and "cultural loss" take place as critical elements of self-awareness.

The colonial and post-colonial past and present have always been a history of contact and cultural hubris. The cultural contact in Latin America was anything but symmetrical, harmonious, and fair (Quijano, 2000). Through historical processes that were already set in motion at the end of the XIX century by saltpeter mining, the Aymara, Quechua, and Atacameño cultures have been constantly pressured by social and economic processes such as proletarianization of the indigenous labor force and Chilenization of Peruvians living in Tarapacá. Aymaras have been held under constant pressure to adapt to the required labor force, which has partially formed their current ability to handle the meaning of cultural differences. With these processes, the present adaptability of the Aymara and Quechua culture in the north has been historically developed. Some people understand it as a "passive" adaptation or "Westernization" of cultural transformations of indigenous ways of life. However, I see it as a dynamic redefinition and performance of cultural-political possibilities and expansion of new means of action and strategies. In this dynamic, indigenous identities are constantly redefined and strategically appropriated in the "Dominant Chilean culture" elements. The indigenous "space becomes in-between spaces of an ongoing process of identity formation. According to Homi Bhabha, it is in the emergence of interstices where intersubjective and collective nationality, community interests, or cultural values are negotiated (Bhabha, 1994: 18). Indigenous and indigenous communities become subjects *in the middle*, shaped by post-colonial imaginations and a long history of subordination. Therefore, these different forms of adaptation, such as the appropriation of heterogeneous and dispersed discourses which belong to Western "registers," such as "Climate Change," "nature conservation," and "sustainability," become an integral part of this process of cultural hybridity. Some of them become integrated into the indigenous understanding of nature protection. Other non-western discourses, such as

"Buen Vivir," is to be understood as part of a transformed and transformative indigenous claim mobilized through new forms of open and creative articulations.

For this reason, sustaining an essentialist vision of culture is only possible by essentializing the subjects who supposedly live it (Abu-Lughod, 1991). That means evaluating what others do regarding what is expected from them. It is common to undermine the diversity of interests and values among indigenous. If their action does not meet the given expectation, the other ends up being a "false other"⁵⁹ (Llobera, 1999).

Western culture has always contained a fascination with the authenticity of indigenous ways of life. The search for authentic characteristics ultimately points to the search for a "stable core" of a culturally shaped identity that remains stable and indifferent to historical processes. In this respect, identity has always included an essentialist understanding of culture, a "core" which, if considered "real," would also be unchangeable (otherwise, it would not be "real"). Thus, the relationship between identity and power integrates an ideological dimension based on neo-colonial imaginaries and knowledge structures in which "about" and "in the name" of these essential "Others" have always been spoken of (see Spivak, 1998):

"Questions of who is a 'real indigenous' person, what counts as a 'real indigenous leader,' which person displays 'real cultural values, and the criteria used to assess the characteristics of authenticity are frequently the topic of conversation and political debate. These debates are designed to fragment and marginalize those who speak for or in support of indigenous issues. They frequently have the effect of silencing and making invisible the presence of other groups within the indigenous society like women, the urban non-status tribal person, and those whose ancestry or 'blood quantum' is 'too white.'" (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, 76)

Indigenous people articulate the problem of the relationship between identity and neo-colonial structures regarding the question of who has always spoken on behalf of these colonized subjects, be it state administrators or social scientists (Spivak, 1998; Todd, 2016). Since any notion of "singularity" of colonial subjects has historically shaped them (Fanon, 2004), this also applies to today's ethical and political challenges of anthropological research developed in this specific context of neo-colonial relations and power structures (Assad, 1975; Fabian, 1983)⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ A fascination perhaps expressed most crudely in the famous of Joseph Conrad's famous anthropological novel: "I have seen the Horror." The Horror here denotes the semiotic relationship with the fascination toward the radical Otherness. An Other that, however, is incommensurable in its phantasmagoric thickness.

⁶⁰ The Foucault formula of "knowledge" as "power" becomes highly evident in colonial contexts. Today, a wide range of literature has explored this feature of European history of knowledge related to the domination of other cultures. (see Dussel, 1994; Castro-Gómez, 2005; Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2014)

Regarding the question of who is "authentically indigenous," several dimensions of exoticization overlap. On this subject, Tuhiwai Smith argues:

"The purpose of commenting on such a concept is that what counts as 'authentic' is used by the West as one of the criteria to determine who really is indigenous, who is worth saving, who is still innocent and free from Western contamination. There is a very powerful tendency in research to take this argument back to a biological 'essentialism' related to race because the idea of culture is much more difficult to control. At the heart of such a view of authenticity is a belief that indigenous cultures cannot change, cannot recreate themselves, and still claim to be indigenous. They can be simple, internally diverse, or contradictory. Only the West has that privilege." (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, 77)

The idea of contamination is crucial because it points to the problematic feature of a post-colonial identity under constant pressure. Nevertheless, this idea not only obeys "racial" characteristics that suppose the problem of the mestizo in Latin America but also the symbolic contamination with values supposedly strange to their own. Normative assumptions intersect here with estimates of authenticity based on beliefs about the ethical and moral purity of a "noble ecological savage" (see Berkes, 2008). For this reason, I situate the problem as deeply rooted in colonial history, which draws the contours of defining and evaluating the "other" and its borders.

Already Fanon argued in his writings about the problematic nature of colonial subjects defined by European knowledge. But how can these powerful idealistic definitions be broken? In response, Fanon argued for radicalizing violence as a purge of internalized colonial power structures. Definitions of identities offer insights into post-colonial subjects, often in "grey zones" of in-definition. Thus, their cultural-hybrid character indicates the difficulty of withstanding pure definitions of "self." It is increasingly difficult to remain "authentic" in a connected world. "Pure" definitions are increasingly rare in a changing world, "they drive you crazy": We have to admit that in times of globalization and social media, identity is cyclical, not essential (Clifford, 2001, p. 26; see also Papadopoulos, 2008). Post-colonial subjects are, as such, marked by historical, physical, psychological, and symbolic violence. They thus embody a paradox that is, in turn, expressed in the identity process and when it comes to the fore to reconstruct these lost meanings and lost values to fight "westernization" and to recover their "own" culture.

3.1.2. Social Structures and Marginalization of Indigenous in Chile

In Chile, socioeconomic inequality has been shaped by a long historical process tinged by colonization, domination, and alienation of resources, which has strongly influenced the lack of recognition of indigenous full citizenship status (Valenzuela, 2003, p. 5). The situation of indigenous exclusion and poverty in Chile until the 1990s presented conditions of acute exclusion in the context of a society with high levels of national poverty rates (Castillo et al. 1, 2017, 219). It was not until the late 1970s that poverty continued to be a problem despite the implementation of redistributive policies, such as the improvement of wage conditions, an agrarian reform that favored small landowners, to end the concentration of land during the government of Frei Montalva (1964-1970) and Salvador Allende (1970-1973) (Castillo et al. 1, 2017: 220). During Pinochet's dictatorship, the implementation of structural adjustment programs (SAP) worsened this problem by privatizing the health, pension, and education system (Taylor, 2006). At the turn of the XX century, reports held that 32.3% of the indigenous population lived in poverty (Valenzuela, 2003). According to the World Bank, 65% of indigenous people rank in the lowest two quintiles of income distribution (Agostini et al. 1, 2008)

The enactment of legislation was fostered by the new neoliberal state policies and favored foreign investment in mining in the north, a robust agricultural industry in the valleys of the center, and agroforestry and fishery industry in the south country. These legal provisions were part of the SAP, strongly impacting indigenous culture and territories. In the north, enacting the mining and water code and the mining concessions law reconfigured people's relationship with land and water. Water, already scarce in the Atacama Desert, became an essential good for the survival of the indigenous culture in the highlands and mountain areas (Prieto, 2015; Budds, 2004; Boelens et al., 2011; Prieto & Bauer, 2012; Perrault, 2012; Yañez & Molina, 2014b; Barros, 2008). Water scarcity strongly threatened the little pastoral and agricultural activity that remained active due to the unfair distribution of water rights (Prieto, 2017, 2015; Yañez & Molina, 2014a). The lack of living conditions in their ancestral places led to the gradual depopulation of communities in the highlands and rural areas. Many indigenous became migrants to live in the urban centers. However, many still maintain strong identity ties with their places of origin. According to the Census of Population data 2002, around 78.5% of the Aymara in Chile live in urban areas; among the Atacameños, the figure comes to 82.8% (INE-Origenes, 2005).

Since the year 2006 to 2013, surveys indicate a gradual increase in the number of people considering themselves "indigenous" (Casen, 2013). The adscription to one of Chile's eight recognized ethnic groups is based on self-affirmation. The reasons for that increase can vary from intense feelings of belonging to others, such as the possibility to apply for state benefits (see Aravena & Cerda, 2018). The performativity of indigenous identity is a discussed issue related to policies to promote and contain multiculturalism. Given the historical debt of the Chilean state, the Indigenous Law promotes the "development with identity." For some critics, this enables an instrumental use of their indigenous identity (see Aravena & Cerda, 2018).

Even the most critical views see similarities in identity management in these processes akin to corporatist practices: It thus becomes an "identity economy" in which their cultural belonging is used primarily for economic gain. These issues are already researched across ethnic studies and anthropology. Comaroff & Comaroff (2009) outline how indigenous and tribal groups commoditize cultural practices and identity. Many justifications plea that there is nothing wrong in using their cultural practices for their benefit (2009, p. 9-12).

Without a doubt, "culture," "tradition," "heritage," and "customs" have all become attractive and transformed into lucrative commercial branches. Neo-indigenous' new age' practices and ethnic tourism have similar characteristics (Galinier & Molinié, 2013; Povinelli, 2001; De la Cadena, 2016). As Galinier & Molinié writes about the features of the figure they call "neo-Indian, "

"This 'neo-Indian' is closer to our television culture and Disneyland. In his daily life, he does not wear feathers but polyester, yet he dresses like an Aztec prince or an Inca on feast days (...). He no longer dances for the rain but for the tourists, although sometimes, in the slums, he invents a salsa with indigenous tones. Sometimes he militates in Indianist movements claiming an identity he no longer possesses (...) The Indian used to pay tribute to the Spanish Crown with labor; nowadays, he pays it with images, but by creating a look in his own way." (2013, p. 8-9).

These critical interpretations of the emergence of an economy of ethnicity and performance of authenticity focus on the processes of commodification of identity contextualized in the neoliberal multiculturalism since the 80s and 90s. However, other researchers have placed the question of ethnicity differently, mainly as a form of resistance and self-affirmation, focusing on resistance processes from a historical perspective connected to the rise of new identities. In the case of *ethnogenesis*, the concept is used to analyze the emergence of Mapuche "ethnicity" during colonial resistance, contributing to a de-substantialized view of indigenous identity, and it has been used in other ethnic studies contexts to explain the development of new

contemporary ethnic identities (see Boccara, 1999; Castillo et al., 2017; Bengoa, 2004; Campos, 2002; Bart, 1976). Beyond this discussion about the legitimate use of discourses of identity, the point is that both the construction processes of an "individual identity" concerning self-ascription and the formation of indigenous communities as collective spaces of political mobilization are deeply connected with strategies of resistance because they draw on what is available to indigenous to claim their right to have a place in the world. It is worth bearing these critical inquiries regarding ethnicity and identity in mind, as the indigenous in the north have repeatedly been criticized for allegedly "exploiting" their position to gain comparative advantages over other national actors, mainly to use their position to develop negotiation practices with mining corporations.

3.1.3. Social differentiation processes in Tarapacá

The high level of precariousness in which indigenous people live in the country is a fact that has been already recognized since the time of the New Imperial Act and the Commission for Justice and New Deal implemented by the first governments of the center-left political coalition (Castillo et al., 2017; Yañez & Molina, 2014b; CVHyNT, 2008; Bengoa, 1996a, 1996b). This process continued to happen to some extent despite Indigenous Law 19.300 and the ILO Agreement 169, which give Indigenous new tools to defend their rights and cultural specificity. Furthermore, northern Chile's indigenous populations, such as Aymaras, Diaguitas, Licanantay, and Quechuas, are affected by similar problems, such as social inequality, territorial displacement, and weak state policies (Barros, 2011; 2013). These inequalities in social and power structures have developed in the region since colonial rule (Van Kessel, 1985; 2003; Barros, 2009).

In the region of Tarapacá, some studies point to a growing separation between urban and rural development that would account for social and geographic inequalities of the regional population, accentuated by the globalization processes of copper mining. The Chilean sociologist Juan Podesta describes the situation of the region of Tarapacá as a "heterogeneous globalization," an expression of how mining affects the region differently. While in Pica and Matilla, these impacts are comparatively "positive" regarding infrastructure and minor developmental projects. Other places in the region, such as the communities of Huara, Colchane, and Camiña, are characterized by geographical exclusion and poverty. As Podesta notes, indigenous

"integrate into weaker globalization that excludes them, marginalizes (...) and destroys them. Which only with great difficulty enables the Aymaras to improve their living conditions. (...) Generally speaking, they have a very weak social infrastructure and lack job opportunities, leading to the young population's emigration to the cities. Ultimately, Tamarugal is a typical example of how globalization does not only have one face." (Podesta, 2014, p. 17-18)

Tarapacá expresses these different stages of this development: underdevelopment in rural desert areas versus high city development. Nevertheless, these differences do not define the diversity of life expectations and values, namely those that do not serve the generation of wealth and consumption. We know from anti-globalization movements that this phase of global capitalism is marked by different scales of inclusion, exclusion, and marginalization according to the global division of labor. Podesta notes that indigenous people have no choice but to move to the city in these circumstances. Otherwise, they can negotiate with mining companies if they own land or have water rights (Van Kessel, 1985; Barros, 2011; Romero et al., 2017). These critical aspects of globalization processes include a clear relationship between the "center" and "periphery" (Wallerstein, 1988). Yet, these evaluations and analyses highlight a critical review regarding "winners" and "losers," which put all actors on the same development course. In the historical context of a neo-colonial course of "pure" and "hard" extractivism, which resonates with a "pure" and "hard" evolutionist logic of material development, this may be a plausible analysis to make regional and global interactions visible as the theory of dependency has widely developed (see Fajardo, 2022). However, this dichotomy of "poor" and "rich," "developed" and "underdeveloped," or "winners" and "losers" loses sight of other contexts that cannot explain value breakdowns through this evolutionary development ideology (which is also the basis of the critical theory of the "left"). Today, these are mainly the attempts of some critics of extractivism, which present indigenous livelihoods as a realistic and ecological alternative to the capitalist and colonial developmental model (Machado, 2016; Acosta, 2013; Gudynas, 2012; Svampa, 2012). However, these critical resources -handled widely in the literature on extractivism-make too sharp distinctions between indigenous and Westerners, as if there were no middle ground, contact, or hybrids.

An example of this is Maristela Svampa's concept of *eco-territorial turn*, which includes the different range of resistance held by indigenous and peasant communities across Latin America against extractive projects. How should we include or understand the different cases we have been describing? Negotiation strategies do not represent a case for resistance in these eco-territorial terms. Thus, sustaining radical distinction between "resistance" and "its opposites" (in its multiple variants "adaptation," "westernization," "negotiation," or "agreements") means

ignoring the many "grey scales" integrated into collaborative practices. The point here is to understand the indigenous claims and demands not from a pure and pristine state but a hybrid and negotiated reality. It is clear from that standpoint that also the leftist tradition makes the same mistakes in essentializing the indigenous as a kind of "anti-capitalist" subject. This is simply wrong, at least for the Chilean reality.

These sharp oppositions also give a simplistic picture of the antagonistic relationships generated in these contexts. Because the devil lies in the detail: If one looks carefully at the practices and discourses of people become more unclear and complex. As we will see through this chapter, different entanglements are forged given the possibility for the indigenous to develop another future for themselves, in which the process of forging an identity also includes a diverse range of collaborations, negotiations, and agreements with corporations and with the Chilean State (Romero et al., 2017) that not happens without contradictions, tensions, and frictions.

3.1.4. Indigenous becomes part of state institutions

"We cannot move beyond the parameters the law gives us."

Indigenous woman and teacher.

Institutionalization in Chile since the 1990s has gone hand in hand with indigenous policy. Through a broader compromise with different indigenous representatives, called the "New Imperial Act," the left-center coalition has compromised for a more just treatment of the indigenous. The compromise held that an indigenous law and a Corporation for indigenous affairs should be constituted, as well as their constitutional recognition⁶¹; on the side of the indigenous, they would support the new political coalition that would promote these institutional arrangements. After the regaining of democracy was created, the national corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI) in 1993, based on Law 19.253, also known as the "Indigenous Law." It promises a fairer treatment of the indigenous population focused on reparation measures for the historical damage caused by the land's usurpation led by the Chilean State during the XIX and XX centuries. Land and Water Found was created in this context, with the main focus on buying usurped land and giving it back to the indigenous. The promise of democratization and conflict resolution was high, as Rodrigues & Caruthers sustain:

⁶¹ In fact, indigenous have yet to be recognized constitutionally.

"For the first time in Chile's history, its indigenous people could select representatives from their communities to sit in a powerful national institution designed to articulate their interests and respond to their concerns. Many indigenous people viewed CONADI's participatory character as a long-overdue victory after years of sustained activism" (2008, p. 6).

Many of these promises of horizontality, constitutional recognition, and historical reparation were not fulfilled, especially given the Mapuche conflict that continued to persist during the governments of the Concertación until the present day. The interest of Mapuche communities and the Chilean state soon go into conflict, giving rise to Chile's first known environmental conflicts⁶². Today, the historical conflict regarding land in the Macro-zone of the Araucania Region has become increasingly militarized, interpreted as a substantial political failure (of the right and left) to solve the land problem peacefully.

In the north, the Aymara have been different from the Mapuche precisely because they have adapted differently to the new national contexts. Nevertheless, this adaptation process happens not without suffering, as many people remember the havoc caused by the *Chilenization* policies implemented at the beginning of the XX century on Aymaras after the annexation of Tarapacá and Antofagasta. With the implementation of an "indigenous institutionality" in the North, during the first years of CONADI, the leading positions were occupied by Aymara leaders who participated in formulating the indigenous law. Interviewed indigenous leaders still remember these moments and how they felt when they finally had some institutional representation. However, at the same time, they began to see their demands restricted because these now had to go through the institutional sphere of the indigenous corporation. In other words, the demands of "minority" groups must necessarily pass through a state-driven action (Bengoa, 1996).

Indigenous must be formally registered as a "community" or "association" by the state authority CONADI. A colleague working for CONADI explained that *"this situation led to many of the communities having to transform their legal personality, i.e., the legal personality is maintained to manage resources. So, to negotiate, you have to change their nomination and switch to*

⁶² Rodriguez and Carruthers analyze the conflict about constructing a dam in Mapuche's territories called the Ralco project. The authors recount the conflict's development and President Frei's interference in systematically removing any opposition to the project that emerged from the ranks of CONADI. One by one, CONADI officials who declared some sympathy for the indigenous cause against the Ralco project were replaced by persons more sympathetic to the ideas of President Frei. The example gives an account of the strong authoritarianism that persisted in post-dictatorship times in the face of anything that opposed the developmental imperatives of the Chilean State. The point of this conflict is the different views of the Chilean State and indigenous about the role of CONADI. As the authors write: *"The Ralco conflict sheds light on the dramatically different visions that state officials and indigenous communities held of CONADI. For the government, CONADI should avoid political entanglement altogether and should serve instead to facilitate a larger economic plan of promoting market and entrepreneurial opportunities in indigenous communities"*. (Rodriguez & Carruthers, 2008: p. 9)

corporate. For-profit or not-for-profit is already an issue that must generate or become concrete within the organization itself." (Worker, CONADI, Iquique, 2019). According to the register I requested from CONADI in 2019, the following communities and associations existed in Tarapacá to that year and are set out in the following table.

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Communities</i>	<i>Associations</i>
Camiña	13	21
Colchane	28	36
Huara	30	28
Pica	4	37
Pozo Almonte	7	54
Alto Hospicio	-	40
Iquique	-	33
Total	82	249

Fig. 12. Own elaboration.

I will describe some tensions regarding the legal recognition of indigenous communities. Their legal recognition can be used as an essential element of pressure against mining companies, but only if they are situated near the "area of impact." So, the relative proximity to these areas is of relevance. These tensions show the complex role of CONADI in a situation where, on the one hand, it seeks to satisfy indigenous demands within specific institutional guidelines and, on the other, to respond to the political direction of the governments of the day, who, beyond left/right seek to promote extractive projects (considered as a "national interest"). This tension is demonstrated by further evidence regarding the institutional recognition of communities in sectors under mining influence, such as the Pica sector. In the following, the tensional relation between CONADI and community recognition will be outlined by three related issues:

- The containment of communities in mining areas
- The contradictory role of CONADI regarding indigenous leadership

- The role of indigenous development area (ADI)

The containment of new communities in mining areas. At this moment, there are several communities and associations in the current formation process. Some of them have real difficulties being recognized as such. When it comes to forming new communities today, interpretations vary and reveal interethnic conflicts and mistrust against the role of state institutions and among indigenous themselves. Regarding forming new communities, an advisor commented that it would be relatively easy to conform to an indigenous community in the middle of the desert, "*where there is nothing.*" He told me that between 1991 and 1997, it was easy to build an indigenous community according to the CONADI statutes, "*you have to complete the formalities, go to the notary, and then hug each other.*" However, the environmental problems, demands, and conflicts generated by mining have changed this situation. "*Since there were not all these environmental and legal issues during this time, it was like "signing and hugging."* Now if you want to form a community in the middle of the pampas, it is relatively easy, but not if you want to settle in the impact area of a mining company." (Assessor, Iquique, 2019). This account also relates to the formation of communities in certain territories. Given the long history of territorial conflict, building communities and their institutional recognition is not a simple matter because it intersects institutionalism with cultural politics. As the advisor says, it is not only a formality where people sign and then embrace each other. Instead, certain restrictions are beginning to be placed on new community formations. So, this narrative added another perspective to the already mentioned critical appraisals on the state's role in incentivizing extractive projects. 'In this context, I have heard several critical remarks from actors that mention the communities' contention in their formation process. The interpretations revolve around the fact that this is due to the active role of the state (through CONADI) in avoiding future conflicts between communities and mining companies. This idea is also present in the people who try to constitute themselves as an officially recognized community and the assessors working for this purpose. One of these assessors commented that the role of CONADI has its strong constraints regarding the approval of the projects because these represent an important source of employment: "*It is employment, economy, and that takes precedence over everything. Moreover, that is in all public services; these are the guidelines.*" She hesitated to recognize the commitment of CONADIs regarding communities: "*I think they give very little direct support to the communities in strengthening the organizations. I believe they are weakening it more than they are strengthening it. They are also very reluctant to form new communities, especially near mining companies.*" She told me about their difficulties with one of their assisted communities for recognition: "*They (CONADI)*

use the tools that the law gives them in terms of time, observations, loopholes to delay the formation of communities and already to reject it outright. (...) then let us keep what is there and not conform to anything new. We do not need to create further conflict" (Assessor, Iquique, 2019). This uncertainty regarding institutional recognition is currently the case of the people of the Quechua community in Pica, with whom I talked. They formulate the same complaint. Indeed, they referred to the people within CONADI who were unwilling to recognize them. They felt discriminated against and cannot understand why this "irrational blockage" since they claim to have presented all the documents needed for it on more than one occasion. However, there is always something that the institution rejects. At this point, they already interpret this treatment as an issue against the community (also reflected in the ethnic conflicts between Quechua and Aymara)⁶³.

The contradictory role of CONADI regarding indigenous leadership. These stories merged the varied experiences of the indigenous of the sector with the Chilean institution. The most critical accounts suggest the complex relationship between these state institutions that aim to protect indigenous people and encourage their development in the area while still in line with an extractivist endeavor. An issue that generates tensions at the institution's heart in the face of the indigenous confrontation with mining activity. For some, the role of CONADI containment has not been strong enough, understandable regarding the specific goals of the institution, their field of action as a "state corporation" (and not a "ministry"), their limited budget to finance developmental projects among indigenous, and especially to return indigenous land to the "ancestral owners." Although the institution observes the projects "in the system" of SEIA, protecting the interests of the communities, its field of action is delimited to the institutional sphere. Other people commented and complained about the political bias that is always present in the institutions, which depends on the political orientation and decisions of the current government, affecting the possible direction of "indigenous politics."

Another worth-mentioning facet of CONADI's political role is related to the existing indigenous movement in the region and the very beginning of the institution. One indigenous leader commented on the time before CONADI was created:

"Look, if it has not been those who gave us the indigenous law, I would say it was a maneuver of the state. Why? Because, in the first place, we did not have an indigenous movement. What strength would that movement have if we had it in four years? (...) we

⁶³ They attribute it to the "Aymarization" of the State institution, the position of power mainly held by Aymara people who favor their friends and relatives.

asked for an organization that would CONADI, which would care about the indigenous, and they gave it to us. However, it is a state agency that took away all our leaders. (...) We were beheaded as an indigenous movement. Because "It is easier said than done" (...) (Indigenous Spoke person, Chusmiza. Iquique, 2019)

The Spanish word she used, "Ahora es con guitarra," means that now the time has come for the indigenous to change things because they have the power to do that. However, according to the spoke person, indigenous claims must follow these institutionalized ways. Ultimately, the state gained more influence over the Indigenous because it conditioned their institutional recognition through their formation as a community (or association). In the early days of CONADI, only some indigenous leaders began to work in this institution. This provoked two interrelated effects: the indigenous movement became headless and indigenous claims necessarily went through framed institutional procedures. It is interesting to note this tension in people's stories. Not only because CONADI policies are oriented toward governmental decisions but also because this single institution covers not all indigenous demands. This creates many tensions over points of view of indigenous culture, indigenous development, and indigenous territories, as well as who are those "selected people" to take these institutional roles.

The role of indigenous development area (ADI). As we have seen, despite being an essential step towards protecting the indigenous, the constitution of CONADI is not exempt from tensions, disagreements, or even conflicts, especially given the Chilean state's historical imposition and memory of post-colonial and ethnocidal policies⁶⁴. However, the reception and impact of law and the institutionalization of indigenous demands have been uneven in northern Chile, as well as their reception and ongoing interpretations and assessments. It also becomes visible in other institutional figures given by the indigenous law, such as the case of the "ADI" or "Indigenous Area of development"; this is one of the highest forms of indigenous community representation established by law⁶⁵. ADI aims to consider and promote the development of the indigenous peoples, protect their land, demand appropriate use of those lands, and maintain the ecological balance. The ADI Jiwasa Oraje in Tarapacá has been founded by various indigenous communities, such as Colchane, Huara, Pozo Almonte, and Pica (Jiwasa Oraje, 2011). In 2018, I interviewed Andrea and Marcia, both leaders of the ADI. When I met them, they both spoke

⁶⁴ Such as the case of the "Pacificación de la Araucanía" in southern Chile and the current war against Mapuches and the process of Chilenization, which affected most of Aymara culture

⁶⁵ it must be in areas where indigenous people have lived or have lived for a long time ("Vivir Ancestral"); 2. it must be areas with a high indigenous population. 3. Areas where indigenous people have individual or collective land holdings. 4. Areas that have a certain "ecological homogeneity." 5. Furthermore, there must be a link between the basis of life and the balance of natural resources, such as rivers, flora, and fauna.

at length about their role as ADI representatives rather positively about the tools they have at their disposal. The first conversation revolved around the different dialog processes between the organization and the two mining companies. In this context, they told me about the importance of the ADI as an organizational tool and the various projects they have built for their communities. In the second and third interviews, I spoke only with Andrea, who, over time, had developed a much more critical perspective on the institutional sphere. In those interviews, She criticized the institutional feature of the ADI as insufficient to rely on the diversity of indigenous communities and as a "distractor" because –in her words- "it makes you feel important." However, in the end, she said, it is only another "dangerous" tool the Chilean state gave to leave out the critical issues regarding indigenous. She sounded very disappointed concerning the real pressure indigenous people could exert to foster another kind of development in their territories.

3.1.5. Stewart Hall's concept of articulation

Conceptualizations, as in the case of "indigenous culture," reflect a similar problem as in the concept of "identity" because none of these exists in a "pure" state, free from contact with other discursive formations, different notions of identity, or other cultural realities. Thus it is crucial to understand them as "open" and "lived" through an ongoing process of formation and transformation. Leaving aside, for the moment, the narrative of the indigenous people from Tarapaca, I will now get into a broader discussion on the connection between identity, subjectivity, ideology, and power that provides important references to understand these dynamics. By this, I mean the construction by assembling various cultural, semiotic, historical, and political elements that constitute an *articulation* in Stewart Hall's sense. Hall borrows his understanding of articulation from Ernesto Laclau:

*"The theory of articulation, as I use it, has been developed by Ernesto Laclau in his book *Politics and Ideology in Marxist theory*. His argument is that the political connotation of ideological elements has no necessary belongingness, and thus, we need to think about the contingent, the non-necessary, connection between different practices-between, ideology, and social forces, and between different elements within ideology, and between different social groups composing a social movement, etc.-. He uses the notion of articulation to break with the necessitarian and reductionist logic which has dogged the classical Marxist theory of ideology." (Hall, 1985, 53)*

Articulation in Laclau's sense arises in the conceptual and epistemic investigation through which he examines the connections and participation of various Marxist concepts, in which

systemic "cohesion" is nevertheless not always evident. It is also a question of interpretation⁶⁶. However, Hall applies the concept of articulation in his research on identity, media, and racism in direct discussion with feminism, psychoanalysis, and postmodern philosophy. Interpreters point out that articulation is intended to characterize a social formation without falling into the trap of reductionism and essentialism (see Slack, 1996; Restrepo, 2014; Sanchez, 2014; Papadopoulos, 2008). Accordingly, this concept plays a theoretical, methodological, and political role, as Jennifer Slack comments:

"With and through articulation, we engage the concrete in order to change it, that is, to rearticulate it. To understand theory and method in this way shifts perspective from the acquisition or application of an epistemology to the creative process of articulating, of thinking relations and connections as how we come to know and as creating what we know. Articulation is, then, not just a thing (not just a connection) but a process of creating connections, much in the same way that hegemony is not domination but the process of creating and maintaining consensus or of co-ordinating interests." (Slack, 1996, p.115).

In her interpretation, Slack points out the "open" character of this concept, within its methodological dimension, brings together various elements that attempt to describe the common game of context, discourse, power, and actions⁶⁷:

"You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness.' The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected." (Hall in Slack, 1996, p.116)

In this post-structural theoretical model, the relationship between identity and difference points not only to specific properties and characteristics of a social formation. Be it institutionalized practices, group identity, or ideology in the mass media, they also connect to certain theoretical

⁶⁶ This becomes particularly clear in the referred essay, in which Laclau critically explores Andre-Gunder Frank's Dependency Theory which, according to Laclau, confused essential concepts such as "mode of production," "economic system," "feudalism" and "capitalism." In this sense, articulation is a philosophical-methodological procedure, entirely in line with some Marxist-style critique of ideology (see Laclau, 1977).

⁶⁷ Cultural studies also strongly emphasize the "open" character in the sense of a constant transformation of theoretical perspectives and the critical connection between the academic field and the possibility of changing the society being researched. The threshold between theoretical engagement remains linked to a more activist stance, as will become clear in the following statement: "*Cultural studies is, in fact, constantly reconstructing itself in the light of changing historical projects and intellectual resources. It is propelled less by a theoretical agenda than by its desire to construct possibilities, both immediate and imaginary, out of historical circumstances; it seeks to give a better understanding of where we are so that we can create new historical contexts and formations which are based on more just principles of freedom, equality, and the distribution of wealth and power.*" (Grossberg & Radway, 1991, 129)

contexts involved in this discursive practice of critical and self-critical "questioning." Hall's point of view regarding a dynamic in the construction of individual or group identity in a post-colonial age focuses on the contradictions and distortions that underlie this process (Hall, 1992). Nevertheless, Hall understands these processes of constructing "subjectivity" as a creative procedure in which ideological, political, and cultural elements can easily intermingle, e.g., how religion, music, or aesthetics participate in certain cultural processes. In this sense, Hall's work helps us to understand the process of identity not in a coherent and homogeneous logic but rather to emphasize its diffuse and dynamic character with the participation of various discursive elements (Hall, 2010, 1996). Embedded in a post-Marxist context, Hall avoids the reductionist concept of the critique of ideology. Although there are various attempts to unite a dualistic neo-Marxist view of "material foundations" and ideological "supra-structures," whether, in Althusser, Gramsci, or Zizek, Hall nevertheless attempts to go beyond the relations of "structure" and "false consciousness." In various moments of his work, Hall deals with Althusser's ideology critique, Foucault's discourse analysis, and cultural semiotics (Hall, 2010; 1994; 1985; Morley & Khuan-Hsing, 1996; Restrepo, 2014). His reflections create a helpful hermeneutic and heuristic tool in which articulation is crucial, allowing various concepts and discourses from different registers to be brought into the same interpretative horizon. Again, it is essential to note that different articulations can be built up in the research process: their character is contingent and contextual. Articulation as an anti-essentialist mode of analysis brings to the fore the multiple entanglements and connections between identity and politics, discourses of indigeneity and environmental protection, collaboration practices, and future orientations toward life projects.

3.2. Language, territory, and material memory⁶⁸

*"Our culture has our grandparents as protagonists,
their language that they taught us and that later
others forced us to hide."*

Mario Bacián. Indigenous leader.

The Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar has developed a whole theory of nature in its present multiple variants and phenomenologies. Escobar speaks of *regimes of nature* that today coexist, intermingle, and sometimes confuse each other. They account for how the social and the biophysical are constantly reproduced. As Escobar calls it, *organic nature* constitutes one of these regimes based on a specific "cultural framework." It does not symbolize the 'natural' versus the 'constructed.' Still, it is characterized by a more integral connection of the cultural and the biological, but also *'lies in assemblages and recombinations of organisms and practices that operate through rules often incongruent with the parameters of modern nature'* (Escobar, 2009: 285). The notion of organic nature developed by Escobar understands a prevalent element that is hidden in the many variants of local knowledge in which the natural often does not function or exist as a world separate and apart from the human world and where, instead, the natural world is organically integrated into the human world. This can be found in the multiple forms of both animism and totemism (see Descola, 2013, 2014), where local models show multiple forms of connection between the natural, human, and spiritual worlds (see Levi-Strauss, 1998). The author emphasizes the embodied feature of local knowledge, which appears to the eye of the anthropologist not as a set of relatively abstract knowledge but as embedded in different kinds of practices. Escobar argues that to be aware of these relationships of organic nature, seen from the terminology and theoretical substratum of the West, would fail to capture these subtle differences and multiple relationships. Finally, the anthropologist, rather than recognizing the specificity of this local knowledge, would be reproducing the old hierarchies that oppose this knowledge to the abstract and theoretical understanding of the West, as well as

⁶⁸ I would like to thank Beril Ocakli and Anna Frohn Petersen, both researchers on "mining issues" at the IRI THESys, for their valuable comments and critiques, which have allowed me to improve the argumentation of this chapter regarding the overall narrative.

making untenable the "*conception of separate realms of nature and culture that can be known and managed separately.*"(Escobar, 2009, p. 297)

The whole theoretical development proposed throughout this work has sought to understand and situate the problem of extractivism described in its multiple dimensions. On the one hand, to situate mining development in its historical dimension concerning global capitalism; also the relationship between local knowledge and the critique of impact studies has been problematized, where the last part of the chapter provides a lengthy exposition of the developments in anthropology on the question of worlds that transpire, communicate and intermingle. In the previous chapter, I introduced the idea of articulation to approach how indigenous leaders and spokespersons use different discourses, practices, notions, and concepts to reflect their concerns and care for their history and culture. Articulation aloud to problematize the question of authenticity, ambivalence, and contradiction differently. The idea is not to judge the specific use of certain notions –such as nature, *nature's protection*, *Pachamama*, or *mother earth*- as part of a "coherent discourse" but to understand its particular performativity in a context in which indigenous worldviews get some "positive" recognition by the western hegemonic scientific culture, as notions of *sustainability* and *nature conservation* begin to be handled concerning and according to indigenous worldviews (Berkes, 2018; Tengo et al., 2014; Tengo & Malmer, 2012; Sillitoe & Marzano, 2009; Ballard et al., 2008; Agarwal, 2002, 1995).

However, I try to avoid romanticizing indigenous worldviews and communities, deepening the gap between these and "Western" knowledge and culture (Agarwal, 1995). Sometimes these theoretical and empirical differentiations are necessary to understand the nuanced differences, but only sometimes. For this reason, my theoretical efforts focus on seeing these knowledge/practices/cultures as deeply intermingled with and by Western notions that give indigenous people another means to defend their concerns and rights. This hybridity is expressed in concepts such as *articulation* and the idea of *organic nature* and *nature regimes* in Escobar but also in other anthropoid-philosophical inquiries to overcome these dualist conceptualizations as it is expressed in the work of Edgar Morin (2005), Fritjof Capra (1998), Gregory Bateson (1998), Humberto Maturana (1997) and Francisco Varela and colleagues (1993). This chapter will expose some features and transformations of cultural elements that distinguish the northern indigenous culture embedded in specific ecological relations, such as language, material heritage, and territory.

Aymaras participate in an ecological and cosmic order. Territory involves many diverse relationships attached to Andean "cosmovision"⁶⁹. Some of the cultural characteristics of the "Andean worldview" implies the interpretation of a "cosmic order" based on *the reciprocity* principle of the human-environment relationship. *Dualism* is an ontological principle, and *chachawarmi* is a cosmic (sexual) order principle. These are not abstract concepts; above all, they constitute life structures in which life in the Andes is assigned a specific meaning (Cardenas et al., 2013). To live according to this worldview implies that interactions between humans and nature must be kept in a harmonious balance. As part of this cosmic order, humans are committed to the principle of reciprocity in a cycle of relationships and interactions between the Earth, the sun, and human actions. This is exemplified in a study highlighting the relevance of duality: *In this view, no being is unique and separate from the world. Everything that exists has its complementary opposite, its partner*" (Cardenas et al., 2013, p. 51). According to the Dutch anthropologist Juan Van Kesel, this religious principle is also attached to Aymaras technological system, which he contrasts with the "western" technology of the *Homo Faber*. The meaning and logic of their technical system are shaped by their worldview, ethics, and mythology, as well as by the indigenous perception of the environment (Van Kessel, 1993, p. 3). In a clear comparison with a Western worldview, the Peruvian researcher Carlos Milla describes:

"We differ from the West in our conceptualization; when we apply our Andean methodology, we look at phenomena in motion and thus become actors and spectators simultaneously, analysts and the analyzed, part of reality, as Pacha and nature, as a harmonious whole that understands itself, in contrast to Western transcendental dogma." (Milla, 2004, p. 35)

In our Western culture, holism is often used to characterize a perspective in which nature is understood as a "structure" and a "whole." (see Morin, 2005) Mainly associated in Western philosophy with the work of philosophers like Leibniz; nonetheless, in anthropology, various attempts have been made to emphasize this characteristic and produce translations of indigenous worldviews.

Before the Spanish colonial rule, the cultures in the Andes were strongly influenced by the Inca culture. However, "Inca" is not to be confused with "Andean." Rather 'Andino' is a geographical-spatial and cultural category (Estermann, 2009). Despite a certain ambiguity about the use of the term, there is a process of identity formation regarding an effort to recover

⁶⁹ Spanish Word for "worldview" translated as "cosmic view "or "cosmic order."

an identity linked with specific worldviews and protection and conservation of the territory. Despite an often-expressed idea that territory and culture have a prominent place for indigenous worldviews, I think both elements –territory, and culture- must be understood in their historical contingency regarding the Chilean state and its policies. The racist and evolutionist worldview gives ground for the implementation of nationalistic policies which transformed indigenous culture persistently. I have talked with many Quechua indigenous leaders who are forming and defining their worldview as a process of recovering and engaging in a long and complex process of living, thinking, and remembering. Other indigenous leaders focused their work on the maintenance and conservation of the archeological sites of the sector (e.g., in Pica) to strengthen and maintain the local identity of the territory to develop other economic activities less harmful to nature, as today tourism is being seen as an important alternative to mining. In the end, they mean what Mario Baser called *life projects* (2004)—anchored in how to regain the meanings of land, territory, and ancient cultural practices considering the future. For many, territorial changes are often associated with losing identity, while other cultural elements are forged in the cities. It has been a great challenge for the Indigenous to understand their cultural heritage regarding its transformation across urban life and dwelling (Aravena & Cerda, 2018). In the case of Aymaras, the most mentioned cultural element is their language, partially lost through the process of nationalist mobilization in the annexed territories after the pacific war, basically aimed to promote Chilean nationalism in the Peruvian and indigenous populations (Van Kessel, 2003).

The loss of the indigenous language has been one of the central characteristics of the cultural changes experienced by many. Something that marks differences in the customs between the groups that live in the highlands, the intermediate sectors, and the coastal cities. Almost forty years ago, a sociolinguistic survey conducted among the indigenous population in Tarapacá in 1985 revealed that only 44.5% spoke their ancestral language. Out of these, 96.9% lived in the highlands (Altiplano), 56.4% in the foothills, 50% in the Loa Valley, and 30% in the urban coastal centers of Tarapacá (Gundermann, 1995; Madaleno, 2009). Other publications focus on the linguistic features of the Aymara people and note that only 39,2% of the total Aymara population in Chile speak their language. The people living in the highlands have prominence with 91,5%, followed by those living in the oasis and streams (41%), and finally, those living in the cities, where only 30% are Aymara speakers (Fabre, 2005).

In the context of the constitutional convention, discussing the possibility of establishing plurilingualism in the new constitution would mean a better recognition of indigenous

languages in the country. Elisa Loncón, Mapuche and linguist, points to the state's duty to create the necessary means to promote the use of indigenous languages in the country.

"Today, to normalize the use of these languages (...) is to make their use normal in everyday life. In addition, it is to install the language in society, the media, schools, and different places of prestige. It has to combat linguistic discrimination, ethnic shame, and the lack of loyalty of the speaker to their language, derived from contempt, from the punishment received for being a speaker of an indigenous language". (Loncón, 2022)

The difficulty of creating this norm has to do with the historical discrimination that indigenous peoples have suffered throughout history, strongly impacting the use of their language.

In 2019, I met Noelia from the Aymara community of Cariquima. At that time, she taught the Aymara language at a school and the University of Tarapacá. She told me about the process of cultural loss and cultural assimilation of the indigenous people and the effects of that on their worldview. She explained that many people do not seem to understand what is involved in losing a language, the meanings, and the cultural senses attached to it. Today the state, through its agency CONADI is trying to re-introduce the Aymara language among the indigenous population. There are currently about 1,600 schools in the country that teach the subject of indigenous language (Loncón, 2017). Nevertheless, the problem with these educational policies in the school curriculum is the historical denial of its "utility." Elisa Loncón highlights this in another article:

"The most serious aspect of the lack of explicit recognition of indigenous languages is the problem of learning and lack of quality education in indigenous areas. Thus, the education system has discriminated against indigenous peoples by not using languages as a medium of instruction and by making the teaching of English mandatory rather than that of indigenous languages" (Loncón, 2017). (Accessed. 05.09.2020)

When I asked Noelia about the reactions of the parents about their children studying an indigenous language, she said:

"They do not know the importance of why we learn a language or why we learn it as a second language. So, there is some resistance to teaching Aymara to their children because they prefer English, as they already know this will open (...) work opportunities for their child. Moreover, the benefits of learning English are known, but they ignore the importance of learning the Aymara language"⁷⁰. (Indigenous spoke-person, Cariquima. Iquique, 2019)

⁷⁰ In 2017, a group of politicians presented a bill for a law on the "linguistic rights" of Chile's native peoples. The concern about the loss of indigenous languages is an issue that cuts across the country's indigenous problems from north to south.

Then she explained to me the symbolic meaning of the use of language: "*language is linked to the territory,*" the meaning of this in the sense of 'Andean' culture, where communities, identities, and cultural practices are highly connected elements. But the cultural change is also expressed in the immediate needs to be met, Noelia pointed out regarding indigenous culture:

"Little by little, they have to migrate from their territory with their animals, where they live—the culture with its ancestral activities. Because the water is affected, the animals are dying, and since they have children, they occupy more urban spaces where the work is paid monthly, and they no longer live daily". (Indigenous spoke-person, Cariquima. Iquique, 2019)

The loss of language, according to Noelia, has very profound consequences on the worldview of the Aymara culture. Her words sum up the whole indigenous cultural problem regarding the recovery of their cultural values and meanings:

"I think we have reached a time where we have forgotten the destroyed sacred places, and that process of validating, of rebuilding the history from the territory. Already the grandparents have died mostly for that reason. We are in a generation where we no longer speak the language and no longer live there". (Indigenous spoke-person, Cariquima. Iquique, 2019)

She also commented that the various deals with mining companies are breaking up and dividing the communities among themselves. This process is difficult to recover, given the diverse relationships that indigenous people have established with the mining sector.

"The loss of language for Aymaras, in contexts where we have lost that vision that we come from the Altiplano (highland). Historically, indigenous people have used the three ecological spaces: the valley, the pre-mountain range, the coast, and the Altiplano. So, I think we have lost this vision today as well. Furthermore, we have acculturated in the urban life system in the mostly urban society." (Indigenous spoke-person, Cariquima. Iquique, 2019)

When I asked her about the role of transhumance as a crucial feature of Aymara culture, she mentioned that they have already lost control of the three ecological floors. Already centuries ago, the control over different ecological levels in the Andes through ecological floors made the cultural diversity that existed in pre-Columbian times possible. This has been investigated through ethnohistorical chronicles and archaeological findings (Murra, 1975). The ethnohistorical uses of ecological floors imply different cultural practices of landscape design already disrupted by diverse historical processes, as so many indigenous become urban dwellers, which adds difficulty in gaining water rights for irrigation. For this reason, that part of the old agricultural practices has been increasingly abandoned. Here, Noelia's concerns about livelihood in the ancient territories connect with her interpretation of a cultural change, mainly

understood as cultural loss. "*Even being here, we feel alienated from the territory,*" she said. An idea that reflects all the anguish of a cultural agony already denounced by anthropologists such as Juan Van Kessel in the book *Holocaust to Progress. The history of Aymara people in Tarapacá (2003)*.

However, this vision contrasts with other indigenous leaders who do not feel the connection to the territories has been lost. The change process in the indigenous communities is expressed above all in today's living conditions. Despite these transformations, marked by the Aymara's cultural adaptation to the Chilean culture and society, some essential elements remain.

3.2.1. Transhumance

Aymara's ability to adapt is appreciated positively, not as a cultural loss. One of these elements is territorial occupation through agriculture or livestock breeding and urban dwelling. A nuanced interpretation of the charged intensity of cultural loss and change is needed to grasp the different territorial claims of the diverse indigenous communities. Andrea from Matilla gave me clear insights about these ideas:

"The occupation of the territory and its origin. The attachment to the territory and the origin, specifically in the case of the Aymaras, transhumance is linked to it in one way or another. (sic) We can have our origin in one Community but still live somewhere else. For example, I am from an area further up but live here. (...) It is part of our ability to move to the coastal area because it is also part of our work to bring goods to these areas. Therefore, territorial occupation is like the roots, and transhumance connects these two (things)." (Indigenous leader from Matilla. Matilla, 2019)

Transhumance is the seasonal movement associated with the mobility of livestock. Transhumance is related to the ability to live through different geographical areas and, therefore, also means a "broader" concept of territory and occupation "within" territory. It is where one moves through, representing a form of territoriality (Soya, 1971). Forms of movement, adaptation, and identity "in" and "within" are the territories to which one feels bound (Ingold, 2000). Agriculture has been developed based on ecological floors and pastoral practices of animal husbandry, expressions of ancient human life. These practices are lived through and forged in specific territorial configurations. They shape biographies and community life embedded in specific spatial conditions. Transhumance practices refer to how the relationship between territory and life is networked through ecological and sociocultural configurations. Land and territory are lived in different ways despite (or, better said, because) the pressure that extractivism puts on indigenous territories and culture. However,

transhumance is also the capacity to dwell simultaneously in different sites. It is not marked by the occupation of one territory but by living in more than one "environment." In this sense, it bounds urban-rural areas and urban-rural livelihoods in a net of relations.

In the words of the sociologist and urbanist Abdoumalig Simone, "*They were elaborations of various information and ways of connecting and disconnecting things.*" (Simone, 2021, p. 1348) Similar to Simone's idea of "people as infrastructures," which tries to grasp the messy entanglements of urban dwelling beyond notions of individualization, our idea is to focus on binding and re-binding socio-ecological relationships across different territories with different meanings of livability. Urban-rural livelihoods, cultural loss, and historical trauma intermingle in an individual and collective process of enunciation and formation of new forms of identities. An indigenous leader said, "*We have passed through diverse situations, and we still exist.*" Their existence in-between spaces, be it in the cities of Iquique, Pozo Almonte, Alto Hospicio, or the rural areas of Pica or Huara, and all those territories situated in the highlands in which only a few people are still living (mainly the elders). The shape of life in different geographical spaces highlighted an expanded meaning of transhumance, making these cultural elements significant efforts to regain the ancestral meaning of their histories, practices, territories, and beliefs. For many of them, "indigenous" is not a bad word anymore, something to be ashamed of, as so many testimonies told of their experience in school. Now is the moment and the conditions to recover what has been lost, even with the financial help of mining corporations. In other words, the notion of transhumance appears as a message of current indigeneity, that they still have an identity bound to the old places and the sites of grandparents. Moreover, there is an ongoing process of re-territorialization in action as a response-ness to territorial mining intervention. There are alternatives of livability to be forged, slowly constituted, but meaningful.

Another example of how this re-territorialization and recovery of the ancestral use of place and practices is the sporting activity called the "Chasqui run." Carried out by the indigenous Aymara communities of the Pica-Matilla sector, the run reconstructs a part of the Inca trail that passed through the oasis site. In 2019, I spoke with the organizers of this activity, carried out yearly, with more than 90 participants (mainly children) in the run. The activity allows the children to become familiar with the territorial values and to revitalize some of the ancestral customs of the indigenous in the area. As Andrea said: "*to move forward is to move backward, to look back to the way our grandparents lived.*" It is a process where knowledge is once again disseminated and passed on from generation to generation. Through these activities, the aim is to revitalize the attachment to the territory and its history. The run is also attended by many representatives

of other ethnic groups, both from Chilean territory and abroad. In this way, these activities generate alliances and networks with other ethnic groups, some of whom are invited to participate in the run.

Although both mentioned indigenous spoke persons have different diagnoses regarding indigenous culture, Andrea's and Noelia's positions align with each other in driving the importance of indigenous cultural values in the new generations: *"Because therein lies the hope that we will be agents of change. Furthermore, the children can awaken their awareness of the Pachamama, the land where we live. That beyond as a culture we have that principle as human beings"* (Indigenous spoke-person, Cariquima. Iquique, 2019). Both seek to recover lost meanings by re-educating future generations in indigenous values. As an indigenous leader said in her words of welcome at a meeting of young indigenous people to get to know and value their own culture: *"Thank you very much for coming and getting to know the territory of Matilla, which, although it is charming and touristic, has many problems that we need to know about, that is why we need young people like you to empower yourselves, young people who fight and stand up for the defense of their territories."* (ADI Jiwasa Oraje, 2015)

It is no coincidence that among those interviewed, it was mainly women who were concerned about the cultural changes suffered by their people. Both have concerns and have formed a practice, an ethic of care to reverse the harm caused. Both need help to rebuild links with their language and territory—a slow and difficult struggle. However, in both of them, one can perceive, on the one hand, the sense of loss, but also a certain hope that rebuilding such lost ties is possible and that their practice does make sense. For Joan Tronto, care is *"all that we do to maintain, continue and repair "our world" so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all that we try to weave into a complex web that sustains life"* (Tronto, 1993, p. 103). In the case described above, we speak of a damaged world and the form to care for it, but also of a transit between different worlds that connects the practice of care with a politics of recognition, as well as the use of the "legal weapons" that Chilean culture has imposed on the indigenous world. In this way, concern and care are manifestations of feelings that underlie practices of resistance and struggle that go beyond their ethical-historical meaning. Beyond their analyses, the histories and narratives of both indigenous leaders differ or may even contradict each other regarding the historical diagnosis of their situation as indigenous subjects. However, their practice seeks to repair and rejoin lost traces by exercising a practical ethic of recomposition. It becomes a severe ethical-

political matter concerning caring for one own past and history. This becomes a long ongoing process, a practice of slow but meaningful recovery (Puig de la Casa, 2011, 94).

3.2.2. Meaning of material heritage and patrimony

In the Atacama Desert lies the inherited memory of the ancestors. The locals know the various archaeological sites that contain the remains of the so-called "gentiles" (as they are called). Many of the people I spoke with see them as their ancestors. However, significant differences exist between a Western and an indigenous understanding and cosmovision on how to take care of the material heritage. Petroglyphs and geoglyphs are Andean motives for tracings on stone or the ground. One of the best-known geoglyphs in the region is the archaeological monument called "Giant of Tarapacá," declared a "protected national good." Unfortunately, these sites of patrimonial value have been permanently affected by human action. The discussion revolves around protecting this material memory and the role these sites play in indigenous ancestral culture.

An archaeologist of the Regional Museum in Iquique explained that indigenous cultures need to be understood in their relationship to territory and ancestral life. Luis has vast experience working with different communities, and he has been aware of how our Western definitions of heritage differ considerably from those of the people in the Altiplano: *"Because we see it as heritage, but the communities are not seeing it as heritage. They see it as part of their daily life and organic world."* He said that if some people from the communities came across a pitcher, they would probably not take it home, and they would probably leave it there because these "things" belong to another order, to the supernatural world of the ancestors, but which is an integral part of the space they inhabit. For this reason, he interprets these relations with the ancestors as ecological relations because they have or could have repercussions on the economic dimension. They can symbolize ominous or benign omens of what might happen:

"So, of course, they will not interpret it as we do, as a heritage site, an archaeological site, or whatever. They will see it, as I said, in an organic way, an ecological relationship. So, heritage protection is silent, careful, and active. Nevertheless, it always develops from inaction. People are not going to go and put a fence around the archaeological site, and they prefer not to go, touch it, or intervene. Moreover, that is the way to protect. The hill is there, it is sacred, and it is not to be touched. You do not touch the sacred". (Archeologist, Iquique, 2021)

Luis continued that people who go to these sides without getting sick are strong, spiritual people, and he does not go to this side because he knows he can become ill. These relations are

deeply ecological, in which elements interact organically and involve different worlds. Luis exemplifies this with the bones of the ancestors:

"They see perhaps a fragment of the textile sticking out of the Earth, the scattered bones, and some communities take those bones to the soul world in the cemetery. Furthermore, at the bottom of the cemetery with a high cross, in a structure similar to a Chacana⁷¹, they open the Earth and place the bones. Why? Because the subject is alive. So, he needs the soul world as a corridor to move in the territory because if his bones are scattered, that soul will not find his bones, his physical anchor, and he will make a mess. It will cause a canal to overflow, a farm to overflow, and there will be a landslide." "My food is going to fall," "My baby is going to burn," "My husband or my son is going to crash," and "We are going to fall off the road leaving Iquique." They are going to attribute to it. There are very complex relationships. So, they will not find an answer regarding heritage protection as we handle it. The vision of heritage for them is different." (Archeologist, Iquique, 2021)

He calls these interrelations the "organic weft" ("trama orgánica"), part of a silent form to handle and care about the material heritage—a weft of organic, spiritual, and material relations. The best way to care about it is not to go but leave it there. To leave the side undisturbed. On the other side, I have often experienced that people blame indigenous people because they are not carrying off their material heritage. They are left to deteriorate over time. However, it is also well known that archaeologists from northern universities have looted the tombs of the "gentiles" many times. Ultimately, the mummies are exhibited in a museum, but the indigenous do not go to the museum. They even know the museum, as Luís commented. Ultimately, what care, protection, and heritage mean is also connected to the colonial legacy in Latin American reality. It shows how diverse meanings, knowledge, and ways of life collide.

There is more than one way to interpret the existence, care, and importance of petroglyphs and geoglyphs among indigenous. An indigenous leader from Pica made a campaign to restore different archeological sites close to Pica. Because these are abandoned, cars drive over them, and people do not even notice that they are ancient indigenous cemeteries. The destruction of archaeological sites in the region is also enormous due to mining activity. The latest big mining projects –Quebrada Blanca Phase 2 (EIA from 2016) and Collahuasi (EIA from 2018) - declare their possible impacts on the archeological sites. It seems that raising people's awareness has been slow, and narratives differ in interpreting their responsibilities as leaders not caring enough about that. As a leader commented to me about destroying material heritage: "It is *like losing a gigantic library*." Especially those who expect regional tourism growth are often critical of

⁷¹ "Chacana", also called "Andean Crux", is an Andean Symbol. The word comes from Quechua, and it means "ladder." In Andean Cosmology, it symbolizes the "union" and the "bridge" between different worlds.

these developments. Giant petroglyphs are spread across the desert, but as huge "drawings" on the ground, they can be seen only from higher altitudes. Many of them have already been damaged. In this sense, the Quechua Roberto told me about his conception of the importance and recovery of the ancestral memory rooted in the geoglyphs. There seems to be considerable potential regarding cultural and material memory:

"When I was talking to you about the destruction of geoglyphs, I told you about the loss. But it is not lost (because) it stays with you. It is always there. If someone gets back in touch with nature, this contact with nature will re-emerge. So, that is also why I am interested in worldview ("cosmovision"), how you work with yourself or the Community to recover what you have always had. And the unfortunate thing is that work is done, and a person's message is lost, like the library of Alexandria. We had all that knowledge long ago, and now we have to do all the work to discover it again. But that is a good thing. To feel that you can recover it. I do not use the expression that we are losing our language, that we are losing our culture." (Indigenous Spoke person, Iquique, 2019)

These narratives indicate the continued damage inflicted on the cultural memory of the area's indigenous peoples. However, the assessments and interpretations of this situation varied enormously among indigenous. The process of identity reconstruction that is beginning to emerge takes on various elements. To some degree, it is a process of re-invention and self-recognition as indigenous members of an indigenous community and the emergence of an awareness of the cultural and historical value, the meaning of language, and the material heritage of archaeological sites.

3.2.3. The value of space

In 2019 I met Roberto from the Community of Mamiña, who works as a "Quechua trainer" doing recordings and web content design. Roberto constantly criticized me for my lack of engagement with social media, as I do not have Facebook or Instagram. He told me that people should know what I think and where I stand. According to him, social media is an excellent tool to make yourself visible and make people know you. For him, I think knowing is the same as trusting. Roberto was the only one who noticed my lack of social networks having no Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. He managed these different worlds: high-tech, video recording, and social media and one of the ancestral roots of Quecha culture in Tarapacá. During several conversations with him, I could delve deeper into the notion of indigenous cosmovision and the subjects he was interested in, and he saw himself as a "trainer in indigenous culture." On one occasion, he said, *"Indigenous cosmovision has to do above all with values."* Understanding the theme of values is crucial, connected to his intense criticism regarding the relations between

indigenous and mining companies. He has always been very radical in his criticism of these forged relationships, which is why other people who know him also avoid him (or do not trust him). In another conversation, he told me that he resigned from his place as part of his indigenous Community because of his total disagreement with the Community's decisions regarding the mining companies. I tend to interpret his ideas as demands for moral judgments based on his position in life. He often said, *"If I had been with the mining companies, I would have money, but because I do not, I don't have anything."*

Values have to do with the decisions of the people, decisions that can severely affect their well-being, but also their own culture and territory. People have an awareness and knowledge attached to feelings of mourning and sadness regarding indigenous lost values. But specific values attached to land and territory, according to Roberto, should prevent you from negotiating with mining.

Coming back to Noelia, she said once, *"I think we have already lost many values, and we are already very contaminated with Western culture. And we have lost the horizon of the territory. Of course, what will they defend if young people no longer speak their own language? Or how they are going to defend themselves against mining."* In many testimonies that indigenous or non-indigenous have, this critical element is the bond to the land, the territory. Those who live in the city with little ties to the territory they once came from or their families will be less willing to defend their land than those with strong and recognized cultural roots in ancestral domains.

I realized how strongly cultural, symbolic, or geographical elements are interrelated through dialogue with the Aymara and Quechua people. People are aware of the changes in the landscape and their culture, whether these are caused by the influence of the state or by the past and current effects of mining on the landscape. Resource extraction changes the landscape, territory, and people's attitudes toward their culture and identity. One of the most problematic aspects is the intergenerational experiences and the differences in interests and perspectives that emerge from them:

"Many changes can be seen in community relations, for example, concerning the present generations. Let us talk about people who are fifty or seventy years old. These people are against mining because they love their land; they value their environment and have always protected it. The Andean worldview is another vision in which man is part of the universe. However, I do not see that in today's generation. I mean those under 30 with different ideas today (indigenous spoke person, Iquique, 2019)."

The change in the interests and needs of the younger generations already fully formed in the "Chilean culture" is often pointed out as an issue of concern. Young people from indigenous families live in the coastal city and have been formed in these cultural terms since then. Therefore, for younger generations, living an urban life would allow better education and a more stable basis for better living conditions. Some of them can study, thanks to the scholarships obtained from mining companies. This process implies different levels of cultural change. It is, therefore, understood in an ambivalent way: While the younger generations are becoming more "Westernized," at the expense of their indigenous cultural background, they are also given better opportunities in life. When I led Noelia to reflect on the impact of mining, her somewhat sad tone persisted when she told me that her indigenous siblings might become professionals and obtain the technical skills to resist the mining process. Then she added that, hopefully, this would not happen at the expense of losing the knowledge of her grandparents and people like her who still know the language. Another indigenous remembered the impact of Chilean nationalistic policies:

"SC: You talked about uprooting a few moments ago; how is that generated in terms of culture and language?"

DE: From all sides. From the language, from the territory. For example, you were prohibited from speaking Aymara in school because they punished you. Many had to change, and finding work in the city was terrible. They had to change their name and their surname. So that is terrible. (Indigenous spoke person. Iquique 2019)

For this indigenous leader, one of the most crucial issues today is the possibility of being autonomous and independent from any external entity, be it the government or the mining companies. The problem lies precisely in the need for more autonomy for many of the leaders who have received funding from companies or positions in government, which hampers the possibility of offering real alternatives based on meaningful, long-term processes of resistance.

The indigenous culture of the Andes is immersed in a constant relationship. Entanglements of territory, water, and life are crucial because they express the ecological basis of all human existence. The territory is not an abstract concept but a concrete component of identity and livelihood and an important part of a resistance to a transformation process, entangled in complex dynamic power relations shaped by post-colonial geographies. Territorial changes are carried out through new forms of intervention in nature, which have shaped landscapes and mobilized identities, forging political and cultural elements attached to different kinds of resistance and collaboration (Escobar, 2010b, p. 67). Today, life projects are translated into minor development projects through which communities try to repopulate the partly abandoned

villages by creating new livelihoods and life projects. We will see this in the case of the Chusmiza community, which is recovering the meaning of ancestral territory.

3.2.4. Re-shaping the territory: The case of Chusmiza

The story we delve into concerns the recovery of the ancestral territory of the Chusmiza community. Contrasting cultural loss and mourning with cultural transformation and reconstruction as aspects of a long-term process will provide other elements to the picture of indigenous reality in Chile. Chusmiza is located 140 km from Iquique, over 3200 meters above sea level. The village of Chusmiza-Usmagama depends mainly on agriculture and livestock breeding, but in recent decades the inhabitants of the village have moved to other areas. Outlining the history of this Aymara community, I will show how vital territory is in the sense of an indigenous worldview and how strong notions and meanings of territory are rooted in the history of their culture and political claims. To support the idea of territory as an essential part of the indigenous cosmivision, I will expose part of the testimony given to me by Maria. She had been a spokesperson and leader for her Community for almost 30 years. Before exploring her testimony, she told me a story about the close relationships between political demands, law, water, and territory. We will give an insight into the issue of how water is a fundamental part of Chusmiza's territory.

An influential leader of the Chusmiza community tells the story of how the Community lost its right to water and how it fought it back. A water bottling plant used the water source of Chusmiza and employed people from the Community. The plant began operating in the 1920s and was a vital employment source. The indigenous leader Lu s Carvajal said that the relationship between the company and the Community was good, as it provided work, and the bosses were accessible to the Community's complaints. However, at the beginning of the ninety-nineties, the bottling plant changed owners with Chilean business people as partners. So, the Community began to manage with CONADI to conform themselves as an indigenous community according to the law and regularize their water rights. This process occurred relatively late because the people of the Community thought there was no point in regularizing something that belonged to them, "*why are we going to regularize our water if the water is ours?*" (Carvajal, 2008, p. 378) But this process regarding the water rights claim generated a dispute between the Community and the company. In 1996, the state agency DGA declared itself incompetent to resolve the dispute, and the conflict went to the Pozo Almonte courts. However, the same year, the DGA granted the company more than half of the water rights.

Chusmiza has only one water source, a slope on which the ownership of extraction was now in the hands of this private company. The water rights were nevertheless retained by the private owner of the company, which meant that the indigenous Community was denied access to groundwater. In response, the Community filed a petition for annulment in the civil court. At that time, CONADI committed to helping the Community, but its power was limited as part of the state. Luis says they received promises from several presidents, such as Eduardo Frei (1994-2000) and Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006), that they would hurry to solve their problems. Finally, the Community decided to sue the DGA, and in 2002 the court upheld the Community's claim and returned the water to it. However, the company and the DGA appealed this decision. In 2004, the Community's claim was rejected. Without further appeal, the Community filed a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Today Luis Carvajal is no longer working as a leader, leaving his position in the hands of other people like Maria, whom I met in 2019 and had several interviews with whom we always talked about the Chusmiza case. She was always very willing to tell me about new developments and projects. Maria told me mainly about the process of rights claims and community lawsuits. She remembered, *"It was a fight against an elephant,"* she said. *"We litigated against the state; the challenge was enormous, against a company and the state, it was not only a legal challenge but an economic one."* This is because, by that time, water specialists were rare because of the unique feature of the Chilean water code. Therefore, the only specialist was costly. *"So, it was a big challenge, but we did it. Once we got it at the Supreme Court level, we got the Supreme Court to rule in our favor, and they had to give us back the water rights. They were returned"* (Indigenous leader, Chusmiza, Iquique, 2019). The fight lasted 15 years, but finally, the indigenous Community got their water rights back. Water is an essential resource for every life project in a community that has based its livelihood primarily on agriculture. The vital activities of the Community highly depend on this resource. But when the Community regained the water, the people began to think about the village's future and plan a small-scale development process by implementing a minimum infrastructure that would provide conditions for local people who would not have to migrate to other sectors.

"We have no school, and the droughts are broken. There are no water storage ponds, agriculture, livestock, or anything. People have gone. Only two families left there, and families made up of two or three people, the old people lived there." (Indigenous leader, Chusmiza, Iquique, 2019). So the question was, after this successful claim for the ancient water use, the question was to think about the Community's future. *"We had to do something."* Only a few

families live in Chusmiza, Fifteen people and a "floating" population of workers who work in the sector. The rest of the Community lives in urban spaces.

As we have pointed out, the cultural dynamic has contributed to different changes in indigenous livelihood. It has also changed the ideas about the quality of life and the relationship to their land, territory, and desert. How can a village like Chusmiza be made habitable again? Should the state offer the indigenous people the opportunity to resume their old ways of life and customs? So the Community began demanding more active state engagement in their issues and concerns. However, the state did not respond, so the Community asked for help from the Citizens' Observatory. A lawyer specialist in water and indigenous rights represented the Community in their lawsuit against the Chilean state in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. After three years, the indictment was accepted, and thus the first negotiations between the state and the Community were initiated. Militza said that these so-called "friendly negotiations" focused mainly on the restitution of ancestral territories ("territorios ancestrales") and showed how strongly this is linked to the water problem.

"Chusmiza has only one water source, so we request a friendly solution with the Chilean state within an agreement. We are demanding the surrender of all our ancestral territory, which is not the village; the village is the private property of the indigenous people, of one or another indigenous person individually. But we have an ancestral territory as the other communities have, and the state has not returned to us, although the indigenous law establishes it. So, it has to return it. (...) Because it belongs to us, and we have to care for it. This is the struggle that we have given for so many years to recover our water rights. "(Indigenous leader, Chusmiza, Iquique, 2019).

After 15 years of struggle against companies and the state, the crucial question arose regarding the "ancestral territory" and its meaning, how large this territory was, and who has the expertise to measure it. Even though many people talked about it, nobody knew what "ancestral territories" really meant. One of the main concerns Maria mentioned is the territory's protection because "in the past," *"people knew what that territory was because they protected it."* The problem is that mining concessions also define territories in a state administration, which implies complex relations in terms of boundaries and territorial limits. Nevertheless, the indigenous territory in question goes beyond private property and mining concessions granted by the state, as Maria explains: *"All the communities had their ancestral lands that bordered on other lands, just as the current concessionary mining lands border on others. We know those boundaries."* (Indigenous leader, Chusmiza, Iquique, 2019).

What is meant by "ancestral territory" follows a different logic from the concept of a national land survey, particularly in controlling the areas of potential resource extraction and the concessionary areas where mining is or will be carried out. According to the Constitution, the "underground" and the natural resources available belong to the state, which releases the concessions for mining following complex institutional procedures. The distinction between "surface" and "ground," which includes mineral resources and water, is a problematic feature of the administrative policy of the territories in Chile. Territorial visualization and state administration mean dividing nature into different resources and geographical scales. This includes a process of abstraction, e.g., in the case of water, and the bureaucratization of nature. Water, land, and resources are therefore separated goods, and it should be noted that this "logic of division" is deeply rooted in the legal framework and highly convenient for the extractive process. So, the question is similar to defining an "Area of Impact," as seen in chapter four: How to decide on borders? From the analytical thought, the fixity of boundaries and territorial limits end disputes between neighbors. But not when different ontologies are at stake, defining various life projects rooted in places and spaces (Blaser, 2004). The described process denotes the movement of civil law and private property that symbolizes the power of the state to define a space and its borders (Serres, 2004, p. 92-93). But the question of ancestral territory exceeded this frame and margins.

Nevertheless, the contradictions become apparent in some cases when distinguishing ancestral territories from state-concessionary territories. Maria was aware of these differences when she said: "*The community occupies the territory. That is why property and title is a thing of the state*". However, it is a crucial feature of the Chilean constitution that indigenous people living in Chile still need to have their ancestral territories fully recognized by the state authority. This process continues to be a source of dispute between native peoples and the Chilean state, a conflict that can be traced from north to south, with varying degrees and intensities. Legal dispositions are always hierarchical (Yañez, 2014a). Therefore, the decisive role of ILO's Agreement 169 becomes necessary for these processes because it makes visible the connections between indigenous culture, cosmological views, and livelihoods⁷². However, in the case of

⁷² For example, in the 2nd paragraph on 'land,' Article 13: 1. In applying the provisions of this Part of the Convention, governments shall respect the particular importance of the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned with their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as applicable, which they occupy or use otherwise, and, in particular, the collective aspects of this relationship. 2. The use of the term *lands* in Articles 15 and 16 shall include the concept of territories, which covers the total environment of the areas that the people concerned occupy or otherwise use. (Ilo.org) Article 15 deals with resource management and the right of consultation, particularly regarding extractive resource extraction, and in both Chile and Latin America,

Chusmiza, the most crucial question remained unanswered: the one about the size of the ancestral territories, a question closely related to the very understanding of the concept of "ancestrality." This denotes the traditional routes of the grandparents in their ancient pastoral activities connecting to the features of space occupation and habitability. When this question arose, there needed to be more clarity about the size and spatial dimension of this territory claimed to be "ancestral."

"But we were claiming to get back our ancestral territory, but I could be thinking that it will be ten hectares, you could be thinking that it is one hectare, the other could be thinking, one hundred hectares, nobody knew. So, we did know that the grandparents and people who remain know the ancestral territory very well." (Indigenous leader, Chusmiza, Iquique, 2019).

Then she continues saying:

"(the sector of) Chiapa, they say, goes up to the gorge or gorges that border our territory. Because in the past, they were careful to draw the boundaries of a community at water river basins, hilltops, or a gorge, you see, not like today's border lines" (Indigenous leader, Chusmiza, Iquique, 2019).

This question, which includes a territory's spatial dimension, encompasses its limits and boundaries. Yet, boundaries and borderlines are nothing but relatively arbitrary constructs. Nevertheless, people across the desert defined ancient boundaries associating these with specific geographical "natural" features and accidents. Here the distinction between *fiat* and *bona fide* borders can give us a theoretical insight into the metaphysical relationship between ontology and geography (Varzi, 2016; Smith & Varzi, 2000). While *bona fide* borders are attributed to "natural borders," distinguished from "artificial borders," i.e., *fiat borders*, as given in the case of political geography regarding territorial state administration⁷³. As the philosopher Achilles Varzi notes, maps and history books provide information on the relationship between political and geographical borders. According to Varzi, the distinction

the agreement provides legal tools for indigenous peoples to resist and initiate negotiation processes between communities and private companies (Schönsteiner & Van Yurick, 2015).

⁷³ According to the English geographer Lord Curzon, borders have always been one of the most critical issues in modern State land administration. In his famous novel lectures, Curzon gives insight into "modern geopolitics," considering the political significance of borders: "*Frontiers are indeed the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, life or death to nations. Nor is this surprising. Just as the protection of the home is the most vital care of the private citizen, so the integrity of her borders is the condition of existence of the state.*" (Curzon, 1907, 7). This text, written at the beginning of the XX century, deals with the problem of the conception of modern territory formation in terms of its defined but changing borders. Curzon uses several examples to describe the differences between natural and artificial boundaries regarding their preservation and defense in times of European colonial rule over Africa and America.

between natural and artificial borders is important even for forming a political entity based on the State-land relationship (Varzi, 2016, p. 2). *"It makes a big difference whether the borders themselves have been robustly fixed by Nature or simply drawn conventionally by people through political agreement, unilateral stipulation, or warfare."* (Varzi, 2016, pp. 2-3) Therefore, the distinction between "artificial" and "natural" in land demarcation is linked to human perceptual abilities. Defining the "external" world means drawing boundaries, defining, and distinguishing objects from other objects (Monod, 1993). *"Our cognition of external reality involves the systematic imposition of boundaries of many different sorts, including fiat boundaries which may be more or less ephemeral."* (Varzi & Smith, 2000, p. 5). In this case, the ontological diversity that contributes to the definition of boundaries, how they are shifted, and by which mechanisms they are set in motion is remarkable. In this empirical case, the metaphysical distinction between *fiat* and *bona fide* boundaries shows that border demarcation always coexists but can be either blinded or emphasized by certain power relations. The differences in the perception of how much land the ancestral territory claims also show the difficulties of land surveying and its translation into concrete numbers.

The people from Chusmiza needed to learn how to translate their request into the territory's spatial scale, but they did know that if they went to the Inter-American Court, they had to have a clear idea of how much that territory was. They said: *"We are going to have to say that our ancestral territory has so many hectares, and that is what we want to be given back."* Yet, this kind of measuring work is expensive. It is needed to do geo-referencing, use drones, hire professionals, topographers, and a long etcetera. Moreover, mobility in the desert is complex, especially for older people, since they are the main actors who still remember the old boundaries of the territory's occupants. So, one of the practical problems had to do with financing such an enterprise. Fortunately, the Community obtained support from the University of Tarapacá, which helped them via internal projects supplying them with the resources needed (gasoline, fuel, and food) and a professional team that included topographers, geographers, and professors. With the help of the university and the professional team, the Community's people could demarcate precisely how the older people remembered their ancestral use of space. In this way, they reconstituted the size of the ancestral territory. As Maria told me, today, more than thirty-three thousand hectares of land are considered part of the ancestral territory of the Aymara community of Chusmiza.

However, it is important to point out possible conflicts between opposing criteria and current negotiation strategies and communication processes as ways to position themselves as actors in tension and disparities of power balance.

The Community of Chumiza has proceeded through legal demands against the state and companies and won these proceedings. Their claim and mobilization for human rights, indigeneity, and land management show the dynamic relations between administrative procedures of land surveying, power, and territory, but in which indigenous actors can also develop their power mechanisms and strategies. This highly dynamic contingency situation leads us to the idea that power is not a feature one possesses or exercises but rather an uneven balance of different social forces.

With the help of a team of experts from the University of Tarapacá, the ancestral territory could finally be measured and estimated. By doing this, the Community carried out a process of de-territorialization through which new territorial boundaries were drawn, and new definitions were established. These new boundaries revealed an ontological dimension, close to proceedings of life designs, an open mechanism of future life orientations (see Escobar, 2014; Blaser, 2004). Reading the dynamics of conflict situations between indigenous communities and state authorities allows us to conceive these processes as a tension field in which different "sites," in the sense of a social ontology, relate to spatial analysis (see Schatzki, 2003). It implies understanding *space as sites* that express an ontological dimension that involves the coexistence of human possibilities and other human life projects⁷⁴(Blaser, 2014). Spatial interpretation and delimitation, such as *bona fide* and *fiat boundaries*, have been defined by specific historical and political structures and contingencies and are never entirely subordinated or determined. According to these sociological readings of human spatial relations, a territory is a politicized form of a spatial design as part of a much larger historical context because it is simultaneously bound to several geographical scales and historical narratives. The case of Chumiza shows how legal regulations can play a significant role in state land and resources administration transforming and disturbing it. However, it can also be handled dynamically despite being given "rules of the game." The story shows how precisely those individuals, who have been

⁷⁴ Schatzki writes: "*Site ontologies maintain that social phenomena can only be analyzed by examining the sites where human coexistence transpires. It is in highlighting this type of context that this approach differentiates itself from socialist ontologies that emphasize wholes, sui generis facts, or abstract structures.*" (Schatzki, 2003, 176)

historically disadvantaged by these laws and regulations, can go through them and use them to mobilize indigenous identity and territorial claims (De Certeau, 1998).

3.2.5. A process that continues

Processes can be a long run. As researchers, we only grasp conflicts in partial ways and are limited in time. Not only because we only approach a limited number of people, their personal views and interpretations, but we do this in a limited time frame. Every time "news" can emerge, forging new relations, decisions, and even historical events. For that reason, conflicts have a high conjunctural character, in which new events can happen that, in turn, influence the state of the whole conflict. I have tried to keep in touch with the people I met during my second field phase. Given the high incidence of interviews and online meetings that became more frequent due to the pandemic, I also looked for ways to get closer to the people of the Chusmiza community again to find out how things have been progressing.

In a second interview, Maria told me that the agreement between the Community and the state, the so-called "friendly solution," has three main points: 1. A proposal for the return of the territory, 2. The purchase of the company's (bottling) assets as land, and 3. To implement a development plan which includes tourism, agriculture, livestock, and water management. But still, there are several concerns about the process that complicates matters.

First is the repopulation of the Community. Maria said this would likely not happen, as many new generations have higher education, and the Chusmiza community can hardly offer them jobs. As much of the future projection of the Community in terms of employment opportunities revolves around tourism, she also believes that the people who have their jobs and businesses today in Iquique will not want to leave them to venture into tourism in the restored area—also, considering that the Community does not have much experience in this area. "*There is a lot to learn,*" she said, "*It is not enough just to do some tourism courses. If we want to offer something, it must be of (good) quality*".

Second, regarding the return of the agreed territory, Maria told me that the national agency for national assets (*Bienes Nacionales*) needs to have the appropriate regulations for the return of the territory. Even if everything is "ready," the perimeter is defined and lifted. The problem is that the laws do not coincide with the available legal figures and regulations. Maria told me

there are two possibilities: that the return of the territory is done through the decree 1939⁷⁵, under the idea of "sanitation," which means the temporary surrender of the territory by the administration, this would mean the state hands over the land under certain conditions. Maria explained that this would not mean the return of their territory in the form of "common property," which was the ruling decision of the Inter-American Court, but "something else." The problem is that Chilean regulations need to cover this. The other possibility is under the indigenous law, which establishes that the state undertakes to hand over territory to indigenous people for a limited time (25 years). She said, "*There is no such thing as a public figure.*" And she continued to refer to the different international commitments to indigenous rights and protection. "*What about that?*" The great uncertainty regarding the appropriate figure for the return of the ancestral territory shows the case's novelty.

Third, the case of the Chusmiza community is interesting because it commits the state to help shape a kind of life project regarding their Community. When I asked Maria about their experiences regarding divisions between the communities, she told me that while measuring the territory, they held several meetings with neighboring communities supporting them. So, Chusmiza's experience has been very different from other communities: "*In everyday life, to the extent that one goes with clear, non-invasive proposals, communities come together and support each other. In the case of territorial boundary, the communities helped Chusmiza and, in turn, sought to restrict and reclaim their territory.*" Moreover, for this reason, Maria is also aware of her responsibility: "*We must do things right, also because Chusmiza is a reference for other communities.*"

Our description has moved between indigenous identity, the definition of space and territory, and the social fabric and implies a complex amalgam of different practices and discourses. The various stories described in this chapter only give a fragmented picture of a more complex field. These elements, such as language, transhumance, heritage, and territory, briefly described as cultural, ontological, ecological, and political issues, are particularly bound to specific networks and meanings and embedded in indigenous communities' logic. The communities are the social formation in which these issues acquire sense and reality.

⁷⁵ This decree is called Rules on the acquisition, administration, and Disposal of state property of the year 1977, associated with the Ministry of Lands and Colonization. <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=6778&idParte=8739359> accessed. 16.05.22

4. CONFLICTS

“Maybe, somebody will see the crater we left.”

Worker of Pica’s municipality. 2019

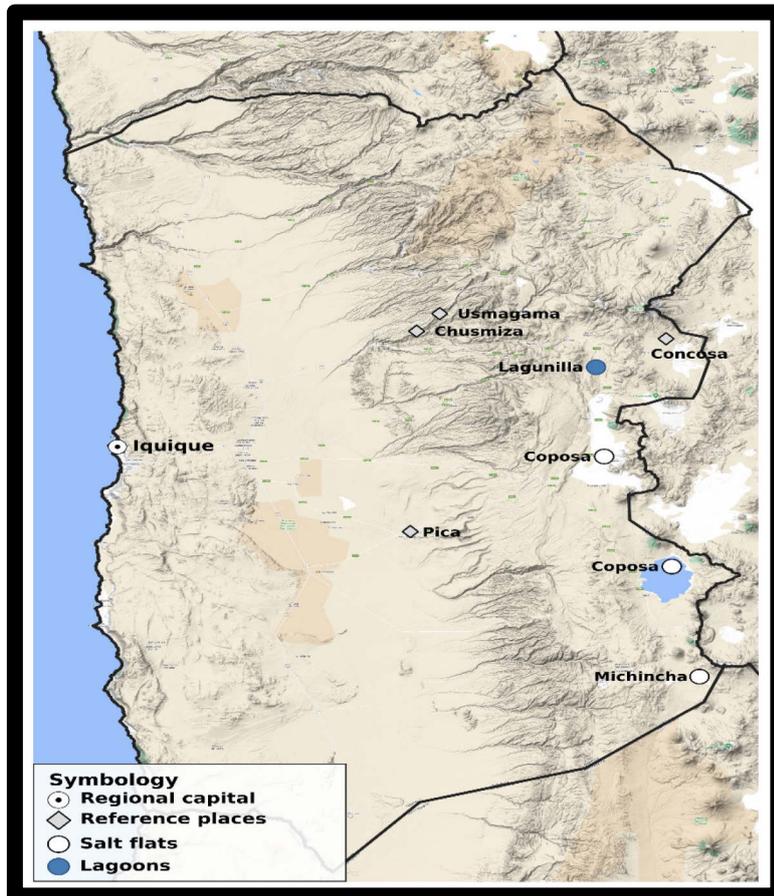


Fig. 13. The map shows the different localities and communities, as well as the lagoons and salt flats damaged by mining extraction. (Courtesy by S. Toledo)

The previous chapters have dealt with a variety of topics. While the first six chapters deal with the political role of indigenous consultations, changes in the corporate perspective, and the role of international mechanisms such as ILO Convention 169 in the processes of discussion and legitimization of new extractive projects, chapters seven and eight while moving away from the mining issue, aimed to problematize the indigenous issue and the process of cultural transformation. The matters described are related to the scope of mining impacts in terms of the cultural and territorial redefinitions and

reconfigurations these processes entail. In this way, we have developed a perspective that attempts to understand indigenous life in its relationship with external entities that remove, transform, and even condition it in a certain way.

This Chapter presents some regional struggles associated with water use and the negotiation processes with mining companies. It will start with the conflicts generated by using water resources in the Tarapacá region, specifically in the Pica Oasis. A worrying situation regarding the overuse of water, but not solely attributed to the mining use of the groundwater necessary

for its extraction processes. The issue emphasizes the ambivalences generated by the infrastructure projects to improve the water use conditions in the area and by the growing concern and mistrust of a population that warns of the danger of the drying up of the oasis and thus of life itself.

The following chapters will discuss the role of the roundtables in negotiations between mining companies and communities. Negotiations place them in a difficult position, as these mostly involve financial compensation. As already discussed in the previous chapters, the transformation of the aspirations and needs of the indigenous people is an issue regarding their loss of culture and identity. The question of how much "Western" they become is always critical. In this way, the following chapters also seek to problematize the issue of indigenoussness, multiculturalism, and cultural difference from a postcolonial perspective.

4.1. Water conflicts

Access, distribution, and water allocation are significant challenges for the country's long-term development. With growing demand, it represents a "strategic resource" for export-oriented economies like Chile and is highly necessary for mining activity (Peña, 2004, p. 6; WB, 2011). According to the General water directory (DGA), the water distribution among the production sectors shows that agriculture requires about 82%, industry about 7%, and mining 3% of the country's total continental water resources (DGA, 2016), and only 8% is available for human use (drinking water). This extreme imbalance between agriculture, mining, and industrial water consumption has often been criticized as related to the human water supply. It has been understood as a consequence of private water management (Flores, 2020).

However, specific sectors of Chilean society, mainly business, and politics, have considered the current water management a relatively successful system⁷⁶. However, while statistics show a relatively successful production curve in mining and agriculture, environmental impacts associated with water have occurred over the past 30 years, dividing the opinions over this development (WB, 2011, p. 5). While proponents of water regulation consider agro-economic and extractivist production sectors essential for the country's development, critics point to the social and ecological consequences, such as growing inequality and various forms of

⁷⁶ "Successful" because, in the long run, it has enabled the cultivation of approximately one million and two hundred thousand hectares of land, and by this generated 18 billion dollars in agricultural exports and also created two million (direct and indirect) jobs (Emol, 2020).

environmental pollution⁷⁷. Problems related to water management give insight into the meaning of impacts and the question of the responsibility of state institutions and Corporations, making evident the inherent contradictions of the Chilean neoliberal system.

In this chapter, we will look at how the impacts associated with groundwater use and extraction have led to various issues regarding the mining industry. To do so, we will begin presenting some elements of the discussion at a national level on the water code.

4.1.1. The debate around the water code

The state is the virtual owner of the waters in the Chilean territory. In the Water Code of 1981, *water* is defined as a "Public Good" (Art. 5), but its use and allocation must be granted through a so-called "right of use"⁷⁸. The technical procedures for applying for these rights are stipulated in the Water Code. The *right of use* means that if the stock of the resource is sufficient, the owner can use and benefit from the good without time limitation. In this sense, through these legal abstractions, water is treated as private property. "*The right to use water belongs to its owner who, by the law, can use, enjoy and dispose of it*" (Art.6). According to this, the rights owner can either use, trade, or even mortgage water.

These dispositions have various practical effects, as the legal separation of water and land means water rights are handled and traded independently of land ownership. Through the authority of the DGA, the state limits itself in its role as a "distributor" of these rights, according to the hydrological information that gives an account of the stock of the resource. Water rights are also divided into "consumptive" and "non-consumptive" about their use. While consumptive means that water rights are used for specific branches of production, such as agriculture or

⁷⁷ Interestingly, the study "Clima Change Performance Index" (CCPI) (2019) presents Chile as a specific case of nature management. The country ranks 11th in the study, with relatively high performance with four variables: Co2 emissions, renewable energy, energy use, and climate policy. Various factors were considered for this study, such as UNDP's Human Development Index, in which Chile ranks 42nd (HDI, 2019). Despite Chile's relatively "good" score, the study states, "*However, wealth is unequally distributed, a majority of the population is highly in debt, and many basic social systems are privatized, including education, health, and access to water*" (Burk et al., 2019, p. 24). Also mentioned is the wave of protests that have been going on in Chile since October 2019

⁷⁸ In Spanish: "Derecho de Aprovechamiento"

mining, non-consumptive indicates that water can be used non-productive, e.g., for energy production.

In 2005, the Water Code was slightly reformed, introducing a compulsory patent payment for those owners who do not or only partially use them⁷⁹. This, however, contributes to the contradiction between the concept of water as a "public good" and as "private property" because water is not "privately owned" by a person or company, only the right to its use. In a pragmatic sense, this nevertheless functions like any form of privatization. Once these rights are granted to private individuals, they must be registered and can then be freely traded. This liberalization process of hydric resources has thus created a so-called "water market," free from any interference and influence by the state. Even if, since the 1980s, the water market has not been as "dynamic" as expected (Bauer, 2002; Peña, 2004; Prieto, 2015), according to some observers, it effectively contributes to more efficient water management (DGA, 2016; WB, 2011; Desmadryl, 2020; Martens, 2020).

In this context, the state gives away more responsibility due to these processes, also because no priorities are set when granting water rights, e.g., water use for the Chilean population. Even in the case of the current water stress situation – attributed to Climate Change, all interested parties compete on equal terms (Flores, 2020). Although the consequences of Climate Change on the country's water supply are not in doubt, it is strongly argued that the neoliberal - i.e., privatized – version of water management implies an unfair distribution already affecting part of the Chilean population. This unjust distribution has become thus one of the most serious and widely discussed problems nationwide. Today, about 42% of the rural population has no access to drinking water; consequently, in various areas of southern Chile, the water supply has to be provided by water cisterns. A study shows a clear correlation between poverty and the need for access to drinking water (Amulen, 2019). This study also indicates that 87% of the rural population is supplied with water from wells, rivers, lakes, or swamps, the quality of which cannot be guaranteed (Amulen, 2019, p. 23; see also Galaz, 2004; Boelens et al., 2012) This situation leads to the fact that many critics see that the current legislation systematically violates the human rights of Chilean citizens. Once again, the poor seem to suffer most from both the environmental effects of Climate Change and the misallocation of resources.

⁷⁹ A lawyer concerned about the situation of Chilean water management told me that the real aim of this patent payment is to prevent speculation and accumulation of water rights (see World Bank, 2011).

Defenders of the current water distribution system, such as the ex-director of the DGA Matias Desmadryl, argue that the Water Code does not imply the privatization of the resource but that water rights have first been protected by the constitution (Desmadryl, 2020). He argues that even before the current Water Code of 1981, Chile already had a functioning system based on water rights. Studies have shown similarities between different water management systems in other countries. Chile is not an isolated case of private water management and can be compared with countries with similar legal grounds, such as the USA, Australia, and Canada (Endo et al. 1, 2018). In this context, where scientific research becomes essential in supporting political decisions, water management in Chile is still considered an "efficient system." Desmadryl ends his commentary with the following words: "*Our institutional and legal framework needs to be strengthened in the following areas, among others: Priority for human consumption, promotion of new sources (desalination of ocean water, reuse), better management of groundwater, conservation and sustainable management of the resource and strengthening public institutions.*" His article ends with the sentence that when debates of this kind are held, they should be "free of ideology." Here the author draws a clear division between technical knowledge and political ideologies. "Ideology" means having critical ideas without knowing the issue's technical background. A commentary by Ricardo Ariztia, President of the National Agricultural Society, attached below Desmadryl's comments, adds: "*We hope that those who have led the debate will put aside their ideologies; that they will stop demonizing the current system without foundation, and evaluate the current legislation in the light of experience, to decide on the best interest of Chile*" (Ariztia cited in Desmadryl, 2020). "Ideology" means holding a specific "political position" in the left-right spectrum, ignoring techno-scientific expertise. This enunciation is used to denounce a politically "biased" argument opposed to technical or scientific "unbiased" knowledge. Already in the late 1990s, the Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulian spoke of the apparent „death of Ideology“ in favor of a the technical dimensions becoming part of political decisions. "*The deep reason for the political crisis in Chile today stems from the apparent death of ideologies perpetrated by a hegemonic ideology that tries to make politics technical by taking it upon itself to destroy alternative ideologies*" (Moulian, 1997, p. 56)⁸⁰.

⁸⁰ According to Moulian, this is based on an error in which two conceptions of Ideology get mixed up: Ideology as *utopia* or *a normative political system of thought*. The former can undoubtedly end in fanaticism and totalitarianism (as in the tragic history of the abrupt and violent end of the *Unidad Popular*, the government of Salvador Allende).

In evaluating this system that is interpreted as fundamentally unfair, the relation between technicality and Ideology becomes controversial. On the one hand, some consider that unfair distribution can be corrected by applying technical criteria. While others think that the failures lie at the system's root and, therefore, cannot be fixed. A vision of "universal access to water" based on a human rights principle would inevitably clash with a neoliberal water management, such as that which has ruled Chile since the dictatorship. Some advocates argue that the water system is technically efficient and should only be corrected in some aspects, such as access to drinking water which is not prioritized in any terms. In this debate on the water tenure regime, there is a significant contradiction between estimates at the technical level and those that are politically motivated. Thus, the discussion about the social consequences of water supply and distribution after the protests in October 2019 is fully ongoing, showing their political dimension beyond technicality.

For some experts and NGOs, the reform of the Water Code, in particular, is seen as an urgent project (OLCA, 2013; Yanez & Molina, 2014a; Bauer, 2002; Nevenko, 2019), which could be overcome by applying a human rights perspective to the problem of unfair water distribution. As a study for Heinrich Böll Stiftung argues, previous water codes in Chile included priorities for human water needs, as was the case with the 1951 Water Code. Therefore, the water shortage can be attributed to hydrological and natural conditions and legal and judicial decisions (Flores, 2020). Nevertheless, the Water Code has some means to ensure the population's water needs. However, even if "human rights" were a criterion for equitable water supply (Granados, 2017), they could not be applied easily since the Concertacion government mostly privatized the public drinking water system. However, these issues confront us with urgent questions about human access to water and irremediably visions of a bleak future where universal water scarcity is one of the possible scenarios (Ballesteros, 2019).

4.1.2. Between drought and water shortage

The affectation of Climate Change becomes more evident from year to year. The extreme climatic and hydrological characteristics of extremely diverse geography also influence centralized institutional water management in various ways, thus claiming their ability to control the multiple effects of this diversity of geographical conditions (DGA, 2016). Researchers are already discussing a "mega-drought" (Gerreaud et al., 2020; 2017) that has lasted more than ten years. However, when the central government has declared a "period of extraordinary drought," legislation (Water Code) has the means to declare a temporary

exceptional situation of water shortage (Tapia, 2018, 2019). In 2019, due to the water stress, about 17 exceptional decrees were issued. The time elapsed in the year 2020 to date (August) has decreed around 18 in water shortages in various regions of the country (DGA, 2020). The criteria for this exceptional situation are based purely on "*physical characteristics and on hydro-meteorological conditions, such as rainfall, river flows, reservoir quantities, and the condition of the water basins,*" which are measured using technical methods that disregard the human impact on their environment entirely (DGA cited in Tapia, 2019, 124, 2018). However, the original legislation does not provide the means to control the water stress situation that Chile is experiencing (Tapia, 2018). "Drought" and "water stress" are two intertwined phenomena but should be treated differently regarding the questions about state responsibility for centralized water management. Climate change is not to be blamed as the cause of every issue. Current legislation treats both concepts like synonyms. For this reason, researchers point out that both concepts should be handled with care to treat the natural and human impacts differently (Nevenko, 2019; Tapia, 2019).

During my fieldwork, many people named "water" an essential issue regarding its distribution, management, and impacts. In the north, a shared view was that mining impacts groundwater levels with significant consequences for the local population. In this context, many criticized the water state management as insufficient to sustain the ecological conditions of the highly vulnerable landscapes of the Atacama Desert.

When I returned to Santiago during my fieldwork in 2019, I met with a member of the Newenko Foundation dedicated to studying the country's legal relations of water management. He explained that Newenko, unlike other more "activist" foundations like Modatina, focuses on studying current regulations and developing legal arguments. Given the growing water demand in Chile, he told me about the current debate and situation of water regulation. He explained that The Water Code "*was conceived from another hydrological point of view, (...) of a very different reality from the one we have today*". He continues by explaining that the issue of scarcity was not present during this time. In this scenario, it was an "*instrument that worked quite well.*" But the problem is today,

"the water requirement in Chile has been increasing exponentially. (...) Therefore, already in the eighties, we needed 100, today we need 1000." This also means that "from the hydrological point of view, there is already a different reality" because the country is much bigger than it was before. "And water," he said, "is transversal to any process." Therefore, "economic growth means greater water consumption from any point of view. That is an important issue. And in the climate change scenario, we have scarcity and

drought in many regions, so the scenario is different. (...) Moreover, efforts have been made to change the code, update it, or give it a different framework. But those processes have not been in the times that the community expects. These are slow processes". (Lawyer, Newenko, Santiago de Chile 2019).

Naturally, the country's conditions are different after almost 30 years since the Water Code began functioning. Chile's population will increase to more than 19 million by 2021-2022 ([country meters Chile Accessed 16.05.22](#)). Most of the arguments point to the need to reform the code and "adjust" it to the current conditions given the country's transformation in industrialization and extractive industry and because of the population's demand for water resources. This debate has socio-environmental implications for water justice and the political consequences of maintaining a system that has deepened social inequalities meanwhile businessmen got rich in the "water business" (Ciper, 2020, 2014, 2013)

Our argument is based on the assumption that any form of management of the hydrological cycle is political and, therefore, open to change (Swyngedouw, 2009, p. 57). We cannot deny that are precisely political decisions that lead to these processes, even if they are then defended as technical solutions, to give them the appearance of objectivity and expertise that supposedly guide these decisions—recognizing this means going beyond the technocratic view that argues that politics must be held outside the realm of decisions, based only on technical arguments. Therefore, Water management is a socio-natural matter in which power relations, political agreements, legislation, and environmental regulations play a decisive role (Budds, 2013, 2004). In the following chapters, I will expose a local case of water conflict in the Tarapacá region and examine how this national regulation impacts regional water distribution and allocation.

4.1.3. Water conflicts: the case of the Pica Oasis⁸¹

The following conflict allows us to introduce the impacts of the national water management system on local territories and their inhabitants. This conflict involves the mining company Doña Santa Inés de Collahuasi and the rural community, mainly of "chacrerros" living in the Pica Oasis. Pica is an oasis about 100 km from the city of Iquique, where the main occupation

⁸¹ Much of the exposition of this water conflict has been previously published in an article together with Joerg Niewöhner under the name "How Central Water Management Impacts Local Livelihoods: An Ethnographic Case Study of Mining Water Extraction in Tarapacá, Chile." (Water, 2021) Some of the issues raised in that article have been integrated into this chapter and, in some cases, rewritten to maintain the narrative style of this monograph.

is agriculture and tourism. Farmers grow mainly citrus fruits such as mangoes, guayabas, tangelos, lemons, and oranges. The fragile situation of the oasis is increasingly affected by various natural disasters⁸². However, the current perception of the local population is related to the transformations of the environment and landscape. Their observations led them to criticize the constant water consumption of the nearby large mining companies, and they see it as a threat to the ecological balance of the oasis.

The conflict broke out when the mining company requested water rights for groundwater extraction in Huasco Salar in 1988. Approximately 900 L/s of water were granted to be extracted from the groundwater flow that feeds the Huasco Salar. The communities in Pica reacted quickly, trying to prevent the granting of the water rights, arguing that the extraction would lead to the drying up of the many areas of the salt flat connected to Huasco, including Pica and Mantilla. However, the hydrological models of the mining company represented the underwater river basin as two separate water basins. They argued that the water reserves



Fig. 14.

A matter of dispute: hydrological connection between Pica and Huasco.

Courtesy by Sebastian Toledo

⁸² Such as earthquakes damage not only the houses of people but also the farmers' water pipelines; also, the existence of the blue fly (mosca azul) that can transmit various diseases to humans is a matter of concern for an area that lives off fruit growing. Farmers have struggled with plagues like this (Pérez, 2006).

in Pica and Matilla would not be affected by the water extraction in the Huasco highland sector.

A spokeswoman of one of the largest farming communities in Pica described the local community's fight: During that process, the community had drafted several critical comments that challenged mining company Collahuasi's environmental impact assessment (EIA) on several points. The community argued that the company had made mistakes in its calculations and that the consequences of water extraction would allegedly not be felt until 2025. But as the agricultural leader Susana Guagama reports, the community felt the environmental effects much earlier. She argued that the hydrological models could not anticipate the future impacts of water extraction (Guagama, 2008, p. 389). She reported that this experience has shown that the process of how hydrological modeling occurred, including the lack of opportunity to question assumptions, has led to incorrect predictions about the extent and timing of environmental damage.

Collahuasi's water extraction is also blamed for the deterioration of two other salt flat areas nearby, Michincha and Coposa. In several Indigenous consultations, the veracity and scope of the impact studies presented by the mining companies have been questioned; this is also evidenced in the counter reports generated by the communities and their advisors, e.g., in the case of the Aymara community of Coposa about the Collahuasi mine expansion project.

In October 2005, local authorities visited the salt flats to assess the damage, and the mining companies were held responsible. As a result, mining water rights were restricted, and authorities demanded a mitigation plan.

The case shows how communities need to generate "data" as formally admissible evidence to back up and legitimate their expertise, which is grounded in their everyday life and experiences and is not recognized in the formal assessment process. In cases where ecological damage has already occurred, communities have a chance to demonstrate the causal link between extraction activities and damages and thus attribute responsibility. However, in cases where possible detrimental environmental changes are forecast for the future, causality is very hard to establish. A precautionary approach, such as advocated by Guagama, is not foreseen in Chilean impact assessment procedures. The Pica and Huasco communities successfully articulated their local experience of water-related environmental change against the technical expertise of hydrological modeling. Their opposition was successful because currently, no water is extracted

in Huasco, which is now protected by several international regulations as an important ecological niche⁸³.

Fig. 15. The View to Matilla coming from Pica. The vast landscape of the Pampa del Tamarugal. Photos by Sascha Cornejo



⁸³ Like the “Law of National Monuments,” Huasco has been declared a nature reserve. Any form of human influence that could harm this area is prohibited. Since 1996, the area has been protected by Chile’s international agreement through the RAMSAR Agreement of the Marshes. In 2002, the former environmental agency CONAMA declared Huasco as an area of “highest priority for the conservation of biodiversity at the regional level.” Changes have also been made at the legal level: In 1992, wetlands protection was incorporated through Articles 58 and 63. In this way, approximately 139 wetlands with a surface area of 335 km² were legally protected until 1996.

Fig. 16. The Huasco Lagoon (2019). Today is called "Huasco Salt Flat."



Fig. 17. Huasco has an altitude of 3.800 meters over Sea level.





Fig. 18. "The salt flats route"

This case can be considered a relatively successful story of local resistance to the ever-expanding mining industry and the ecological pressures it generates. Yet the case also allows for discussing the profound asymmetry in negotiating diverse meanings attached to water that relates directly to the procedural frame required by water access regulations. Firstly, current environmental impact assessments

occur based on clearly delimited territorial units that follow administrative logic without regard for social and ecological interdependencies between such territorial units (as discussed in chapter four). An asymmetry arises between territory as governed and territory as lived and experienced by local communities. Secondly, and related, whether a hydrological connection exists between subterranean aquifers that support two different administrative territories is initially unknown. For the mining company, the starting assumption was that aquifers in the two territories were not connected, something confirmed by the hydrological modeling conducted as part of the EIA. The second asymmetry arose as local communities had to prove that a connection between aquifers existed. This "proof" was not accepted on community terms but had to be brought forth in the form of supposedly neutral science.

The analysis of empirical material will show in more detail how exactly local communities struggle against these asymmetries in attempts to rearticulate their matters of concern as matters of fact (Latour, 2005), emphasizing the role of uncertainty in this process and how it enabled a plurality of views to emerge on drivers of water stress in the region. The case was relatively successful because it was possible to show that there was an impact on the water table. However, local communities also point to a more complex ecological relationship than the one implied in water management.

4.1.4. Assessing impacts and responsibility

Mining companies are becoming sensitive to impacts on groundwater levels and are pushing desalination as a technical solution to water stress. It is the case for the three big mining companies in the sector that are implementing these technological developments. The tenants and the indigenous communities very well know this. However, people still blame mining for the regional water stress that they are experiencing. The numbers cited by company management indicate other possible explanations for the situation. As is often the case in environmental conflicts, companies are fostering a discourse that frames accusations of mining-related water stress as unreasonable fears of “unskilled” people who do not trust hydrological modeling (Li, 2015; Kirsch, 2017). As the allocation of water rights is made based on predictions from hydrological models alone, this intermingles with the perception that the state is on the side of companies. Models represent the characteristics of the aquifers and thus form the basis for decision-making. Neither the state nor the companies see a need nor have incentives for making the (underground) territory legible in any other way but through model predictions.

Although the water extraction occurs mainly in the highlands, the inhabitants of the low mountain areas seem to feel an increasing uneasiness that, sooner or later, they will run out of water. Previous experiences of this kind reappear in the testimonies of the people regarding the desiccation of the Quisma Valley. Their principal aquifers were expropriated in the first decades of the XX century (Castro, 2010). When this water source dried up, people had to leave the valley. Some families living in Pica came from the Quisma Valley and now hope this story will not repeat. These issues have been mentioned by people living in the oasis, and many insist on the aquifer connection. As one Indigenous leader in Pica explained, “*we are not experts, but we do understand that this overexploitation sooner rather than later will affect us (...) there are sectors in Pica that have already been seen to be dry.*” Another Indigenous woman spoke about their judgment of the impacts of water extraction: “*They (Collahuasi) said they were extracting a minimum number (liters) per second. So, we said how is it possible that what you take out (the aquifer) is already drying up? It is absurd. Everybody knows they take out a tremendous amount (of water) per second.*” In several conversations, people expressed their mistrust towards the mining companies’ communication concerning the amount and the location of extraction. What the State requires from the companies through its policies local communities do not think is enough to protect the area's ecology. Local farmers explain how they worry that impacts will not be felt today but that they are sure to appear in the next thirty to fifty years. To

them, it only seems a question of time as they already experience changes in the landscapes around them. Take the case of a mine worker who has lived in the Pica sector, talking here about his perception of environmental change in the Huasco Lagoon:

“When I was a boy, I used to go there, and I was about ten years old, (...) it was a lagoon (...), And now you see, it’s a salt flat. (...) And in some places, you see some pools of water. So, of course, they can tell me a lot of things, but among all those things, they can tell me, you know what, the mining companies may be taking water from higher up, and it affected here.” (Miner, Collahuasi. Pica. 2021)

Although generally, people blame the company, other factors are not the company's responsibility which must also be taken into account. For years, the mining companies have been investing in projects for the people in Pica. In this way, their material dependence generates a situation that is expressed in their ambivalence when it comes to looking for culprits for that situation.

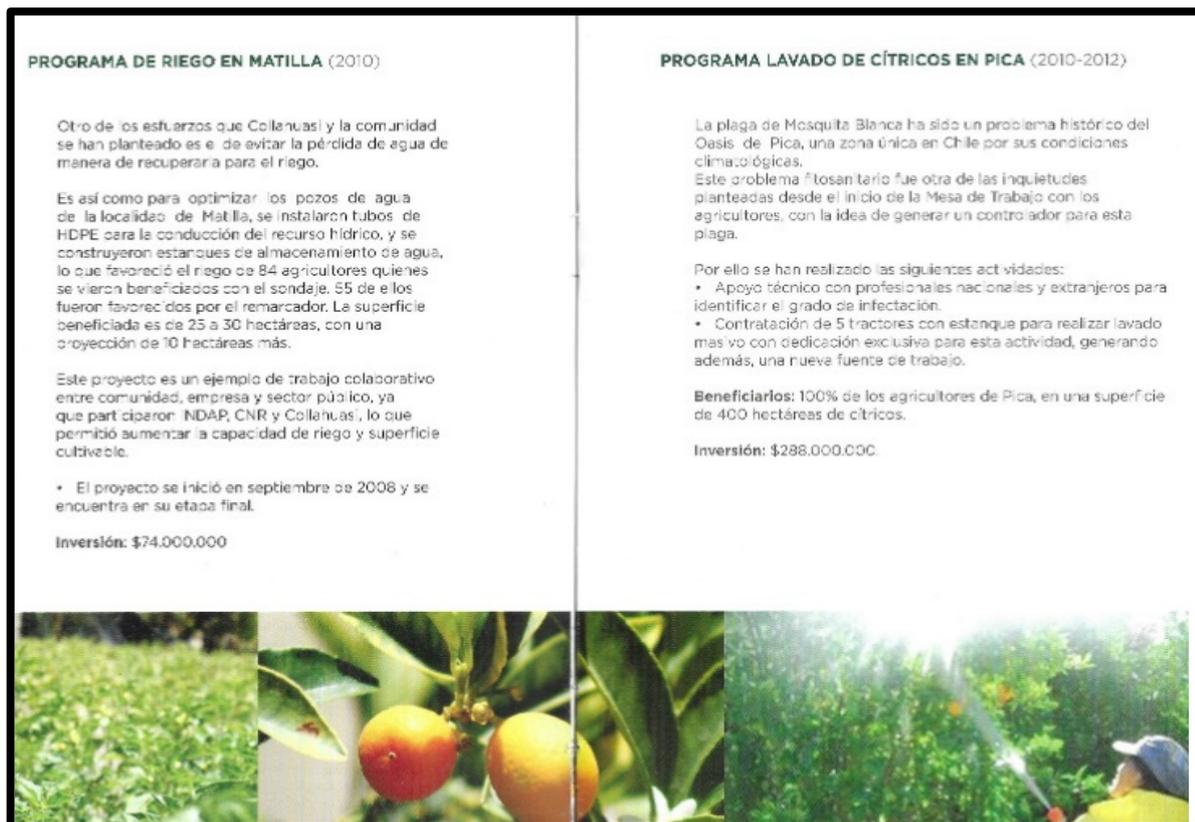
4.1.5. The renewal of the irrigation systems by Collahuasi



Fig. 19. „A History of collaborative work“ A Collahuasi brochure briefly outlines the various projects with farmers in the area.

Local water management and practices are more efficient in arid weather conditions, showing the entanglements of mining, water management, and landscaping. Traditional methods provide water supply in Pica for the cultivated land, and Agriculture mainly uses an irrigation technique called flooding (riego por inundación). The water is collected for weeks in a pool (also called "cocha") and later drained to irrigate the various lands. Water is stored for weeks in water pools called "cochas" (four of them are Resbaladeros, Concova, Miraflores, and Animas). After the pools are filled with groundwater by extraction (thermal water, as in the case of the largest cocha Resbaladero, used as a touristic attractor as a thermal bath), the cultivated land is irrigated after a few days.

As the irrigation channels were heavily damaged by the various earthquakes, in a joint project in 2012, the Collahuasi mining company and the state authority CNR (National Irrigation Commission) renewed important parts of the irrigation systems. This basic irrigation infrastructure is used mainly in the historical center of the locality. With around 600 million CLP (about one million dollars), this project rebuilds about 15 kilometers of pipelines,



improving water consumption efficiency and sustainability. The irrigation systems are old customs organized through water communities.

A farmer in Pica explains how they handle this precious resource.

"Of course, in the "cocha," we accumulate for 48 hours, more or less, 72, 48 hours accumulate hundred cubic meters of the natural slopes that flow from there. That allows us to later be with those accumulator ponds as they recharge. We open the tap, and water flows through those channels at approximately 150 liters per second. Moreover, that is what makes the threshing floors tick. Watering farm by farm. (...) that was a great advance" (Farmer, Pica, 2019)

As some of the interviewed farmers sustained, the newly built canals and irrigation systems have not only optimized water consumption. Still, they have also made it possible to expand the cultivated land in Pica. However, there are also some critical perspectives regarding the "flooding" process, like an employee of the Pica municipality concerned about water loss using these irrigation techniques. His critique pointed to the inefficiency of the whole irrigation technology because it is costly and leads to water loss. The irrigation in Pica was optimized and improved precisely based on this project.

In a completely different tone, a Collahuasi employee commented to me on the success of this project *Before, hundreds of liters per second were released through the valves, no channel could*

hold that amount, and the water did not reach the last farmer (sic). Now that is how this was regulated: From 300, it went down to 150 liters per second. One hundred fifty liters per second come out, and those 150 liters reach the last person to do his irrigation. That is the idea. To think that what we want to develop with each of these indigenous and rural communities is to think that they are sustainable projects. Because afterward, we will no longer be there, the idea is that they are self-sufficient and can maintain this. The saying goes: "Bread for today, hunger for tomorrow." That is the theme we always look for: at some point, this industry is not going to be there, and that these projects can have them, be self-sufficient, and that allows them to keep going" (Manager community relation dep. Collahuasi, Pica, 2019) People tend to put their present needs in the foreground without "thinking about the future." The saying "bread for today, hunger for tomorrow"⁸⁴ is very common in the region. It is a critical description of a form of future orientation of people who can supposedly not satisfy their future needs. Putting attention to "who" actually is saying this can be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, the company helps people to shape their future, which is seen as part of the company's responsibility.

But the other message is also that in the somewhat paternalistic relationship between the company and the local population, the latter always seems to focus only on the immediacy of the current situation. (As an indigenous spokesman once told me: *"If you need money, where do you look? To the mining companies, of course"*.) In this light, the employee tells me that people should learn to be more responsible regarding the future through this kind of project and be "more independent" from the mining companies because "later" they will no longer be there. It contradicts the estimation I have been presenting and analyzing during this work because it is precisely mining that leads to this immediate and short-term future vision. The previous chapters have already problematized the effects of obtaining financial resources for indigenous communities. However, this gets another meaning in the case of water, showing ambivalent features, because it allows them to generate other perspectives for the future of the communities while affecting their territorial environmental sustainability, something they expect to care for. This causes a complex situation that we have tried to describe in its contradictions and ambivalences. Therefore, it is also contradictory that the employee suggests that they should teach people to be more "long-sighted" regarding their future projections when it is precisely the mining intervention that leads to these "short-sighted" visions of the future of the localities.

⁸⁴ In spanish: "Pan para hoy, hambre para mañana"

Perhaps one of the biggest problems is the tension between projected impacts and the translation into a "monetary" figure. The possibilities for the mining company to "translate" its concerns - real or not - into social and financial interventions in the communities are determined precisely by its capacity to pay for an "ecosystem service" and the "right" to usufruct a territorial space and water, knowing and therefore projecting possible ecosystem damage. In her study on mining in Peru, Fabiana Li speaks of *equivalences* to describe these modes of translation between damages and compensation (Li, 2015)⁸⁵.

Finally, the assessment of the described experience of cooperation in Pica between companies and the communities is consistently positive. Some people are critical of the interdependence of mining companies with their community affairs. In the case of this joint project, some people think that the mining company will control and measure the oasis's water resources. Also, the company's close relationship with the Pica community is often critically referred to because, in the end, it makes the population vote positively for mining. These are some corporate strategies to get the social license to operate, enhancing good neighbor relationships. Some indigenous spokespersons explain the "passive attitude" of the local population towards the mining companies in this way. It is something that is accepted. However, they manifest the tensions between Pica's tenants and their appreciation of the intrusion of mining companies on people's needs, and it shows the partial connections in which water, mining, resistance, and negotiation practices are bounded together. These connections between interests, development projects, and interference in community affairs shed light on the relationship between the material interdependence of the local population and mining processes.

4.1.6. The concerns about communicating vessels

In the above-outlined conflict around the meaning of underground water bodies, the considerations vary among the different actors, depending on their knowledge, livelihood, and appreciation of the transformation of the local ecology. These contribute to their critical valuations regarding the impacts of mining considering the effects of Climate Change in these regions. It seems that explanations always tend to go to one pole or the other, that of the responsibility of unjust administration and distribution of water rights, and those that blame Climate Change but attribute more to "natural" than "social" causes. I have tried to describe

⁸⁵ In our case, we will not go into detail here on using this kind of Western terminology as *ecosystem services*, as tenants do not use it to express their environmental awareness.

people's awareness of the multiple factors contributing to the problem. Yet whether the aquifers are communicating vessels or separate water bodies remains highly uncertain and contested. The state Authority responsible for water management (DGA) is aware of the situation. As their director explained in an interview:

“You have to separate the concepts a little. To demonstrate if there is a connection between the aquifers. (...) It is super complex because there may be a connection, but technically you can't prove it. Because this connection is underground, it may have very slow input rates. And you have to think that the hydrogeology of an aquifer is (...) empirical too. It's like the “hydro fantasy” that hydrogeologists call it. And it has a model that explains a certain reality, but as we know, the models are very simple explanations of reality”. (Official, DGA. Iquique. 2019)

Even the DGA cannot prove the aquifer interconnections because of its lack of hydrological expertise and financial resources, compounded by the lack of staff and specialists in hydrogeological issues. Finally, those who have the resources to generate costly hydrogeological studies are the mining companies. Nonetheless, this not only accounts for the asymmetry between the knowledge in dispute but also for the tension that fuses expert knowledge, socio-territorial configurations, legibility of resources, administration, management, and distribution through water rights and commodification (Babidge & Bolados, 2018; Acosta, 2018; Bauer, 2002). Given prevailing uncertainty, the conflict cannot be resolved only at a technical level. Hence other factors start to come in. But these factors are not recognized as decisive in making the territory and its water resources legible. These could be integrated into a larger forum that seeks to resolve the dispute over water (Torso et al., 2020). Many examples in the literature and research already integrate these other perspectives from experience and observation (Sanchez-Plaza et al., 2021; Rangecroft et al., 2018).

It is clear, in this sense, that in addition to climatological factors, administrative and institutional factors are important components of distributive justice for this vital resource (Bolados et al., 2018).

Ultimately, decisions are made based on available information and despite uncertainties. The lack of public resources for further assessments and broader evidence reflects central government priorities. Private companies estimate and characterize the ecological relations that their extractive practices transform and their uncertainties. As many researchers have already pointed out, in a neoliberal economy based on the extraction of “strategic” natural resources, responsibility is transferred to the private sector (Barros, 2008a; Bauer, 2002), which, through

its social responsibility devices, seeks to establish links and acceptance among the people. As we have seen, environmental regulation in Chile also tends to generate these approaches and the search for consensus (discussed in chapter five). The role of the state is reduced to that of a guarantor of compliance with existing regulations, something that is known as “legal certainty.” However, from people's responses, this is repeatedly evaluated as the total absence of the State (see Li, 2015 for the case of Peru). I think, however, that it constituted a “relative absence” since its different levels of institutionalized and previously regulated “presence” cannot be overlooked. Something that the state is doing through its multiple regulations. As a Chilean expert on water management comments, “(w)hat the state cannot fail to do is to ensure equity of access, to control use, to keep balances, to know who uses water, etc.” (Dourojeanni, 2015, p. 7)

4.1.7. Impacts of central Water management

Another vital issue regarding water conflicts and their institutional connections is water's “material” availability in a shifting environment impacted by climate change (MOP-DGA 2016; 2013). In Chile, these concerns are expressed in the discussion of whether each river basin should be managed in its specific way, respecting its local ecological conditions⁸⁶ (Tapia, 2018). Such a shift would lead to significant legal consequences affecting the central water administration based on the Water Code of 1981. Disputes around water access and allocation are not only happening at multiple levels showing the discrepancies between administrative treatment and the people's understanding of a single and whole “ecological reality”. Undoubtedly, stark differences exist in the opinions and assessments of local communities, authorities, and mining companies. Some of these differences seem incommensurable regarding practices translated into technical knowledge (Jasanoff, 2021; Viveriro de Castro, 2004b). However, as decisions have to be legitimized on techno-scientific grounds, decisions are made based on available data and hydrological models. This is also in line with the administrative division of different water flow basins, as a state official explains:

“Then there may indeed be aquifers that have unknown connections today, and it may be. But there is another issue that has to do with the fact that the DGA recognizes these aquifers as hydrogeological sectors of common use. These are sectors that interact with

⁸⁶ This is known in the literature as “integrated water resource management” However, as Dourojeanni (2015) explains in a paper about the conceptual meaning of water management and the diverse meaning and synonyms attached to it, the idea of “integrated” is related to a holistic perspective not clear for everyone.

each other. For example, the Pica aquifer and the Pampa del Tamarugal aquifers are hydro geologically connected but function as totally different units, so the DGA administratively separates them. You have the Pampa aquifer and the Pica aquifer. There is a hydrogeological connection. This is true indeed. But they function as different hydrogeological sectors of common use. If I pump—being very exaggerated— one thousand (liters) out of the Pampa del Tamarugal (aquifer), I probably won't have a direct effect on Pica.” (Official, DGA. Iquique. 2019)

Chilean water management provides the technical provisions and criteria through which water storage is made visible, quantified, managed, and distributed⁸⁷. It has to be highlighted that the decision to grant water rights is based on an assessment of the “foreseeable conditions.” These, however, come with significant uncertainties. It is the administrative decision whether to consider aquifers and river basins in the region as “separate units,” which lowers the range of uncertainty, making the impacts seemingly easier to predict and monitor. The administrative decision turns a highly dynamic, fluid, and indeterminate system into a relatively static and manageable resource. Water becomes “manageable” because a dynamic system becomes legible to the state as a network with fixed units. While this looks like a decision based on hydrogeological evidence, what is to be considered “evidence” and scientific “facts” is preconfigured by political and legal decisions in the first place (Prieto & Bauer, 2012; Barandiaran, 2015). Scientific representation in the form of models seems to play on neutral ground as if it is protected from the “realm of politics” (Latour, 2005), yet modeling here does not function as a heuristic tool. Instead, modeling is preconfigured in an administrative frame and thus assists in producing evidence that ultimately leads to and legitimizes decisions regarding the specific form of water management. In this way, modeling reduces troubling uncertainties to make water resources intelligible without ambiguities. In this way, it shapes powerful images of reality and has “*particular socio-economic effects because particular choices, knowledge, preferences, and ‘naturalized discourses’ have ‘materialized’ in the model*” (Melsen et al., 2018, p. 1436).

However, as already mentioned, there could be another way of broadening the evidence base and appreciating uncertainties allowing non-technical knowledge to be included. It is because “*the socio-hydrological model itself becomes a political ‘actor’ that is socially constructed and therefore not neutral in its effect on the socio-hydrological reality*” (Melsen et al., 2018, p.

⁸⁷ The *Groundwater regulation* of 2004 gives clear indications about the conditions for applying for groundwater extraction, E.g., art. 20: if (c) there is the availability of groundwater in the hydrogeological sector of common use; (d) that the exploitation is adequate for its conservation and long-term protection, considering the technical background of irrigation and discharge, as well as existing and foreseeable conditions.

1435) that modeling ought to attempt to integrate local stakeholders' perspectives (Torso et al., 2020). Local people try to articulate their concerns vis-à-vis the regulatory constellation—or be it in a rather uncoordinated process. Importantly, however, this articulation does not impress the local official: Even if the supposed connections between aquifers did “indeed exist,” this would not matter to the hydrological management process. Reports of the possibility of aquifers being connected fail to be considered evidence. This can happen because objectified knowledge framed in law can never be “applied” to real-world situations without people exercising certain discretion. As Mariana Valverde commented: “*What people do when invoking the law or facing legal difficulties is never law as such. People interact with and help to maintain or transform various legal complexes—ill-defined, uncoordinated, often decentralized sets of networks, institutions, rituals, texts, and relations of power and of knowledge that develop in those societies in which it has become important for people and institutions to take a position vis-à-vis law*” (Valverde, 2003, p. 10). In the same way that models do not simply represent reality and law is not merely applied to reality. Instead, it is through discretion that a legal complex manifests itself. The legal complex in our case study—shaped by an extractivist history, neoliberal politics, hydrogeological models, local officials, and concerned communities articulating their concerns—produces water in the region as a resource by systematically not recognizing alternative meanings of what in the body of literature has been described as hydro-social territories (Boelens et al., 2016). People know that expert knowledge and scientific models describe impacts, make predictions, and project them into a possible future. However, as the above story points out, people have lived in the region for a long time, attentive to water to sustain life. People observe, experience, perceive and assess the changes that have taken and are taking place in this highly fragile landscape.

In this context, one of the local communities in Pica presented various data, evidence, and documents to the authorities to support their view. A spokesperson asked: “*What other evidence do they want?*” (Guagama, 2008, p. 390). In other words, what kind of knowledge must be considered seriously for the environmental assessment system? In other words: If the legal framework and regulatory process seem to play in favor of the companies, how can local people present their concerns about extractive policies and practices in legitimate ways? As Jessica Budds note regarding environmental knowledge in Chile, “*earth and environmental sciences play an important role in producing environmental knowledge that is generally perceived to be technical, accurate and unbiased, and therefore reliable. Such knowledge is often deemed crucial for informing environmental assessments and policy-making*” (Budds, 2009, p. 418). In this gap, other ancestral water practices are systematically undermined by seemingly objective

evidence (Babidge & Bolados, 2017; Prieto, 2015; Yañez & Molina, 2014a; Boelens, 2014). However, the regulatory perspective on what makes expert knowledge technically sufficient and thus legitimate in an administrative process is not shared by the local communities. Hydrological models fail to lead to a sense of shared ownership concerning the long-term environmental impacts of water extraction. Instead, feelings of uncertainty prevail, deeply rooted in local experiences and failed projections of environmental impacts (Jasanoff, 2021; Whittington, 2018). However, as already noted, the problem has more to do with applying specific models and using modeling outcomes than the models themselves in a generic sense. There have already been several experiences that demonstrate that different knowledge can enter a fruitful dialogue through participatory modeling that provides greater stability, legitimation, and robustness to applied knowledge (Torso et al., 2020; Melsen et al., 2018; Rangelcroft et al., 2018). But this requires a broader view of human knowledge, not only focused on a narrow perspective of the “expert,” the “scientific,” and the “technical” in complete resonance with a particular western “ideology” that fundamentally puts scientific inquiry on the top of human knowledge.

Summarizing the argument: the described conflict is based on a general disagreement in which expert knowledge is confronted with the understanding of the people who see and observe the gradual affectation of their environment. People and community discourse represent the aquifers as “communicating vessels,” which shapes distrust towards the company’s attempt to separate into two what they consider a single territory—this distrust fuels growing uncertainty concerning a sustainable future for local livelihoods. Local communities’ responses to the mining expansion are based on direct experiences of the local environment and empirical observations, bringing out substantial fears related to the sustainability of water supplies. Within official assessments and mining company discourse, these experiences are framed as emotional responses vis-à-vis the scientific facts that hydrological modeling provides. So far, I have referred to the relationship of the state, policies, and regulations to the people who lives or suffers their consequences in the form of hydrological injustice (Boelens et al., 2012, 2011). Now, our attention will shift to the corporate responses to the regional water stress situation.

4.1.8. Building trust, building infrastructures

As discussed, important decisions that may affect the environment are based on technical-scientific knowledge that gives a particular characterization of how it might be affected. Unease and mistrust of the local population against "scientific criteria" become highly visible regarding water issues. Uncertainties can arise from incorrect forecasts, but these are also an intrinsic part of the efforts to build the "sustainability" of extractive projects. The practical application of scientific knowledge makes it possible to predict how the environment will "behave" under certain ecological conditions. However, positivistic models have proved inadequate in several cases (Forsyth, 2011). When talking about impacts, people refer to the effects on the water as already happening in particular sites, such as Lagunillas, Michincha, and Coposa lagoons. From this point of view and considering these precedents, Huasco could soon be added to the list of damaged ecological niches if mining is allowed to extract water on the site. Due to the failure of the prediction made by hydrological models, mistrust of these models has increased, particularly about who presents them and what effects they are supposed to have, and what kind of technical expertise lies in the definition of risk management and prevention.

How is trust built and conflicts alleviated? We can read the already outlined efforts to generate permanent and solid links between potentially affected communities and mining companies as a clear expression of this "trust-building" process. I have already drawn attention to the connection between transforming corporate culture into discourses such as CSR in line with the UN sustainability goals. These devices, which are closer to technical and strategic management, promote the generation of trust.

However, the mining corporations have developed their responses to regional/national water stress regarding the infrastructure of saltwater treatment plants. What kind of evaluations are taking place in the corporate spheres, and what new technological imperatives are they facing? In this small chapter, we will argue for a "corporate commitment" to evaluate a projected future water use through implementing new infrastructure associated with new costs, unforeseen impacts, and improvements. Projections indicate that mining future water demand will increasingly be satisfied by seawater. According to COCHILCO (Chilean Copper Commission), the use of seawater is expected to increase to 46% of total water consumption from 2016 to 2027.

In contrast, the demand for continental water resources is expected to decrease by 17% during this period (COCHILCO, 2016a). Interestingly, two years later, the same mining conglomerate

published a study with significantly different projections: Mining is linked to sustainable development goals in this study. Based on the planned construction of water desalination plants to meet the needs of various mining projects, this study projects an upturn of about 230% of seawater used for copper mining alone by 2029 (COCHILCO, 2018). Nevertheless, the success of these socio-technical amalgams is also dependent on other factors. *"Success also requires the development of a substantial and sustainable partnership between governments, the private sector, communities, and civil society to harness the transformative power of cooperation and partnership between the mining sector and other stakeholders"* (COCHILCO, 2018, 1).

How to understand these infrastructural changes related to managing complex environmental systems and their possible impacts? Infrastructure is not a thing in itself but much more a relational category. The right question is not "What is it?" but "When is it?" In other words, when it becomes a structural necessity embedded in different social arrangements and technologies (Star & Ruhleder, 1996, p. 113), this materiality is projected into the future to solve current problems. Larkin points out the relational character of infrastructure and its technological implications. *"What distinguishes infrastructures from technologies is that they are objects that create the grounds on which other objects operate, and when they do so, they operate as systems"* (Larkin, 2013, p. 329). According to Larkin, this "system thinking" effort is one of the critical features of *infrastructure theory*. The difficulty is that infrastructure is not only "there" as a material inscription of human technical and engineering efforts; it also implies a *categorizing moment* that compromises cultural, political, and epistemological commitments (2013, 330). Therefore infrastructure not only brings people, knowledge, materiality, and space in interaction, it implies human projects of living, as Jerome Whittington comments in his study of Laos hydropower: *"...infrastructure defines the limits and capacities of being human in fundamentally uncertain ways"* (Whittington, 2018, p. 18).

Following his arguments, it implies a domain of flexible experimentation of life projects. Sustainability is an integral part of integrating knowledge and uncertainty in the general transformation of post-natural landscapes. The result, he argues, is novel ecosystems. *"The active production of ecological uncertainty, or what we can call the post-natural ecologies of late industrialism (...) represent not simply a degraded environment, but more aptly a situation of novel ecologies."* (Whittington, 2018, 20). This reference to a temporality in which past tenses and future transformations are intertwined in imagined material (possible) formations, which in this case, tends to alleviate ecological impacts already rooted in their inscription. One of the

features of these infrastructural inscriptions is their transparency (Star & Ruhler, 1996), projecting a possible future, a temporally relieved situation.

Infrastructural projects, as indicated, alleviate a human impact resulting in ecological stress but eventually, reproduce the same problems on other scales. They make possible other infrastructural developments and ecological interactions of a still highly intervened socio-nature. There is no change beyond other infrastructural inscriptions moving into other spheres of natural resource extraction. The material conditions for replacing one (freshwater) resource with another (seawater) are conceived by its more urgent ecological costs to solve. It is not the extractive procedure as a whole that is at stake but the question of its material and ecological consequences. It indicates the high expectation of socio-technical imaginaries with the *will to improve* already transformed ecological conditions (Li, 2009).

Is it possible to dissolve the tension between economic potential and environmental care? This old problem anchored in every procedure that declares itself as "sustainable" finally reveals that the value of economic potential can be an important reason for agreeing to care for the environment (Sachs, 2015). Technical solutions have been increasingly attractive for resolving disputes of this kind because they demonstrate a particular faith that expert solutions will finally be able to address the tremendous cost of extractivism for these places and the people who experience the changes in landscape and water tables. This is something to which political ecology already drew attention years ago and which is well characterized in the work of Martinez-Alier and Guha on *Types of environmentalism* (2000). In the very history of research, political ecology has focused its critical eye precisely on technical solutions as a "disguised ideology" de-politicized tendencies that do not touch the heart of the problem, which is the capitalist process of commodification of nature (Robbins, 2012; Leff, 2004; Forsinth, 2003; Bryant & Bailey, 1997). In this same field, we can situate the series of criticisms formulated regarding the concept of sustainability born within the high spheres of the environmental management technique (See Bermejo, 2014; Sachs, 2015; Swyngedouw, 2009, 1999). In the last chapter of this research, we will go into more detail on these issues when I analyze other civilizational alternatives that seek a way out of the current extractivism in Latin America. Now, in the previous sub-chapter, we delve into how the use of salt water has, in turn, generated other responses from mining companies.

4.1.9. Giving back water rights

The above-cited COCHILCO's projection includes a wide variety of mining companies currently building seawater desalination plants or is in the planning phase of review. This points to a general reorientation of the water consumption of the mining companies. Now, two of the major mining projects in Tarapacá, the second Phase of Quebrada Blanca (QB2) and the expansion of Collahuasi, have planned seawater desalination plants to reduce the extraction and use of continental water. As the director of DGA explained: "*(The DGA) understands that the recovery processes of the basins are taking much longer than they should and welcomes these substitutions. What has not been achieved yet, is that all mining processes derive from seawater and decrease its use of continental water*" (Official DGA, Iquique, 2019). Therefore, the future orientation of the mining industry seems to be a reaction to the environmental consequences already caused. In a conversation with consultants, it is mentioned how the local population perceives these infrastructural transformations. "*Because of the social responsibility, they will do their process well. For example, for the process, it used to spend ten liters of water; now, with the desalination plant working at 100%, they will use eight of ten, so they will only take two out there. So that still looks good, socially speaking*" (Assessors, Iquique, 2019)

The growing use of seawater is generally positively evaluated. During my fieldwork, I could follow the perceptions of the local population regarding these themes that seem to be highly optimistic, especially those related to the consequences of the already-caused environmental costs of water extraction. Even authorities' officials ultimately hope that the entire mining industry will re-orient their water use to the use of seawater for their processes. Quoting the official of DGA again:

"But we have the first step (...) that the projects were already incorporating seawater extraction, but the conversation with the authorities is needed regarding the second step, which is the return of water rights. What happens is that today, the complexity of (...) giving back the water rights to the state, after a while, the state can make them available again. For those who will request those water rights." (...) "We have also managed in these same evaluations of mining processes to get them to give up water rights and limit that water extraction as much as possible. We have had successful cases from Cerro Colorado and from Teck in which almost 500 liters per second of groundwater are being returned" (Official DGA, Iquique, 2019)

The official mentioned the case of QB2, a company that declared to return their water rights to the state as the water required for the mining processes would be extracted from the sea and treated in a desalination plant. Even if this decision is made voluntarily, it is essential for the company's public image. Nevertheless, it also opens the question of what will happen with these

rights "gated back." *"It is a donation to the state in the fund to prevent it from being returned to future owners, and the idea is that the water will not be used again until at least there is a recovery"* (CO, DGA, Iquique, 2019)

This decision was seen as positive by all the different actors concerned. However, there persists uncertainty expressed by the people regarding what will happen with these "free" water rights. Despite the assumption that these will be returned to the state, it is still being determined to the people how the DGA will deal with these newly acquired water rights. The above quote nevertheless gives a clear indication of how the director of the DGA thinks about it today: The idea is that the water will not be reused to ensure the sustainability of the underwater basins. This is also in line with the general estimation of over-granting water rights, which endangers the sustainability of the whole ecological system. These decisions can positively affect the sustainability of future water resources in the region.

The decisions from corporations, such as the cited one, are voluntary. As the right to water constitutes an individual property right, it is protected at the constitutional level. This means the state has no mandate to pressure the mining industry to give back their water rights if they do not use it⁸⁸. Therefore, it is only up to the mining companies' attitude or "goodwill" to make a "gesture" towards the environment. As already exposed, the DGA authority is limited in its powers to exert more significant pressure on the mining companies. As one official told me, one can only "hope" for more such decisions: *"From a legal point of view, we have no power to force a mining company to decide from which source they should take out their water"* (DGA official, Iquique, 2019).

However, the state agency SEA also pays attention to the water problem as the examining authority of the more recent extractive or energy projects. *"Each of us, within the scope of our powers, has asked the owner to make a gesture and to give up his (water) rights. But it is only the will of the company, as the owner of the water rights."* (SEA official, Iquique, 2019).

Despite the generally positive assessments of these transformation processes in the mining industry, some people still seem skeptical for several reasons: First, when seawater extraction and use will begin. E.g., in the case of Collahuasi's new construction, the new construction

⁸⁸ The code was reformed to avoid the accumulation of water rights without using the resource. This meant the payment of a patent for non-use. However, the effect was not as expected; with it, the value of the water rights shot up. The water entrepreneurs preferred to pay for the patent rather than hand over the rights already acquired.

phase established the development of a two-phase project that would start in 2024 with the desalination of 525 liters of water per second. That phase would be completed in 2028 with another 525 liters. These would complement the total 1050 liters of desalinated water the company requires for its operations by 2028. Secondly, various uncertainties are emerging among indigenous people and consultants regarding the issues and questions concerning desalination, what will happen to the extracted salt, where it will be stored, and whether it will be returned to the sea or deposited in the desert. All this makes it difficult to foresee the ecological consequences of these new and unpredictable developments. Thirdly, pipelines across the Atacama Desert can substantially change the landscape, impacting fragile ecosystems. These new infrastructure projects show that life in the desert may still change, and it is also open to how the people will be affected. Finally, the extensive use of desalination plants in the mining industry raises new concerns, uncertainties, and potential environmental costs that are difficult to foresee.

I have considered several institutional, economic, political, and ecological elements concerning water management, distribution, and allocation which are all complex issues defined and articulated by these various provisions. Regulations and law play an important role in all this configuration. Despite the urgency of the water stress situation, the state can only intervene in extreme cases declaring localities affected by water scarcity by limiting water overuse. Other more "extreme" decisions, such as expropriating water rights, could be taken in the future and have significant political consequences. This has been a widely discussed issue in the constituent assembly, and the debate has focused on universal access to water from a human rights perspective. The constituent assembly had the difficult task of harmonizing a vision of Chilean development that was less anthropocentric and more aligned with the need to recover an already damaged nature because of so many years of irresponsible exploitation.

In September 2022, in the referendum people rejected such ecologist efforts by rejecting the constitutional draft. One of the many reasons this happens is that these ecological considerations clash with the interests of the Chilean business sector and other conservative sectors of Chilean society that seek to secure Chile's predominant place in the exploitation of natural resources (mining, forestry, fisheries, etc.). One of the most promoted arguments was that the constitution would hinder Chilean development, putting too much emphasis on environmental protection.

Before the referendum, it was time for all social and political actors in the country to recognize that selfishness and profit are not positive forces if we all want to survive. However, I was wrong in believing more people would think similarly.

4.2. Conflicts and Negotiations

*"if the company is developing, the Community
must also develop itself."*

Indigenous leader. Quechua community. 2019.

*"I think that partnering with large resource extraction industries
for the destruction of our homelands does not bring about
the kinds of changes and solutions our people are looking for,
and putting people in the position of having to choose between
feeding their kids and destroying their land is simply wrong."*

Simpson & Klein, 2013

The articulations of resistance and negotiations during the consultation process are related to the politics of recognizing indigenous demands and their cultural specificity. The future orientations of alternative developmental projects are closely related to negotiation processes. I have already described some ecological, economic, institutional, and political arrangements that entail the relationship between corporations and indigenous communities. Mining companies' financial scope and power create a dynamic within actors with divergent interests. Negotiations are always future-oriented, but paradoxically, they also threaten that future. The rising awareness during these processes shapes the diverse indigenous communities' meanings, orientations, and specific life projects despite and because of mining.

Mining has become a great attractor, a possibility, and a significant threat. This situation creates important ambivalences and uncertainties among indigenous. Thus, despite the ambivalence that mining generates in the communities, it is a considerable force that leads them to define their future as communities and as indigenous people. However, this ambivalence causes a disparity in moral concerns, which vary significantly from Community to Community. Thus, this terrain of dispute, conflicts, and negotiation critically involves meanings and assumptions about territory, culture, and identity. These affect diverse values, moral concerns, and the dynamics of self-awareness and consciousness. Negotiations hold all these elements together.

In the existing literature, *community development agreements* (CDA) are mainly studied in the Australian and Canadian contexts (Sawyer & Terrence, 2012; Harvey & Nish, 2005; Young, 1995). A document of the World Bank establishes two main goals of CDA: They try to improve relationships between companies, communities, governments, civil society, and other stakeholders, and they promote sustainable and mutually rewarding benefits from mining projects, including pro-poor initiatives and different strategies which may be beyond the immediate scope of impacts for a project. (WB, 2012: p. 5). Another critical factor is the capacity of national and local governments to effectively manage and distribute mineral revenues at the local level (WB, 2012). In Chile, the discussion involves the taxation regime and the degree of decentralization needed to ensure that resource extraction also leaves more financial resources in the regions where it happens.

Conflicts and negotiations involve conjunctures. Situations of relative stability based on deals between communities and companies can rapidly change, for example, when companies implement new mining projects or try to extend the life of existing projects. Despite their highly different structures, contexts, and outcomes, corporations try to minimize the impacts in a determinate local site. In this regard, it shows that the different positioning of indigenous communities can influence their outcome and bargaining (O'Faircheallaigh, 2013; O'Faircheallaigh & Corbett, 2005). However, negotiations are not unproblematic features of the SLO strategy implemented by mining corporations seeking the collaboration of indigenous communities. In Tarapacá, Negotiations are well-known as current forms of relations with the corporations and, as such, highly criticized by those who try to defend themselves from any mining intervention in the territories. Negotiations not only exacerbate different perspectives regarding job opportunities, financial benefits, environmental loss, and impacts but, generally, the views and life expectations of different indigenous groups. These are due to varying ties to the ancestral territory stressed by an ongoing process of westernization of indigenous culture in direct connection to their migration process. In this context of cultural loss and cultural transformation, this chapter will describe three different negotiation processes that provide some elements regarding the question of impacts, ecological destruction, and compensations, as well as the reconstruction of the ancestral meaning of heritage and territorial care.

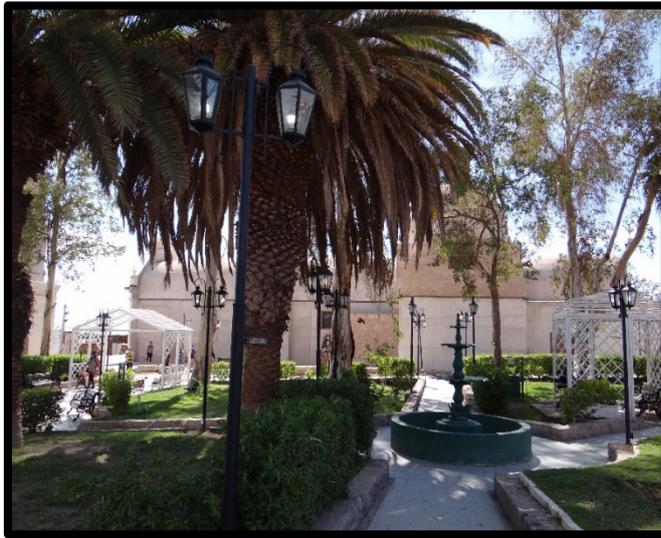
4.2.1. Negotiations through "working tables."

Today, negotiations, deals, and agreements are common in the region. From a legal point of view, negotiating partners are considered "private actors," and therefore, negotiations are not illegal. Corporate actors, mining conglomerates, and the World Bank promote these practices as they prevent future conflicts from hindering investments in extractive projects. Negotiations occur under different conditions embedded in institutionalized practices, shaping diverse tensions and contradictions regarding the mobilization of indigenous identity, indigenous rights, territorial claims, and growing environmental awareness.

In the current context of a "social spirit" of capitalist enterprise, mining companies are increasingly pressured to agree with the local population (O'Faircheallaigh & Corbett, 2005). The change in corporations' attitudes and the existence of a normative dimension created the conditions and frameworks over which these processes usually occur. Despite apparent power asymmetries and social inequalities, indigenous peoples invented new resistance methods to pursue territorial and cultural development agendas in this context. We have already seen that corporate strategies deployed to seek community acceptance happens through long negotiation processes, which depend on both the offers of the mining companies and the different needs of the communities in the sector. Both "actors" can agree on various forms of compromises, mainly job opportunities, scholarships, financial benefits for development projects on the part of companies, and the following permission to operate in indigenous territories. Through these processes, communities try to improve their meaning of subsistence, focusing on alternative developmental projects in their regions.

Above all, the state shows its presence regarding environmental institutionalism and implementing new extractive projects according to the existing rules. I already described the presence-absence procedures through which the state conducts its presence in a bypassed way, allowing these links between communities and companies to happen. The neoliberal strategy has been individualizing indigenous demands, channeling them, and thus transforming them into matters of private rather than collective interest. As already outlined in chapter Three, part of these politics of negotiation occur under the umbrella of CSR as a corporatist's strategy and the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent as the basis of any consultation process, which, however, does not exclude possible conflicts. These devices finally seek to promote consent as the common goal for mining to agree with local communities.

Once, a mining operator of the community relations department told me that it is through dialogue processes that working criteria can agree on something. It means looking for those demands the mining company can agree to and try to meet. Some necessary conditions for this were that the demands were not too "inflated," i.e., unrealistic and challenging to meet, and that the communities with which the mining company sits down to talk are within its area of influence.



*Fig. 20. The square of Matilla.
(All Photos by Sascha Cornejo)*

In March 2018, two leaders of the ADI Jiwasa Oraje in the Matilla-Pica sector described to me how the indigenous organization has been looking for ways to get heard by the major mining companies TEK-Quebrada Blanca (QB) and Collahuasi. Their story shows communities' strategies to make themselves heard and sit down as "equals" in dialogue. This chapter is based primarily on the multiple conversations I had in 2018, 2019, and

2020, which allowed me to follow the development of the conflicts.

The mining company Collahuasi financially supports various cultural and educational projects in Iquique, Pica, and Matilla as part of its social responsibility (CSR) policy. Nevertheless, assessing the company's influence is quite critical, as both leaders believe that companies influence the population's opinion by financing various cultural and Community projects. "*They (Collahuasi) intervene in people's needs (...) Ultimately, they buy people's consciousness, which is the most worrying thing.*" They told me they tried to create different development projects in their areas and territories through negotiation processes. Two companies with an essential presence in the area should finance these projects. However, problems arose early in the first stages of the conversation they had with the managers of Collahuasi. Because "*(t)hey want us to sit down with all the other organizations. They have organized working groups that last for years. There are many meetings to build a fire station (...) or redesign a sports field. Years (...). There is little point, especially with the responsibility Collahuasi has.*" (Indigenous leader, Matilla. 2018).

In the light of negotiating strategies with local communities, each mining company decides on its implementation of CSR strategies. But it depends not only on the community relationship but also on the type of manager in charge of that unit, in its "soft skills" and capacities to relate and generate important connections, which can strongly influence the collective acceptance and positive opinion about mining activities.

The so-called "Mesas de Trabajo" or "work tables" are organized by the companies to discuss and respond to the needs of the people in different ways. Nevertheless, it is often mentioned that these "work tables" can be endlessly protracted and that the speaker's and representatives' patience slowly dwindles. A Quechua woman from Pica also referred to this:

"the mining company Collahuasi calls all institutions to a working table. But I said they presented a project for the famous market (in Pica) seven years ago. This (project) has yet to come out for seven years. And I do not live from the mining company (...), And I said it to the boss very clearly: Look, you have been telling the same story for seven years. The only thing you do is get bored, and people get bored. I listened and closed my eyes, and I heard you tell me that Mrs. Iris has fallen asleep. No! I said. I do not sleep; I am bored because you always discuss the same thing. (Spoke person. Quechua community. Pica 2019)



Fig. 21. The House of the ADI JIWASA ORAJE in front of Matilla Square.

People often highlight how mining companies interact differently with communities because of the different corporative strategies and the nature of the diverse indigenous communities. The differences are important regarding the viewpoint of community members on how companies respond to people's problems and needs. In the public consultations, I repeatedly heard people say to the managers, "Why they did not like company "X." An example of this

would be the case of the return of water rights by mining company Quebrada Blanca. An

indigenous leader insisted in a public presentation that Collahuasi should do the same. Knowledge of mitigation, compensation, and reparation measures are also referred to comparatively. This knowledge helps to mobilize expectations and reinforce them to demand better measures already applied by other companies. Even so, in the case of the first steps of interactions between communities and companies, these lengthy *mesas de trabajo* are often viewed critically, as people feel "stalled," as the previously quoted woman from Pica.



Fig. 22. The church of Matilla was damaged by an earthquake and rebuilt with the financial help of Collahuasi Mining Company.

Finally, the woman decided not to participate in the *mesas* anymore. *"No, I said, so I am no longer attending your sessions. Moreover, I stopped going. (...) Now we are almost all on Quebrada Blanca. Because Quebrada Blanca at least asked permission to come here to Pica. It called us to meet. They came because they wanted to settle down here."* (IA, Quechua Community. Pica 2019). The different experiences of the communities concerning the work tables lead to people preferring to negotiate with one or the other mining company and request help through the projects they offer.

It is known in the region that Collahuasi and Quebrada Blanca profoundly influence the people of Pica. Both have improved semi-urban infrastructure. In the case of Collahuasi, it even influenced school education through a foundation as an indigenous leader told me, not without sadness, that appropriating the "curriculum" in Pica will favor technical education given the work in the mine. This power to redirect the expectations expressed in a school curriculum demonstrates the "technical orientation" and a more significant territorial linkage to the

expectations of further mining development in the area. It deserves our attention before we continue to expose the issue of conflicts/negotiations more deeply.

4.2.2. "Mortgaging the future"

To better understand the weight of the social and environmental impacts on the region, this event shows this single perspective of the well-being symbolized by the possibilities offered by mining. It focuses on that single developmental perspective, leaving out other possibilities. The Educational Foundation of Collahuasi mining company has taken over the mentioned school in Pica. The same mining workers who work for this company are somewhat critical of these developments because it reduces educational opportunities in the sector and is based on a slightly biased view of the miner's life. As one of the interviewed miners and union leader commented:

"One of the serious mistakes made in the commune in recent years is handing over the school's administration to Collahuasi. So, the parents voted and decided. And, of course, the parents have no idea what the real working conditions will be. They think that you will earn money (working) in mining, so you have to study for a career in mining. But they are not given any other range of possibilities. Furthermore, some careers are more profitable than mining. In other words, we have natural resources in the commune, but you can develop geology and astronomy, the same with dinosaur footprints—many other fields. But no, they are restricting them even more. So, now that they are held by the same Collahuasi administration (...) that they are going to give them just one viewpoint and the rest "bye-bye" (Miner and Union Leader. Pica. Zoom interview. 2021)

Here the opinions are very diverse too about the effects of these transformations. But the criticisms are related to something other than professional-technical education, but to the myopic vision these industry-business-education relations generate. In the case of mining companies, they are particularly notable, resulting in a distorted picture of the reality of mining itself. As the above quote from the leader points out, without considering the conditions in which those children will live with a technical-professional qualification in the future, the promise behind a short-term future perspective. In this regard, a local leader from Pica commented: *"But for some parents, it is good because their children are going to work for the mining company... because they only look down their noses."* The opinion of the people of Pica about this decision of the municipality is divided, and it contrasts the different perspectives of the future. Both those that seek to promote activities other than mining, such as agriculture and tourism, and those that only see the economic potential associated with mining development.

These decisions could affect the area's future and how people relate to their territory. A leader of the Quechua community of Pica also said:

"I do not know if you heard that the Padre Alberto Hurtado high school today has a very relevant course for developing local economies. There were (the careers) Agronomy, and there was also Tourism. Careers that can be complemented or perhaps enhanced technically to improve local development. However, they took out the tourism course and implemented electro-mechanics. Today many of us feel it is not the right thing to do. Because we are generating more workers or enslaved people for the mining industry, and we are allowing them to take on legitimacy within the territory and continue their extractive political practices. If what they are extracting, the pollution is tremendous; we should pay attention to this. And this is happening. So today, the municipality, whether left or right-wing, has allowed Collahuasi to take over the total administration of the school. Through an investment to improve the academic level of the children, so we believe that this is not the way." (Indigenous leader, Pica. 2019)

The rejection of such decisions is in no way due to a rejection per se of wanting to improve children's education in the region. Instead, this decision to leave children's education in the hands of a private mining company is based on a simplistic and biased view of the positive effects of mining. As we have already pointed out, it is beyond doubt that mining implies an unprecedented creation of wealth, to which many Chilean citizens expect to gain access. Beyond the considerable differences within the mining world, there is still an almost simplistic idea that working in mining means access to better living conditions. Most of the people who have given me their critical testimony to these facts are people linked, in one way or another, to the land, agriculture, and indigenous culture and values. Therefore, they are concerned about the long-term effects of mining in the region, be it the impact on water or the contamination of the territory.

Interestingly also is the fact that indigenous mining leaders view this development critically. As the miner, Franco, pointed out, "We are mortgaging our future." This vision also demonstrates the ambivalent situation of miners, who benefit from mining being an active part of these processes but are also aware of the transformations that mining generates in the social environment. Interestingly, given its potential growth, their status as miners does not translate into a defense of mining activity.

The fact that Pica's municipality agrees to such a relationship between industry and education may indicate that the mining industry becomes strongly involved in municipal and territorial decisions affecting, in this way, the life of the people betting on a specific future. As the series of critical analyses pointed out, this prioritizes mining over other activities, such as Agriculture

and Tourism, which are more sustainable in the long run and mean more significant employment opportunities for more people.

4.2.3. *The Matilla case (1): Compensations are not the same as benefits*

*"Today we are also demanding...
it is not begging for handouts but demanding a right."*

Indigenous leader. 2021

What we already outlined seems common sense: mining symbolizes development or at least the expectation of their promises (see Li, 2007; Young, 1995; Ferguson, 1995). When these expectations are not met, complaints and protests arise. Working tables function as negotiating bodies with increasing expectations for the participants, and for many, they end up in endless processes without materializing in concrete projects. The working table issue also emerged from the interview with Andrea and Marcia about their complaint against the mining companies.

"We insist that we demand our rights as indigenous people, as set out in ILO Convention 169 and the Special Indigenous Rights Act. We do not want to sit with other organizations; we respect their needs but will not sit down with the Christian community or the local council (...). We are arguing about Agreement 169, and the Christian Community demands wine for their mass." (Indigenous leader: Matilla, 2018)

Both leaders give me insights into the complexities of indigenous rights claims. These are complex because, as indicated in the quote, indigenous people are positioning themselves differently within the non-indigenous population in Pica. They also interpret their demands as different, emphasizing the cultural difference that distinguishes them even from the rest of the people in the sector.

"We speak a different language, (...) we are talking about rights, the invasion of the territory, and extractivism in our territories. We have other demands, so we are calling for separate working groups (...) We have started to communicate with Collahuasi in three or four meetings and also an attempt to sign an agreement, but nothing concrete so far." (indigenous leader: Matilla, 2018)

Terms such as "compensation," "petitions," or "benefits" are based on different cultural and environmental experiences and assessments. However, Andrea and Marcia failed to convince the Collahuasi managers that, as indigenous, they have the right to sit at separate working tables

from the rest of the local population. As a consequence, they broke off their attempts to agree with Collahuasi. The reason for the breakdown is remarkable because of the strong stance they took to demand their rights as indigenous. Both leaders insisted on the differentiated treatment they deserve as indigenous based on their cultural differences: *"We speak a different language!* How can we interpret this claim of cultural specificity?

On the one hand, the distinction is based on an awareness of the norms proposed by ILO Convention 169, which clearly distinguishes that the particularities of indigenous peoples' cultural and territorial values should be subject to special treatment by governments and corporations. Art. 4 of the ILO convention said: *"Special measures shall be adopted as appropriate for safeguarding the persons, institutions, property, labor, cultures, and environment of the peoples concerned"* (ILO, 1989). Both leaders expect special treatment from the mining companies. As they repeatedly point out, it is part of companies duty because of the impact of mining's territorial intervention and corporate social responsibility.



Fig. 23. The circumscribed territory of the ADI JIWASA ORAJE

Following this idea, "being Indigenous" means distinguishing oneself from the Chilean population by emphasizing the supposedly indigenous cultural characteristics based on normative guidelines, such as ILO Convention and Law. Andrea and Marcia continued, *"We are not equal. We have rights... We have special laws, special international regulations, and therefore we cannot all come together."* (Indigenous leader, Matilla, 2018) The indigenous leaders' legal claim differs from the

Chilean people's needs. Their message is: *"We are not equal!"* While non-indigenous people ask for *financial benefits*, indigenous people demand *compensation* because of their right to be compensated for destroying their ancestral territory and using underground water resources. To quote the indigenous leaders again:

"It is crucial to distinguish between indigenous and non-indigenous communities. Non-indigenous communities ask for benefits, and indigenous communities ask for compensation for their violated rights because non-indigenous communities do not ask for compensation for their violated rights (...) We, "Indios," say, "That is because they (mining companies) have a duty because they are affecting our territory and must fulfill their obligations. They must do it because it is their duty". (indigenous leaders. Matilla, 2018)

In some way, these ideas articulate territorial demands with the agencies of national and international laws that give legal support to the protection of indigenous land in the face of the imperatives of expanding natural resources frontiers. Claims of recognition can involve and trigger various forms of reflection on what indigenous culture and territory mean regarding their right to decide for their future⁸⁹.

Another indigenous leader from Quipizca told me about the deal with a mining company through which they began a process of territorial planning and monitoring, with an essential focus on the cultural development of the area and the re-population of the Community. These negotiations allow the communities to orient themselves in planning their future in the long term. The ambivalent attitudes and perceptions of the people regarding mining are connected to the processes of re-evaluation of the indigenous culture and indigenous livelihood. Also, their institutional recognition by the Chilean state is vital since this means a concrete opportunity to obtain benefits/compensations from state and mining companies. We will see below that the strategic use of demands for equality and respect is deeply implicated in the confrontation with companies.

⁸⁹ In fact, a similar argument is put forward by the Cultural Survival Network, which calls for the separation of the terms "indigenous people" and "local communities," which have been used together in the framework of the UN conservation policy program with the term "Indigenous people/local communities" (IPLC). The network explains that these notions should be kept separate because indigenous culture has gained special recognition in international Law, specifically recognizing its relationship to land and territories. In contrast, local communities do not have such a specific definition. Part of this declaration states: *"Treating Indigenous Peoples as separate and distinct entities from local communities is an approach supported by experts in the international human rights space. (...) While Indigenous Peoples' affirmed. Specific rights are enshrined in international documents. Local communities are not consistently defined and are not necessarily subject to particular collective rights. The use of this combined term can dilute the meaning and strength of Indigenous Peoples' rights and challenge the protection of specific rights"* ([Statement towards Discontinuing the Use of the Collective Term "Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities" or "IPLC" | Cultural Survival/First People Worldwide](#). Accessed 10.11.22)



However, the quote's distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous comments is complex because it assumes a substantial comprehension of indigenous identity and culture, underlining their actions and moral behavior. An issue also anchored in the abstraction of the concept of "indigenous" as a "universal" category present in law definitions. An abstraction that, however, has a very concrete effect because it assumes that

a group of humans share specific cultural and territorial characteristics different from a broader cultural group. By this, they have to be treated differently. As the ILO convention says:

The use of the term “indigenous” in Chilean law and ILO.

For Chilean Law, “indigenous” are above all “Chileans” without a constitutional recognition. However, they share some specific characteristics: Such as

a) children of an indigenous father or mother; b) descendants of indigenous ethnic groups that inhabit the national territory,

c) as long as they have an indigenous surname, d) those who maintain cultural traits of an indigenous ethnic group such as the way of life, customs or religion or whose spouse is indigenous (in this case self-identification is required). (Art.2)

Regarding ILO's definition: “*Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form, at present non-dominant sectors of society. They are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, by their own cultural, social institutions and legal systems.*” (quoted in Henriksen, 2008: 5).

"The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in formulating, implementing, and evaluating plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly." (ILO, 1985: art. 7)

In many parts of this work, we have highlighted the tension that underlays the abstraction of Law within a complex world's social and material differences (See Valverde, 2003). What is at stake here is the political mobilization of rights claims as a general strategy. Whose complexities regarding law and state institutions raise questions: How are indigenous land values, resources, and territory mobilized in a "politics of culture"? How can these "mobilized cultural differences" affect negotiations with mining companies (or otherwise are influenced by these negotiation processes)?

I will outline this claim of "being different" (see next chapter) by differentiating three intertwined dimensions. A legal-normative dimension refers to Chilean legislation and its free "space" for action. This dimension has been widely explored through chapters five and six about Consultas⁹⁰; another *corporatists dimension* that involves the corporate culture in terms of CSR, which seeks to peacefully agree with local communities to gain their relative acceptance (see Chapter Three); and a *cultural dimension* (task of this and the next chapter), which can be related to the various claims of indigenous identity, knowledge, and cultural specificity, discourses which are mobilized politically to demand specific claims; These three levels overlap in several processes and provide the context in which negotiations and agreements acquire político-cultural meanings.

4.2.4. Tactics and power

The argument I am trying to make is that processes of negotiation, collaboration, and resistance to mining processes shape the *mobilization of difference*, promoting a politics of indigenous identity, using existing legal complexes (indigenous Law, CONADI, ILO 169) that frame the "indigenous question" through institutional settings. It implies important environmental, territorial, or cultural awareness moments and reflections of people who are already affected. The various devices and institutions also sustain the claims that frame these different forms of resistance, collaboration, and negotiation. To approach this, I am following a process of identity based on self-adscription and self-definition. I have already analyzed the notion of articulation

⁹⁰ This is established in Art. Seven of the ILO convention said that "*the peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions, and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in formulating, implementing, and evaluating plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly.*" (ILO, Art.7. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169. Accessed: 5.11.21

(see chapter Seven) related to the narratives and testimonies above that show that identity is not something given or eternal but a process in the making (Hall, 1996).

Regarding the differentiation among communities, the problem also lies in the different degrees of commitment communities can have to "external" actors. Often people mention that mining is trying to "divide and Rule." That the fragmentation of the indigenous people themselves is an effect of the policies of the mining companies in their community relation approach, the consequence of that is those communities begin to compete with each other, often because the deals between the community and the company can have very different outcomes. This produces various grades of tensions between ethical, moral, and cultural understanding of their practices and actions as indigenous. With this in mind, this subchapter focuses on a situation of negotiation that leaves an open space for action and practices regarding general claims for what is considered "just" and "responsible."

Continuing the story of the ADI leaders, the experience in the negotiation process with TEK-Quebrada Blanca was slightly different from the case explained above in the case of negotiations with Collahuasi. Andrea and Marcia held agreement talks with the company between 2011 and 2012 when TECK submitted a significant project to the SEIA system. After lengthy negotiations, both sides agreed to collaborate and work together. However, the company withdrew the project from the SEA platform, and the previous negotiations lost meaning. From the story that Andrea and Marcia told me, it was clear how the mining companies systematically failed to meet the compromises. Again and again, the agreements were revoked by the company. But over time, the indigenous leaders developed other ways to pressure the company.

"And they withdrew the project and said, "Everything is canceled." But we wanted to avoid accepting that because that is corporate social responsibility. (...) They signed an agreement but did not want to keep to it (...) And what did we do then? We sent a letter to Canada and gave them hell (...) I was called by the director from Canada, the "gringo", and I think he hardly understood me, and I hardly understood him (...), and he told me: "Stay calm because I have just given the order that the company (in Chile) should agree with you. (Indigenous leader, Matilla, 2018)

This is corporate social responsibility! It is not a passive way of understanding that companies have the best intentions to settle in the territory, but a call to demand, not just wait for voluntary commitments. As the above quotes make clear, the indigenous organization is trying to get Collahuasi and TEK-QB to sit at the table to negotiate on equal terms. Furthermore, both indigenous leaders are also very familiar with the technical, institutional approach of the Chilean state environmental authorities. As we have seen, every project (mining, forestry,

energy a. o.), after undergoing complicated institutionalized procedures, must obtain the appropriate permits from the various environmental authorities. In this assessment and inspection process, Andrea and Marcia point out the moments in which they still have the chance to raise their voices and demand compensation measures. This call for "commitment" of the companies is based on a claim regarding their right to seek compensation. In this sense, both leaders insist that as legitimate owners of the territories, they must also be recognized as negotiating partners, accounting for the capacities of subordinate people developed for specific goals in power asymmetries (See Appadurai, 1990, Tsing, 2005). These capacities and the development of new possibilities for action will become clearer from our account of the process of confrontation with the companies and the Chilean state. Negotiations and consensus-building become thus part of various forms of survival strategies, part of a future-oriented "cultural design." (Appadurai, 1990) These future visions are connected to the sediment cultural characteristics of specific group formations. The critical role is defending territory as an all-encompassing goal, expressed in Latin America's most diverse indigenous resistance movements (e.g., see OCMAL). The territory is repeatedly mentioned as an element of cultural politics: on the one hand, it is part of the material basis of indigenous livelihoods (see Escobar, 2010) despite historical transformation and an integral part of any political mobilization of an indigenous claim of cultural difference (Povinelli, 2011).

Nevertheless, the question remains about how certain identity boundaries are drawn. Even if we want to avoid a homogenizing and universalistic view of indigenous culture, we should consider the "borders" between indigenous communities' internal social cohesion (Cohen, 2015). In this light, negotiation processes also cause conflict between indigenous communities because their claims are handled differently and expressed through different practices. But negotiations are only one form to engage politically with specific cultural claims of distinction.

Strategies and tactics strengthen and frame possible human actions. The letter to Canada can be an expression of what De Certeau called "making do" (De Certeau, 1988), referring to specific possible fields of action in particular situations and contingencies of a moment of confrontation, which denotes a kind of "anti-discipline" (1988: XV). De Certeau talks of *tactics* precisely to define dynamic processes of resistance, as in the history of Spanish colonial rule:

"The Indians often use the laws, practices, and representations that were imposed on them by force or by fascination to ends other than those of their conquerors; they made something else out of them; they subverted them from within –not by rejecting them or

transforming them (though that occurred as well), but by many different ways of using them in the service of rules, customs or convictions foreign to the colonization which they could not escape. They metaphorized the dominant order: they made it function in another register. They remained other within the system, which they assimilated and which assimilated them externally. (De Certeau, 1988, 32)

The author reminds us that "*the place of the tactics belongs to the other*" (1988, XIX). Its character is fragmentary and highly dependent on time to transform structural disadvantages into opportunities. In this way, it is highly creative. In de Certeau's ideas, our case stands for the appropriation of the existing means of domination of the hegemonic rule of the Other, referring here not only to the current legislation (that you need to know to be able to defend yourself!) but also to corporate discourses as CSR. It is not just waiting for companies to "graciously" deliver what they promise, but demanding from them because they continually make promises. It gives an exciting entry point to the question of power. As Foucault wrote, "*(p)ower exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action, even though, of course, it is inscribed in a field of sparse available possibilities underpinned by permanent structures*" (Foucault, 1980, 340). Tactics show the grey tone of power because it refers to creating a political space marked but not determined by power asymmetries. "*The weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them*" (De Certeau, 1988, XIX). In that space of the other, organized through the legal power of the ruler, opportunities can always arise and be seized. Subordination is never total. Even if all the signs indicate otherwise, the battle is lost, or there is nothing more to be done. Power and its performative elements, like *strategies* and *tactics*, operate in a field of possibilities (Foucault, 1980, p. 341), this is to say, linked to the creative performance of human actions. Therefore, despite a legally founded asymmetry of power, resistance is possible.

To quote Andrea again from Matilla:

"We, as ADI association, have not a drop of water. We do not even own a grain of sand. But we have negotiated as we are equal. We did not accept what they offered us (...) because we consider this charity. And we believe that a company with a real awareness of CSR should be socially committed to them because of indigenous peoples' rights. Therefore, there should not be these everlasting negotiation tables, and there should not be "crumbs." (Indigenous leader, Matilla, 2018)

This demand for their ancestral rights goes beyond their position as "legally established" owners. As she says, they do not own either water or land, but their life in the territory makes a big difference that would, in turn, reinforce their right. The recognition of "ancestry" has weight, something that the ILO agreement 169 and the Chilean judicial system already recognize.

The man who fights Cerro Colorado

Chilean citizen Luis Jara has been fighting against the Cerro Colorado mining company for years. Jara claims to be co-owner of the estancia Cancosa, the land on which the Aymara Cancosa community is located, which has financial agreements with the mining company. In one of the juridical confrontations, lawyers from both sides presented their arguments. The lawyer representing the Cerro Colorado company criticized Jara's constant "harassment" of the company. One of the arguments he developed was that he was a "comunero" who inherited part of the rights of possession of the Cancosa ranch. However, the company's lawyer says that Jara does not carry out any activity there, unlike the Cancosa community, which has lived there since "time immemorial" (in fact, since 1945!). Therefore, Jara cannot exercise ancestral rights over the place, unlike the Community, which has an agreement with the same company. The interesting question concerning this legal dispute is Jara's pleas for environmental protection due to water extraction from the Lagunillas sector. During this confrontation process, the company's lawyer questions not only Jara's "real" right to oppose the company's water extraction but also his "disinterested" interest in protecting the wetland, arguing that his constant lawsuits against the company have undermined the implementation of the mitigation measures carried out. In this way, Jara's real interest, he says, is basically to profit from his own "malice." It is interesting to note the use of the argument of ancestry by the mining company's lawyer against Jara since he is only a co-owner of the estancia and does not carry out any activity on the site.

I met Jara in 2019; in a conversation, he told me about all his efforts to stop the company from extracting water, claiming that the indigenous Community was not interested in caring for the environment as they silently allowed such impacts to occur. BHP's lawyer told a public hearing in 2021 that Jara has an almost unhealthy compulsion to damage the company and has a particular addiction to lawsuits.

4.2.5. Negotiation outcomes

The negotiation between the Aymara community of the Matilla sector and the mining company Quebrada Blanca allowed the Community to obtain different outcomes, such as grants for the members, a certain amount of financial resources, a small project for making fruit tea to take advantage of the vegetable wealth of the Pica oasis, as well as the implementation of laundry, a business of rental of heavy machines and the development of handcraft and accommodation services. In addition, the company committed itself to applying for public sector development projects focused on the territory. All these projects require a lot of planning time and responsible management regarding the fair distribution of roles and responsibilities among community members and constant work tables between the indigenous organization and the company. "*We have made some progress,*" said Andrea when I spoke with her in 2020. She also told me that

some of these projects had not been implemented because of diverse circumstances, but they demonstrate the concern for generating small-scale development strategies. This should improve the living conditions of the people in the sector and the indigenous organization improving their financial autonomy. Although these projects would be carried out with the financing of mining, their projection aims at generating other living conditions, *focused on more than just the job promises of mining.*

"Because the objective of the ADI is to be autonomous. But people still expect to work in mining. However, here people continue to do agriculture, farm on a smaller scale, the theme of the traditional candies of the zone, the production of tea, and the whole theme of fruit or frozen fruit pulp. These are local things, and you do not have to lose that." (Assessor, Matilla 2018.)

They try to improve their autonomy model, despite their difficult position regarding financial dependency on mining. It requires constant and disciplined work and a firm position regarding the companies. Because it is not a question of "*asking for things*" but of "*demanding from this company that pollutes,*" it must take responsibility for its impacts, not simply by providing financial resources but by becoming involved in small-scale local development. Furthermore, given the organization's experience and the constant support of its technically and legally trained advisors, the indigenous leaders are fully aware that if these agreements are not fulfilled, they must carry out other means of pressure (e.g., protective legal tools and resources).

As indigenous leaders, it is crucial for them to speak as "one voice" because one of the companies' tactics was to generate divisions of interest within the communities. Andrea told me that she was invited several times to Santiago for a "sincere coffee," whatever this means, and she always refused. "*We do not have two positions, always one thing, and the agreement is respected.*"

The Community faced a problem: in the new DIA by Quebrada Blanca (QB2), the Matilla Ecozone was not considered an "affected community." "*The state also did not consider us as subjects for consultation,*" Andrea said. They asked the project holder to include them in the consultation, to which they replied that they could not do so but that the SEA should include them as an affected community. So they sent a letter to the SEA asking for their inclusion, which was also rejected. Then the organization filed an administrative appeal with the SEA, which was also dismissed. However, Andrea assured me their efforts to appeal to the SEA would probably be unsuccessful. They hope to exhaust those instances to litigate in the Chilean environmental court. "*We are now exhausting all these means. But what has this meant, the*

organization's resources, being able to coordinate with friends, lawyers, to find advisors". She goes on to say that they also went to Congress to denounce their situation of helplessness. But immediately after her input, the company cut off all communication with the indigenous organization because of this public denunciation.

" And we have the written document that says that as long as we do anything administrative, they will not talk with us. Then we ask, where is your signed agreement? Where is their corporate social commitment, which they publicize so much on their websites? Where are the " good neighbors " because no one can stop another from taking administrative action just for conversation. Where are the "good neighbors"? Where are the "community relations"?" (Indigenous leader, Matilla. 2019)

The issue of corporate responsibility ultimately comes up regarding the question of goodwill. As an organization, they try to enter the system to force themselves into the conversation.

"We were talking the other day about a triangle between the state, the mining company, and the indigenous peoples. Those who talk to each other are usually the government and the mining companies. The indigenous people do not speak. So in one way or another, you must get into that structure to make us talk among the three of us." (Indigenous leader, Matilla. 2019)

With their possible actions, it is up to the indigenous to create the conditions for taking over these legal structures since the indigenous people are always left behind. Often institutionally embedded, these situations and conditions can lead to implementing new tactics that actors can develop to pressure authorities and companies. We will see through this chapter how these tactics and strategies are handled and forged through different contexts and contingencies.

4.2.6. State responsibility regarding environmental degradation

As we have observed, due to water management, politicians and the state are also held responsible for the consequences of environmental destruction. The public presentations outlined in the previous chapters exposed such critical attitudes. Some people see the responsibility in the inadequate water management legislation and environmental regulation, while others attack the workers of the SEA authority directly. But even the SEA employees in Tarapacá believe that the state must bear the highest responsibility for environmental destruction. But they interpret the role of the state and politics in the sense of the current legal situation as follows:

"That here in the region in the last 20 years, it has not been the Community, but the state that has affected the region, the regulations that we have had many gaps, so that has

allowed us here in the region to lose important ecosystems in the last 20 years. (SEA 1 official. Iquique. 2019). Another employee of the same agency said: "How do we best arrange it so that it is a lever for development and so that both the original inhabitants, the ordinary citizen, and the environment are respected" (SEA official 2. Iquique. 2019)

This view of responsibility in the face of environmental degradation does not consider existing environmental regulations and measures sufficient to ensure a more "sustainable extractivism." Researchers and politicians have demanded better legal standards arguing for reforming the water and mining codes (Bauer, 2002, 2015; Yañez, 2014a, 2014b; Lavanderos, 2004, 2001). Demands that have repeatedly failed because of political play and pressure from the business sector (see discussion on the role of "political ideology" and "technicality" in the chapter about water conflicts). These consequences mainly happen in the highland areas in a more radical vision. Other people think that the affected territories are "sacrificed. An idea that resonates with the idea of development and that development always entails sacrifices. Even though the discourse on sustainable development attempted to resolve this highly persistent dilemma, the tension between economic development and environmental protection is still evident. Once again, Lagunillas is an example of a "state retreat" based on responsibility towards desert areas such as the Tarapacá highlands:

"I do not believe there is any real concern about these areas. They are ecosystems that exist only in this region. Important salt flats in the highlands do not have water today because the mining industry needs the water. That is why marshes have dried up today, and we are watering them today as if they were a garden. (...) With all our regulations and standards, we cannot know today how these ecosystems function." (SEA 1 official, Iquique, 2019)

The lack of research on the ecological connections between indigenous livelihoods and their cultural practices and environmental interconnectedness determines the different understanding of these consequences. A holistic view of indigenous culture related to the environment could be more pronounced in the EIA and hydrological modeling technocratic application. However, this issue is of concern - at least declared- by some mining companies, as pointed out in a public consultation. A simplified understanding is at work in which things are kept apart for "analytical" reasons. But for indigenous, "territory" is an all-encompassing term in which human and non-human actors are united through a vital context, a web of life, an organic weft. In the Collahuasi consultation, the managers decided to stick to what "the law says," which dictates how the studies should be presented. These models based on techno-scientific expertise leave aside the holistic point of view. However, the mining company proposes to extend the range of effects as a voluntary act. This trend towards voluntarism seems to be predominant in areas where legislation does not seem to generate the right conditions for extractivism regarding

"real" sustainability. In this way, the diversity of "gestures" that companies carry out or claim to carry out cannot be underestimated, such as including indigenous populations and communities in impacted territories. However, as in the QB2 declaration to return water rights to the Chilean state, measures evidenced the voluntarism as a corporate social responsibility strategy in a field where neither the state nor the law seems to have any capacity to put more pressure on environmental protection.

4.2.7. The Lagunillas case (2): Impacts and negotiations

Cancosa is a rural Aymara community that lives mainly from cattle breeding and whose population has always depended on the highlands' ecological conditions. The village of Cancosa was founded on November 7th, 1945, and received legal recognition in 1995 under the Indigenous Law 1993. The Community consists of more than 80 families, about 350 people. A village in the middle of the Andes over 3,962 meters above sea level, close to the border with Bolivia.

According to the census, in 2002, only 26 inhabitants remained. Another 20 indigenous people visit the site to look after their livestock and quinoa plantations. As elaborated in Chapters Seven and Eight, Aymaras in Tarapaca lives mainly in the city of Iquique and Alto Hospicio. Romero has described this diaspora situation as a "post-community" situation (Romero, 2019), contesting Van Kessel's hypothesis of the complete acculturation of Aymara culture. Nevertheless, an important "cultural bond" persists with the territories attributed to the different communities. This capacity to live in different habitats simultaneously is understood by some indigenous speakers as part of the cultural characteristics of the Aymara culture (see chapter Eight under the sub-chapter about "transhumance").

The story begins in 1981 after the introduction of the Water Code during the Pinochet dictatorship, which established that to gain water rights, you have to go through the application for the DGA. During this time, the Cerro Colorado mining company applied for water rights of 300 L/S, whose extraction was to be concentrated in the Lagunillas sector (Romero et al., 2017, 65), an area at 2,600 m OSL and part of the ancestral territory of Cancosa. At that time, relations between indigenous people and companies were not institutionalized as they are today, which meant there were only sporadic attempts to bring the Community and the mining company into the conversation. The company began to hold initial meetings with the comuneros of Cancosa to buy their water rights. In this context, the actors got together for the first time to define how

the company should support the Community financially through jobs, contributions, or scholarships (Mamani, 2008). The Comuneros were carried away by the promises of employment and scholarships offered (Salinas, 2012, p. 222-223; Mamani, 2008).

Cancosa was one of the first indigenous communities in the region to allow a mining company to extract water by leasing land (Salinas, 2012). This type of agreement was new in the area. It inaugurated a period of conflict and conflict solutions between mining companies and indigenous communities, whose relationship is often interpreted as patronage⁹¹.

In the Environmental Assessment Study (EIA), the company has specified that the underwater fossil river basins from which the water is to be extracted are not networked with other basins of the Altiplano (plateau). According to Antonio Mamani, spokesman for the Cancosa community, this was an important argument to persuade the "grandfathers" to sell their water rights. But at that time, little was known about the consequences of mining and water extraction. In 1994, with the beginning of the mining activities, the water extraction of 130 l/s started in the sector of Lagunillas. After six years, the first damages were noticed by the Comuneros. Despite the damages, the DGA extends the company's water rights to 150 l/s. However, the Community accuses the damages, which the company rejected. These accusations strongly affect the relations between the company and the Community. Because of this situation, the Comuneros started to seek advice from specialists to develop different studies commissioned by the comuneros which supported the thesis that the underwater basins were networked and that constant water extraction had reduced the total water level by eight meters (Mamani, 2008, p. 393-394). The Community denounced the problem to the DGA authority, which then commissioned a study for the national environmental corporation (CONAMA). Later, the authority rectified the damage and ordered the company to take mitigating measures. According to Mamani, however, any form of mitigating measures failed. It was still proven that Cerro Colorado must bear the responsibility for the impacts on the water level in Lagunillas. In February 2006, the mining company was fined more than 47.000.000 Chilean pesos (some 50.000 US dollars).

Nevertheless, the mitigating measures were insufficient to remedy the severe environmental damage. The Cancosa community has made a strong case for this. It has initiated various institutional ways to hold the mining company accountable (Larrain & Poo, 2010, p. 72). In the

⁹¹ In Spanisch: 'clientelismo'.

following time, the Community developed various strategies to pressure the government and corporations. After a long wait for the state to intervene, Cancosa sued the mining company for the ecological damage caused, judicializing the whole conflict. As the conflict could be protracted, the mining company and the Community finally agreed on three main agreements:

1. Establish a monitoring plan of the environmental conditions, which means hiring an independent team of experts to carry out the monitoring and technical measurements.
2. Financing of a program to develop and promote the Community, which was to run through various points.
3. Drawing up an education plan 2030 (Salinas, 200, p. 235). In addition, the company committed itself to fixed annual payments.

It is often highlighted that this type of practice of mining companies, in the end, leads to disagreements and disputes between and among communities. Here, different issues must be analytically distinguished, despite their highly intertwined character, such as mitigation procedures initiated after environmental damage, social consequences of agreements, negotiations, and deals, or compensation payments to indigenous communities, which involve different attitudes and perceptions. Before we look at how the social, political, cultural, and imaginary impacts follow dynamic processes, we will focus on the responsibility of mitigation actions.

After damage in Lagunillas was recognized by the Chilean environmental authorities, the pressure of the rules initiated mitigation processes of Cerro Colorado in the affected area. Artificial irrigation should renew the affected ecosystem. But more was needed to restore the entire ecosystem. The case of Lagunillas is not only a symbol of the environmental damage caused by mining but also of the failed attempt to repair the damage already provoked. As one consultant described to me:

"Here in Lagunillas, they tried to renew the swamps again without success. Therefore the mining companies must finally accept that these areas cannot be reclaimed. There is no possibility of renewing a swamp area that is 400 years old again. This area also has productive importance for indigenous people who live from cattle breeding or herbs, and it is a whole chain of damage that has been caused". (Consultant, Iquique, 2019)

These events show that the extent of the environmental consequences does not only cause ecological damage because the damaged hydrological cycle implies a chain of relationships, cultural practices, and material foundations that becomes broken. Connections and amalgams of human and non-human processes are not easy to repair. This question is only the tip of the

iceberg since mitigation processes are also linked to other standard practices of mining companies, such as compensation payments, as in the case of the Cancosa community.

Various people referred to their concern about the destruction of ecosystems like Lagunillas. Yet, some attributed direct responsibility to the state, based on a general assessment that state and mining companies "play together their common game" in which institutions, i.e., the legal framework, reinforce mining activity. As a result, people's frustration and anger were directed against the state authorities, as described in the public consultations.

Despite the development discourse that feeds the promise of mining and its various symbolic facets associated with economic well-being and progress, there is also the belief that the local population benefits little from mining. Only a few have the privilege of being hired directly by a mining company, while others are associated with subcontractors. Promises of modernization and development are always a symbolic part of extractivist economies, stressing the relationship between the "blessed" and "ugly" faces of environmental destruction and social fragmentation (Burchardt & Diez, 2014)

4.2.8. The Quipisca case (3): Reconstructing the Community

So far, I have mentioned stories of failed acts, negotiations, tactics, and strategies deployed to force companies to sit down to dialog. However, there are also relatively successful cases of Community and territorial constructions based on deals with companies. The Community of Quipisca can tell a different story.

This Community has closed an agreement with the mining company Cerro Colorado/BHP Billington, which has nearby installations. Quipisca is located in the commune of Pozo Almonte in the province of Tamarugal, a highland village of no more than 30 families located in the sector of ravines of the Andean mountain area at an altitude of 1,800 meters.

In 2019 I met Alfredo, one of the main leaders of the Community. He told me that as Cerro Colorado was installed before environmental regulations obliged companies to generate community relations, there was no counterweight from the communities to confront the advances of the extractive industry. Then they began implementing social responsibility policies and the first conversations with the surrounding communities. However, he criticized this process because the company usually dictated what it offered to the communities. He also criticized the growing competition between the communities during this process on "who would

get the best portion of the cake." In this context, he says, the Community began to work towards a development project that would help improve the quality of life of its inhabitants. *"We are committed to generating internal processes. We call it a process of community reconstruction, strengthening our cultural identity, our descendants."* In 2009 Quipisca was constituted as a community and began a dialogue with BHP. In 2012 the company planned its operational continuation, which meant entering into various dialogue processes with the communities in their Impact Area. The company was trying to persuade the communities to approve the project through the well-known promises of local development and engagement with the company through direct contracting. The leader told me that the company invited the communities to learn about the project in one of the meetings. Using a PowerPoint presentation, they explain the main characteristics of the project.

While the discussion was taking place, they passed an attendance sheet for registration. Alfredo says that he realized what they were doing, took the sheet, and tore it up, saying that they were not going to accept these practices and that they were there to learn and be informed but not to validate the process. After that, he says they broke off relations with the company for about a year after that. *"That this was not the way to generate dialogue and that, to my understanding and that of the Community, this dialogue had to be on equal terms because we handled and understood the information they provided with technical and professional accompaniment. So that is when we started incorporating the advisors into the dialogue"*. The Community demanded that the company provide the resources for the district to get advice from professionals who can explain the project to them. At that time, an early consultation process (PACA) was underway. *"The same day, we started with a proposal prepared in a presentation (...) If the company wanted social licenses to continue operating, it was essential to have resources for the community to hire independent advice."* After a long back and forth and a long wait, *"they finally accepted what we proposed. And we managed to set up the independent consultancy fund"*.

The consultation proceeded concerning the company's Environmental Impact Study to the SEIA. The study was composed of 12 volumes full of technical information. Alfredo says that many communities resisted entering these processes, which was natural *"because nobody likes to have a hole dug in front of their house."* It was also complicated to resist this company because it was already installed, so the state would always favor its continuity. Therefore, much of what was achieved was based on goodwill. Because the consultation process is based on the right to be informed in advance, but the state makes the final decision. *"So this scenario was*

clear to us, and we began to establish what mitigation and compensation measures had to be defined concerning the impacts that affected our territoriality." It was not easy since they had to make visible the possible impacts, possible mitigation, and compensation measures, which is why advisors' work was so significant in this process

Alfredo knew they had to develop as a community parallel to the company's development. They based the decision to negotiate and agree on the idea that despite their refusal as a community, the state would give them operational continuity anyway. Within this "pragmatism," the Community has sought to rebuild itself using the resources provided by the mining company itself. "Our action comes from the reality of the territory, of our community. From thinking about what we ultimately want for our community". It led to a territorial planning process, a work of cultural reconstruction supported by a collective and communitarian process: "That everything that is planned should be centered on the cultural legacy that had been lost, that had been made visible and that today we had the opportunity to reverse it."



Fig. 24. Quipisca community, Developmental Plan 2016

The Community builds an extensive territorial development plan with the assistance of an NGO called RIMSIP and the collaboration of the Desierto de Atacama Foundation. A document records the program and construction process involving extensive intercultural dialogue between the Community and non-indigenous advisors. The Plan seeks to establish the guidelines under which Quipisca can develop under the

principles of *Sumak Kawsay* (Buen Vivir or good living). To this end, a Heritage Management Plan was drawn up, which would consider the various Inca and pre-Inca archaeological sites to conserve and sustain their heritage. They build an Environmental Monitoring Plan to increase environmental knowledge about the natural resources of the sector, monitor changes in the

environment over time, and ultimately ensure the conservation and protection of the natural heritage of Quipisca. The Plan identifies the main biocultural assets of the territory and the Community that can help its development: the natural landscape, the archeological resources, gastronomy, identity-based archaeological practices, and the local festivals and ceremonials (Quipisca community, Developmental Plan 2016); the Plan also focus on strengthening agriculture and livestock farming in the sector the ancestral forms of territorial occupation. As Alfredo said, they try to do everything possible to preserve their environment by organizing and hiring different professionals to monitor the water and air quality in the area.

"We go up to our territory every week, apart from the fact that we have people living there, which allows us to monitor and control water quality, air quality, and our archaeological heritage within the territory." If the Community detects any minor irregularities and affectations, these will be reported to the mining company or the responsible state institutions. This process allowed them to become involved in other processes of knowledge generation. Beyond expert knowledge, community members have also been gaining environmental awareness. *"From time to time, we are evaluating, and as the impacts are generated, we have an "environmental technical table" with the company. Every two months, we meet and review all the measures committed to in the environmental resolution processes"*. These experiences allowed the villagers to be active and to propose issues to the company.

Regarding irregularities, they have filed complaints with various state institutions depending on the subject. He also acknowledges that the company has generated its own growth process regarding its community relations. Alfredo has been in contact with other indigenous communities from different regions in Chile, which also have agreements with Cerro Colorado. Through These meetings, Alfredo could see what other indigenous people were doing regarding their relationship with the company and how they projected this relationship into the future. According to Alfredo, the issue is to demand international standards, as the company is also part of conglomerates willing to accomplish "good practices" and enhance sustainability. *"So another thing I have learned is that denying or being negative nowadays is not enough nowadays. Today it is also necessary to propose. In other words, if today the possibility is not given to propose actions, ideas, ways of generating dialogue, or a different relationship. That means our right must come first"*.

This process seeks to enhance the sustainability of life in the Community and the territory. Alfredo sees it as a process of sowing seeds for generations to come. *"And hopefully, they can*

continue with the legacy of not forgetting their community, not forgetting their culture, identity, place where we come from, our parents, our grandparents."

4.2.9. Minor development and life projects

This chapter has focused on telling different stories about the strategies to push community agendas forward related to their possibilities for development. In this regard, the notion of *the minor* characterizes the form that the desired indigenous development takes. In cultural studies, constructing a "minor language" within broader social and cultural contexts can provide us with meaningful heuristic and hermeneutic elements (Laurie & Khan, 2017).

According to Deleuze and Guatarri, the sign of the *minor* in Kafka becomes the living voice of collective enunciation: "*There is no subject, there are only collective devices of enunciation.*" In this way, the authors believe that they have found the revolutionary potential of this literature, their revolutionary conditions, *to find their own point of underdevelopment, their own jargon, their own third world, their own desert* (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987, p.31). In this sense, *the minor* is a political issue regarding what and how something is said and enunciated. The indigenous issue has less to do with problems of "integration" into a hegemonic culture -since a large part of these sociological devices in post-dictatorship Chile function in the face of the logic of consumption and the disciplinarian forces of the market-but instead with the mobilization of difference and certain distinctions with that "great majority." In other words, the problem seems to focus less on a relationship with Chilean culture and its underlying racist and classist imaginaries than on the opposition of factional powers and institutions, which have historically prevented, dominated, and *defined indigenous culture* as the Mapuche writer and journalist Pedro Cayuqueo said in an interview about the situation of Mapuches in Chile.

"We have a deep cultural conflict between two societies that do not know each other and have never had the possibility of intercultural dialogue. What I mean by this is that a Chilean society does not know the native peoples, particularly the Mapuche, and has an extreme historical prejudice (...). There are voices full of racism against us, so there is a profound ignorance in Chilean society... still concerning the native peoples and the Mapuche. This ignorance translates into racism. This racism is part of the culture in Chile" (Cayuqueo, 2022. Acceded 26.01.22)

My reading of the "minor" is understood as a space of enunciation, highly positioned and politicized. It becomes an answer to the "ignorance" of Chileans regarding indigenous culture, as told by Cayuqueo, and a response to the normal racist behavior that crosses Chilean culture

and its stereotypes regarding indigenous⁹². It confronts the conscious and unconscious racism in Chile's daily life.

From the indigenous position, it does not seek to obtain hegemony but to defend its "own." To keep "at bay" the Otherness of Chilean culture and institutions, historically subordinated, defined, and studied indigenous. For this reason, assimilation is less a problem than distinction, self-identification, and recognition of their fundamental political and civil rights, their claim to their right to be equal and to be different, and to shape another horizon of meaning regarding "development." In this sense, the idea of the minor here outlined is close to Mario Blaser's understanding of *life projects* of indigenous because these are embedded in local histories. They encompass visions of the world and the future, which differ from those shaped by the state and the market: "*Life projects diverge from development in their attention to the uniqueness of people's experiences of place and self and their rejection of visions that claim to be universal. Thus, life projects are premised on densely and uniquely woven 'threads' of landscapes, memories, expectations, and desires.*" (Blaser, 2004, p.26) But these minor development projects do not seek to be a hegemonic alternative to extractivist development but rather to show how other notions of development can coexist under the economic and institutional mantle that has made extractivism flourish.

Regarding Andean indigeneity, its political purpose seems clear in its distinctive features, without aspiring to counter-hegemony. By being "non-hegemonic" and "non-universalistic," it is profoundly "minor" (something that strongly contrasts with the appropriation of "Buen Vivir" discourse by the state as in the case of Bolivia as I develop in the last chapter). One of the critical issues regarding the above-cited quotes is the question of self-representation and the use of Law as a practical, strategic, and discursive tool. From the reflections on a minor language that acquires its meaning within a major group, I will emphasize the idea that in this context, everything seems political and collective (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987, p.29-30). In fact, "minor" "*life projects have no political horizon; they are the political horizon*" (Blaser, 2004, p.40). But the supposed marginality of minor indigenous culture is an exciting feature. There are always pathways to overturning cultural and legal hegemonies that restrict the subordinate voice (see Spivak, 1998). In this light, minor language is not only highly political, escaping the desire for

⁹² An underhand racism became evident when 62% of the Chilean population rejected the constitutional text that had been drafted, which included constitutional recognition of the indigenous peoples of Chile and the country's plurinational. Many people said they believed or feared that this would mean the country's breaking into several small nations. This idea was installed after a long campaign of disinformation from the ultra-right, but it also made evident the racism of the people who disagreed with the indigenous demands.

transparency and neutrality, but also post-representational, allowing many voices to articulate identities and territories in post-colonial contexts (Garcia, 2017). In this way, the articulation I suggest through the *minor* is understood as a strategy and mode of political appropriation of categories, as the term "indigenous" itself refers to the intended use of "counter" categories given their possible emancipatory potential. This issue leads us to delve more deeply into indigeneity, western multiculturalism, and the state policies that try to contain them while simultaneously making them possible.

4.3. Being different, being Other: Identity in tensions

"A world which does not attribute to him a true personal consciousness, but only allows him to see himself through what the other world reveals to him."

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Soul of black folk*.

Tania Murray Li once commented that *Indigenuity* is mobile and articulated in various positions and struggles. However, one of its main features is the "*permanent attachment of a group of people to a fixed area of land in a way that marks them as culturally distinct*" (Li, 2010, p.385). The previous chapters have give a reading of what these territorial connections mean and how they permeate and give meaning to the various practices in indigenous consultations and the counter-reports of Impact Assessments. Now we will look closely at what it means for some persons who define themselves as indigenous to be "different" into a broader group. It is no secret that the "aboriginal culture" -today labeled in the universalistic category "indigenous"- has suffered racism and discrimination precisely because of this socially constructed "difference" (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Many "biologic" arguments supporting racist notions of biological differences have been characterized as false and pseudo-scientific (see Esposito, 2006). I do not think it is necessary to delve into the origins of biological (nowadays cultural) racism that shaped a stigmatized, exotic, and essentialist vision of the indigenous culture (Zapata, 2016). However, that is why the firm conviction of this "difference," expressed in Andrea and Marcia's story exposed in the previous chapter, is so interesting. How to understand this claim that they, as indigenous, are different? Here, it would make sense to distinguish significant internal/external differentiation levels, highlighting the nuances and subtle differences between indigenous and non-indigenous people, considering the specific community relations regarding meaning and identity. As I highlighted before, in the region does not exist an "indigenous movement" that unites all different communities and people into a broader opposition movement against mining. However, although it is well known that mining generates divisions between communities, exceptions do occur where these "internal

differences" are overlooked⁹³. Usually happens in response to an external entity that indigenous identity ties are highlighted in favor of opposing antagonistic actors, be it the "state," "mining companies," or the "Chilean culture." By this, discourses like "we are not the same"/" we are not speaking the same language" (see the previous chapter) claim a general differentiation between "Chilean" and "indigenous" by overlooking these internal degrees of difference. It is how a political mobilization of identity acquires specific meanings in post-colonial contexts. As Marisol de la Cadena Comments:

"Borders between indigenous things and nation-state things are complex; they historically exist as relations among the fields they separate, and therefore they also enact a connection from which both—things indigenous and non-indigenous— emerge, even as they maintain differences vis-à-vis each other. Both are together in histories, calendars, identities, and practices; but they are also different in ways that the other does not—even cannot—participate in."(De la Cadena, 2016, p. 33)

De la Cadena's argument I am following is that according to definitions of the law, the indigenous can be included "in that" but never reduced "to that" (De la Cadena, 2016, p. 33). According to Strathern, the partial connection she follows shapes a particular type of post-plural politics in response to a Western logic of homogenization. The problem in defining "the indigenous" contains epistemological and ontological assumptions and political dynamism: "*We share a vision of mixture, eclecticism, and dynamism as the essence of indigeneity, as opposed to visions of collapse or "corruption" from some kind of original state of purity.*" (De la Cadena & Starn, 2010, p. 11) Again the "culturalist argument" above is sustained. The politics of indigeneity resist being enclosed. However, the community's borders represented a "mask" concerning the outside world. It is the community's "public face," "where *internal variety disappears or coalesces into a simple statement. In its private mode, differentiation, variety and complexity proliferate.*" (Cohen, 2015, p. 74)

Nevertheless, the symbolic bond between indigenous people in Tarapacá is indifferent to the high diversification of interest, cultural means, and livelihoods among indigenous communities. The significant diversification of indigenous demands gives more strength, meaning, and complexity to the term "indigenous" itself, and it highlights differentiation processes regarding meanings and definitions of a "common future." Here I want to relate what an indigenous leader

⁹³ This happened at the end of 2019 when several Aymara and Quechua communities joined together to protest against the indigenous consultation promoted by the central government to change some provisions of the indigenous law.

with vast experience told me about what he thinks about indigenous identity reflected in this story:

"I once fought with a university professor (who insisted) that we, indigenous people, are losing our original identity." (...) So, did I tell him, "What about the Chilean when he goes to Europe. Why don't you go with the horse dressed as "huaso"? I said so that he doesn't lose his "Chilean self." (laughs) Of course! They are dressed in a suit. Why don't you go dressed as a "huaso" and on horseback? I said, "So they can say it's Chilean. (...) it's not like that. When hearing the national song, the Chileans jump in the shot because it is deep inside yourself. (...) That's the identity because it is in their blood. Not in the clothes, my friend (...) When I listen to my music (...), and there is a girl who is also "Andean," I go out to dance and am not ashamed. It's my song. It's my culture. And I say this with pride because I am an Andean. Yes, my friend. (...) Identity is not taught at the university—these things I said to him "(Indigenous leader, Iquique. 2019).

This appeal to the "interior" as a profoundly emotional dimension of identity gives a vision of the ties between blood, identity, and culture. The difference is not enacted and performed on a superficial ground; instead, it is based on a deep layer. The leader points out that this is an interior, affective dimension deeper than simply a way to look "indigenous," "Chilean," or whatever... Although the word "Huaso" is an example of this "interior dimension" of Chilean identity, which has a series of connotations. It refers to the "Chileanness," connected to certain practices considered "typically" Chilean, such as national dance or rodeo. However, the point is that Chileans do not need to look like "Chileans," nor do they dress as "Chileans." As he put it, identity is much more subtle than a "way to look like...." This a remarkable idea if one considers the long history of racism to which "the Indian" has been subjected in Latin America, which in the first instance refers to phenotypical connotations. We have already commented on the colonial and racist legacy of such distinctions based on "skin" color and "class" belonging.

However, the old leader made another point when he told me about a kind of "performative identity" involved in music and dancing:

"It is born from our roots, culture, and blood. And that's when I realized I went down with the Patron Saints. I was left admired: so many young goats dancing, and where did these come from, that neither have "brown" or "Indian" faces and there they danced.

(He asked) (...) "And where are you from?"

"My grandfather was from that village (...). That's why I like music because my grandfather used to take us, and he used to sing, and we danced."

He finally comments: "As they have transmitted. And the women the same. And the beautiful goats. And no one had shame." (Indigenous leader, Iquique. 2019)

He comments on his surprise that a child without "Indian" or "brown" faces is dancing to Andean music. You do not have to look like "Indio" to develop such feelings, and this internal dimension awakes in you some moods attached to your personal history and deep-rooted feelings.

However, the narrative has some essentialist components in explaining identity and how it is performed. Thus, the question of identity can be connected to the problem of permanence and change and re-signification, when what was once a source of shame can now be a source of pride. Cultural movements such as the negritude movement can account for this. Chicano subjectivity is also a product of a transcultural relationship marked by domination, racism, and xenophobia, and Chicano feminists challenge these claims and ideals of purity. In this way, cultural "mestizaje" becomes a political force and a consciousness between different cultures. The reinterpretation of colonial history and the relationship between subordinates and conquerors brought to the present nourishes the plural subjectivity of *mestizaje* (Arrizón, 2000: 27-28; Heitger, 2017; Villenas, 1996) or in terms of the American sociologist Du Bois; it forms a double consciousness⁹⁴.

In the tradition of structuralism and post-structuralism, some authors have already pointed out that classification has been an essential cultural device attached to imperial power (see Levi-Strauss, 1999; Foucault, 2012; Deleuze, 1992). In this context, Ian Hacking's (2006) thoughtful concept of *targeting people* and *looping effects* can help us to understand how definitions made from the spheres of power (or sciences) can affect the self-understanding of targeted groups from the outside. Hacking points out that classifications, targeting people, institutions, knowledge, and experts, play a decisive role in categorizing classifications into stereotypes (2006, p. 288-289). In his essay, he proposes a brief interpretation of how this has operated under imperial powers (and then he moves into the field of scientific classifications). Although Hacking is trying to describe a sociological effect in which already classified people enter the role that the classification imposes on them. In this way, "they" become "what they are," or

⁹⁴ As W.E.B. Du Bois writes in "The Souls of black folk,": "*After the Egyptian and the Indian, the Greek and the Roman, the Teuton, and the Mongol, the Negro is a sort of the seventh son, born with a veil and endowed with a second vision in this American world: a world which does not attribute to him a true personal consciousness, but only allows him to see himself through what the other world reveals to him. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this feeling of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's own soul against the yardstick of a world that observes with jovial disdain and pity. One always feels this duality: one American, one black; two souls, two ways of thinking, two irreconcilable struggles, two ideals in combat in a single dark body whose stubborn strength is the only thing that prevents it from breaking into pieces.*" (Du Bois, 2020, p. 13)

instead, what is imposed on them from outside. But I would like to twist this argument a bit, acknowledging that classified people also tend to take hold of and improve their classification characteristics. In this way, I would read *the Looping effect* in the described cases of resistance/negotiation as something that denotes the conscious use of these previously underplayed categories as modes of struggle and self-recognition. I would apply these ideas to our case to understand the awareness- and construction of "otherness" as a form of political distinction, through which previously defined groups often raise banners of the struggle for their right "to be different."

I have been trying to show a complex picture of voices and claims in which indigenous people assume their identity, addressing specific values as the case for defending territory. Still, they also can engage in negotiations and subsequent deals with mining companies. Communities have to make crucial decisions in their context of internal differentiation. These decisions involve critical analysis and orientation regarding their futures as indigenous. Sometimes, they need an alternative to reach these agreements. As mentioned by the indigenous activist Betasamosake Simpson in an interview with Naomi Klein, Simpson tells about the consequences of extractivism on their people. Communities are under pressure because of their poverty to cede their territories to the extractive industry. "*We have not had the right to say no to development because ultimately those communities are not seen as people, they are seen as resources.*" (Simpson & Klein, 2013) Simpson laments that people no longer remember what these territories were like before these interventions. Moreover, communities are constantly blamed for being poor.

In our case, however, what indigenous people do, regarding their practices, customs, and rites, is not in another "order" as those practices of negotiation and collaboration seem to get in conflict, affecting their affective and emotional dimension. Moreover, it affects their moral and ethical concerns about their territory and the environment. For this reason, the difference between compensation and benefit is significant because the communities are not asking for anything. They only demand their rights be fulfilled due to their indigenous condition because they differ and share other meanings. Stuart Hall's said about identity:

"In common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation. In contrast with the 'naturalism' of this definition, the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed -always 'in process. It

is not determined in the sense that it can always be 'won' or 'lost,' sustained or abandoned. "(Hall, 1996, p.2)

For Hall, identity is anchored in discursive practices as an articulation, sometimes much more strategic than natural or fixed. Identity is historical and constantly changing (Hall, 1996, 4). An idea nurtured by anti-essentialist cultural studies, psychoanalysis, and postmodern philosophy that criticized a "static," "fixed," and "naturalistic" notion of identity (see chapter seven). It works in the interstices of a prodigious and strategic production of conflictual and fantastic *identity effects*, as Homi Bhabha once wrote: "*in the play of power that is elusive because it hides no essence, no 'itself'*" (Bhabha, 1984, p.131). These considerations lead us to reconsider an interpretation of the already outlined testimonies: One in the narrative of the elderly leader, surprised by the young goats dancing to Andean music. He understands Andean identity as a deep internal process of self-identification beyond the phenotypical features of "Indians." The other, much more "strategic" use of the term "indigenous," is based on the awareness of definitions of indigenusness in international law and agreements. Definitions that affect the difference between "compensation" (as a right of indigenous demand) and "benefits" (rather than a "request" to share the economic benefits of mining). Both narratives placed the question of identity differently regarding their performed practices, having to deal with cultural processes in which indigenous people constantly move in and out— this is what I develop as a kind of minor resistance to social processes that continuously challenge them. However, there are still existing other notions that convene to highlight now.

4.3.1. A naturalistic understanding of identity

Non-indigenous people tend to hold "naturalist" ideas about identity, traced in association with "racial purity" imaginaries of certain indigenous groups such as Aymara or Mapuche. However, this is not something sustained by the Indigenous themselves: their claim of differentiation is much more "cultural" than "biological" or "racial." I also often perceived critical remarks of indigenous practices regarding negotiations and agreements, which can be outlined as the contradiction between "behaviors vs. discourse"—a matter of the Chilean people's concerns, observing "from outside" what indigenous do. Critical assessments evaluate indigenous values with their practices; thus, their coherence is critically balanced in what they say and do. An example of this is the case of the history of agreement between the Cancosa community and the Cerro Colorado mining company outlined in the previous chapter. One of the first agreements of this type is based on monetary compensation measures. As a farmer from Pica express it:

"The Aymara world, specifically those of Cancosa, which is an Aymara community, leaves us a bit in doubt because they talk a lot about their roots and everything that the worldview implies, but they are very good businessmen. And at the bottom of the waters issue, they reached trade agreements with Cerro Colorado, and we are talking about several million dollars. (Farmer, Pica. 2019).

This statement provides insights about assessing "intrinsic values," specific ideas about how indigenous people behave and what they declare. He mentions an essential contradiction regarding indigenous livelihoods, compensation payments, and indigenous discourses about Pachamama. This is because non-indigenous people's expectations of indigenous practices are still being met. Instead, it is due to a critical observation that needs to understand indigenous practices concerning their discourses of environmental care. How can they negotiate with the mining companies if they say they want to take care of the environment? This seems pure contradiction (nothing else). However, these assessments can articulate feelings and moods such as envy or mistrust⁹⁵ or from relatively "abstract" understandings of indigenous culture. Some outside observers familiar with the cases often perceive that the communities benefit from their indigenous "status" thanks to the indigenous law and ILO Convention 169. In this sense, it places indigenous in an advantageous position over "ordinary" Chileans, mainly regarding their approaches to mining companies⁹⁶.

However, in the view of the Pica farmer quoted above, whether the indigenous people live in the territories is also crucial. This characteristic is a large part of the commitment to defend their territory. As the quoted farmer explains, despite their claim to all their costumes and rituals, these indigenous people live in the urban centers of Iquique, Alto Hospicio, or Pozo Almonte because they are merchants with "no real ties "to their ancestral roots. On the contrary, as the farmer explains, his own feelings of belonging are different: *"I have my roots in Pica, I have my wife and my children, and I am raised here in Pica, and we make sovereignty in the day-to-day and as you see here...."* For him, the indigenous people of Cancosa *"go to their lands when they have only the festivals or carnivals, so they have no scruples about reaching an agreement*

⁹⁵ I refer here to a conversation with a worker of the CONADI authority, who described "envy" as a serious "emotional state" of the "nortino" people.

⁹⁶ These ideas have also been held in the context of the constitutional assembly. The rejected Draft or a new Constitution contained that Chile would become a "Pluri-National State." Many voices disagree with that idea, saying that indigenous people would have a privileged position among other Chileans. The indigenous issue was one of the "reasons" why 62 % of the Chilean vote against this draft. Almost two months after the referendum, the surveys show that people's support for pluri-nationality dropped from 70 to 50 percent.

with the miners, you see." He does not believe in their claim to have "so much connection with their territory and to defend the environment or the waters.

We have already mentioned how these issues of commodifying cultural values and ethnicity have been described in ethnographic studies, and this critique is also at stake here.

"It turns out that tomorrow if it dries up there, it won't affect them. On the other hand, if tomorrow there is a situation where the mining companies have an impact, we are four thousand inhabitants who will have to leave and have lived here since time immemorial, and there are many sides to us, you see. Then our reality is very different." (Farmer, Pica. 2019.)

The farmer put himself as a counter-example regarding an honest awareness of the territory and environmental pollution. He knows the relations between ecological impacts, the local dependence on water resources, the growing fear of water scarcity, and the territorial interdependency between local livelihoods. His critical assessment of the practices of the people of Cancosa points out that as they live mainly in the cities, they would probably not be affected if any environmental catastrophe occurred because of mining. In this way, the farmer establishes a special connection between identity, territory, and the defense of these territories articulated in discourses that can differ from practices. For him, these indigenous people who sold their environments to mining are not honest because they claim something that contradicts their actions.

It is part of an ongoing process of cultural transformation in which Cancosa has a remarkable place. As a worker of CONADI told me,

"Cancosa is a milestone because they attempted a series of actions such as establishing coexistence manuals, interrelationship plans, all traditional use. They did not work because of the power of money. Money did not exist in our culture. And from there, entering to empower the communities, the social work, and the organization, they go into a debacle. Why? Because the people were closest to the negotiation, they generate a lot of antibodies, and the organization is weakened instead of strengthened" (Worker CONADI, Iquique. 2019)

He points to the problem that is acquiring new financial resources, e.g., money, has most impacted indigenous culture. An Issue that leaves us to the second aspect regarding indigenous values and identity is the economic characterization of these groups.

Historically, the indigenous population has been the poorest in Chilean society (see chapter Eight). Class differences in Chile and other Latin American countries are also associated with specific skin colors. A group of researchers has called this process *Pigmentocracies* is not only

reduced to a class-race imaginary but has real connotations in people's lives. It shapes daily experiences across Latin American societies. *Pigmentocracies* is a name for articulating racial and class distinctions in which some racial characteristics, e.g., skin color, are associated with specific positions of social classes. (Tellez & Martinez, 2019)

Despite these imaginaries being lived in Latin American societies, a characteristic of the indigenous people of the North of Chile is not necessarily poverty. Indigenous can perfectly drive a 4x4 truck and have their children study at an expensive university. But according to the most critical estimates, that wealth is nothing more than the result of the deals with the mining companies, whether territory or the water as "transacted." In conversations with indigenous spokespersons generally against mining, some of them told me about the negative role of money as the leading cause of disputes within and between communities: "*Where money is involved, conflicts arise,*" they said. Interestingly, the contradiction between "ecology" and "economics" is somehow reflected at a micro-level.

A worker from the state authority CONADI described the means of "transactions," which goes "beyond" the indigenous worldview because money did not exist before. "*Therefore, it disrupts the whole cosmological structure that any human being has. It has to adapt to what the West calls the market.*" That is a big problem regarding the "*disparity between opinions and between the people who want to maintain a custom (...) for a traditional model, and those who want to negotiate with the mining industry*". By this, the indigenous becomes "migrant" because they leave out their ancient territories to become an urban dweller. Only the elders stay living in the communities. A situation that implies changes in living conditions and social expectations. It is mainly related to the possibilities for the younger generations "*because today, the model that governs society calls or motivates these parents to find or install the best qualities in their children to perform in the best way. Well, this situation generates many disputes within the communities.*" (Anthropologist, CONADI, Iquique. 2019). But this situation is not very different from that of any ordinary Chilean who understands education as the dimension of life that can provide the improvement of the human capital needed to succeed in life (See Dardot & Laval, 2013).

Coming to the point: the mentioned situations give an account of a dynamic in which traditional or indigenous values have been persistently transformed or affected by the intervention of mining companies and the obtainment of financial resources formerly unknown to indigenous people. We will now delve into the literature on how traditional values are affected by

commodification, i.e., capitalist processes that force local communities to redirect their interests and values.

4.3.2. Values and commodification

In anthropological research, these entanglements have been outlined differently, especially in studies focusing on understanding changes in the values of communities affected by development policies. The case of Tania Li's research about land dispossession in Indonesia focused on collective landholding under pressure by external forces, like governmental development agendas. She describes the responses of people who, due to poverty, must "free" the land from their collective bounds to sell to secure their subsistence. *"As some people who consider themselves indigenous reject individualized tenure, others insist on their right to buy, sell, and mortgage their land."* For Li, indigeneity is framed in the constitutive elements of indigenous culture pressured by capitalism. *"This cannot be seen simply as a matter of choice. When there is a choice, it is shaped by a desire and expectation that capitalist agriculture will produce good returns, money to educate children and other benefits."* (Li, 2010, 399) Part of Li's research has focused on understanding the changes brought by intrusions and interventions that people cannot stop and on the expectations that the romanticization and exoticization of "indigenous" generates. In this regard, it's worth highlighting Nancy Postero's comment on Li's article, given insights into her own experience of Guarantees in Bolivia:

"A major factor was a crisis in leadership, as local leaders were caught between their need to appear "traditional" and the pressures to capitalize on their only resource. But another reason these other options were not pursued is that those who wanted to sell their lands were labeled as corrupt or acting against the "Guarani" way." It seemed "unnatural" to see Indians selling their lands, even to me, an anthropologist who chose to work with urban indigenous groups precisely to get away from the stereotypes about Indians and their relation to sacred lands." (Postero comment on Li, 2010, p. 405)

Something thought-provoking in this type of option and attitude is people's ethical and moral evaluation. It is the task of anthropologists to ask why people make these choices and not others. However, within the socio-economic context, the indigenous position is always subordinate and targets unmet basic needs.

Without a doubt, the historical configuration of the "Indio" is full of racist and classist imaginaries that persist in our Latin American societies. Drawing on these different testimonies and perspectives, indigenous livelihoods are under constant challenge. Moral and ethical views are also shaped and transformed through various negotiations and strategies, influencing the

actors' positions. This kind of transformation is not causal but historical and contingent (Li, 2014a).

Similar cases can be seen in land tenure and the holding and selling of water rights. The work of Sally Babidge builds on the relationship between different values whose contradictions are attributed to the neo-extractivist situation in the north of Chile (Babidge, 2016; Babidge & Bolados, 2018; Carrasco, 2016). Babidge's case draws on the ancestral importance of water for the Atacameños: *"The moral value of water can thus be interpreted in terms of essential forms of indigenous identity with its basis in customary practice, ancestral belonging, and traditional forms of labor and subsistence"* (Babidge, 2016, p. 93). Nevertheless, she makes the remarkable attempt to move away from a notion of "closed value structures" in which water as a "source of life" is contrasted with the notion of water as a "resource" and "private property." Indigenous values are also tied to other practices contradicting idealistic notions of indigenism. By this, indigenous values are balanced out regarding Western values according to commodification practices, explained in one case where indigenous people sold their water to a mining company:

"During my stay in the region in 2012, in a conversation with two leaders of a community about their relations with different mining companies regarding water, they told me that they were selling a number of truckloads of water to the smaller of two lithium mining operations on the Salar at a small profit to the community." (Babidge, 2016, p.96)

Afterward, she comments:

"In these cases, minimal contest arises between mining companies and residents in regard to forms of commodification for human comfort and subsistence, since water is understood by locals in terms of the value of human life, but also in these specific terms as an economic resource with 'market' value at small volumes" (Babidge, 2016, p.97).

She also mentions the accusations against the community that they did not resist mining strongly enough. The contradictions of this process also show the difficulties for indigenous people to maintain their "own" values, especially considering the highly normative guidelines that shape the Chilean water market. The contradictions between the rights of the indigenous people and the normative concepts that make up the structure of resource extraction become evident:

"Contemporary Atacameño formulations of value and resource ethics draw on the use of water for aspects of the agro-pastoral economy and new opportunities for entering the market economy, as well as the moral interconnectedness of indigenous bodies and that of 'nature.' For those keen on reviving traditional practice or claiming rights to waters, it is increasingly difficult to sustain a coherence of what is politically conceived"

as 'indigenous rights, as many people put the subsistence economy of agriculture and cultural activities that elaborate on it, second to remunerative benefits associated with the mining industry and resulting cash incomes or financing of development programs.' (Babidge, 2016, p.98)

Babidge's reflections are interesting in that the geographical, cultural, administrative, legal, and political context reflects the framework of an asymmetrical relationship in which different values are created and negotiated in practices and performances. Secondly, the assumption that water's ontological differences must be handled differently because of these specific values underlies them. Thirdly, "hybrid" understandings and treatment of resources can nevertheless emerge in these contexts.

Another example is Carrasco's work about the relationship between the different understandings of water of the Atamaceños in two further case studies. In them, she explores why indigenous communities make agreements with mining companies, such as renting their water rights. In these processes, opposing water values emerge but can still have a dynamic effect. Carrasco considers the different values between the two extremes (commodification and unexchangeable goods). Holding a classical *anthropological-economic perspective*, she writes:

"As argued by Kopytoff (1988:69), the perfectly commoditized world would be one in which everything is exchangeable or for sale. By the same token, the perfectly de-commoditized world would be one in which everything is unexchangeable. No real-life situation conforms to either of these extremes, but every real economy occupies a shifting place between them. In addition, there are hierarchies in the loyalties that make the sphere of morality dominant or subordinate to the sphere of the economy." (Carrasco, 2016, p.146)

According to the author, ideal-typical notions of "commodification" cannot be found in the real world. Instead, ethnographic works, such as those by Carrasco and Babidge, provide rich reflections about multiple "shades of grey" and intermediate fields between commodification and traditional practices, giving rise to various transformation processes, such as how water is evaluated and treated. Carrasco speaks of a "hierarchy of loyalties" regarding valuations and natural dynamics. These show that transformation processes not only have a procedural logic to the relationship between indigenous and mining but should also contribute to the demystification of indigenous culture and the static representation of indigenous communities as timeless subjects. (Carrasco, 2016, p. 148)

The last reference in research, which can serve as a counter-example to the already exposed reading of indigenous values, is Juan Van Kessel's report on indigenous communities trying to protect their lands against mining companies in Tarapacá. He describes a long conflict over the

access to water reservoirs that various mining companies have repeatedly applied to the General Water Direction (DGA). Van Kessel inserts long quotes from Javier Vilca, indigenous spokesman for the community of Lirima, who tells about the different legal ways indigenous people are trying to defend their lands and resources. According to Vilca's narrative, after years of resistance, *"we understand that it's crazy that a small village of 36 people is fighting against a company, against the laws of the country and against the State, which is firmly in favor of the project "Cerro Colorado" (Van Kessel, 1985, p.150.)* Vilca tells how, afterward, the community realized that resistance would be increasingly difficult and costly, so they finally decided to negotiate with the company. It shows a picture of lived conjunctures and transformations under Pinochet's military dictatorship favoring the development of private multinational mining, thus creating the legal basis for the appropriation of water for that production area, a reason to connect the privatization process of water management to the shifting frontiers of the extractive economy.

Nevertheless, this story is one of many that show how communities in Tarapacá historically tried to resist this process in one way or another, as the work of Tania Li, Sally Babidge, and Carrasco outlines the shifting of indigenous cultural values as relatively "open systems." Also, the previously outlined field experience shows indigenous communities' difficulty in defending themselves against the governmental-institutional legitimacy of extractive projects through these stories and narratives.

It seems relatively easy to fail if one tries to coherently interpret actions, discourses, and practices defending the existence of "ideal type" close value systems. It is also difficult to assume a homogeneous understanding of indigenous "identity" and "livelihoods" according to "pure" values with no contact with other worlds. Whether indigenous people live in urban or rural (or both simultaneously) areas, working in tourism or mining can influence individual choices, collective attitudes, and ethical commitments, which shape different positions regarding the closeness or distance to the so-called "Western culture." In this way, I follow an understanding of identity as a relatively conscious process of narrative construction, where different political, cultural, or social elements can configure dynamic processes of articulation beyond authenticity as stable features of indigeneity. In this sense, we need to struggle to grasp an unfinished process.

4.3.3. Identity and multiculturalism

Several forces at work can influence how the indigenous narrative is constructed and held against the forces and power that try to retain or frame them. These processes are dynamic, but they also function with an inherent tension in the context of neoliberal multiculturalism (Hale, 2005; De la Cadena & Starn, 2010; Ramos, 1992; Tsing, 2005, 2010). Indigenous life in Chile has been shaped by the post-dictatorship political arrangements created to deal with the historical debt of the so-called "indigenous question" (CdVJyNT, 2003). We have already delved into the strategic political use of the "indigenous" category, supported by national and international demands, laws, and alliances (Tsing, 2010). We have discussed how negotiations generate a variety of ambivalences regarding two supposedly irreconcilable ways of conceiving the world. The old contradiction between environmental protection and monetary payments expresses a dilemma attached to the development question, reflected in the difficult position of indigenous livelihoods. The concessions made in negotiation processes are at the expense of what supposedly gives "indigenous culture" meaning and strength, not as a "way of life" but as a "livelihood." But we still need to see a homogeneous, univocal way of living together in the territories or the cities. This interpretative pathway leads us to consider the performance of a *strategic identity* as a practice that responds to specific mobilizations of cultural politics, which involves consciously using this category to defend certain positions. These positions can also be diverse and contradictory. It is how discourses are adjusted by articulating specific communities' territorial and cultural demands. We have observed that the relationship with mining has triggered some crucial elements of self-determination and territorial claims.

Regarding the question of indigeneity, there is still operating an imaginary that is based on the strong opposition between the "indigenous hero" and the indigenous who "sold out to power," mainly expressed in the general opposition between those who are resisting any negotiation and agreement, and those who negotiate or already obtained financial income from mining. This tension is the heart of this cultural conflict, making choosing between agreements and negotiation or denying any mining intervention a moral feature. The indigenous world is also perceived concerning the different positions of ethnic groups vis a vis the Chilean state, CONADI, Chilean society, and corporations. An issue that shapes and tenses the horizon of Latin American multiculturalism.

Charles Hale comments in his research on Guatemala and Honduras that neoliberalism is one of the cultural expressions of transnational capitalism, which implies the dichotomy between recognition and recalcitrant indigenous subjects. Hale calls neoliberal multiculturalism

"whereby stand form proponents of the neoliberal doctrine pro-actively endorse a substantive, if limited, version of indigenous cultural rights, as a means to resolve their own problems and advance their own political agendas" (Hale, 2002, p.487). Emphasizing the character of individual freedom and choice of indigenous subjects, he highlights the individualizing nature of multicultural policies. These figures of "otherness" are instead framed within the sphere of recognition: Concessions, prohibitions, and contentions are part of this process forged to articulate the indigenous demands within certain permitted limits. Hale's reflections also make sense when applied to the Chilean case if one looks at the difference between indigenous policies in a comparative way. The Mapuche resistance in southern Chile has made the current state ungovernable. As the Mapuche groups in the community of Temucuicui have been under police siege for years due to the categorization of the Mapuche conflict as a "terrorist threat" and the permanent conflict between communities, the state military forces and the forestry industry of the sector are in full swing. Today also in the north, the Aymara indigenous people are moving to new ways of claiming territorial self-determination over natural resources. Something new occurs in the context of a possible new constitution. Indigenous people have been using their voices to deepen the discussion about natural resources and mining royalties. Some uphold their right to binding refusal of new mining projects. These references, in some way, teach us that it is "easier" for governments doing their "business as usual" recognizing cultural differences as customs or languages than to recognize indigenous autonomy to decide their own development perspectives to follow (a "dangerous" issue regarding the national interests in mining development)⁹⁷.

⁹⁷ Some indigenous leaders' work concerning the generation of norms in the constituent process 2021-2022 is a good example of this. Since 2021 I have been working in collaboration with the leader of the Huara sector, Mario Calisaya, who has been contributing to the commission focused on economic models and natural resources. Since February 1st, the proposal "RIGHT OF THE ORIGINAL PEOPLES TO EXERCISE PERMANENT SOVEREIGNTY OVER THEIR TERRITORIES AND NATURAL RESOURCES" has been available online. (N. 1.318). This is only one of the many citizen proposals to be addressed by the constituent. As the name indicates, this proposal refers to the discussion of a constitutional norm that gives sovereignty to indigenous peoples over their territories as a response and counter-proposal to the permanent advance of mining within indigenous territories. The proposal is divided into three sections. "Problem to be solved" indicates, "*Indigenous peoples recognize the disadvantage that the ownership of natural resources is in the power of others and that they are only granted participation through indigenous consultation, contradicting the self-determination of indigenous peoples to consent and permanent sovereignty over their natural resources. It is reflected that there must be control and exercise of sovereignty with the sole objective of the protection and defense of the territory*". the second is "The ideal situation," where it states: "*Our objective is aiThemed at the recognition of the right that indigenous peoples have in the exercise of permanent sovereignty over natural resources, in their territories, to freely dispose of natural resources, to take back their effective control and to receive compensation for the damages suffered, to guarantee their economic self-determination and the limit to the power of the State to freely dispose of these resources.*" The last is the "proposed article": "*It is the duty of the state to recognize and guarantee the permanent sovereignty exercised by indigenous peoples over their territories and natural resources.* (https://plataforma.chileconvencion.cl/m/iniciativa_indigena/detalle?id=1318 (acceded: 11.02.22) The text is attached to the website, and it also contains the UN- Report by Erica-Irene A. Daes, about the permanent sovereignty of indigenous over their natural resources (Daes, 2004).

In a similar reading, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's work on indigenous resistance in Bolivia (2010) also focuses on the tension evident in the democratizing and homogenizing project of the Bolivian elites concerning the indigenous. Cusicanqui outlines the Bolivian elite's forced attempt to domesticate indigenous demands under the figure of a subordinate, multicultural, second-class inclusion that never participates in the spheres of power⁹⁸. As in Bolivia, indigenous in Chile have historically been excluded from all spheres of power and political decision-making⁹⁹. But time will tell how much the "indigenous voice" has influenced not only the process of its constitutional recognition but also the framework of a country project that is being widely discussed as I write these lines.

These theoretical efforts of researchers such as Cusicanqui and Hale are based on empirical research across Latin America, stressing the multicultural conception of indigenous inclusion within the Latin American spheres of society. They show and problematize the strong opposition expressed in the "meek" and a "conflictive Indio." It shed another light on multiculturalism as an expression of the conduct of indigenous demands through a legal field, a framed space of possible and permitted political action. In this constellation of different "attitudes," the difference between a "conflictive" and "radical" politico-cultural struggle and those demands that go through the corresponding state institutions such as CONADI shows the nature of political constraint inherent to multicultural policies. As the philosopher and psychoanalyst Slavoj Žižek have argued, this liberal tolerance excuses the "folkloric Other," deprived of its substance, at the same time as the "real" Other is denounced for its "fundamentalism," its "patriarchal" and "violent" character. It is never the Other of ethereal wisdom and enchanting customs. Ironically, this aligns with Homi Bhabha's argument on the mimicry of colonial discourse, which constructs an Other "*as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (Bhabha, 1984, 126). In that sense, we can follow that this difference between an "imagined" and a "real" Indio in neoliberal multiculturalism is stressed. The "real Indio" can also be those who are receiving payments from big corporations, something that does not fit with the white imaginary, a purified and idealized ideal of the "Indio as Hero"

⁹⁸ I thank Valentina Vega for the reference to delve into Cusicanqui's work.

⁹⁹ This situation has changed a bit, thanks to the work of the constituent convention formed in 2021 to write the new political constitution of the country. In this new constitution, 17 indigenous constituents represent the ten ethnic groups currently recognized in Chile, whose main fights have to do with the constitutional recognition of the indigenous peoples in Chile and a re-definition of natural resources management. This comment is only a footnote because of the rejection of the draft in September 2022.

(Ramos, 1992). (But, ethnologists and environmental NGOs require these Indians to justify their interventions on their culture.) Ultimately, this idealization is a modern version of the old myth of the *noble savage* (Rousseau). Regarding the American philosopher Douglas Buege, the idea of *ecologically noble savage* is a Euro-American stereotypical durable creation because it has allowed ignoring the living conditions of indigenous people worldwide. Despite this Western imaginary, the reality is so much different, e.g., indigenous people use the various technical tools provided by Western modernity to survive (Buege, 1996, p.83). This situation puts indigenous in a paradoxical situation because they need to "fulfill" the false expectancies of white Western people regarding their "authenticity" as indigenous. In line with this, the position of the Mixe linguist and activist Yásnaya Aguilar Gil¹⁰⁰ cannot be more explicit when she was asked, "*if indigenous people are good?*" She answers:

"No. One of the things that interest me most is that people (...) who approach the indigenous world do so through an idealization, and I believe that one of the most subtle ways of discriminating against others is to deny them the capacity to be evil. So we are complex like any other society, and we have problems, challenges, and being roots, we have new shoots and all these implications. Our languages are not only local, metaphorical, and poetical but also languages in which I can say something beautiful, painful, or pejorative towards the other. They are languages like any other, and I can talk about how an atom works and about my own history." (Aguilar Gil, 2017. Accessed 8.11.21).

This statement is powerful in its clarity, as it is not only a critique of a white image of the indigenous but a call to be seen and understood within the *human communitas* as any other human being. Multiculturalism is a specific ideology of a preconceived difference in completely depoliticizing terms. What we call the *mobilization of difference* is subject to negotiation processes that call into question the positions and definitions of indigenous held to justify certain practices. These different reflections outlined above put a lot of stress on indigeneity and politics. As Ana Tsing comments regarding the inconsistencies and contradictions of the politics of indigeneity:

"Indigenous policy forces us to judge between the real and the fictitious, between empowerment and co-optation, between good and bad allies. The call to immerse ourselves in the experience of indigenous people is a starting point for such trials. However, the victories which indigenous peoples depend on the mismatch between universal rights and local cultural legacies, expert science and local knowledge, the social justice and community priority". (Tsing, 2010, p.74-75)

¹⁰⁰ Thanks to Jorge Vega for this reference.

In the context of neoliberal multiculturalism, everything seems fluid: different alliances can be forged, identities transformed, cultural elements mixed, and discourses connected and mobilized. As already seen, any definition of identity underlies a dynamic character of self- and group identification as a constitutive element. This seems problematic if we conceive some identity claims as anchored in values and an ethic that defend supposedly "ancestral" values. It appears that the definitions of identity can "adjust" to the new context and scenarios that call into question the foundations of this identity. We must deal with political and strategic features beyond the identity question in its conceptual dimension. This means that any "fixed" or "fluid" identity seems shaped beyond any normative or conceptual assertion that can be made of it. It becomes almost absurd because it always goes on to questions of authenticity. These processes have already been critically highlighted by the new uses of ethnicity in a commoditized version of cultural performativity (See Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, see discussion in Chapters Seven and Eight). However, these criticisms must consider the wide range of cultural pluralism that can occur in various forms and ways, e.g., how ethnicity is achieved and performed. However, this work has developed an understanding of the porosity and hybridity of the indigenist discourse as enacted within a political-discursive performance. Although with the series of transformations described concerning indigenous culture, it is difficult to separate the various political and economic strategies that seek to improve the living conditions of indigenous subjects. For this reason, we have maintained the focus on the politico-cultural strategy outlined in this research. However, it seems clear that identity processes are difficult to understand regarding a "substantialized identity" connected to an inherent characteristic of specific, relatively stable cultural or social elements.

The different issues outlined in this chapter show two intertwined effects generated simultaneously, on the one hand, the processes of controlled homogenization through the indigenous policies implemented by the Chilean state since the '90. Controlled homogenization, in the sense of having established the guidelines of a non-radical but controlled difference within the designs of the state and its policies by implementing policies that favor the creation of communities as relatively small entities, as relatively stable groups. This fragmented indigenous people's aspirations, desires, and needs since each person in a community must deal with multiple positions. Still, within the margins of the community, they belong. The actions of the mining companies in this situation only deepened the problem of cultural fragmentation. On the other side, their financial power is used by communities to strengthen their position and, to some degree, to implement a non-hegemonic *minor development*, which does not resonate

with the aspirations of the Chilean state, but, paradoxically, it uses the financial ties with corporations to promote another kind of life projects beyond extractivism.

5. NATURE

5.1. Nature, utopia, and Decolonization

This last chapter is an essay about the question of current utopias and the future from a neo-indigenist and de-colonial perspective. I am introducing this previous chapter by commenting on two historical and political events in which the debate on alternative development models has taken a specific political and legal shape. These two examples establish political and philosophical discourses as alternatives to extractivism and neo-extractivism as part of a broader program of capitalist accumulation. I refer to the election of Evo Morales as Bolivia's first indigenous president in 2005 and the introduction of Ecuador's new political constitution in 2009. Political leaders of both regimes have expressed deeply critical views of Latin America's development history. They have ideologically pronounced their critique of the capitalist system from the left wing and a de-colonial tradition. These have been articulated with alternative notions of life anchored in a different valuation of nature and development (Zibechi, 2011; Gudynas, 2016, 2012a). Both express an interesting eco-political and ideological dimension, which I do not consider isolated events. They are expressions of the inherent tension about the definition of Latin America's "space of hegemony," resonating with a postcolonial perspective and the ecological crisis that our planet is going through.

The document "El Vivir Bien como respuesta a la crisis global," published by the Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia (2009), provides insights into the philosophical foundations that offer an alternative to capitalism. The plan explains the demand for "*the construction of a strategy and a 'plan of struggle' to defend life and save the planet, to protect Mother Nature, and to make possible the subsistence and preservation of our planet Earth*" (MRE 2009, p.11). The document mentions the connection of several "crises" that dominate the global spectrum today: Climate Change, the depletion of natural resources, the water crisis, the crisis in food production, the end of the era of cheap energy production, the global financial crisis and the "crisis of the time," all amalgamated catastrophes that represent a diagnosis of the general "global crisis" (MRE 2009, p.14-15). The existence of this multi-crises situation will finally lead to a global, ecological, and social collapse. Responsible have been the capitalist and socialist modes of production and development, "*which prioritize rapid growth and give priority to the collective and individual accumulation of wealth, all in response to unrestrained and insatiable consumerism and the exploitation of every one of us*" (MRE 2009, p.14-15).

This developmental model is mainly held responsible for this multi-crisis situation. To this end, an indigenous worldview can be an alternative based on a diagnosis in which the differences between the "poor" and the "rich" are not the only priority. So, it will be necessary to look beyond the promise of "development":

"In this scenario, it is no longer enough to fight for the liberation of impoverished nations from the oppression and exploitation of the rich countries, free the South from the North, and fight for independence and national sovereignty against imperialism. The main problem is no longer the "poverty" of the South; the problem is the misunderstood "wealth" of the North, the growing and excessive consumption for which one planet is no longer enough, as the impoverishment of the South and the enrichment of the North are advancing." (MRE, 2009, p.16)

It is no longer a question of whether capitalism or socialism is the only alternative or whether sustainable development should be given preference over other forms of development. From the perspective of the Bolivian government at the time, the contradictions inherent in capitalism cannot be resolved¹⁰¹ due to the intrinsic characteristics of capitalism based on the notion of economic growth. To give some insights into this governmental document's messianic and emphatic tone: *"A cosmic change is imminent. [...] a change of epoch, an unstoppable dawn of new life, identity, and restoration of power"*. (MRE 2009, p.18-19). Against a "culture of death," "oppression," and "exploitation," indigenous philosophy addresses itself as a "civilizing alternative."

From different spheres of knowledge, attempts have been made to understand the cultural connections between extractivism as a specific development model and the consequences and uncertainties in its various political, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions (Burchardt & Dietz, 2014; Gudynas, 2012, 2009, Acosta, 2016, 2013; Bridge, 2004). I think that political ecology and research on extractivism have been widely engaged in understanding the tension between global and civilizational models, which revolve around the capacity to provide answers and generate alternatives to these crises, reassembling the world from a narrative of catastrophe (Kozlareck, Rösen & Wolff 2012).

I will defend the thesis here that current discourses such as "Buen Vivir" consist of power- and meaningful appropriations and postcolonial articulations of different elements of political and ecological (modern) discourses. These discourses are nurtured by eco-political imaginaries of

¹⁰¹ This thesis can be traced to various studies in diverse academic fields that critique capitalism from its ecological foundations. This has been expressed in multiple publications on political ecology, deep ecology, and eco-socialism. See Hernan Daly, Joao Martinez-Alier, Jason Hickel, and Naomi Klein.

other forms of nature-culture relations, which in postcolonial extractivism and neoliberal contexts provide an account of the urgency of meaningful protection of our future, which means shaping a utopian horizon. That is why their messianic character is fascinating, which leads us to the following guiding questions, which will place the following reflections: Is it possible to break out of the capitalist development scheme based on the colonial model of the "West and the rest" (Hall 1992)? What can "local alternatives" look like? Should these discourses be taken seriously in the current *Zeitgeist*, marked by Climate Change and the Anthropocene?

First, it will attempt to explain the discourse of the "rights of nature" (in the following „RoN“) concerning the critique of a Western development model to address these issues. Secondly, I will grasp the historical dimension of modernity, in which a kind of "temporal displacement" takes place through new utopian horizons. Thirdly, these discourses are related to the appropriation of Western and modern concepts of "nature," which will be addressed to draw attention to the contradictions inherent in these discourses and counter-discourses. Finally, we will argue that these contradictions are part of the aporetic effect of "modern grammar."

The initial point of departure will be the recognition that this discursive field is subject to problems in its practical application. Because in both cases, Ecuador and Bolivia, these alternative visions were translated into state programs following the philosophical assumptions of *Buen Vivir*. Here the concept of articulation outlined in chapter Seven can be helpful again. *Articulation* is a discursive formation in which different ideas converge from different epistemic, ontological, and semiotic registers, which are united to form a discursive unity (Hall 2010; Morley & Kuan-Hsing 1996) that may seem contradictory, but not for that reason ineffective. Using this concept, I focus on the "symbolic efficacy" rather than on the internal coherence of such discursive formations. In other words, we are not interested in constructing a critique (inspection) of the internal logic but rather in accounting for the political, ecological, and temporal tensions inherent in these discourse formations when indigenist ideas are developed as current state projects.

5.2. Nature as a legal subject

The concept of nature has been deconstructed and criticized as a "Western invention" (Leiss, 1974; Latour, 2007; Morton, 2007). However, the RoN discourse goes in another direction. It shows how indigenous cosmological concepts are appropriated and redefined in today's postmodern era. Nature as a legal subject shows a paradox firmly rooted in our specific situation

of a neo-colonial period, in which decolonized subjects begin to fly their flags and flame their discourses. On the one side, it is a curious thing that a progressive Latin America left to pursue the banner of "nature protection" when the European intelligentsia deconstructed nature in Western philosophy and science. Since nature has become a field of contestation between realist and constructivist positions (Soper 2005), it acquired different meanings in Latin America, charged with tensions and inherent frictions (Tsing 2005). Even in the face of the so-called RoN, what the Mexican social scientist Enrique Leff called "appropriation of nature" is a necessary struggle and expression of a process these legal measures intend to lead. They respond to modernity as an ontological and epistemological project deeply connected with globalized capitalism's North-South asymmetrical economic conditions (Gago & Mezzadra, 2015; Gibson-Graham, 2008). Modernity is a socio-political amalgam and an ontological and epistemological ground on which all possible relations with nature are ultimately based on domination and exploitation (Leiss 1974; Adorno & Horkheimer 1998; Harvey 1998).

Although the link between extractivism and capitalism has deep historical roots, extractivism can be understood as a capitalist phenomenon grounded in a particular way of understanding and treating nature (Gudynas, 2012; Svampa, 2012; Lander, 2014). However, this is already conceived almost as a commonplace of the critical articulation between modernity and capitalism¹⁰². Even so, the starting point of this critique is directed at the self-destructive character of the appropriation of nature (Leiss 1974; Adorno & Horkheimer 1998) since the progressive drive for growth tends to destroy its very material and ecological basis (Acosta 2010). In this regard, the Hindu ecologist activist and thinker Vandana Shiva pointed out: "*When economics works against the science of ecology, it results in mismanagement of the earth, our home*" (Shiva, 2019, p.7). In the early years of the sustainable development discourse, the well-known study *Limit of Growth* addressed precisely this problem. It argued that the drive for growth could not be sustained over the long term, given the ecological conditions of the planet. Neoliberal economists and technocrats have been talking about ever "newer," "better," and "more efficient" alternatives to fit "sustainable development" so as not to have to abandon the central mantra of capitalism based on economic growth. Thus, the problematic "core" of the unstoppable exploitation of nature remained intact. As Wolfgang Sachs comments: "*Sustainable development calls for the conservation of development, not the conservation of nature*" (2015,

¹⁰² Different debates articulate these complexities regarding modernity's ontological, political, and economic formation. See, e.g., the discussion Anthropocene vs. Capitalocene (Moore, 2016; Haraway, 2016) and the intercontinental debate on the Coloniality of power (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007).

p.1). Thus, criticisms of capitalism have already been articulated from a "double vision," from the exploitation of human beings and the exploitation of nature (Polanyi 2012; Marcuse 1970), an idea which has found its development with different nuances in fields as diverse as deep ecology, political ecology, and dependency theory (Bryant & Bailey, 1997; Forsyth, 2003; Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007). These approaches have shaped various perspectives in Latin America formed by epistemic violence (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2013). People seek to create ecologically realistic and socially just alternatives from this position and awareness.

However, the RoN has been based on an essentialist vision of nature related to human needs in Ecuador. In its imagination, nature should no longer be subordinate to human needs: Nature has its own "right to exist," which is applied independently of human values (Campaña 2013; Acosta 2010). However, as one of the most important Latin American ecologist comment, this does not mean that nature must exist untouched by human processes, but rather that the recognition of its rights must, above all, respect ecosystems and the communities that depend on them (Acosta 2010, p.22). This is in line with Martinez-Alier's argument about the ecological dependence that some human groups have on their environment -an ecology of the poor -as opposed to a "northern" ideology of ecology within the limits of capitalism that tends to defend the conservation of a "pristine" nature (Martinez-Alier & Guha 2000). In other words, the rights of nature should not be confused with the defense of a pristine, untouchable, wild nature common in northern countries.

Thus, the RoN should broadly contribute to environmental and social justice (Svampa, 2016; Machado, 2016). This complicated legal effort aims to extend human rights because, from this "non-modern" perspective, nature is dialectically related to satisfying human needs (Harvey, 2004; Leff, 2004). Consequently, the rights of nature and human rights are not opposing conditions but rather mutually supportive (what some jurists call third-generation rights). While at the same time, they are intended as a legal, material, and philosophical contrast to the "modern" and "capitalist" view of nature, which insists on its commodification (Harvey, 2004a, p.116). Under this scope, natural resources are only there to await to be extracted by technical and industrial processes. Many critiques have been written about these processes, from a neo-Marxism that begins to understand geographic and territorial transformation as a process of relentless capitalization and commodification (Harvey, 1998; Smith, 2007) to non-Marxist critiques of capitalism from the organization of labor, markets, and land (Polanyi, 2012). Common to these critiques is a specific focus on capital's incessant mobility and accumulation

to the detriment of communities, territory, and people (Bridge, 2004; Svampa, 2012; Gudynas, 2016).

The anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli (2016) used an interesting metaphor to denote this "extractivist symbolism" according to a biopolitical logic of capital. She proposed a geo-ontological figure, the *desert*, which shapes the socio-technical imaginary of the possible. The capitalist machine is profoundly vitalist. It generates wealth and life (see Cooper, 2008). Geo-ontological formations acquire new ontological value as they become part of a productive cycle and thus enter the history of human (re)production. Povinelli's concept of the *desert* is a metaphor to denote a space where life as productivity is not yet a reality, but it can emerge. But life as a political question is a constitutive part of a border that continually shifts, inscribing the flow of capital in materializations that leave effects (Deleuze-Guatarri, 1987). Such a play of life/death oppositions is often frequent in local struggles and resistances against extractive or energy projects¹⁰³. But unlike the biopolitical imaginary of late capitalism, what is highlighted in Latin American resistance is not the life injected by capital to awaken a potential productive capacity but the biopolitical "germ" of any project oriented towards extraction and new forms of wealth generation (Cooper 2008; Rifkin, 1999; Shiva, 2003). Instead, it focuses on the effects of destroying ecosystems and place-based cultures (Martinez-Alier, 1992; Escobar, 2014). In the background, two ontologies of life and death are at stake, with different degrees of acceleration and intensities. Let us center here on the aspects of "life."

The philosophical-normative basis of this new scenario of values must be framed in the context of the Andean philosophy of "Buen Vivir." The RoN seeks to inhibit the capitalist appropriation and commodification of nature through constitutional measures. Thus, protecting nature from the insatiability of capital (Svampa, 2016). However, in various statements by some theorists, this is only understood as the beginning of a civilizational transition to another social order (Acosta, 2010, 2012; Campaña, 2013; Zaffaroni, 2011, Llasag, 2011). The argument is that a society based on the RoN must not only establish a different epistemological approach to nature (i.e., a "non-modern understanding") but also demands that in its relationship to nature and human beings, they must be placed on the same level of value (Acosta 2010, 2012). Accordingly, raw materials and other resources should only be extracted to a limited extent. This means, on the one hand, that natural resources should be considered "finite treasures" and,

¹⁰³ This narrative can be traced in various documents produced by the Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflicts (OCMAL) and the Latin American Observatory of Mining Conflicts (OLCA)).

on the other, that the "limits" must be recognized according to their natural cycles to ensure life on earth. Nature must not be exploited infinitely to guarantee its conservation and sustainability (Plumwood, 2002). But recognizing these natural limits and shaping human life within these limits is crucial to the idea of a future Earth (Avila, 2011).

So-called biocentrism thus contrasts sharply with predominant Western anthropocentrism (Acosta 2010; Gudynas 2011). Some of the literature dealing with extractivism points to heterogeneity of local-global elements, which are mobilized discursively and shape responses and alternatives. Different spheres of intellectual and activist cultures in Latin America thus contest the mantra of developmentalism, and it tends to place another dynamism on the old left-right oppositions (Gudynas 2012; Zibechi 2011). Nature has undoubtedly become a political issue (Escobar 2009; Cornejo & Durán 2018), or perhaps it was from the beginning of modernity (Latour 2007). Critiques, inquiries, and alternatives emerge as possible responses to a more profound "civilizational crisis." What is interesting about many of these ideas is the utopian dimension of a different coexistence within the planet based on imaginaries of ancient indigenous values (Sanchez-Parga, 2012). The philosophy of "Buen Vivir," on which much of the argumentation for the RoN is based, functions as an articulation between old and new ideas and concepts, both pre-modern and modern conceptions of nature. These are expressed in this philosophy, not without tensions worth considering more closely.

In this way, an imaginary of a supposedly harmonious relationship between indigenous people and their environment is often assumed, for example, of pre-Columbian times (Sánchez-Parga, 2012). Also, the discursive equation of a Western concept of nature with indigenous views such as "Pachamama" or "Mother Earth" is not without contradictions. However, these inconsistencies are inherent in the translation processes these terms relate, acquiring similar and homologous meanings. No translation is perfect, but they seem to shape *radical worlds* (Povinelli, 2001) forged by an insurmountable excess of meaning (De la Cadena, 2016; Viveiro De Castro, 2013). In many cases, "nature" is not a specific concept in indigenous cosmology, as they base their world on diverse ontological human-cosmos relations that cannot be reduced to the metaphysical assumption of an external and universal nature (Escobar 2009; Descola & Palson 2001; Latour 2007). Then, the reason for using the concept of "nature" in these discourses as a "positive" element of indigenous values is unclear and even problematic.

The philosophy of "Buen Vivir" is driven by an attempt to oppose "modern," "capitalist," "patriarchal," and "dualist" worldviews. The point I will aggregate is the problem that all these understandings are saturated by the colonial, postcolonial, and capitalist conditions that have shaped the historical and semiotic relations between the West and "the rest." It is only through these "historical formations" that it has been possible today to think of alternative visions of the relationship between human beings and nature. Or in other words, this historical frame reflects the conditions of their possible existence. It is not intended to evoke a historical determinism but to draw attention to the historical dimension of this discourse formation. In these articulations, the imaginaries of the "indigenous" are associated with a "modern" ecological consciousness but are discursively articulated by re-appropriating elements outside their conceptual register. But which, however, seems to belong to it. In addition, these discursive formations and alliances have an empirical expression that can be traced back to various parts of the world, evidencing a complicated relationship between "universal" understandings and local uses and practices (Tsing, 2010). I wish to highlight that under this articulation, "nature" and "Pachamama" are shaped and related as two similar concepts that support each other at the level of semiosis. We will enter here, to some extent, into the Western fascination with the "pure" and the "authentic," the yardstick by which an ideology of indigenous culture often tends to be conceived (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Still, such an effort must also consider its history, dynamism, and transformative capacity. However, this will be explicitly outlined in the following sections.

5.3. The Western critique of the concept of nature

I want to open the discussion by questioning the use and sense of the word 'nature.' In other words, I would challenge its use. At first, addressing this question seems confusing, illogical, or beyond Western logic (Verran, 2001). Common sense would never deny that nature exists. It is a sign of the intellectual situation of our time - the Time of the "Gaia hypothesis," "Climate Change," and the "Anthropocene" - that this problematization makes sense at all¹⁰⁴. Nevertheless, various theoretical approaches have attempted to problematize and deconstruct the multiple meanings attributed to Western and modern nature.

¹⁰⁴ All these concepts and issues that emerged over the last few years confront us with various critical aspects of nature (with a capital "N"), and although they come from different perspectives, theoretical traditions, and disciplines, they all seem to have in common the questioning of the supposed "externality" of nature (at least in a nuanced way) and the supposed western human-nature relationship which is not enough to "grasp" the "ecological crisis" we are facing with

Even in these critical approaches, it becomes visible that some "continental gap" appears, which expresses the differences between ideas in a global "North" and a "South." In an essay by the expert on extractivism in Latin America, Horacio Machado (2016), the Argentine sociologist accuses European thinkers Eric Swyngedouw and Alain Badiou of denying the existence of nature. For these authors, "nature" is understood as a new "opium" (Badiou) or as an "empty and floating signifier" (Morton 2007; Swyngedouw 2011). Both authors attribute this to a mobilization process of ecological fantasies in advancing capitalism. Swyngedouw, following Timothy Morton's (2007) arguments, distinguishes between three meanings of nature: that of the *empty signifier*, that of the *force of law* (or norm, against which its possible deviations are measured), and that of the place of the *plurality of fantasies and desires* that are projected around it. Thus, the three articulate the symbolic aspect of a *floating referent* which becomes highly ideological because of its elusive character. The decisive element in all their argumentation is the depoliticizing effect of the term itself (a prevalent argument in Swyngedouw's work), in which the obsession to maintain this concept would undermine the possibility of exercising real politics. Following this line, Badiou and Swyngedouw criticize the discourse of sustainability in green capitalism that ignores the real causes of today's ecological problems, namely the insatiable and ever-advancing capitalist mode of production (see Klein, 2015). In this way, apocalyptic visions of its destruction are articulated with an essentially depoliticized fear because the sustainability discourse would generate an external "enemy figure," thus displacing the agonistic value of politics itself (Mouffe, 2005). However, according to Swyngedouw, the problem is not nature "in itself" (without denying its "reality") but rather its continuous re-interpretation in various contexts of contemporary capitalism (see also Law & Lien 2018). That these diverse ideas of nature function as an "empty signifier" means that they can always be adapted semantically. Whether in the most diverse variants of Western concepts of nature, whether as an ontological guarantor of science or as an organic source of intact and "wild" landscapes in need of protection and conservation (see also Robertson et al. 1996; Smith 2007, 2008; Castree 2001, 2002). Ultimately, nature remains "incomprehensible" because it acts as a *perpetual mobile*, as its meanings are erratic and adaptable to ever-new contexts.

This criticism is entirely justified, given the wide technical range of northern environmentalism that seeks to expand and improve expert solutions. That is to subtract them from the real issue of political responsibility (this is what Escobar called socio-technical nature (Escobar, 1999). Tensions underlying the concept become evident regarding its 'materialities,' discursivities, and valuations, as Kate Soper observes:

"Yet while the ecologists tend to invoke 'nature' as an independent domain of intrinsic value, truth or authenticity, postmodernist cultural theory, and criticism emphasize its discursive status, inviting us to view the order of 'nature' as existing only in the chain of the signifier. Nature is here conceptualized only in terms of the effects of denaturalization or naturalization, and this deconstructivist perspective has prompted numerous cultural readings which emphasize the instability of the concept of 'nature' and its lack of any fixed reference." (Soper, 2005, p.21).

Beyond the deconstructive exercise, Machado's ideas are based on a strict materialist point of view, which is often held by Latin American political ecologists, and which resonate with the wide range of resistance movements in the global South (Schiaffini, 2016; Bebbington et al., 2008) which claim to defend "nature," "water," "land," "territory," and "ecosystems" (Svampa, 2012; Antonelli, 2014, 2016). In general, they assumed that social and ecological movements in Latin America could not be reduced to an abstract or ideological gloss on a universal concept of nature because they defend "real" material needs and worlds (see Martinez-Alier, 1992). These needs are rooted in the ecological foundations of threatened environments and the indigenous and peasant resistance against extractive projects in Latin America. Developmental projects also become a threat to the people themselves in the form of criminalization of protests and murder of environmental activists. This contradiction between a "material nature" as the basis of life, and a theoretically "abstract" post-structuralist critique of nature, accounts for an inherent tension between the concept of nature and its inter-continental reception.

Nature constitutes an excess that cannot be encompassed by technical reason alone (Beck, 1991, 1996; Horkheimer 2007; Adorno & Horkheimer 1998), but that reason is not enough to abandon the term itself. Here, it is necessary to differentiate between the discursive and material levels involved in this problem. Apart from that, authors such as Swyngedouw, Badiou, and Morton strongly criticize the postulate of the sustainability discourse or green capitalism. Their understanding of "Nature" is infused with the sustainability discourse and their technical solutions. According to Machado, they nevertheless indulge in the false conclusion that nature "as such" does not exist. Thus, denying its "reality" ends up denying its ontological status. Morton and Swyngedouw's reflections are extremely revealing when considering the current 'proliferation' of interpretations of what nature "is" and "means" based on different underlying practices, techniques, and political directions. Swyngedouw does not claim to question nature "as such," but rather, its always diffuse conceptions, especially about sustainability. It opens up the gap between "discourse" and "reality," already problematized in the linguistic turn, regarding the problem of representation of an external reality (see Kristeva, 1998).

The confusing linking of analytical-empirical and normative concepts of nature will be necessary to distinguish a few conceptual elements. It is where one of the major complications of the term itself arises: Is nature something observable and therefore translatable as an empirical fact (scientists will not doubt this)? Or does it rather imply behavior, a law, or a norm? These questions lead us to swim in Western waters full of "old" dichotomies. Not for nothing, Raymond Williams once wrote that the concept of nature is one of the most complex in human language. According to this philosopher, "nature" can be defined by three areas of meaning:

1. *the essential quality and character of something;*
2. *the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both;*
3. *the material world itself is taken as including or not including human beings (Williams 1985, 219).*

Williams comments that the relationship between the three definitions is general. While the first one gives an account of a "specific" and "singular" characteristic of something, 2 and 3 are abstract definitions but also singular. The singular, abstract definition is conventional but has a precise history since the meaning of 2 came from the meaning of 1 and became abstract because it was thought of as 'an essential quality or character.' Whilliams argues that: "*Abstract Nature, the essential inherent force, was thus formed by the assumption of a single prime cause, even when it was counterposed, in controversy, to the more explicitly abstract singular cause or force God.*" (Whilliams, 1985, p.220). Whilliams' reflections point to the formation of human thinking about nature, and the imaginary figure of a "singular" and "abstract" nature. It seems to us to suggest the idea that for nature to be considered "universal" that has been shaped as a singular entity is one of the points that have been already questioned today in many academic contexts, from STS to Anthropology mainly in their interpretations of modernity (Latour 1983; 2001, 2007; Shapin& Shafer, 2017; Viveiro de Castro 2013; Descola 2014). Hence, one can derive the great analytical confusion that the term entails, since as "force," "law," and "essential character of something," it functions both: as a *normative assumption* and as an *empirical reality*. Its "abstract" and, at the same time, "real" character is expressed in multiple semantic registers, e.g., natural science, magical thought, animism, and totemism. All of them will have their own "inscription of nature" (Descola, 2013). However, it is precisely at this point that semiotics converges with the materiality of a supposedly external reality¹⁰⁵. It is also one of the

¹⁰⁵ Here lies, as I think, the weakness of the argument of authors such as Latour regarding modernity based mainly on the semantic division between "nature" and "culture" (and all other oppositions). This semiotic

critical arguments that Machado attributes to the European thinkers mentioned above. Due to their abstract and discursive understanding anchored in a critique of discourse, they did not consider that nature means sustenance and material basis for people who do not resonate with modern dualism. How, then, to understand this link with the real without fetishizing it?

Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has argued that ecology has become an important ideological device. His diagnosis of the global situation is based on the worsening of the inequalities on a global scale, in which the worldview projected from ecology is heavily saturated by the inequality of modern forms of knowledge.

"The problem is thus that we can rely neither on the scientific mind nor on our common sense; they mutually reinforce each other's blindness. The scientific mind advocates a cold, objective appraisal of dangers and risks involved where no such appraisal is effectively possible, while common sense finds it hard to accept that a catastrophe can really occur. The difficult ethical task is thus to "un-learn" the most basic coordinates of our immersion into our life-world: what usually served as the recourse to Wisdom (the basic trust in the background-coordinates of our world) is now THE source of danger." (Žizek, 2008)

Following this argument, ecology becomes part of a postmodern mirror game in which "humanity" seems to watch the "outside world of nature" through the mirrors colored by risk, danger, and uncertainty assessments. In a way, Climate Change becomes a kind of "reality check" that affects developed societies, thus undermining their security after deploying technical solutions. In this way, nature has become political because it has become dangerous. However, we live in a time when we no longer have the same trust in modern knowledge institutions (Jassanof, 2004). Sometimes it feels better to hold the old-fashioned prejudices and have easy answers to such complex questions than grasp the whole insecurity.

The increasing control of nature is inherent in the technical and progressive process of modernity, which has already been addressed by dissimilar authors such as the anti-modern philosopher Martin Heidegger and the sociologist Ulrich Beck. The problematic relationship between risk, uncertainties, and environmental consequences is decisive in Beck's work and Heidegger's idea of the "gigantic" (2015). The effects of unexpected phenomena not only repeatedly return, but threats also become the shadows of technical progress and are an integral part of the very process of knowledge that produced them in the first place. Beck consider the ecological disasters caused by nuclear energy, such as Chornobyl (Beck, 1996). What Žižek

expression is precise in the level of meaning, reducing the problem of modernity to a semantic issue, in some way detached from the real.

describes as the ideologization of ecology seems to be the counterpoint of what Beck had described a few years ago as reflexive modernity: "*The theories of reflexive modernization are not nostalgic. They are imbued with the knowledge that the future cannot be understood and existed within the conceptual framework of the past.*" (Beck 1996, p.25). The core of Beck's vision of reflexive modernity recognizes that Western knowledge is to be understood not only in its technological interdependence and the unintended consequences which converge with new forms of risks. As discussed in various chapters, knowledge is subject to certain epistemological limits in its orientation toward the future. Risk assessment is undoubtedly connected with new uncertainties. Yet, on the other side of the planetary hemisphere, the effects of a global economy on the "global south" have explicit local expressions in the form of direct impacts: the destruction of territories, contamination, and overuse of water, fragmentation of communities, etc. In Latin America, uncertainty has been shaped by the experience of potential and actual real disasters, also related to the loss of trust in the modern institution of science but much more in the state. Beyond the discursive valuations, when "the project modernity" and its forms of knowledge are recognized as "being in crisis," how shall we understand the recourse to "nature as such"? Given this state of future catastrophe, are we living today in a moment of nostalgia?

5.4. Utopia and Retrotopia

We may add another question to the above questions: Are we dealing with "modern" problems? After all, it was modernity that first brought about the distinctions between the "old" and the "new," "modern," and "non-modern," and anchored them deeply in our consciousness of time and space (Ingold 2000; Fabian 1983). So, we have to connect the spatial problem to that which addresses the issue of time to understand how new articulations of utopias are forged today. To think "progressive" or "utopian" means to move into a progressive conception of time, with relative confidence that the future will look better than the past (also an expression of the developmental ideology). Nostalgia is linked to the assessment of a "better" past, that what was once was always better. In Europe, this perspective is associated with the reactive critique of romanticism and the reactionary movements of a nationalist far right (Bauman, 2017). In contrast, from a postcolonial perspective, time becomes a political problem in its constitutive roots through the imaginary positioning of subjects and cultures traversed by these histories. It expresses what anthropologist Johannes Fabian has described as a typological time in terms of the hierarchization of different concepts of time.

"Typological Time underlies such qualifications as preliterate vs. literate, traditional vs. modern, peasant vs. industrial, and a host of permutations which include pairs such as tribal vs. feudal, rural vs. urban. In this use, time may almost totally be divested of its vectorial, physical connotations. Instead of being a measure of movement, it may appear as a quality of states; a quality, however, that is unequally distributed among the human population of the world." (Fabian, 1983, 23)

Here I want to follow the core of Fabian's argument: to treat the *denial of the co-evilness* of non-Western subjects as a philosophical and anthropological problem (Fabian, 1983). However, the notion of different concepts of time itself is based on a "naturalized and spatialized time" *"that gives meaning (...) to the distribution of humanity in space"* (Fabian 1983, 25). The epistemic notion of nature may not provide a reference point for classifying all other temporal concepts. New utopias are emerging in postcolonial countries, some of them making universal claims as the idea of civilizational rupture that represents the philosophy of *Buen Vivir* claimed by modern states. As explained above, the concept of *Buen Vivir* precisely articulates this claim to be a "civilizational alternative" in which, however, there will be room for other ontologies (Sousa Santos, 2014^a; Escobar 2010a, 2014; Kothari et al. 2019). But is *Buen Vivir* a modern thing? It is supposed not, but it is trapped in a given "temporality." Suppose we try to understand this temporal dimension of the emergence of these discursive formations in its full postcolonial historicity. In that case, there is no way to avoid modernity as a semiotic, epistemic, and political "one-directional" problem.

Fabián and Wolf already examined the different temporalities of "modern" and "non-modern" cultures some decades ago, thus investigating the historically and epistemically grounded assumption that indigenous peoples are subject to a different time cycle and, therefore, they are not a component of "history" in the modern sense (Wolf 1982; Fabian 1983; see also Said 2013; Blaser, 2013). However, the current environmental consequences caused by the constant exploitation of nature show us how deeply colonial the assumption is that modern and non-modern are spatially and temporally separated. It leads to the difficulty of imagining them as part of a *Hu-manitas*, parts of a "human community" in the Anthropocene era. But this same imaginary is also an effect of the colonial past, which, from the beginning, relied on including the other-under-domination. The problem of temporality is part of the subordinate position of non-Western thought in a broader sense (Said, 2013; Hall, 1992, 2010). Chakrabarty called this process 'historicism,' thus posited historical time as a measure of the cultural distance (at least in institutional development) that was supposed to exist between the West and the non-West' (Chakrabarty, 2007, 7). Following Chakrabarty's ideas, these "other nations" are locked in the "waiting room" of history: *"That was what historicist consciousness was: a recommendation to*

the colonized to wait. (Chakrabarty, 2007, p.8). This expression of political infantilism imaginatively latches onto the supposed lack of political education of the colonized and defines their non-modern peculiarity. In this way, the spatial and temporal formations articulate a grey zone, a "not yet," which has historically shaped symbolic and epistemic violence towards the colonized (Santos, 2013; Dussel, 1994). Hence, the imaginary articulation between history and development re-inscribes a certain evolutionary grammar that seems to have disappeared from the socio-political discourse. Since the end of the Second World War, it is no longer the sociobiological component, as the concept of "race," which was the center of human faculties, especially those of "human groups," has been measured. Still, it is precisely when the developmental discourse emerges as a utopian and teleological horizon, not of human groups but whole "cultures" and "societies." Yet, as indicated above, the question of the representation of nature from a historical point of view is not unproblematic because the emergence of new utopias in Latin America is also a reaction to the colonial past and the ongoing history of exploitation of nature. Development and progress continue to be the protagonists of this drama, and the growing extractivist projects in the region show that this dream has not yet been exhausted. Development continues to be the great leitmotif that imaginatively holds the most diverse threads of economic growth, politics, ecology, and society (Sachs, 2015).

In this context, we should question how we could understand the current rise of nationalist, right-wing, or left-wing populism at the forefront of Latin American nation-states and the way it connects to the question of growth, development, and extractivism. The exportation of nature through raw materials is still shaped by the development ideology and critically interpreted in the "Commodity Consensus" (Svampa, 2012). Thus, in Latin America, the vision of the future has always been accompanied by its material necessity anchored in a plundered continent's natural "wealth" (Dussel, 1994). A continent that claims territorial sovereignty against the globalized market and imperial powers (See Brandt & Wissen, 2017).

In one of his latest books, the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman deals with the current emergence of reactionary forces in Europe based on the resurgence and value of past philosophies. Bauman's book sheds light on the relationship between utopia and temporal conceptions. According to Bauman (2017), nostalgia is essential in emerging new "retrotopias" in Europe. Something that is also observable in post-extractivist societies such as Latin American countries, but with very different effects. However, it will be necessary to distinguish between what Bauman describes as a kind of European "nostalgic turn" from a Latin American "turn" in eco-territorial terms (Svampa, 2012). Europe's imaginary, national, and identity

boundaries of inclusion and exclusion articulate political dissatisfaction and social insecurity with new, dangerously nationalist imaginaries. While in Latin America, utopias emerge based on indigenous imaginaries of place, territories, and nature. In this way, the RoN means appropriating some aspects of Andean philosophy translated into the languages of state institutions and law. These translations of indigenous philosophy into modern states' language cannot only be understood in terms of conservative or reactionary forces; suppose one considers the rights of nature as a "modern solution" to a "modern problem." In that case, one is soon trapped in a homogeneous temporality in which emerging philosophies can only be classified as "reactionary" or "progressive." Like Walter Benjamin's Angelus Novus, it can only look at the past with "horror" while the wind of development drags it further and further: that wind is called "progress". From this debatable articulation between utopia and the ideologies of development, from the perspective of subordinate economies, one can only "regress" to the pre-modern philosophies and imaginaries of a past pre-colonial time that never existed beyond historical imaginations. Latin America has been fundamentally shaped by a "Western" temporality and thus bound to a one-dimensional worldview, conceivable only in "forward" or "backward" terms. It is because Europe, the U.S., and the developed worlds are the only spatial and temporal coordinates offered to a Spatio-temporal bounded postcolonial rationality.

We can observe several discursive elements in Latin America that characterize nostalgic retrotopias. But I insist that their effect in the leftist tradition is very different from that of Europe, as it is a historical and constitutive feature of economic and epistemic inequality and dependence (Wallerstein 2015; Gunder-Frank, 1967; Santos 2014a, 2014b, Dussel, 2014). The nineteenth century's evolutionist scheme -the barbaric/ civilization -has always symbolized the epistemic and economic "backwardness" of Latin American thought. In turn, this assumed "backwardness" always implies a relatively fixed temporal referent, a temporal coordinate, and a horizon of meaning.

These Latin-American *retrotopias*, in the end, are looking for a shift of these temporal referents. Despite the already recognized inconsistencies of linear time, Latin American social scientists also share these forms of a "modern" and "linear" concept of time, attached to the notion of development as a form of historical progress. It can be seen in the intense criticism of the discourse of *Buen Vivir*, which has been disparagingly branded as "pachamamismo." This critique points out that the discursive articulation between "Buen Vivir," "nature," and "Pachamama" is grounded in the deep idealization of a "harmonious" state of ecological relations among indigenous people. For example, for the anthropologist Sánchez-Parga,

adopting these indigenous life philosophies functions as a kind of mythologization of non-modern lifestyles, with the idea of providing alternative answers to the problems of advancing capitalism. With sharp rhetoric, Sanchez-Parga not only criticizes the vagueness of the ideas on which the argument of the RoN is based, but he even accuses them of a reactionary and anti-revolutionary ideological gloss. According to him, through this rhetoric of a romantic conception of the past, the world becomes "enchanted" again. Other scholars, such as the director of *Le monde diplomatique*, Pablo Stefanoni, criticized the "Pachamamic" discourse for its lack of realism and "hollow" character. Comparing European and Latin American environmental awareness, he writes:

"in Europe, there is much more awareness of garbage recycling (including plastics) than in our country, where in many ways everything is yet to be done, and an informed - and technically sound - environmentalism seems much more effective than dealing with climate change from a supposedly original philosophy, often an alibi of some urban intellectuals for not addressing the urgent problems the country is experiencing." (Stefanoni, 2011, p.263)

His critique points out that the "pachamamismo" does not allow for addressing the real problems of the Bolivian indigenous as Climate Change and extractivism. If we are talking about indigenous businessmen and urban indigenous, how would the Pachamama discourse fit with the cultural hybridity of indigenous people in Bolivia (and the world). Related to the issue, the former vice-president of Evo Morales' government, Alvaro García Linera, pointed out:

"There is a romantic and essentialist reading of certain indigenists. These visions of an indigenous world with its own cosmovision, radically opposed to the West, are typical of late indigenists or strongly linked to NGOs, which does not take away the existence of differentiated organizational, economic, and political logic. In the end, they all want to be modern. The uprisings of Felipe Quispe in 2000 demanded tractors and the Internet. This does not imply the abandonment of their organizational logic, and this can be seen in indigenous economic practices (...). There is logic proper to the indigenous world, but it is not an antagonized logic, separated from the western logic." (Quoted in Svampa & Stefanoni, 2007, p.6).

These criticisms have a pragmatic underpinning, expressed most paradoxically in the neo-extractivist policies of progressive Latin American governments, as in the case of Ecuador and Bolivia. Their governments used the produced wealth to relieve the most disadvantaged social sectors. In this way, García Linera continues:

"However, this environmentalist approach to industrialism cannot override other needs we have as a country. And what we are looking for is a balance between the need for surplus, greater production, and productivity to get out of this area of subordination and the environmentalist issue. The environmentalist viewpoint, which leaves aside other

types of needs, is rhetoric that curiously comes from the less environmentally conscious countries of the North." (Quoted in Svampa & Stefanoni, 2007, 9)

According to the most critical Latin American ecologists and environmentalists, such as Alberto Acosta and Eduardo Gudynas, neo-extractivism would deepen economic dependence on the global North and the domination-exploitation of nature. The *Buen Vivir* discourse raised different tensions and contradictions, which means questioning the unilinear development model followed by Latin America, also the case of left-wing politics. "Ecological thinking" and de-colonization are also problematic for the common left worldview. Walter Mignolo (2005) observes that this temporality problem from a postcolonial perspective also holds Latin Americans left captive. Therefore, for Mignolo, de-colonial thinking is a metaphor for a different viewing of the modern and colonial world. Various theorists and researchers address today's constitutive path of a fully decolonized worldview (Dussel, 2014; Castro G., 2005; Castro G. & Grosvogel, 2007; Escobar 2012; 2014) in view to build a joint project of epistemological independence (Santos 2014a). The contradictions between indigenist imaginaries and Marxism are historically rooted. Still, the central problem of how they are understood and evaluated by the non-indigenous world brings us back to the structures of epistemic inequality. As in other similar contexts, once Tuhiwai-Smith wrote:

"The arguments of different indigenous peoples based on spiritual relationships to the universe, to the landscape, and stones, rocks, insects, and other things, seen and unseen, have been difficult arguments for Western systems of knowledge to deal with or accept. These arguments partially indicate the different world views and alternative ways of coming to know and of being, which still endure within the indigenous world. Concepts of spirituality that Christianity attempted to destroy, then appropriate, and then claim are critical sites of resistance for indigenous peoples. The values, attitudes, concepts, and language embedded in beliefs about spirituality are often the clearest contrast and mark of difference between indigenous peoples and the West. It is one of the few parts of ourselves which the West cannot decipher, cannot understand, and cannot control ... yet." (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, p.78)

Tuhiwai Smith argues that indigenous subjects' current "ancestral," cosmopolitan, and spiritual worldview is complicated to understand from a Western perspective. Although "nature" is nowadays associated with other discursive elements, signs that may belong to different registers ("Pachamama," "Buen Vivir" or "Ancestrality") becomes part of other utopian alternatives. But these also require relatively "fixed" elements for a relatively coherent discourse.

I have been trying to show the above-outlined critique of Machado to European thinkers that Western intellectual spokespersons are working from that side which we can relate to a supposed intellectual "vanguard" in line with a deconstructive ethic. The result is an apparent

discursive radicalism of these theorists, which undermines the efficacy of the elements now politicized in the mobilizations of that Latin American "Other," including a shifting of reference in their neo-colonial "time" and "space." In this sense, these critiques of European thinkers turn out to be profoundly postmodern (probably without intending or wanting to be), and the conceptual notions of "nature" becomes part of an ideological glossary that allows for new valuations in today's green capitalism. These evaluations seem correct from a critical perspective of capital accumulation but also understood from its situated position as a critique "coming from the North." Especially regarding their persistent critique of a revalorization of nature through conservation movements (Castree, 2001; 2002; Smith, 2007) and the capitalist romanticization of "wild" and "pristine" nature (Escobar, 1999, 2009), sadly, Morton and Swyngedouw's approach finds it challenging to break free from the post-structural discursive substratum, which gives way to the semiotic and linguistic turn (Kristeva, 1998). With this, I mean that it gives too much weight to discourse, losing sight of the "material reality," which these authors are supposed to be aware of. The result is, once again, an extreme de-constructivism in the making, in which "Nature" as a concept-idea-sign-materiality constitutes the big "X," re-definable, changeable, and transformable according to human viewpoints (see discussion in chapter Four).

It makes sense to ask whether *nature* still has a place for future-oriented utopias.

For it seems that there are no solutions outside the time frame of modernity: either it moves forward into the uncomfortable and uncertain future or returns to the "good old days" (Baumann, 2017). Given these schematic categories, the relationship between utopia and progressivism must be redefined in terms of its Spatiotemporal frame and the politicization of nature. The fact that indigenous worldviews are today articulated with modern visions of nature is also a sign of an ongoing effort to constitute an *ecology of knowledge* (Star, 1995) or a pluriverse (Chuji, Regifo, and Gudinas, 2019) in which different ontologies have a place, and in which "ancestral" values can be appreciated and evaluated according to their local or global specificities, beyond whether they are fragmentary or strategic (Escobar, 2014, 2010; Blaser, 2013; Martinez-Alier & Guha 2000). But unlike the cases of indigenous communities written above, Bolivia's and Ecuador's state exercises stand a case for a claim of hegemony inserted in using the state as a tool to promote an extractive project but in indigenist terms. This reveals its contradictory character: overcoming extractivism through extractivism. That was the tonic, at least of figures like Garcia Linera. In philosophical terms, they also account for an understanding of modernity reaching its paradoxical limits (Latour, 2007).

According to the interpretation attempted here, we should understand the RoN as a semi-coherent utopian project with the seriousness and respect it requires and deserves. To appreciate its historical novelty, we must finally separate ourselves from this Western, linear, homogeneous concept of time. Because it forces us, again and again, to look back or to look forward, to look to the left or the right. All these theoretical developments here presented supported the argument that the re-politicization of nature clearly demands going beyond these horizons of meaning at a time when mistrust and uncertainty seem to articulate political responses to a fragmentary and yet globally connected *Zeitgeist*, resistances and demands, despite their paradoxes, articulate an alternative to take seriously (Hall 2014).

Thus, to briefly return to the initial subject of the *Buen Vivir*, as Chuji, Rengifo, and Gudynas comment on this concept, despite its semantic diversity (observable throughout Latin America), it is a response to the idea of progress and the notion of a single, linear history. Therefore, it is open to non-linear, parallel, and even circular temporal processes. The critical articulation of *Buen Vivir* points to the critique of the obsession with progress, economic growth, consumerism, and the commodification of nature. As we have already pointed out, this idea articulates complex processes that seek to find another way out of the crisis attributed to the material processes (productive, distributive, and consumptive) of global capitalism and the processes of fragmentary epistemology. Because of their clarity, we end this reflection with the following quote. *Buen Vivir*, then: "*expresses a deeper change in knowledge, affectivity, and spirituality. An ontological openness to other forms of understanding of the relationship between humans and non-humans which do not imply the modern separation between society and nature.*" (Chuji et al, 2019, p.111).

Finally, regarding this discussion in today's Chile, there is a lot of uncertainty about how social and economic development will continue in a post-pandemic situation. The social outburst of 2019 and the failed process of the Constituent Assembly made Chile a different country. These historical processes have triggered a broader debate where the discourses of *Buen Vivir* and the RoN appear as alternatives and forces that seek to oppose business-as-usual mining extractivism. The draft of a new political constitution, including the RoN, had a deep ecological imprint with the idea of rebuilding the country's nature-society relations. However, the constitution draft was rejected by a high percentage of the Chilean population (62%). But, the discussion regarding RoF, extractivism, and *Buen Vivir* has already been installed. Today, there are conditions under which these debates make sense to discuss.

CONCLUSIO: LEARNING FROM THE STORIES OF EXTRACTIVISM IN A POST-COLONIAL ANTHROPOCENE

"The earth is not a globe."

Kenneth Olwig

For this ending section, I will briefly mention how the different chapters are related to the principal aims of this research. Then, finally, I will discuss, at large, the question of extractivism regarding the Anthropocene and the Chilean path of development and extractivism.

Brief outline: what I have done

Through the different chapters, we described and analyzed the intertwining of social, economic, moral, and ecological consequences of mining in Tarapacá (principal aim), first, by providing a historical perspective of the forces and transformation of the extractivist endeavor in the North of Chile, taking the case of Salpeter extraction and copper policies since the XX century. Then I discuss the importance of reaching agreements between companies and communities and outline how institutions, capitalism, corporate engagement, participation, and resistance are intertwined in complex relations that forge the different and precise meanings in which opposition and collaboration occur. I also describe the environmental institutions focused on implementing extractive projects and the role of advisors and consultants who work with indigenous communities. Then I described the change in corporate discourses of mining companies regarding their social and environmental responsibilities.

Another aim was to give an account of the interaction between actors, institutions, and law in the context of Chilean extractivism, which was developed through the whole research process in describing these different entanglements. This research has developed a relational understanding of the interaction of the various actors and the description of institutions and law regarding their agency for implementing extractive projects.

The final aim was to trace the 'cosmological' and 'ontological' differences expressed in socio-environmental conflicts, outlined in the role of techno-scientific knowledge in EIA and its

contestation by indigenous communities. The conflict of expertise in this dispute has been described on the institutional and socio-political levels and the cosmological relationships that hold water, territory, and cultural meanings together. I delve into the indigenous cosmology regarding territory, their cultural transformation, and their local water knowledge. Finally, I problematize and describe the historical forces that shape current indigeneity and indigenous imaginaries in Latin American multiculturalism. I also define the construction of imaginaries as *Buen Vivir*, representing a meaningful perspective for a post-colonial civilizational future beyond capitalism.

Anthropocene and capitalism: a discussion

We already know that the difficulty in imagining a post-extractive society is that the world is becoming increasingly entangled in economic, political, ecological, and cultural relations. Many studies argue that we need to change our economic model and not only reform and greenwashing (Swyngedouw, 2010; Castree, 2008; Smith, 2007; Harvey, 2004). As Jameson once suggested, it is easier to imagine the end of the world as the end of capitalism (2003, 76). In line with this, it is not difficult to imagine that if resources-dependent countries dare to change their economic structure by re-orienting their relation with nature and implementing post-extractivist policies-, that's for sure, it would lead to substantial socio-economic disasters and political destabilization in these countries. Extractivism is not only a capitalist endeavor but has been deepened across the wide range of commodification of nature on an unprecedented scale (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017). Considering the multiple and broad transformations of nature by the productive process, the question of Anthropocene becomes the question of the Capitaloscene. This means that the "human" forces that change the planet's surface are acknowledged as the powers of an economic system that will never stop in its tendency to economic growth. In terms of one of its proposers, "*Capitaloscene signifies capitalism is a way of organizing nature as a multispecies, situated, capitalist word-ecology*" (Moore, 2016, p.6). It involves the question of the dominion and organization of nature and natural resources and an already discussed opposition between capital and life. Extractivism is a complex organizational web of a world ecology extracting surplus where it can¹⁰⁶ constantly nourish by

¹⁰⁶ For this reason, the attempt of some scholars to broaden the notion of extractivism to other fields, such as bio-prospecting, is not surprising (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017). The fact is that innumerable indigenous knowledge has already been appropriated by large pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies that have patented this knowledge with the false argument of "protecting" it. That shows that capitalism in its extractive

the web of life of ecological systems continually threaten. In Latin America, indigenous and peasant anti-mining movements express this awareness, symbolized by the slogan "Mining or life." This slogan resumes what communities in the global South have been experiencing; innumerable research on resistance movements explains this kind of "avatar complex" (Bebbington & Bebbington, 2011).

Another thing we already know is that the capitalist abstractedness of human-nature relations leaves a desert. Landscapes as the old saltpeter ghost-town cities in the North of Chile bear witness. Today they are large-scale museums of a post-extractivist desert: Landscapes of abandonment.

If used as a broad category of analysis, the Anthropocene needs to consider a broad spectrum of environmental justice, recognizing the differences, inequalities, and unequal burdens and responsibilities of the global North respecting the South. It is not the *Anthropos* -the human species -the main problem, but the transformation process towards a unipolar world of a capitalist ecology without alternatives for being in the world. A world where the capitalist and dualist "ontological" imperative is paramount, destroying the possibility of conceiving and imagining other possible worlds. As discussed in this work, this ideology has been transforming and impacting the indigenous world in an ongoing historical process. For that reason, critiques of the term seek to study the Anthropocene as an epoch deeply infused with the violence of colonialism and capitalist relations that shape our current world, highlighting the philosophical-ontological imperatives that prevailed since the colonial encounter. Thus, for some researchers, this idea has moved from a scientific concept in geology and earth system science to an increasingly historical-political awareness of an unequal world and economic dependencies.

On the other side, the de-politicized concept of the Anthropocene acquires a significant weakness if it is allowed to equalize the regional and local conditions from which we speak of the human. It becomes profoundly historical blindness. It is necessary to mention this to grasp the concept heuristically to encompass the series of socio-environmental relationships in their historical dimension. The field of Politics had to be opened for what was supposedly beyond his reach, thus demonstrating the absurdity of the "ontological división" (Latour, 2007). "Humanity is that destructive, so there are no alternatives" seems to be the message of equating Western ontology with the rest of the world. Herein lies the danger of this de-politicized

forms has shifted its borders to the world of the genetic "microcosmos" (see Cornejo, 2017; Whitt, 2009; Rifkin, 1999; Shiva, 1993).

understanding of the Anthropocene that appears to reinforce the historical path of colonization and capitalism as a historical necessity because this is "how humans are"¹⁰⁷.

However, the impossibility of thinking of another world beyond capitalism is infused with catastrophism (Katz, 1995). As Cindi Katz comments on apocalyptic environmental visions, "*(a) new politics of nature requires that we get off the high horse of the apocalypse*" (1995, p.280). Catastrophism rendered as universal becomes a conservative and reactionary discourse because any effort would be ineffective to change anything (Swyngedouw, 2010). "Humans" are destructive as they are/"There is no future beyond capitalism." Seen from this angle, the concept of the Anthropocene, rather than alerting us to a severe problem (and this was the authors' intention), on the contrary, what it does, is to accept fatality and total defeat. The hour of blind faith in human control over natural processes seems to be over (something already anticipated by Beck's risk society). But in this reside their conceptual possibilities that the Anthropocene is more than a meta-narrative and as a new fiction of universality means the final split of humanity as a whole, rendering its uncontrolled diversity and plurality. The urgency to take other narratives and values seriously and as part of decision-making can shape our shared future. Other worlds could flourish under these new universalist pretensions¹⁰⁸. So, the idea is not to discard the concept but to operationalize it so that it is open to recognizing the nuanced differences and pluralities that prevail in today's post-colonial world. Differences that, speaking from the South, lead me to an ethic of suspicion against this new universal narrative where a "Western," "European," and "U.S American" meta-story comes to provide answers to regional and local problems. A suspicion that turns productive if it is translated into the hope

¹⁰⁷ And what are the stories about humans in the context of triumphant capitalism? It has been widely developed in research about eugenics and social Darwinism, the nature of a competitive ideology based on the current capitalist endeavor, and competitiveness that seems to respond to a "natural" impulse in every human being (Gould, 1996). That somebody will be left behind is only a sad consequence of the natural struggle traced back to our genes. In the purest, social Darwinian spirit, capitalism is conceived not only as the best but as the productive system that fits the most with our genetic and biological condition. The so-called "survival of the fittest" becomes not a historical reality but a natural necessity (Lewontin, Rose & Kamin, 1987).

¹⁰⁸ As one of the last Reports of IPBES regarding the different values of nature pointed out: "*Balancing and mobilizing values can be facilitated by participatory processes for envisioning alternative futures that are inclusive of diverse worldviews, knowledge systems, and values. Various pathways can contribute to achieving just and sustainable futures, including but not limited to, for instance, 'green economy,' 'degrowth,' 'Earth stewardship,' and 'nature protection' and other pathways arising from diverse worldviews and knowledge systems (e.g., Living well and other philosophies of good living). These sustainability pathways are associated with certain sustainability-aligned values and seek a more diverse valuation of nature as a foundation for reconciling social, economic, and ecological dimensions. These and many other pathways from other worldviews and knowledge systems (e.g., Living well in harmony with Mother Earth) reflect different perspectives on bringing about values-based transformative change. However, all are founded on the need to rebalance the range of values shaping individual and collective decisions.*" (IPBES, "Summary for policymakers" 2022, 5)

that the solutions to the current crisis will not come only from the West and the imperial powers which originate such problems. A more humble approach seems necessary (Jasanoff, 2021).

I intend to criticize the current "dogma" that capitalism can and must be saved—a belief based on technological fit and economic growth. Economic ecology has been building the idea that the root of the problem is the ecological unsustainability of an economic system that tends "naturally" to the high concentration of wealth and inequality and thus to undermines democracy. To the extent that it continues to project a constant growth of production and consumption, it will not stop threatening the planetary ecology and its ecological boundaries (Hickel, 2021; Kallis, 2017; Welzer & Wiegandt, 2013). This is the main problem of our time. Scientists already speak of limits and planetary boundaries and the acceleration of the imminent ecological collapse (Steffen et al., 2011).

There are already a lot of voices from "the south" who plea for a system change, but there are rarely taken seriously and heard "in the north" (only mention the language barriers). Scientists -not only some "radical" and "anti-capitalist" activists- are researching, writing, and discussing implementing better measures to ensure social and environmental justice. However, a more profound critique of the capitalist production system could be denigrated by politicians and scientists who do not want to give up their conviction that sustainable capitalism is the only option "we" have. These convictions, or "dreams," are taken diverse forms as current proposals of eco-modernism and trans-humanism. For these, the savior's name is still technology¹⁰⁹.

Mining is a case that shows how this dream of sustainable capitalism is still alive despite the degradation of landscapes, the destruction of ecosystems, and the fragmentation of communities. The search for new natural resources is needed and justifies extractivism as the only development alternative for the in-the-way-of-development countries. When confronted with such a "planetary level" image, I am convinced that a real commitment to humankind's survival must involve a persistent critique of how goods and wealth are produced, consumed, and distributed.

¹⁰⁹ However, technological developments do not favor everyone, something that the biotechnological revolution in the last hours of the XX century demonstrates has deepened inequalities, making it possible to extract value where it was previously unthinkable (Rifkin, 1999). Far from "serving humanity" as it is often sold, every technological invention served, in the first instance, a purpose of calculation and cold technical rationality (Horkheimer, 2007; Marcuse, 1970, see also Leff, 2004; Martinez-Alier & Guha, 2000). The problem lies in the embeddedness of technological and technical rationality, already elegantly described by some exponents of the Frankfurt school. As good Marxists, authors such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse sought to understand the rapid technological and scientific development in the broader context of capitalist development.

The Anthropocene and its critics

As a new Western narrative, the Anthropocene connects many things. Herein lies the main strength of that idea in its scope and relatedness. In this sense, it involves new narratives of system thinking, global ecology, metabolism, and articulations. Maybe these "names" are all insufficient to denote the era of the total mesh of re-composition and patchiness (when the figure of "progress" does not fit anymore!). Beyond the fact that "*no place in the world is untouched by the global political economy built from the postwar development apparatus*" (Tsing in Haraway, 2015, p.3). What the hell is the Anthropocene in the end? Simply another Western story? A meta-narrative (as Lyotard never dreamed)? Or a fancy word that tries to grasp the "essence" of our apocalyptic time? The Anthropocene centers the debate on the environmental crisis studied to understand its possible causes. I don't want to delve into a simplistic equation of Anthropocene equal Climate Change equal Climate Crisis (all written with capital letters). However, I have been trying to move towards different actions of reassembling a damaged post-colonial world in which extractivism is deeply connected to this white narrative of geology. As Kathrin Yusoff comments, geology is a mode of dispossession and accumulation, depending on the side of the geologic color lines (2018, p.3). The Anthropocene narrative is infused with the "view from nowhere," proposing a new scientific and, therefore, the de-politicized narrative of a myth of white man as "creator/destroyer."

The Anthropos and its agency is, without doubt, an issue for anthropologists (Latour, 2017), but it needs to be placed as a matter of geological extraction. The problem with the concept lies in the range of what we call "ours," "us," and "we"¹¹⁰ : The supposed "Humans" as an overall category, this "geologic force."

"To be included in the "we" of the Anthropocene is to be silenced by a claim to universalism that fails to notice its subjugation, taking part in a planetary condition in which no part was accorded in terms of subjectivity. The supposed "we" further

¹¹⁰ Interestingly, this question also permeates the public debate in the U.S. regarding the Anthropocene, in which critics and apologists have different arguments. The latter camp is represented by influential authors such as Diane Ackerman and Andy Revkin, who see the future potential of this "new era" in terms of human creativity. Much of this positive thinking concerns the incredibly uncritical perspective on technological development. As the scientist reporter Kate Allen comments on Ackerman's work: "*Sometimes, optimism about the Anthropocene doesn't seem like the result of temperament. It seems like the result of privilege, an outlook afforded to those who live in bubbles where adaptive resources — money, mostly — is plentiful. In those bubbles, where Parisian eco-homes delight, and fresh air is just a trip to Muskoka away, things can look like they are getting better.*" (Allen, 2014) Conversely, those who are most critical and bear a pessimistic vision are just those who highlight global and regional inequalities from where the Anthropocene is perceived and, in the end, feared (see Dalby, 2016; Hamilton, 2014). They supported the idea that politics and governments must make fundamental and effective structural changes (Dalby, 2016; Klein, 2015).

legitimizes and justifies the racialized inequalities that are bound up in social geologies." (Yusoff, 2018, p.12)

Just as it is now recognized that the developed countries, led by the United States and Europe (also mention China in their developmental path), have been historically responsible for a large proportion of CO2 emissions bearing "bigger" responsibility for anthropogenic Climate Change, similarly, it is the often highlighted critique of the notion of the Anthropocene that encompasses humanity as a whole, ignoring their regional and global inequalities, dependencies, the imperial and colonial agendas "*lost when the narrative is collapsed to a universalizing species paradigm*" (Todd, 2015, p.244). In other words, the Anthropocene pretends to encompass the human being by denoting "his era," the era of unexpected transformations (and degrading) of the earth system. As one of the authors of the term suggests, ten years after proposing it:

"The term Anthropocene suggests: (i) that the Earth is now moving out of its current geological epoch, called the Holocene, and (ii) that human activity is largely responsible for this exit from the Holocene, that is, that humankind has become a global geological force in its own right." (Steffen et al, 2011, p.843)

I want to pick up on one of the most frequently mentioned critical elements that call into question the possibility of speaking on behalf of the human species as a whole. Despite the profuse use of this term in the broad spectrum of social and natural sciences, more than a few scholars disagree with the uncritical use of this terminology because of its ambiguities and what it silences (Barry and Maslin, 2016; Haraway et al., 2016; Todd, 2015; Malm & Hornborg, 2014). As Dipesh Chakrabarty put it, having all images of the human condition as colonialism, global warming, and globalization urges us to think disjunctively about humans (2012, p.2). In a conversation among philosophers and anthropologists about this matter, Ana Tsing commented:

"'Man' does not mean humans, but a particular kind of being invented by Enlightenment thought and brought into operation by modernization and state regulation and other related things. It is this 'Man' who can be said to have made the mess of the contemporary world. It was 'Man' who was supposed to conquer nature." (Haraway et al., 2016, p. 541)

In other words: It is not the whole human species that provoked these environmental changes, damages, or disasters; disjuncture is necessary to acknowledge the unequal burden and responsibility. In terms of the Canadian Metis scholar Zoe Todd:

"Not all humans are equally implicated in the forces that created the disasters driving contemporary human-environmental crises, (...) not all humans are equally invited into the conceptual spaces where these disasters are theorized or responses to disaster formulated." (Todd, 2015, p. 244)

It has been widely discussed how a particular ideology, this philosophy, and ontology historically reified nature, transforming it into natural resources and giving a similar treatment to those humans of the colonized world. Modern ontology teaches us that resources as such exist for human use. These "Humans" have no reciprocal responsibility for what it takes. An essential supposition often characterized as the total dominion over nature, also called "Anthropocentrism." However, this anthropocentric worldview has been widely criticized by the "indigenous World," environmental activists, scientists, and philosophers, in a moment where its most important side-effects become impossible to ignore. As Davies and Todd comment on the concept of Anthropocene, *"By making the relations between the Anthropocene and colonialism explicit, we are then in a position to understand our current ecological crisis and to take the steps needed to move away from this ecocidal path."* (2017, p. 763) This means acknowledging a critique that in Latin America and other parts of the world is gaining more attention regarding the field of rights. As already discussed in this research, rights are extended to other non-human entities mainly for environmental protection. This is the case of constitutional recognition of nature, rivers, or water bodies declared as legal subjects. Although from the techno-scientific field, earth system science, eco-modernism to the Gaia theory, these ideas seem strange, tinged with animistic romanticism (Latour, 2017). But what is at stake is to respond to a particular modern ontology, which resonates with the economic imperative of late capitalism, based on the unequal and neo-colonial relations that today forge the realities of the southern territories transformed by extractivism. Otherwise, how can we understand this turn towards an alleged animist and indigenous past? This is where proposals such as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and the criticism of indigenous scholars meet. With essential differences between them, they seem to indicate that indigenous knowledge was, in the end, not a "primitive," "inaccurate," and "incommensurable" thing. Even if taken seriously, indigenous knowledge can teach important lessons for the future of all (see, e.g., last IPCC Report Pörtner et al. 1, 2022: 9; IPBES, 2020).

Indigenuity in the Anthropocene: the common world we share

These issues highlight the deep dependency on an economic system that is fundamentally unjust in how it extracts and distributes the earth's wealth. In countries such as Chile, historically linked to extractivism as a system of extraction, distribution, accumulation, and resource allocation, these dependencies translate into a false opposition between the environment and the economy. It is accompanied by a narrative that says there is no other way or options because the creative imagination of different ways of relating to the world and nature is precluded beforehand. As Maurizio Lazzarato once said, the lifestyle promulgated by capitalism produces homogenization; other forms of life or the proliferation of other possible worlds are just expressions of the same (2006, 140). I have tried to show these inherent tensions regarding other possible worlds, as the historical treatment of the indigenous culture: On the one hand, as a *noble ecological savage* who must protect his environment against Western intervention, what Alcida Ramos called the "hyper-real" Indian (Ramos, 1992); on the other hand, the equally infamous imaginary of the Indian corrupted by money and Western values, mainly held by people who observe from "outside" the "privileged" space of indigenous regarding their interactions with the mining companies. These different perceptions are also sometimes present among the Indigenous themselves. The problem with these narratives is that they are based on a sometimes essentialist mode of thought attached to the problematic features of identity claims as a form of cultural and political discourse. These claims sometimes take strategic, contradictory, or ambivalent forms. I have discussed the indigenous question of mining intervention, which moves between these two imaginaries that operate in people's moral conscience. To understand the different wordings that compose indigenous culture in the North of Chile is necessary to draw their complex historical relation forged with the corporate actors and the Chilean state. Indigenous have never lived in a bubble. Their culture and identity are a product of an ongoing relational process with external powers.

For this reason, the question of indigeneity in the Anthropocene leads us to question the common world we share and how Western culture has transformed other worlds, integrating it into the large World system. The colonial world shaped the world of today. Coloniality means that other possible worlds become violently integrated and systematically transformed, some of which were also destroyed (Quijano, 2000). Indigenous know what it means to live in two worlds or more. The world of laws, institutions, and bureaucracy alienates them, but they know these worlds and they take some advantage despite their subordinate position. People, indigenous and non-indigenous, share these common worlds. Herein lies my rejection of

black/white interpretations, based on an "ethic of resistance" whose name can be held as a critique of anything that looks like assimilation, adaption, or "westernization." This led me to focus the analysis on these shared worlds and the hybridity of worldings. These worlds were made measurable and common by force during the colonial encounter. Today, the world of institutions and representative democracy extended to indigenous as "Chilean citizens" (not as indigenous) is what continues to impact their hybrid culture slowly. This has been discussed regarding Chantal Mouffe's agonist model by defending a radical democracy based on opposing different life projects.

The space occupied by the indigenous persons is an interstice, an in-between, as discussed in this work through the concept of Articulation by Stuart Hall. This hybridity of indigenous culture is their main strength, an essential source of their silent, slow, and "minor" resistance. I showed that the strength of indigenous discourse lies in hybridity, how it reassembles strategically and integrates different discursive elements. The idea of this "in-between" is well represented in the concept of a "border culture" explained by a Chicano artist.

"Border culture can help dismantle the mechanisms of fear. Border culture can guide us back to common ground and improve our negotiating skills. Border culture is a process of negotiation toward utopia, but in this case, utopia means peaceful coexistence and fruitful cooperation. The border is all we share" (Gómez-Peña, 1994, p. 185)

Living in-between shapes and transforms how indigenous people consider their lives and future in the face of the constant advance of extractivism. They seek to position themselves better within this struggle and resistance through negotiations, agreements, and compromises. I tried to go beyond these imaginaries of total "resistance" as an ironclad opposition to collaboration and understand the imagined lines as blurred and transformed in an ongoing process. At the same time, similar dynamics also shape the question of indigenous identity.

In the nineties, when multiculturalism became part of the neoliberal agenda, the inclusion of indigenous was consistently mediated by the state institutions that control and manage indigenous people's historical demands and rights claims. I focus on the constant threat to indigenous culture because the Chilean state has constantly told them their culture is not worth much, such as speaking their language (e.g., choosing English instead of Aymara or Quechua). Since the "regaining of democracy," the state has promoted a culturalist approach to indigeneity, leaving some space for tolerance. Still, it represents a well-controlled space for their representation of (their) cultural difference. Their claims for historical justice have never been fulfilled, as the question of land and territories in the southern regions. Because of this, the

suspicion of the indigenous of the state and its institutions is a reasonable attitude. However, beyond that threat and structural abandonment, the people in their communities still forge a life project, which means being part of something, learning their lost language, making decisions according to their community, meeting and rebuilding the routes of their ancestors, to recovering their ancestral territories and re-shaping their boundaries; to learning their practices and their stories again. Indigenous culture is also a reconstruction project due to so much damage caused by the Chilean state¹¹¹.

¹¹¹ Constitutional recognition is a fundamental debt since Chile is one of the few countries in Latin America that has not given this recognition to its native peoples. In the process of constitutional change, "the question of indigenous" has an important place. But, the aggressiveness of the Chilean elites today shows, once again, that some groups of Chilean society feel threatened by this process of constitutional change. One of its most critical points regarding the new constitution "draft" was the recognition of indigenous and the idea that Chile is an "intercultural and plurinational State." The people who rejected the draft feared that the country would disintegrate into infinite groups, even that the Chilean nation would disintegrate. And that the "draft" will give indigenous a privileged space among Chilean citizens. This was a misinterpretation (or a lie with bad intentions). Constantly opposing the "rights of indigenous" to those of "Chileans," some ultra-right groups are referring to the indigenous as "terrorists," "privileged," and "Narcos." Such extreme violence and hate show latent racist tendencies in some groups of Chilean society.

Possibilities for a future: extractivism, neo, and post-extractivism

The urgency to hold a critique of extractivism is not because it represents a path to human progress - beyond the "oldness" of that discourse - but the fact that it is presented as the only way, the only path to follow. Other less invasive and destructive but less lucrative alternatives are ignored because they mean less money. This has to do with the strong impact that the notion of development still has on Latin America in its entire situation of dependency and "underdevelopment." Older theories, such as the dependency or the resource course theory, have retained some explanatory force. In this sense, extractivism is based on mutual dependencies and increasing north-south economic and ecological inequalities. In some cases, this becomes increasingly visible because they are accompanied by processes of structural and military violence (Escobar, 2010). But extractivism is a necessary global condition to maintain the whole capitalist production machine functioning.

Today there is a new expansion of resource frontiers as the global North seeks to secure the natural resources needed to implement its energy transition, especially regarding electro-mobility. This generates new environmental pressures on territories and a population that is increasingly aware of the environmental impacts and, therefore, highly critical of any mining intervention on what they consider their territories. The burden of a resource-rich country persists. The whole story indicates that state and corporate actors want to extract more and more until they can, before the priorities of the world market change or before other substitutes are invented or discovered (as in the case of synthetic saltpeter developed in Germany). More than a few politicians and engineers publicly argue that now, in times of increasing electro-mobility and energy transition, copper and lithium have become one of the most important resources. It represents a significant opportunity for Chile to demonstrate its world leadership as a mining country. Slogans such as "Chile is important for the world ecology" are beginning to be heard in the media, propagating the idea that green extractivism is possible. Chile will follow this historical path rather than another, perhaps due to the risks of taking other directions¹¹².

¹¹² Ideas for a post-extractivist society were held by the most "radical" ecologist of the Constitutional Assembly and quickly denigrated as "radical," "anachronistic," or even "dangerous" for the developmental path. It highlights the rigid opposition between "economy" and "ecology." These issues have repeatedly come up regarding approving or rejecting the new text for the referendum of 04.09.22. Some proponents of the "rejection" option have argued that the new text puts too much emphasis on environmental protection, which will affect the development of industries such as mining and could plunge the country into extreme poverty if the new constitution is approved.

The cases described in this research are "low-intensity" conflicts. The violence lies in how extractive projects are implemented and justified despite widespread citizen opposition. As already seen, critique of a project or EIA becomes an integral part of the whole institutional process. Comments become "addressed" and are taken seriously, but not too much because this would put in danger the "project" as a whole (which also shows the pressures on the institutional agents). Projects need to go through the institutional structure but be retained. In this way, uncertainty becomes a complex mechanism, even a political tool, because it is better not to know. Ultimately, this impacts the citizen: What remains in the communities are ambivalences, economic dependencies, contradictions, and the idea that these projects cannot be stopped in any other way than through legal proceedings in the environmental courts or through massive public campaigns and protests. The environmental assessment system and its instruments ensure the functioning of regulated procedures with apparent political neutrality based solely on technical criteria. This idea needs to be revised due to the high political complexity of the decisions that promote the extractivist agenda despite high uncertainty ranks. The problem is that no state institution can do independent and more transparent studies on the possible impacts of any mining intervention. In this sense, Chilean institutions are mainly reactive. The state reacts when damage is already produced (and denounced in the environmental institutions).

For this reason, EIAs are imperfect tools for acquiring transparency, accountability, accuracy, and, in the end, trust. Despite their costs and complex procedures, they fail to deliver, at least expected by an increasingly uneasy citizenry due to the environmental impacts they have already experienced. By relying on this bureaucratic management of nature, the state fails to adequately protect its citizens, territories, and ecosystems¹¹³. EIAs are technical tools in line with the neoliberal system of global resource extraction (Jacka, 2018; Kirsch, 2017; Li, 2015).

Can we imagine another world where the country's wealth is not based on the systematic and excessive exploitation of nature and humans by humans? What possibilities do we have to raise awareness and change our way of thinking, understanding, and seeing the world around us in an intimately connected way? Today it is increasingly more challenging to conceive the forthcoming of a country or region by considering the different ecological, economic, and political arrangements that any geographical location integrates. For example, the Atacama Desert was transformed by the long dream of development: the old saltpeter ghost town, the

¹¹³ However, despite my persistent critique, I still believe having them is better than not having them. In the end, they represent a path that can be improved

hundreds of abandoned tailings dams, and the multiple mining sites in current operation are all expressions of that dream.

The idea that natural resource extraction should serve the interests of the Chilean citizenry rather than a handful of investors becomes highly complex when viewed at close range. Perhaps some reorientation can be accomplished with a grand ecological master plan to ensure state, private and foreign investment in less polluting and possibly less profitable areas. The question is whether a government is strong and determined enough to carry out such a proposal. Nationalism is, as already known, another essential component of any neo-extractivist discourse (Hargreaves, 2019). But in Chile, themes such as "nationalization" and "privatization" have deep political roots and lead to endless quarrels between those who seek to defend the "common good" against privatization and the "thirst for profit" and those who see the state as too inefficient to take on such an arduous task.

Moreover, only "nationalization" is rapidly dismissed as old-fashioned socialism. Fears begin to rise, and old wounds begin to bleed. However, both tendencies have clear and opposing ideas about the state's role. In simple terms, one is towards a Welfare state, oriented to the fulfillment of some minimal living standards of Chilean citizens; the other towards a Security state, which also means a "minimal" state regarding human well-being but strong in their repressive and control apparatuses. The state cannot remain on the sidelines and must ensure the fulfillment of such a reorientation plan (Klein, 2015). However, the last ten years of political struggles have shown that Chilean-style neoliberalism must replace another more democratic, fairer, and egalitarian system. However, not capitalism itself is in question; it is neoliberalism.

The question is whether a post-neoliberal society will also lead to a post-extractivist- based economy. In Latin American countries, neo-extractivism has been the driving force behind new social policies: extractivism is preponderant for producing wealth. And wealth needs to be better re-distributed (Gudynas, 2009). This seems very "progressive," but *"beyond this veneer of progressismo, however, the capitalist model of accumulation remains unchanged"* (Hargreaves, 2019, p. 62). Interestingly, the idea of "First, generate wealth, then re-distribute it" (Garcia Linera) has been implemented in countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador, which at the time tended to give greater recognition to indigenous peoples and the rights of Mother Earth, while Extractivism was deepened institutionally and still affecting people and territories. The difference lies in the "name of what" extractivism is carried out. Call it "progress," "development," "social welfare," or "social equality."

I think that if things change for Chile, which historically has promoted a "pure and hard" course of extractivism, at the most, it will transit to a "progressive" and "nationalist" neo-extractivism. This may be possible by implementing a series of changes at the level of mining taxation (royalty), ensuring that part of the income obtained stays in the "mining regions" and improving environmental quality standards.

It is necessary to equalize access to housing, education, and health conditions and generate social and ecological justice to generate welfare for the human beings living on this planet. After thirty years of neoliberal experience, even the most ardent defenders of free-market solutions should be clear about this necessity. As pointed out, the state must be a key actor. Since neoliberalism has so exorbitantly deepened inequality -in an embarrassing way -a sense of social justice is required that must necessarily undermine the ideology of the free market and competition that has permeated all the different dimensions of social life. We may only get very far with a minimum sense of equality. Ecological justice requires social justice and decolonization, making visible the severe cultural and political effects of Western, patriarchal, white, and capitalist discourses worldwide. It also means taking the possibility of a critical science seriously.

I want to stay realistic and understand that for a country like Chile to change, its century-old resource extraction path is improbable. But the social protest of 2019 shows that social movement and protest can lead to more profound changes in the societal structure and fabric. The mining case is just one of the countless examples that illustrate this dilemma in which lies the wealth produced under the capitalist condition given the Climate Crisis: extract until you can't and keep going until the whole ship sinks. Decoupling from this developmental course would mean transcending the political definitions that governed the 20th century. We must recognize that the planet's defense is paramount for this century. The Paris Agreement still operates within the framework of sustainable capitalism. Thus, the nationalist logic undermines any attempt at a global agreement (Swyngedouw, 2010). This deepens the gap between nationalism and globalism, making that contradiction grow between the interests of a "Nation" and "the planet," and became more evident given the rise of ultra-right-wing leaders like Trump and Bolsonaro and evidenced in their brutal anti-environment policies¹¹⁴. So these new forms

¹¹⁴ Perhaps no fact is more ridiculously evident from our post-truth times when Bolsonaro denounced the "colonialist attitude" of the Western powers because of the persistent criticism of Bolsonaros anti-environmental policy of cutting down the Amazon. And worst of all, he is right to make that denunciation. Or does only the "left" have the right to denounce the bio-colonialism of Europe and the U.S.?

of right-wing nationalism are just another form of anti-globalization localism. As Latour comments, this shows that somehow the planet has become too small for modernization with all its associated dreams – "progress," "development" for some, "living standards," "welfare," "emancipation," and "equality" for others - to be truly realized. Latour points out that the result is complete disorientation at a planetary level: we no longer know where we are going (Latour, 2018, p. 25). A definition of a planetary policy that goes beyond "right-left" notions is needed, moving away from these modern political attractors (2018, p. 43).

But sadly, the differences between the two political expectations -left and right- need to be more flexible. The virulence propagated through social media further reinforces self-conceived prejudices rather than creating the conditions for a greater and better understanding of different points of view. Instead of greater democratization of knowledge and access, what seems to be happening is a generalized brutalization, where everyone shouts their truth to the four winds without listening to the rest. We live in a time where lies and bullshit becomes "alternative facts". A not very favorable condition at a time when we need to hear ourselves to enhance our understanding is an essential condition to act.

Sadly, these different elements show we are far from having a common "planetary politics" beyond capitalism. And we need to take seriously the idea that "there is no planet B," as social and environmental justice activism has summed it up.

Although I have been very critical of scientific work, complicit on so many occasions with economic and political powers (Cornejo, 2017), I still believe that it is our job as scientists with all that historical neo-colonial burden on our backs now, to generate and communicate the knowledge that can be the basis for a more profound transformation. Inter- and transdisciplinary research, as the emergence of de-colonizing and indigenous methodologies, is needed to gain knowledge, investigate complex realities, and provide complex answers. We have yet to get these answers, but we can move towards getting these. Global activism, such as *Fridays for Future* or *Extinction Rebellion*, is right to call for the urgency of our times. This planetary urgency calls for those of us who seek to understand, build other worlds, and build relationships. "*Urgencies have another temporalities, and these times are ours (...) these are the times of urgencies that need stories.*" (Haraway, 2016, p. 37). Committing ourselves to these causes is to engage in these urgencies, committing ourselves to this world, its stories, and its possibilities.

I hope this work has shown how different stories flourish under the messiness of capitalism and environmental destruction.

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Until Nothing left

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