

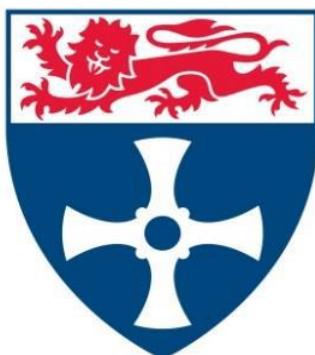
# **Grains and Fruits: Agrarian Change and Class Relations in La Araucania, Southern Chile.**

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## Abstract

This thesis sheds light on agrarian capitalism by looking at the implications over social relations when new cash crops are cultivated in a new frontier. An ethnographic work was conducted over 15 months in La Araucania Region, Southcentral Chile, where the Mapuche indigenous people have part of their ancient land. While other rural inhabitants who are not indigenous also play a role in creating a complex rural social fabric, together a definite agrarian structure arises from the interplay between these rural inhabitants and the crops grown. The research employed ethnographic methods such as shadowing, participant observation, in-depth interviews, and secondary sources to reveal the perceptions farmers and peasants have toward certain crops. This research offers a nuanced sociological understanding of the processes of agrarian change underlying the adoption of cash crops. It is an effort to re-install the link between rurality and food production. In turn, the present ethnography overcomes commodity fetishism by highlighting the human agency involved in food production.

The ethnography draws its arguments on the comparison of grains and fruits. While the former lies at the heart of tradition, the latter has been portrayed as one of the prime examples of agrarian capitalism due to its high dependence on wage labour. By teasing out these crops, it is possible to obtain a narrative that underlines the material, the subjective, and the cultural meaning growers endowed to either cereals or fruits in terms of security, whether in the form of food security or as a sense of security in a somewhat troubled context. It follows that the elements hindering the establishment of orchards in a new agrarian frontier are rooted in family farm dynamics.

Accordingly, the second main component of this research is the analysis of agrarian class relations. To this end, it pays attention to the variety of family farms co-existing within the same territory. It concludes that through the everyday interactions held by these family farms, one can improve the comprehension of family farming by identifying the common grounds and what makes each family farm unique from their neighbours.

Dedicated to Maria, Gaspar and Aurora, my source of strength.

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## Glossary

**Agricultura Tradicional:** Term employed by growers, whether farmers or peasants, to refer to farming cereals.

**Ahuincaron:** Derogatory term employed by Mapuche indigenous people to signal those peers that went through a process of being westernised.

**Apatronados:** It refers to a working relationship that follows a sort of patron/client dynamic, it is employed from the agrarian workers' point of view and indicates both its loyalty toward the patron along with the obligations the patron has toward the agrarian worker.

**Ballica:** Common name for *Lolium multiflorum Lam*, a weed that competes with cereals. If the weed is not controlled, it outgrows the cereal, suffocating the grains.

**Callejeo:** Selling technique that consists in going out and about to the near urban areas, shouting and offering the agro commodities.

**Carrumba:** Weed.

**Chacras:** Vegetable Garden.

**Cierre Perimetral:** Enclosures.

**Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM):** Radical organisation born in the 1990s whose aim is to reclaim Mapuche's ancient land through the means of sabotage, seizure, and arson attack, among others.

**Cola de buey:** Row sowing, the farming method consisting in ploughing the land, making furrows, placing the seed, and covering with soil, following a linear pattern.

**Comando Jungla:** A special police unit created under Piñera's administration with the purpose of tackling those radical groups in the south of Chile. Its life was brief as they shot dead an indigenous peasant during one of their ride, making the politicians obliged to dismantle this special police unit.

**Comuna:** Smallest territorial unit of governance.

**Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígenas (CONADI):** Governmental body, National Corporation of Indigenous Development.

**Corporación de Reforma Agraria (CORA):** Governmental body in charge of both implementing and administrating the land reform.

**Criollo(s):** Term employed during colonial times for those people born in the Americas and whose parents were Europeans. Due to this condition of being born in the Americas, they were excluded from some privileges entitled just to Europeans.

**Cuico:** Slang to refer wealthy people or posh person.

**Cullin:** Mapuche word and depending on the context, could either mean livestock or cash.

**Cultivos Tradicionales:** Term employed by growers, whether farmers or peasants, to refer to cereal crops.

**El Fundo:** Large estate farm. From the point of view of the agrarian workers does not make much difference if these holdings are run by families or by corporations.

**Encomienda:** Spanish labour system where a number of indigenous people were given to the conquerors and the military in a similar condition to slavery so the Spaniards could settle in the Americas colonies.

**Federación Nacional de la Fruticultura Familiar Campesina (FEDAFRUC):** Family Peasants Fruit Growers National Union.

**Festival del Arándano :** Blueberry fair.

**Goce:** Tacit agreement or privilege endowed by large holders to their landed workers so they could access grazing pastures for their livestock or other amenities offered by the *Fundo*.

**Gringo:** Although in its original form was a way to make fun of U.S nationals working in Latin American contexts. Nowadays, its common use has shifted, hence sometimes derogatory, sometime as an endearment way to refer to the white, the outsider or any person who seems to be from the U.S, European or more generally white.

**Grupos de Transferencia Tecnológica (GTT):** Groups seeking to gather mid-sized and large-sized growers that share interests in one crop or from one particular geographical region. Each group meets once per month to share experiences regarding their enterprises. Also, they rotate every year agricultural demonstration plots where they run experiments regarding the sector they are particularly interested in innovating.

**Guano:** Bird excrement used as manure.

**Hacendados:** *Hacienda* owners, plus their immediate family.

**Harina Tostada:** Toasted flour, a traditional seasoning that country people add to a range of plates, from soups to watermelon.

**Huinca:** Sometimes derogatory, sometimes just signals the outsider status of someone who is not Mapuche indigenous.

**Incas:** Pre-Columbian empire with a massive influence across the Andes range mountains. Nowadays, there are vestiges of its presence in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Argentina.

**Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agropecuario (INDAP):** Institute of Agricultural Development, in charge of promoting the improve the livelihood of family farms, especially smallholders.

**Inquilino(s):** The peasantry who was absorbed by the *Hacienda* and allocated into small plots in exchange for labour.

**Kona(s):** Lay Mapuche indigenous people that lack hierarchical status given by lineage or goods.

**Latifundia/Latifundio:** Large estate farm.

**La Guerra de Arauco [Arauco War]:** A war that spanned 300 years, from the mid-XVI century until the XVIII century, first between the Spaniards and the Mapuche indigenous people and secondly between the Chileans and Mapuche indigenous people.

**La Hacienda:** Large estate and pivotal in organising everyday rural life in Latin America.

**La Operación Huracán:** A police operation occurred in 2017 that led to the imprisonment of several Mapuche indigenous leaders who faced accusations they were involved in promoting terrorism. In 2018 the public prosecutor realised the pieces of evidence presented to the court were tainted by Chilean police. As a result, they had to free up the Mapuche people.

**Locro:** Wheat that has been crushed and then smoked. It is used as an ingredient for seasoning purposes, like to flavour up the soups or stews.

**Lonko:** Mapuche indigenous chief.

**Machista:** Sexist

**Mapuzungun:** Mapuche indigenous language.

**Mate:** Herb infusion.

**Merced de Tierras:** Portion of land offered to the Spaniards by the Spanish crown in order to promote colonisation and new settlements in its colonies.

**Mestizo(s):** Are those mixed blood people whose parents are one European and the other one an indigenous peoples.

**Mote:** Wheat grain boiled.

**Ñuke Mapu: Mother Earth**

**Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias (ODEPA):** This is the office of Agricultural and Policies Studies part of the ministry of agriculture; this office is in charge of conducting studies based on sectoral statics that enables the ministry to do agricultural planning.

**Patron:** The owner of the farm.

**Parlamento(s):** First, the parlamentos were between Mapuche indigenous people and the Spanish and then between the state of Chile and Mapuche. These were instances of conversation where authorities from both parties used to make a pledge.

**Programa Desarrollo Territorial Indígena (PDTI):** Is a public scheme that forms part of INDAP's spectrum of state welfare. it is applied through agreements between INDAP and local municipalities, the former transfers money to the latter, which in turn has to implement the programme. The recipients of this state welfare are only indigenous people.

**Pisco:** Spirit made out of grapes.

**Pisqueras:** Places where the pisco is distilled.

**Puebla:** Physical location granted to the peasantry to ensure their survival. It is part of the array of welfare provided from patrons to their inquilinos.

**Quintas:** Portion of land allocated to grow fruits.

**Rango:** Colloquial way to refer to *Roundup<sup>TM</sup>*.

**Reducción(es) Indígenas:** During the occupation carried out by the Chilean state onto indigenous territory, many indigenous communities were dispossessed of their land by rounding them up and relocating them into indigenous reservations.

**Siembra al voleo:** Broadcast sowing.

**Sociedad de Fomento Agricola (SOFO):** Agriculture Fostering Society.

**Temporeros:** Seasonal farm workers.

**Temporeras:** Female seasonal farm workers.

**Titulos de Merced:** Legal titles where the Chilean state acknowledges a definite land is an indigenous land.

**Trafkintu:** The act of trading goods via barter, particularly use among Mapuche indigenous to access seeds.

**Verdad y Nuevo Trato [True and New Deal]:** It was a pledge made by the democratic government in Chile with the aim to advise the president in regard to indigenous

themes. Among its actions were to document how much land the indigenous people lost, along with envisioning an institutional path where indigenous people could be recognised and improve their livelihoods.

**Visitas [Call-in]:** Is social mechanism that links those who left the countryside community with their smallholding family farms of origin. It explains the presence of livestock despite the lack of land.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction.

This thesis sheds light on agrarian capitalism by looking at the implications over social relations when new agro-commodities are cultivated in a new frontier. This process of agrarian change enables us to enhance our understanding of family farms and their differentiation due to not all growers are keen to switch their crops. The research is located in La Araucania, Southcentral Chile, a region considered the ancient land of the Mapuche indigenous people, the country's largest indigenous group.

Chile is an important fruit-producing country. This is due to its Mediterranean climate<sup>1</sup> and its location in the southern hemisphere, which allow it to supply the northern hemisphere countries' demands, especially during off-season periods. Both features give Chile a competitive edge over other nations (Llambi, 1994; Watkins, 1996; Barrientos, 1997; Retamales and Sepúlveda, 2011; Lebdioui, 2019). Consequently, Chile is the leading exporter of grapes, plums, and cherries globally and is among the top-ten exporters of other fruit commodities such as wine, apples, kiwis, hazelnuts, and avocados (FAO, 2020). Furthermore, in regard to many fruits it is the only country in the southern hemisphere capable of growing these, with a buoyant and reliable production capacity (see table 1). Hence some authors have stated Chile is the biggest counter-season supplier to Europe and North America when it comes to fruits and vegetables (Llambi, 1994; Watkins, 1996; McMichael, 2000). However, countries like Peru, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia are competitors in exporting fresh fruit from the southern hemisphere (McKenna and Murray, 2002; Adriaen;Kleynhans and Tollens, 2004; Simoes and Hidalgo, 2020).

In this vein, Apey (2019) and Pefaur (2020) have reported a constant growth in Chile's fruit production, reflected in the rise of fruit orchards and resulting in the expansion of the agrarian frontiers southward and northwards. Thus, the production of fresh

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<sup>1</sup> Only five regions in the world can claim to possess this valuable and pleasant climate, which is characterised by having hot summers and cool winters.

fruit in Chile is considered a profitable niche and therefore worth the effort being made by the state, the agribusinesses and the farmers to promote and increase this sector (CIREN, 2016; ODEPA, 2022).

**Table 1:Fruits commodities where Chile has an outstanding performance**

Fruits/Commodity	Chile's Ranking Worldwide Producers	Chile's Ranking Worldwide Exporters
Apples	10 <sup>th</sup> *	4 <sup>th</sup>
Avocados	11 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Cherries	3 <sup>rd</sup> *	1 <sup>st</sup>
Grapes	8 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Hazelnuts	5 <sup>th</sup> *	4 <sup>th</sup>
Kiwi	6 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Plums	4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Raspberries	10 <sup>th</sup> *	No data available
Wine **	8 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Own creation drawing on FAO(2020).

\*Only country from the global south.

\*\*The Year 2019.

The Chilean fruit sector is perceived as a success due to the expansion of its frontier as well as the diversification of its production (Gómez and Echenique, 1988; Llambi, 1994; Kay, 2002a; Retamales and Sepúlveda, 2011; Apey, 2019; Lebdioui, 2019; Pefaur, 2020). This constant growth is reflected in the preliminary findings of the last rural census (held in 2020) which demonstrates that the fruit sector is the only agricultural activity that saw a positive percentage change in terms of hectarage. Between the rural census of 2007 and 2020 the fruit sector grew by 23%, with all the other sectors having a negative performance. This equates to 71,644 new hectares devoted to producing fruits (ODEPA, 2022).

Clearly, the revenues of these cash crops are a matter of interest for many actors ranging from farmers to the state<sup>2</sup>. Following the rationale of an economist approach, Chile has found a successful niche with high performance (Warwick 2006; Retamales and Sepúlveda, 2011; McMichael, 2013a; Lebdoui, 2019). Under neoliberalism thinking and following the principles of free markets/trade, countries should focus on goods in which they hold a competitive advantage. Although the consequences of this approach are not straight forward (Watkins, 1996; Watts, 1996; Fitting, 2006; Rosset, 2008; Otero, 2012; Lewis, Le Heron and Campbell, 2017). For example Lewis, Le Heron and Campbell (2017) researched the free trade agreement between New Zealand and China, stating that: “Behind this superficial measurements of mutual benefit, however, the wins are partial, selective and possible temporary as others join free trade space”(p.156). In the same way, Chile followed a neoliberal rationale and has demonstrated its ability to compete and thrive when it comes to producing fruits, namely; good growing conditions, industry know-how, and a good reputation in the international market, reflected in its outstanding performance to supply fresh fruits to the global north. Thus, the production and exportation of fruit, especially ones oriented to global markets, has been viewed positively by policymakers, growers and rural development officers alike (Kay, 2002; Warwick 2006; Challies and Murray, 2011; McMichael, 2013b). However, some social factors caused by this ‘agricultural fever’ of producing fruit have not been adequately addressed, which is especially important given the evident trend of fruit expansion reflected in the last rural census.

Defining these social factors are the focus of this academic endeavour. It is not primarily concerned with quantifying how much fruit is produced in Chile, or the numbers of orchards devoted to fruit production, as the work of ODEPA has admirably completed these tasks previously. My thesis will comprehend the social and cultural dimension underpinning fruit production in Chile. By using an ethnographic approach, the research provides qualitative texture and nuance to understanding the social effects when a territory decides to switch its agricultural efforts towards fruits.

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<sup>2</sup> The balance of trade or net exports is one of the component of the GDP’s formula, therefore governments tend to promote exports within their countries.

Thus, this thesis will focus on those social and material forces that shape the agrarian landscape and the underlying fabric that provides the countryside with its vitality.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will firstly provide context on the chosen case study (Perquenco/La Araucania/Southern Chile), paying attention to the physical and demographic characteristics. Secondly, the socioeconomic unit of *La Hacienda* will be discussed as an introduction to the concepts of relations of production and subsistence farming. *La Hacienda* was the prevailing (pre-capitalist) system for organising the societal arena (primarily rural) in Latin American. Thirdly, historical context highlighting the intercultural relations between Mapuche indigenous people, Chileans and the state will be presented to assist the reader in understanding and imagining the magnitude of the ongoing territorial conflicts in the region. Next, the research questions and aims are formulated, and finally, I conclude with an outline of the thesis structure.

## **1.2 Chilean Physical and Demographic Characteristics in the Realm of Rural Studies.**

The study takes place in Chile (see figure 1), a Latin American country located in the southern cone of South America. Chile has a unique geography, as it is a long thin strip of land, placed longitudinally between the Andes Mountain range on the east of the country and the Pacific Ocean on the west. This uniqueness provides some benefits in terms of agriculture. For instance, this shape gives the country a variety of climates which are grouped according to latitudes. Hence at least fourteen climate types are found in the country, alongside multiple microclimates, allowing diversification of the agricultural production (Gómez and Echenique, 1988). Consequentially, the productive agricultural matrix in Chile varies from region to region, and according to ODEPA (2017), the main patterns of land use across Chile are as follows.



Figure 1: Chile's location in South America.

Source: ESRI, map made by the author.

While the north of Chile has always been associated with mining, there is some agricultural production to highlight. For example, the far North has a desertic climate where fruit and horticulture production is viable but only in the oases. Also, the breeding of livestock is vital for small farmers and indigenous communities, especially camelids such as llamas and alpacas, which thrive in altitudes over 4,500 mt. Elsewhere, the northern area near the capital Santiago, has a semi-arid climate where fruit and horticulture production are found in the valleys that run from the Andes to the coast. In these valleys the *pisqueras* are the most evident form of agricultural production, with the production of *pisco* a local spirit made out of grapes. Regarding livestock, this area is used for the raising of goats in the drylands.

Moving southward, the central zone of Chile (also known as the Central Valley) is the core of fruit and horticulture production. Here the industrial crops and the well-

known vineyards are located. All these products flourish under the environment provided by the Mediterranean climate. In addition, there is the beginning of the forest plantations, which are characterised by the monoculture of exotic trees, such as pines and eucalyptus for timber purposes.

South Central Chile, where this research was conducted, has a rainy temperate climate which has enabled the production of cereals, cattle breeding, and dairy. In addition, the timber industry (referred to previously) has a major presence in this area. Although, there is evidence (at least in the rhetoric used by public policies) that due to climate change, the Mediterranean climate of central Chile has been expanding southwards, reaching the La Araucania region (see figure 2). As a result of having milder conditions, farmers have the opportunity to switch crops toward fruits and for companies to establish orchards and processing plants onto new frontiers.

Finally, the extreme southern zone of Chile is characterised by rainy and cold weather. Cattle breeding can be found in the northern part while sheep farming covers a large extension in the south part known as Patagonia. Regarding the forests, the extreme southern zone of Chile is the area where the largest expansion of native forest remains, which is protected and preserved in several national parks.

Having established the main agricultural land use patterns within Chile, some demographic features will be presented. According to the last census in 2017, Chile's total population is 17,574,003 while the proportion between urban and rural population is 87.8% and 12.2% respectively (INE, 2017a). One of the reasons for the disparity between urban and rural populations in Chile is the capital, Santiago, which houses most of country's services and around one third of the entire population. This demonstrates a historically uneven distribution of development. However, once Chile joined the OECD, it began to embrace its definitions and criteria in order to better capture rural areas in terms of population and surface. Hence old approaches overlooked certain features and aspects of the Chilean countryside which the OECD approaches helped to uncover. For example, in line with the OECD criteria, 25.5%

of the population is considered rural, with 92% of the Chilean land surface falling under the same rubric (OECD, 2014).



Figure 2: La Araucanía's location within Chile.

Source: ESRI, map made by the author.

The latest agrarian census estimated that 37,220 units (farms) were conducting subsistence farming, whilst 139,350 were deemed as productive farms or market oriented (ODEPA, 2022). So, in percentual terms, subsistence farming accounted for 21%, and the latter made up for the remaining 79% of the total farms registered. What is staggering about these figures is that despite several waves of modernisation within the Chilean countryside and with a tendency toward promoting cash crops in the form of fruit there are still plots that are laboured in a subsistence fashion co-existing with those fully market-oriented. As such, David Lehmann (1982) has shown that one of the major differences between those advanced capitalist societies (the

USA and the UK, for example) and those countries which have joined the capitalist venture more ‘recently’ (most Latin American countries) is the persistence of farms that are not capitalist *per se*. Bernstein (2010) also echoes the latter point when exploring the persistence of non-capitalist forms of production within the countryside. He provides a useful distinction between “farming” and “agriculture”, with farming associated with social aspects and natural cycles (something that farmers and peasants have been doing for many centuries), while agriculture is enmeshed in a capitalist rationale of economic relations and markets. It is vital to remember that both of these co-exist in Chile since it encompasses themes like family farming and differentiation which I shall address in more detail in the next chapters.



Figure 3: Perquenco, research site.

Source: ESRI, map made by the author.

There are three spatial levels of territorial governance and political administration in Chile: regions, provinces, and communes. The largest unit of administration is the region, with the country currently divided into sixteen regions from north to south. These regions are subdivided into both provinces and communes, with the latter

being the smallest unit of political administration within Chile. The region of La Araucania (figure 2) is the empirical case study of the research. This is due to its particular nature which contains a useful degree of complexity when it comes to analysing the uptake of fruit production and is representative of a new emerging frontier in rural Chile. The core focus of the case study resides in the commune of Perquenco (figure 3) which is one of the 32 communes that make up La Araucania region. This commune operated as my headquarters when conducting the ethnography and the place where I lived for over a year.

La Araucania is a region characterised by high rates of rurality; up to 29% following the old measure, or, if one applies the OECD criteria, the same region rises significantly to 65% (INE, 2017b; ODEPA, 2022). Secondly its social composition can be described as a mix between European settlers descendants (Italian, German and Swiss), Chileans and Indigenous Mapuche people. These different identities have played a crucial role in how the agrarian social structure is shaped within La Araucania, partially explaining the inner conflict that successive governments have tried to address, unfortunately without success (Campos, 2003; Richards, 2010; Pairican, 2013; Richards, 2013; Hale and Millaman, 2018). The third significant characteristic of La Araucania is that it is the most impoverished region of Chile (INE, 2005; INE, 2017b), and has poor performance in every socioeconomic ranking. Several interventions have tried to boost the development of the region and calm the social conflict (Bello, 2004) to little effect. Lastly, La Araucania is a good case study since it is a region that is just starting to shift its crops from cereal to fruit production (Escalona *et al.*, 2014; Apey, 2019), so it is to some degree a brand-new fruit producer.

These characteristics of the case study enabled me to reflect upon the ‘agrarian political economy’ involved in the fruit sector as one of the paradigmatic forms capitalism takes in agriculture (Mann and Dickinson, 1978; Mooney, 1982; Mann, 1990; Kay, 2002). Moreover, the region’s agrarian vocation allows me to comment on class relations and dynamics of production.

### 1.3 La Hacienda as the Linchpin of Latin America Agrarian Structure.

The history of Chile (and Latin America in general) has created and shaped its social composition. Despite the fact that independence from the Spanish Crown was only obtained in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the history of Latin American countries can be traced back to before Columbus' voyage in 1492, to very early prehistorical human settlements<sup>3</sup> and initial colonisation of the region, the subsequent development of indigenous groups and their culture, and the encounter between the two worlds of European and native settlers, which led to the formation of the Latin American society.

The identities of indigenous societies are still, to some extent, rooted in rurality even though cities have now become the main dwelling area for indigenous peoples due to land dispossession, lack of job opportunities or the undermining of their traditions, among other reasons (Levil, 2006; Bengoa, 2007; Álvarez and Imilan, 2008; Imilan, 2017). However, an enduring narrative among indigenous peoples is a romantic idea that the past, mainly associated with a rural existence, was better and is currently expressed in a back-and-forth movement between the urban and the countryside among indigenous people. In Chile there are nine indigenous groups recognised by the Indigenous Law 19.253, enacted in 1993 and according to the last census, the Mapuche are the largest group, with a population of up to 1,745,147. This group has its ancient land located in what is now known as the La Araucania region<sup>4</sup>, where 34.3% of the inhabitants recognise themselves as a part of this an indigenous group (INE, 2017b).

Despite the evident worldwide increase in urban living, there are several factors which led me to research rural areas in this study. Firstly, due to the dependency of the urban population on food production based primarily in the countryside (Weis, 2007; Steel, 2020). Secondly, due to the conception of the rural existence as a foundational part of the human ethos, in both folklore and in the development

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<sup>3</sup> Monte Verde is an archaeological site located in the Chilean Northern Patagonia where one of the oldest human's vestiges of the Americas has been found, dated to at least 12,550 years old (See Dillehay *et al.*, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Nowadays, Mapuche organisations tend to refer to the region as *Wallmapu*.

capitalist society (and subsequently neoliberalism) which portrays the countryside in a particular fashion (Bernstein, 2010; Patel and Moore, 2017). Hence, in order to show how fruit production operates in a new agrarian frontier from a sociological perspective, the rural historical legacy cannot be avoided. For example, according to Barrington Moore (1966), the social relationship between the lords and the peasants within the countryside played a key role in the making of modernity, in that different expressions of feudalism permeated to different evolutionary paths whereby each country reached their industrial society at different stages and therefore the reduction of peasantry by its proletarianisation.

Although Moore did not use Latin America in his comparison of different feudal system and evolutionary paths, the Latin American conception of the *Hacienda* draws several parallels with the feudalism agrarian structure once predominant in Europe (Kay, 1974; Friedmann, 1980; Stern, 1988; Binswanger; Deininger and Feder, 1995). However, the *Hacienda* has its own characteristics which derived from colonisation which comes from the *Encomienda*; a specific unit used by the Spanish colonisers as a means of achieving dual aims of evangelisation and the protection of its commercial interests. These aims were underpinned by the European settlers' premise that Latin America would provide them with a certain population of indigenous peoples to use as labour-power alongside a right to a proportion of land [*Mercedes de Tierras*]. The aftermath was the decrease of the indigenous population due to exploitation and exposure to European diseases.

The system of the *Encomienda* widely expanded during the three first centuries of colonisation (sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth), encompassing both land use and political organisation. Although this started to collapse in Chile by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Naguil, 2016). Importantly, it led to the creation of two social subjects, namely *mestizos* and *criollos*. The *mestizos* were the children of Europeans and Indigenous people mixing and, after a while, they became the peasantry. Meanwhile, the *criollos* were those European descendants that were born on Latin American soil, and became a social group entitled to grab land, even though they did not have the same level of recognition and rights as the Europeans. When the Bourbon reforms took place in Latin America, leading to the increase of taxes, the *criollos* rebelled and lead the fight for independence from the Spanish Crown.

The *Hacienda* emerged alongside the emergence of the *criollos* and *mestizos*, but only reached maturity as a new form of order in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although in those countries where the populations were more disaggregated, such as Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, it came later (Bernstein, 2010). In the *Hacienda*, political, military and economic power were concentrated in one place (Echavarría, 1963). The *Hacienda* was seen to provide a sense of unity through *latifundia* (Large pre-capitalist agrarian state), in a continent that was learning to govern itself and trying to find stability through different and overlapping periods of anarchy and regimes. Thus, there is a consensus in social science that the *Hacienda* is a foundational institution that encompasses a greater extent of the Latin American history in terms of its economy, politics, and social relations (Echavarría, 1963; Morandé, 1984; Stern, 1988; Bengoa, 1990).

According to Echavarria's works “*Consideraciones sociológicas sobre el desarrollo económico de América Latina*” [Sociological consideration about Latin American economic development] (1963), rural life acquired its vitality in the *Hacienda*. The *Hacienda* was also the source of the independence movement in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and where the continent emerged as an agrarian producer. By extension, *La Hacienda* is the source of the many agricultural exporting booms Latin America has gone through (Echavarría, 1963; Warwick 2006; Bernstein, 2010; Escalona and Barton, 2021). In addition, the *Hacienda* is the loci of the Latin American elite, based on tight-knit family relations which provided the conditions to create both a mode of authority and the emergence of two particular social subjects; the *Patron* and the *Inquilino*.

The *Patron* refers to the landowner while the *Inquilino* refers to the peasantry. Theirs was a socioeconomic relationship based on serfdom, although with a shade of a paternal-bond, using Weber's rationale, which could be perceived as domination carried out by tradition. Due to this lasting 'paternal bond', some authors have shown that the later agrarian reform in Chile during the 1960s and 1970s were doomed to fail (Correa; Molina and Yañez, 2005; Bellisario, 2007a). In terms of agricultural production, the *Hacienda* was always oriented to both the international market and domestic market, one of the main differences with feudalism (Echavarría, 1963). For example, in Chile between 1844 and 1860, the wheat production based on the

*Hacienda* reached markets in Peru, Argentina, Australia and California (Gómez and Echenique, 1988; Escalona and Barton, 2021). At the same time, because of the increasing demand of agricultural products, the *Hacienda* implemented a system of *minifundia*, small plots where the *mestizos* were incorporated within the agrarian structure, some as seasonal workers and others as sharecroppers. That is to say, the landowner (*el patron*) provided the land and a portion of the means of production (i.e. tools, seeds, livestock, etc.) while the *mestizos* - who turned into the *inquilinos* - provided their labour power.

In relation to social classes, only those *Hacendados* (The *patron* and his family) located in the central zone of Chile enjoyed the benefits of agricultural exportation<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, the *inquilinos* and workers of the *Hacienda* were condemned to live under precarious conditions, and their production was mainly oriented to subsistence and the domestic market. One of the best portrayals of the working conditions within the *Hacienda* was provided by Trancredo Pinochet (2011), an undercover journalist who undertook the challenge of working inside the Chilean President's *Hacienda* in 1916, where he managed to expose both the precarious conditions of the peasantry, represented in the figures of the *inquilinos* and landless peasant workers, and the uneven tenure patterns in the countryside. One of the outcomes related to the precarious conditions in la *Hacienda* was the exodus of workers from the rural areas towards the north of Chile, where mining was flourishing. Likewise, the migration to the urban areas is partially explained by the peasantry of the *Haciendas* looking for better living conditions (Bauer, 1975).

#### **1.4 The Mapuche Conflict with the State of Chile- 600 Years of History in a Nutshell.**

Six-hundred years of history is address in this section, split into four periods: (A) Withstanding the Spanish conquer, (B) Chilean occupation onto indigenous land, (C) Land reform and Counter reform in Mapuche land and (D) State attempts to manage

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<sup>5</sup> The Chilean state in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was trying to expand its frontiers both northward and southward; hence, the *Haciendas* were concentrated in the middle part of the country. In so doing, the state undertook military campaigns, in the north, it went to a war known as 'La Guerra del Pacifico' (1879-1883) against Peru and Bolivia, while in the south, the state was carrying out the occupation into Mapuche (indigenous) territory (1866-1883).

the conflict. As this research take place in La Araucania region in the southern part of the country (see figure 2), which is part of the ancient territory of the Mapuche (indigenous) people, is necessary to address both the territory and this indigenous group by taking an historical perspective. There has always been tension between the Mapuche and the Spanish Crown, and then later the Chilean state (western world). However, at some stage they began to merge, following an asymmetric relation of domination.

#### **(A) *Withstanding the Spanish Conquer.***

Claude Gay (2018) and Gustave Verniory (2001) among other intellectuals described Mapuche people as the only indigenous group who were able to resist the Spanish conquest in a war that lasted 300 years spanning the 16<sup>th</sup> , 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries known as the *La Guerra de Arauco* [Arauco War], showing how brave and tough they were during colonisation. In fact, they never gave up their land to the Spanish. Yet during those years, there were instances of negotiations between Spanish and Mapuche known as “*Los parlamentos*”. For example, one of them was “*el Parlamento de Quilin*”, held in 1641, where both parties agreed to set the frontier in the Bio-bio River, acknowledging total sovereignty for the Mapuche south of that point (Naguil, 2016). Nonetheless, the Spanish managed to build several forts inside Mapuche territory, although they tended to end up destroyed and then rebuilt periodically.

The ongoing war was exhausting for both parties, but probably more so for the Spanish that were trying to settle in an unknown landscape. Hence, once the frontier was set as the Bio-bio River, the relationship shifted as the colonial society started to trade with the Mapuche society. Due to this trading and the meeting of cultures, the indigenous peoples were able to accumulate horses, cows and other livestock (Bello, 2011; Gay, 2018). Indeed, it is not a coincidence that the Mapuche have the same word, *Cullin*, to refer to both money and livestock (Bengoa, 2007). Jorge Pinto (2003), a Chilean historian, has shown that during the 17<sup>th</sup> century the war was halted and the relations between the two societies became based on trade, fostering a period of relative peace. While some tensions remained, the fact that the Mapuche were able to establish different market networks, reaching as far as Peru in the north

and Asuncion (nowadays the capital of Paraguay) in the middle of South America, reflects how both worlds co-existed with symmetrical power dynamics.

### ***(B) Chilean Occupation onto Mapuche's Indigenous Land.***

Fast-forward to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the state of Chile was initially taking shape. Thus the *criollos* looked with romanticised eyes on the indigenous population in order to make sense of their independentist project, a phenomenon that was also occurring in Peru and Mexico, where stories of indigenous heroes who successfully resisted the Spanish colonisation were used in their own independentist endeavours (Bengoa, 2007). This romanticism and pride in indigenous heritage is also seen in Chile's first coat of arms, designed in 1812, which contained the figures of two indigenous people holding their spears. Hence, during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *criollos* had an idyllic image of the indigenous peoples.

Nonetheless, this imagined portrayal clashed with reality when the *criollos* attempted to drive out the Spanish and found that the Mapuche were offering them asylum at the Bio-Bio river frontier. To the *criollos'* surprise, many Mapuche chiefs [*Lonkos*] were loyal to the Spanish Kingdom due to the several agreements reached in the *parlamentos* between the parties during colonial times (Pinto, 2003). In addition, the Chilean society based on the *Hacienda* felt no acquaintance to the life of the Mapuches.

It was not until 1850 that La Araucania as region became a troublesome matter for the elite who were preoccupied building a new country, instead focusing on the mining production in the north and the wheat production in the *Haciendas* of the central valley (Pinto, 2003; Escalona and Barton, 2021). During this time, a dichotomy of barbarism and civilisation began to become the dominant discourse amongst the ruling class in Chile. In addition, the country was going through an economic crisis in 1857 and therefore sought new land in order to establish agriculture as a means to overcome the crisis (Pinto, 2003). Moreover, the fact the country was literally divided by an area that did not allow direct connection between the extreme south and the central part of Chile frustrated elites. The Chilean ruling class saw the Mapuche's land as unoccupied and unproductive space that was not

taking advantage of its agricultural edge and thus, in the elites' eyes, the inhabitants had to be reduced, educated and integrated into Chilean society (Escalona and Barton, 2021). The Catholic Church were tasked with educating the Mapuche, especially the Capuchin Order, which was sent to evangelise the indigenous people to modernise those seen as barbarians (Verniory, 2001).

Thus, the state of Chile started a military occupation of the Mapuche territories, which began in 1862 with the re-foundation of the Angol Fort and ended in 1883 with the re-foundation of the Villarrica Fort (Verniory, 2001; Bello, 2011). The military forces used the frontier as a base and every summer entered the Mapuche territory, campaigns in which the Chileans troops were relentless in setting fire to Mapuche ranches, stealing cattle by herding the cows to the northern frontier, and stealing women (Bengoa, 2007). Many indigenous people were forced to retreat and hide in the worthless lands in agricultural terms, that is the highlands and along the coast.

Meanwhile, in 1866, a law which declared all the Mapuche's land as a state patrimony was enacted. The justification for this move can be linked to what James Scott (1998) described as the utilitarian state, which is the state's increasing interest to organise natural resources in order to enhance productivity. Although Chile was not among the cases he studied, it applies perfectly to this situation. From this point on, the state of Chile sought to organise the land tenure of La Araucania. In doing so, the state replicated an old strategy carried out in 1850 when it was trying to inhabit the extreme south of Chile, which was advertising a process of colonisation in order to lure "skilful people", a euphemism to say European. The state had to deal with the remaining indigenous peoples and did so by introducing in 1883 the *Comisión Radicadora de Indígenas* [Indigenous Settlement Commission] as the institution in charge of rounding up the indigenous peoples left into reservations or *Reducciones Indígenas*, thus freeing up land for the Europeans and Chilean settlers.

Four things are important about this process of indigenous land dispossession. Firstly, at the end of the occupation, the state of Chile gave the indigenous communities the well-known "*Títulos de Merced*"; legal deeds that recognise and measure the ownership of a specific amount of land. In total, 3,078 "*Títulos de Merced*" were given, which covered an area of 475,194 ha. This only represented 5% of the ancient

Mapuche territory, which was in the possession of 77,751 Mapuche inhabitants, despite the census of 1907 having counted 110,000 Mapuche inhabitants; hence, many of them became landless (Bengoa, 2007). The indigenous “*minifundia*” also stemmed from this process. The second consideration is that, even though the state officially recognised the indigenous rights to a specific amount of land through the “*Titulos de Merced*”, this did not stop further encroachment into the indigenous territory by the Chilean state and the timber industry by means of various scams and frauds (Aylwin, 2004; León, 2016). Third, during these years of dispossession, state officials showed a lack of cultural awareness in putting the Mapuche authorities [*Lonkos*] and their families with the rest of the Mapuche society [*Konas*] at the same level and within the same plots, or even putting more than one *Lonko* on the same plot, triggering conflicts among the Mapuches (Foerster and Montecino, 1988). Lastly, in terms of agrarian studies, this period is the turning point where the indigenous Mapuches were forced to become peasantry. Thus, memories of the days of cattle breeding and the journeys to the lowlands in Argentina became part of the Mapuche romanticism (León, 1990; Bello, 2011).

The role of European migration and settlement inside La Araucania during the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is noteworthy. Understanding this process, promoted by the state to inhabit the agrarian south, is key when explaining the current condition of conflict since the agrarian elite of the region to some extent stem from this process (Richards, 2010). In short, the Chilean state outsourced the duty of finding European settlers to private companies. These companies were given control of a large amount of public land with the only condition to settle European families that were willing to come to Chile and work the land (Verniory, 2001; Schifferli, 2007). The offer made by the companies generally consisted of land and a yoke of oxen to work it. Gustave Verniory (2001, p.59) a Belgium engineer hired to build the rail and who lived in La Araucania between 1889-1899 wrote:

Each migrant, apart from the free trip to south America, receives 40 hectares of land, plus 20 hectares for each descendant who is over sixteen-years-old. In addition to a yoke of oxen with its gear, a plough, many tool, 300 tables and a few kilos of nails in order to build their first shed. The first year they are entitled to stipends aimed at covering their subsistence. After five years and by paying without interest all things received, the settler turned into the owner of the land (translation by the author)

From this process emerged some famous towns such as Capitan Pastene and Faja Maisan, the former is considered an Italian settlement while the latter is a settlement created out of a mix between German and Swiss settlers. Meanwhile, the Chilean state was building the rail network within the region, to facilitate the settler's arrival (Verniory, 2001; Bengoa, 2007). Furthermore, it is important to notice that in terms of social relationships, many landless Mapuche were employed in agrarian jobs inside these new large settlements, replicating the *Hacienda* way of operating.

In global terms, what happened in La Araucania occurred elsewhere as a process called the British-Centred imperial food regime (McMichael, 2013b). During the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the world wheat market lead by the British Empire created both specialised export zones and specialised wheat producing zones. In doing so both the displacement of indigenous people and the arrival of European settlers in the new agrarians frontiers located in the third world were needed for the consolidation of this food regime, which sought to provide enough cheap wheat for an increasing proletariat (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989; Patel and Moore, 2017).

According to Friedmann (2005), these settlers were not peasants at all. Therefore, a new type of farmer arrived in the new agrarian frontier of the third world who were highly specialised in their agricultural production and entirely dependent on their family as the labour-power. La Araucania and other places occupied by European settlers became grain producers for this global-trend. In this period for example, Traiguen (a town located in La Araucania) became a place where many Swiss settlers made their new home. Moreover, this town was known during those years as the Chilean's grain bowl, due to the great wheat productivity among other grains (Escalona and Barton, 2021).

### ***(C) Land Reform and Counter-Reform in Mapuche Land.***

From 1964 to 1973, the state of Chile started reforming the agrarian system. This was firstly implemented from a relatively conservative perspective, supported by Kennedy's administration through its Alliance for Progress aid program which aimed at preventing Latin American countries flirting with communist ideas (among other things) through the implementation of both green revolution ideals and land reform

(Feder, 1965; Bellisario, 2006; Weis, 2007; Patel and Moore, 2017). However, following the election of Salvador Allende, the first ever democratically elected socialist president in the world (1970-1973), the agrarian reform turned more radical and aggressive (Bellisario, 2007a). Thus, the way the government managed this reform was through the creation of two public institutions namely CORA (*Corporación de Reforma Agraria*) and INDAP (*Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario*) or [Institute of Agricultural Development]. The former was in charge of expropriating land from the big landowners in order to give it to the peasant and indigenous peoples. During this period 6.6 million hectares were expropriated following the motto “The land to the tiller” (Bellisario, 2007a).

The logic behind the intervention was twofold and intertwined; stopping the serfdom (reflected in the character of the “*Inquilino*”) and ending the concentration of land in a few hands. Concerning the latter, the *patrones* could avoid taxes if the land was not producing, therefore most of the land owned by big landlords was poorly managed (Kay, 1975). Essentially it aimed to end the *Hacienda* regime and in doing so create a new agrarian structure and land tenancy system. INDAP was created that is a part of the Agriculture Ministry and is still active to this day, providing technical advice in order to improve the quality of life of smallholders and family farmers. To this end, they advise on the adoption of updated technical inputs (fertilisers, seeds, tools, among others) alongside access to credit with lower interest rates (Kay, 2002b; Bellisario, 2007a).

During these revolutionary years, agricultural cooperatives emerged across Chile, undertaken by those peasants and indigenous peoples who benefited from the land reforms. The name given to those plots of land recovered were “Asentamiento (plus another word)”, with the second word usually making allusion to the revolution. Thus, it is likely to find names such as “Asentamiento Che Guevara” or “Asentamiento Camilo Cienfuego”, after leaders of the Cuban Revolution. Unfortunately, the timing between the state’s expropriation of the ‘latifundia’ and the peasantry was not right, in the sense that many peasants decided to seize the large farms (*Fundos*) before the state was able to fully expropriate them, unleashing a class conflict between the “*patrones*” and the “*inquilinos*” (Bellisario, 2007a; Bastias, 2009). In the case of La Araucania, some of the old land claimed from the

Mapuche people based on the ‘*Titulos de Merced*’ was partially recovered and given to the indigenous Communities. Overall, the main achievement of these agrarian reforms that took place during the 1960s and 1970s in Chile was the abolition of the relationship between the patron and the inquilino (Gómez and Echenique, 1988; Bellisario, 2007b).

However, many of these reforms were reversed following a military coup that placed Agusto Pinochet and his neo-liberal ideology into power. Much land was returned to the old land-owners of the Chilean rural elite or the timber industry (Lehmann, 1998; Bellisario, 2007a). Nonetheless, a few “*asentamientos*” managed to remain in the hands of the peasantry or indigenous peoples. These reforms led to a radical change in the agrarian social structure, with both land tenure and the relations of production shifting completely.

Modern Chile has been shaped by the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Among the broad range of neoliberal policies Pinochet adopted during the 1970s and 1980s<sup>6</sup> the one that most adversely affected the Mapuche people was the 701 Decree in 1974. This decree promoted monoculture afforestation of exotic species (pine and eucalyptus trees) by private companies within Mapuche lands (Toledo Llancaleo, 2005). Moreover, the 2568 Decree in 1979 gave Mapuche people individual land titles and provided permission to sell their properties to Chileans and the timber industry. As expected, many Mapuche people sold their land and without land to work as peasants, Mapuche people began to move to urban settings, coming to be seen as a workforce in the cities (Levil, 2006).

#### ***(D) State Attempts to Manage the Conflict.***

In 1989, one year after the national referendum that defeated the Pinochet regime, Patricio Alwyn, the former President of Chile and candidate to replace Pinochet, went to La Araucania to arrange a meeting and collect the indigenous peoples’

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<sup>6</sup> David Harvey (2007) stated that Pinochet’s regime in Chile is one of the milestones when comprehending the establishment of neoliberalism worldwide since the country was set into a laboratory for testing a hardcore neoliberal agenda without facing opposition.

perceptions. The idea was to make a pledge and sign an agreement regarding the indigenous policy for the democratic transition that lay ahead. This event, known as the “*Parlamento de Nueva Imperial*” was held in November 1989. The agreement had several points, but the most remarkable were for the candidate's side: constitutional recognition and the creation of a new indigenous body law (which eventually became the current Indigenous Law and the acceptance of the ILO 169 Convention). Meanwhile, the side of the indigenous organisations pledged to follow the institutional channels for their claims, that is to say, halt their attempts to seize the *Fundos* in dispute by violent means (Bengoa, 2007).

Chile reinstated a democratic government in 1990, and the state further accelerated the neoliberal model imposed by the dictatorship, tearing up the Chilean social fabric and fostering individualism (Garreton, 1984). Following this, in 1992 was the commemoration of the fifth centenary of Columbus' voyage to the Caribbean islands, triggering an intensification of the indigenous identity. Bengoa (2007) observed this was a milestone because, for years before, the indigenous people and peasants had been lumped together; a misconception that was valid until recently as many indigenous people now dwell in urban areas. In addition, during that year a well-known organisation called “*El Consejo de Todas las Tierras*” emerged, pursuing a new agenda and blaming those indigenous organisations that were willing to deal with the state and had signed the agreement in *Nueva Imperial* (1989). Also in 1992, a few indigenous people broke into a large landowner's property aiming to perform indigenous rites inside these private land. What is seen here is that three different Mapuche agendas were attempting to negotiate with power, but from different stances; in other words, Mapuche people are quite diverse, yet can be considered as one in terms of their social achievements.

In 1993, the state of Chile introduced the Indigenous Law 19,253 which was a progressive act and a social achievement. The new law created the CONADI (National Corporation of Indigenous Development), a department that seeks the “*Desarrollo con Pertinencia*” or the development of the indigenous people of Chile according to their local standards (Bello, 2004), through the implementation of many public policies tackling education and health. However, the majority of its budget goes towards the “*Fondo de Tierras*”; public funds specially designed to acquire land in

order to compensate the land dispossession previously mentioned and then transfer it to indigenous communities. It is worth noting the present study dealt directly with one indigenous community that had benefited from this scheme.

The '90s were characterised in Chile by the intensive neoliberal style of economic development. Governments began investing in infrastructure projects such as building hydroelectric dams, cellulose paper plants and roads within indigenous territories that by this time were protected by the Indigenous Law and therefore entailed what some scholars have called “social territorial conflicts” (Bolados 2016), the “Political Economies of Extractive Industry” (Bebbington, Bornschlegl and Johnson, 2013) or “Pragmatic Community Resistance” (Maher, 2019). These conflicts represent the clash between local indigenous interests and the neoliberal ideology instigated by the state (or the transnationalists). Under the guise of “economic development” and “progress”, the state took advantage of natural resources.

For example, the construction of the Ralco Dam stands out as one of the milestones of these conflicts, since it shows how the “common” goal of national development becomes contradictory when it runs counter to the duty of ensuring indigenous wellbeing (Carruthers and Rodriguez, 2009). Building the largest hydroelectric plant in Chile was a must for development in those years. However, the problem was that one of the areas they intended to flood was a graveyard within ancient indigenous territory and thus protected by the Indigenous Law. This led to the dam-builder’s lawyers trying to persuade inhabitants to take a new territory as compensation, effectively dislocating them. Nonetheless, all the compensation had to be approved by the new entity in charge of the indigenous people, CONADI. It is worth highlighting that during these years the ILO agreement was not ratified, and that the dam was only completed in 2004, after a long period of negotiation that lasted over two governments (President Frei (1994-2000), President Lagos (2000-2006)) and the resignation of two directors of CONADI (Namuncura, 1999; Bengoa, 2007).

Another critical issue to highlight happened in 1997 in the municipality of Lumaco, an area where many Italian colonisers had settled and replete with monoculture forestry plantations. In that year, three timber lorries were affected by an arson attack. This marked a political turning point in the emergence of the most radical

group in recent history, the CAM (*Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco*), labelled as a terrorist group by the government. Its aims are to overthrow the neoliberalist agenda that supports the timber industry within the region, and to gain autonomy and self-governance (Pairican, 2013; Di Giminiani, 2018). The aftermath of what occurred in Lumaco was that 12 Mapuche indigenous peasants were jailed due to the government enforcing the national security protocol. Meanwhile, successive land seizures and reclaiming land protests took place across La Araucania. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1999-2000), the government called for local dialogues, attempting to retrieve the old spirits of the “*parlamentos*” and thus bringing relief to the troubled region. According to Naguil (2016) the tactic behind this was to halt the actions of CAM (*Coordinadora Arauco Malleco*) or at least to limit their sphere of influence. The proposal that came out of these dialogues was a commitment of public investment intended to reach 140,000,000,000 Chilean pesos (\$200,000,000 USD) until 2003, but this was announced just seven months before another presidential election, and so was largely a futile proposal.

During the following years (2000-2006), Ricardo Lagos, from the Socialist Party, assumed the presidency of the country. He dismissed the previous agreement and established a new board to address the Mapuche Issue. At this time, the CAM was quite active and causing trouble to the governance of the region, leading to an intensification in their repression. Lagos’ indigenous policy can be summarised in a threefold approach. First was the negotiation with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to obtain a billionnaire credit to fund the “*Programa Orígenes*”, a wave of interventions to improve indigenous livelihood (Bello, 2007; Boccaro, 2007; Di Giminiani, 2018). The second aspect was the creation of a new commission called “*Verdad y Nuevo Trato*” [True and New Deal], led by the former president Patricio Alwyn. This committee aimed to create a document containing an analysis of the history between the indigenous people and the state of Chile, along with suggestions of how to address the indigenous issue. Despite being perhaps one of the most complete analyses of the indigenous topic in Chile, it later on turned into a seven-hundred-page book filed in a drawer without the politicians implementing any of its recommendations such as constitutional recognition or the endorsement to the ILO 169 convention. The third aspect, implemented in 2001, was the reactivation of the Antiterrorist Law, an old tactic used to deal with the Mapuche who were radicalised

into insurgence. This law allowed the government to jail any suspect before any trial, alongside trials in two different courts (military and civic), and the use of covered witnesses, meaning that the court could rely on supposition rather than material proof (Aylwin, 2004).

Following Lagos came Michelle Bachelet's first period of presidency (2006-2010). She addressed the Mapuche issue during her term by finally ratified the ILO 169 convention, almost 20 years after it was announced in the 'Parlamento de Nueva Imperial' in 1989 (Di Giminiani, 2018). Although Chile was one of the last states to confirm the agreement, it was still a huge social achievement. On the other hand, however, repression continued to be part of the government's tactics. In January 2008, a young indigenous student, Matias Catrileo, was killed during the seizure of a "Fundo" that was in dispute and the subsequent police raid (Pairican, 2017). Also, many Mapuche prisoners were judged under the anti-terrorist law and were not granted equal treatment during their cases. Because of this treatment they began hunger strikes, drawing the attention of the Catholic Church, NGOs, and an international audience.

In 2010, Sebastian Piñera became the president through the support of right-wing parties. During his first term (2010-2014), the treatment of Mapuche did not change much from the previous government. That is to say, repression for those who were not following the official institutional procedures when channelising their demands and implementing limited public schemes in order to improve the livelihood of the deprived region. However, one event happened to stir relations; the murder of Werner Luchsinger and Vivianne Mackay, an elderly couple of Swiss descent who were landowners in the region. The event attracted largescale coverage in the Chilean press and in the aftermath more Mapuche were put in prison under the anti-terrorist law.

The period of 2014-2018 saw former president Bachelet elected for a second term. It was a period of several achievements for the Mapuche. Firstly, that Interamerican Court ruled in favour of an accused Mapuche family and condemned the state of Chile for applying the anti-terrorist law against them. Unfortunately, this verdict came one year after one of the family members, *lonko* Pascual, had passed away

(Vergara and Correa, 2014). Another milestone victory for the Mapuche social movement was the Co-officialisation of Mapudungun, their native language, in the municipality of Galvarino. This was pushed by a local grassroots movement which relied on the ILO 169 convention to enforce the municipality to declare their local language official (de la Maza and Bolomey, 2019a). Finally, at the end of Bachelet's second period in 2017, a huge scandal was revealed. *La Operación Huracán*, a police operation that had ended with dozens of indigenous leaders found guilty, was revealed to be based on false evidence, such as WhatsApp messages that were found to have been created by the police in order to make the leaders look guilty.

Sebastian Piñera was voted in for a second term starting in 2018 until 2021. At the start of this period in office, Piñera announced to the rural elites the creation of a “*Comando Jungla*” or Jungle Commando - a special unit of 80 police trained to face “terrorism” in the Colombian jungle with the same tactics used to tackle Narcos. This special unit sought to provide security in the region and stop the rural violence. However, things got out of control when a young rural Mapuche, Camilo Catrillanca, was murdered at the hands of this special unit, triggering significant scrutiny of the government and massive protests in Santiago, which forced the “*Comando Jungla*” to be dismantled (BBC, 2018). Also in 2018, the president announced the “*Plan Impulso Araucanía*”; a public scheme that seeks to improve the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the region. Piñera’s leadership faced further scrutiny as he was in power when the major protests and civil unrest of the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 unfolded which led to a referendum to rewrite Pinochet’s constitution and create a new a constitutional assembly. To date, the President is Gabriel Boric (2022-present), the youngest president ever in Chile and a former student leader. As deputy, he was part of the pledge to draft a new constitution. Now as a president he is leading the process to get a new constitution as the first draft proposed was overwhelmingly rejected in the referendum held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September of 2022.

## **1.5 La Araucanía as an Intriguing Place for Conducting Rural Research.**

As the reader might have noticed, the reasons for choosing the region of La Araucanía to conduct the research are manifold. In fact, I have omitted even more events which further complicated the situation outlined above, but not all can be addressed in

detail. Besides, a full historical account of the conflict in la Araucania goes beyond the scope of this research. Nonetheless, due to its magnitude it cannot be ignored as it constitutes a fundamental part of the background and where the research was conducted.

The complexity provided by La Araucania as a case study offers me an exceptional opportunity to analyse and ground processes of agrarian change in line with its agrarian vocation. The ongoing process of switching crops from cereals to fruits affects the material basis expressed in growers (both farmers and peasants). Given this shift occurs at the material level, it also enables me to reflect upon its agrarian structure, which is based on the interplay between the means of production and the social relations of production, resulting in a definite mode of production in the countryside (Byres, 1997). However, as I shall demonstrate there is peculiarity that not every farm in La Araucania has embraced a capitalist mode of production when it comes to farming. In effect, there are many family farms deemed as subsistence plots.

In addition, the region offers new layers of complexity that make the case even more interesting for rural studies. For example, La Araucania stands out as a region flooded by successive waves of interventions intended to improve its deprived conditions. This status of being permanently allocated as a public policy target has led to deepening the dependency on the state among the indigenous communities (de la Maza and Bolomey 2019b). Hence, this region enables me to shed light on how different rural development schemes have impacted the agrarian structure and to what extent the growers of La Araucania are keen to embrace the shift towards cash crops (fruit). Furthermore, the historic legacy demonstrated in the previous paragraphs shows how La Araucania's agrarian structure stems from intercultural relationships where class and race are intersected, but more importantly allowing to identify who is the grower and who is the agrarian worker.

## **1.6 Research Questions and Aims.**

The core of this thesis is about gaining a nuanced and detailed understanding of the processes of agrarian change and the implication affecting the agrarian structure

under those circumstances. With this respect, I looked at La Araucania as the empirical setting where an ongoing agrarian change is unfolding. That is, the adoption of highly valuable crops (fruits) in a region always devoted to grains and legumes.

Multiple questions were formulated *a priori* during the design stage of the research while others arose when I was conducting the ethnography. Four key research questions are addressed in this thesis, and are as followed:

1. What are the characteristics of the agrarian structure before and after adopting fruit production?
2. What issues unite or divide the different agrarian social classes within the agrarian structure?
3. How do the customs, the subjective ideas, and the material factors involved in farming enter into motion when facing dynamics of agrarian change?
4. How do family farms and their members engage with both traditional and cash crops?

These questions are explored through an ethnographic methodology which documents the shifts experienced within the agrarian structure in light of the adoption of fruit production in La Araucania (South-central Chile). There were seven further aims for me to achieve as an ethnographer:

- a. To identify growers' perceptions toward cereals and fruits
- b. To understand the social relations of production that shape a definite mode of production, whether cereal or fruit production.
- c. To identify who are the growers and who are the agrarian workers when cultivating food.

- d. To comprehend how the previous roles (grower/agrarian workers) are reproduced and to what extent legitimised.
- e. To explore class struggle and class alliance among the different rural inhabitants within the agrarian structure of La Araucania.
- f. To nuance the concept of family farms in light of the case study
- g. To examine the mechanism family farms employed to achieve reproduction as unit of production.

### **1.7 Thesis Overview.**

The thesis is organised into seven chapters, each of them covering different yet inter-related themes. The ethnographic narrative is driven by the effort of making sense of the complicated situation in La Araucania, where the elements of social structures and the everyday life are presented and discussed. The thesis contributes to agrarian studies in general and rural sociology in particular by deepening our understanding of agrarian change on a new frontier. Up to this point (**Chapter one**), I have laid out contextual data by going through physical, demographic, and historical features. In addition, I discussed why Chile and La Araucania represent intriguing settings to carry out research in regard to rural studies and also introduced both research questions and aims.

**Chapter two** deals with the theoretical foundations that support the present ethnography. It applies classical concepts of political economy into the perspective of agrarian issues. In this way, the chapter delves into agrarian capitalism and draws the main themes of the literature together, including: agrarian structure, family farms, class relations, neighbour relations, moral economy, agrarian commodities, production time and labour time. These concepts are used to develop a narrative which seek to explain in a more nuanced fashion the agrarian change occurred when farmers begin to switch crops toward more valuable ones, like fruits.

**Chapter three** engages in methodological discussions, reflecting on the interplay between the development of the fieldwork, research questions, and theory, which collectively yielded a significant amount of data. Firstly, it delves into the methodology and outlines the philosophical assumptions framing the study. It justifies why ethnography emerges as the most suitable approach to address the research questions. Secondly, the chapter discusses unforeseeable events, such as Covid-19, and how these shaped the ethnography throughout the fieldwork. Thirdly, taking a critical stance, I reflect on the field relations established during the ethnography. Fourthly, I illuminate the different methods employed for data collection and the coding framework used during analysis. Following that, the research's limitations, including the omission of the state, are explained. Lastly, the paragraph examines several ethical issues in the context of conducting research in rural Chile, considering the perspective of a Chilean student based in a UK university.

**Chapter four** delves into the case study, providing a detailed account of the genesis of an indigenous community. It shows how the members of this indigenous community navigate class dynamics, reflecting on state welfare and their transition from being landless to becoming landed.

**Chapter five** is an introduction to the findings. It provides an overview of the social and material forces encompassing the dynamics of agrarian change triggered by the breakthrough of fruit orchards into a new frontier such as La Araucania. At the outset, an effort to unpack available evidence in terms of the number of orchards and land use is made. In addition, the chapter argues against the 'formal' approaches and methodologies employed when documenting fruit orchards. Instead, it advocates for an ethnographic approach which allows for capturing the hidden fruit orchards. Then it moves towards examining various accounts from different periods of time to determine the social and material foundations of a particular mode of production when it comes to farming and how this is associated with the symbolic value of food in terms of achieving food security. The chapter pays attention to subjective and material elements, which in turn become either barriers or enablers for the development of the fruit sector. Moreover, it expands on the role of time, one of the classic debates in agrarian studies (see Mann & Dickinson, 1978; Mooney, 1982;), and

its effects on agricultural commodities. The last section deals with the role of companies in shaping the fruit sector.

**Chapter six** is concerned with two intertwined topics: a) family farms and b) agrarian classes. In this chapter, they are presented from an everyday point of view. As such, the chapters' main purpose is to ground and offer ethnographic texture to the relationship held by family farms with numerous ends- sometimes opposed to each other. In the same way as the previous chapter, it begins by teasing out the official definition of a Chilean family farm and how this does not correspond with all cases observed within this ethnography. Next, drawing on sociological perspectives regarding social classes, the narrative is driven by exploring the social dynamics emerging from the fact that different farms with contrasting modes of production co-exist within the same rural territory. In this way, the qualitative evidence shows how in some opportunities, the distinction farm owner/agrarian worker might be effective, however, on other occasions, neighbour relations are more accurate in explaining the social relations of production sustaining a definite agrarian structure. Both approaches assist in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the strategies family farms employ to achieve their reproduction over time. Thus, after analysing the elements that differentiate and stratify family farms, the chapter looks at aspects that bridge them together.

**Chapter seven** culminates this thesis. It returns to the findings and puts them into perspective by summarising the main points raised throughout the study. With the chapter reflecting on and answering the research questions. Further to this, the conclusions outline a future research agenda.

## 2. Theory

### 2.1 Introduction.

In this chapter, I critically explore the literature utilised to address the research questions and the objectives of this ethnography. The chapter is comprised of two sections. In the first of these, I present the theoretical tenets and arguments that justify the election of political economy as the main framework to provide an analytical understanding of the adoption of agrarian capitalism in the context under investigation. The classical tenet that the social relations of production stem from the material base becomes relevant when studying shifting crops in a specific area. However, this also needs to be reimagined so it can be applied to a Latin American context. Thus, after laying out the key concepts driving the discussion, this chapter moves into its second section which is further divided into seven subsections. To begin with, the elements and dilemmas faced when marrying agriculture and capitalism are unpacked, with special attention paid to the agrarian question; as such, the first subsection focuses on the family farm concept. Secondly, the chapter reflects on the role of agrarian workers and their explanatory capacity to determine whether agrarian capitalism has been adopted or not. Subsequently, the barriers which agrarian capitalism faces when deploying its influence are examined in the third and fourth subsections. Next, the political context and its implications for the production of food are also analysed through the lens of food regimes. Sixthly, driven by unpacking the underlying agrarian structure, the relationships among agrarian social classes are presented and a corresponding typology is offered. The last subsection grounds the discussion by reviewing the literature relating to either Mapuche or Chilean rural studies, seeking to bridge these two areas. Finally, I argue that different sociological traditions are needed to highlight the various components that explain the transition toward capitalism in the countryside. Accordingly, it is suggested that the relationships among farms enacted through different mechanisms are vital to understanding processes of agrarian change.

## 2.2 From the Classical Political Economy Towards the Agrarian Political Economy.

The agrarian political economy provides a sufficiently broad theoretical framework to encompass the high degree of complexity in this case study, especially when addressing the social relations of production underpinning the process of shifting crops towards fruit production. However, this approach has its roots in the Western tradition, implying some challenges when applying its categories to Latin American reality. Furthermore, this view can be seen as highly over-determinist by the forces exercised by capital. In this way, an effort will be made to expose how these capital-centred categories interact with other social categories, such as gender, ethnicity, and intergenerational relations. In other words, it recognises agrarian change necessarily entails dynamics and tensions reflected in intersectional categories. Consequently, a more comprehensive interpretation of the agrarian class structure can be obtained.

The classical political economy approach can be traced to the efforts of Karl Marx to understand the development of industrial capitalism led by Britain during the nineteenth century. During this period, the Western world witnessed an unprecedented production of a surplus, defined as the production of more than humankind requires to reproduce itself as a species (Bernstein, 2017). As Marx and Engels (2017, p. 57) pointed out:

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarcely 100 years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground - what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour.

Under these circumstances of massive surplus, Marx was not entirely convinced by the explanations of the classical political economists, represented by Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Although he accepted some of their insights, he remained critical of their approaches. In essence, what lies at the heart of the previous quote is the notion of humans' capacity to act upon material life conditions.

Giddens (1971) succinctly summarises that Marx had two main issues with classical political economists. The first was their treatment of the capitalist economy as

something universal, whereby the premises of exchange, private property and the self-seeking pursuit of profit are general characteristics shared by all types of economies and societies. Yet, for Marx, the capitalist system entails a specific mode of production, which is located at a definite point within history, and thus has to be considered as a historical outcome. Secondly, and perhaps of more importance for this academic research, is Marx's critique of the lack of human agency within the classical political economy approach. In other words, he acknowledged a tendency among economists to use specific categories (such as capital, commodity, costs, and prices, among others) as being detached in terms of social reality.

“Reification” stems from the latter critique, and is a concept defined as the process whereby abstract ideas become more “real” than the material circumstances that elicit them. Hence, for Marx, the economy and society are two elements mirroring one other. In short, dialectical materialism is a Marxist lens through which to understand reality, whereby real men, made out of flesh and bones and enmeshed in social relations, are the actual sources of any kind of economic concept. Thus, instead of looking at abstract categories, in order to grasp any economic phenomena the analysis should be focused on two fundamental aspects, namely the historical and the specific set of social relations in which individuals are involved in shaping the economy. Or, in Marx's (1986, p. 3) words:

The subject of our discussion is first of all material production. Individuals producing in society, thus the socially determined production of individuals, naturally constitutes the starting-point. The individual and isolated hunter or fisher who forms the starting-point with Smith and Ricardo belongs to the insipid illusions of the eighteenth century.

In this manner, Marx's critique of political economy [*Grundrisse*] sought to understand the material circumstances that shaped the characteristic “mode of production” under capitalism. Giddens (1971, p. 5) summarised Marx's thoughts by referring to dialectical materialism as follows: “The real world is not to be inferred from the study of the ideal; on the contrary it is the ideal which has to be understood as a historical outcome of the real”. To this end, the Marxist methodology known as “historical materialism” pays special attention to the historical material circumstances that led to the capitalist mode of production. Under the assumptions of historical materialism, it is worth highlighting that each aspect belonging to the realm of “ideas” could have different meanings, and therefore they vary according

to the historical period (Bellamy, Clark and York, 2011). On the other hand, history is set in motion by the forces of production on the material basis.

Undertaking a materialist analysis means social phenomena being explained by looking at material life conditions. Thus, every mode of production during history has been comprised of the mutual influence of both the “means of production” and the “social relations of production”, each being located at the base of the material reality. The former refers to those technical inputs allowing production, such as machinery, land, tools, raw materials, and labour power, while the latter refers to the agency performed by the social actors involved in the production of a commodity, which is usually portrayed in the social division of labour.

The interplay at the material base of these two components determines the superstructure, understood as referring to organising elements of society such as the ideology, the state, school systems, laws, etc. Under this logic, in order to protect and reproduce the ways in which the mode of production is organised, the dominant class utilises spheres of society that are part of the superstructure, such as the educational system (Poulantzas, 1979). Hence, the dominant class applies different strategies at the level of the superstructure, which takes on ideological shapes and thereby allows them to legitimise their position within class relations (Giddens, 1971).

As Marx puts it, “The mode of production of the material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general” (Marx, 1986, p. 187). Thus, dialectical materialism lies at the base of this rationale. That is, the interrelationship between the means of productions and the social relations of production is the place from where the capitalist mode of production emerges as something empirical that can be grasped, and hence is a feasible way to highlight the social dynamics by which commodities and surpluses are created.

Marx (1974) defined capitalism as an economic system of commodity production, which involves both national and international exchange markets and which has an endemic tendency towards concentration and centralisation. Along these lines, Bernstein (2010) complements the latter by adding three associated features: Firstly,

(a) commodity production takes place as generalised *modus operandis* under capitalism. Secondly, (b) the capitalist imperative is accumulation so it has generated unprecedented wealth; hence its underlying premise is based upon constant growth. Thirdly, (c) the capitalist character of considering labour as a commodity and therefore the distinction between owners and workers leads to the expropriation or “alienation” of surplus due to the way the division of labour has been displayed.

I will address in detail each of these characteristics when presenting the roles of family farming and corporations, alongside identifying who is the owner and who is the worker within the case study. At this point, it is important to point out that, when analysing capitalism as a historical outcome for most Marxists, history is essentially a history of class struggle, which is conceived as the principal driving force when explaining its course (Giddens, 1971; Wright, 1976; Poulantzas, 1979; Elster, 1986).

With regard to exploring the social relations of production, a few pertinent aspects have to be mentioned. Firstly, every mode of production has its own set of social relations of production, hence the importance of unpacking them according to attitudes towards the means of production in terms of ownership, management, and display (Giddens, 1971; Wright, 1976; Poulantzas, 1979; Bernstein, 2010). Furthermore, the emergence of social classes and their differentiation is rooted in who controls the surplus (Bernstein, 2010; 2017). At the same time, the ways in which individuals engage among and with one another during the production process and beyond leads to generation of differentiation in every society. For instance, gender distinctions or the distinctions between gatherers and hunters illustrate this point.

However, when a society reaches a point of complexity regarding the relationships of its members, a class structure begins to derive from the social relations of production. In this way, and from a historical viewpoint, each stratum performs a certain role or task according to its location within the social division of labour that reflects the mode of production.

The emergence of private property, especially in regard to the means of production, is the starting point for the capitalist mode of production. This threshold has led to different groups or classes being displayed in opposite directions. In Marx's words, what occurs under capitalism is: "To divorce the means of production from labour and more to concentrate the scattered means of production into large groups, thereby transforming labour into wage labour and the means of production into capital" (Marx, 1986, p. 255). In this manner, what capitalism posits is a society "splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (Marx, 1986, p. 225).

Unfortunately, Marx could not further develop his understanding in relation to what constitutes a class, due to his manuscript breaking off (Lukács, 1974; Elster, 1986). However, the idea of decoupling labour and capital is at the very base of class formation. Put into general terms, the members of a class in society could either be the owners of capital (via owning the means of production), known as the bourgeoisie, or they could be the ones who sell their labour power, that is to say, the proletariat. This distinction between labour and capital is essential when discussing class formation within a rural setting and thus it is also key for this research endeavour.

It is worthwhile to draw upon the efforts made by Poulantzas (1979) and Wright (1976) in order to add more substance to what class means under a Marxist approach. The former provides the following insights. Firstly, classes have to be defined according to class struggle; in other words, they are defined in mutual opposition to one another. Secondly, classes are objective places occupied by agents in the social division of labour, yet they are independent of the will of the agents holding certain positions; that is to say, the distinction between structure and agency in social science. Thirdly, classes are not merely determined at the economic level, but also at the political and ideological level. This means that, when analysing social relations of production, it is important to acknowledge the presence of those dynamics of domination related to the political criteria alongside the ideological criteria. Meanwhile, Wright's (1976) contribution lies in having elaborated the notion of contradictory location within class relations, which provides an analytical lens when dealing with those cases where a particular class position is relatively closer to either

the working class or to the bourgeoisie, but without necessarily sharing the same interests at the economic, ideological, or political levels.

To recapitulate, some key points of Marx's political economy have been presented: (a) the importance of acknowledging the mode of production as a historical outcome of class struggle being the main force driving history; (b) the mode of production is comprised of the interplay between the social relations of production and the means of production, both of which constitute the material basis from which any aspects of the superstructure emerge, this rationale being known as dialectical materialism; and (c) the historical threshold where capital and labour are decoupled, spawning private property and surplus, is also the point where social classes are created. Clearly the Marxist approach brings insights in terms of class formation, commodity production, and social relations of production, all of which are closely related with the aims of this research when understanding how the fruit industry penetrates Southern Chile. Nevertheless, Marxism has a significant shortfall when dealing with rural studies, due to most of its conjectures having been developed with an industrial context in mind (Goodman and Redclift, 1986).

Therefore, applying this theoretical framework to the countryside could be problematic, making it necessary to take a further step when applying political economy concepts in this research. Nonetheless, it is quite paradoxical from the point of view of historical materialism that, whilst the capitalist mode of production is mainly concentrated in industrial areas, the rural remains the last place where capitalism could be adopted, even though for Giddens "the initial impetus is located there" (1971, p. 33).

Bernstein (2010) defines "primitive accumulation" as the process through which pre-capitalist societies, in their transition to a capitalist mode of production, first began to establish social classes through the emergence of private property. This transition could have occurred from different paths depending on the material circumstances (De Angelis, 2004). For instance, due to Marx having studied the British example, his conclusions reveal historical evidence of the agricultural land enclosures that occurred in feudal Britain in the fifteenth century, and which led to the undermining of the peasantry by altering both ecological relations and social relations of

production (McMichael, 2013b). Thus, the circumstances of turning land into private property drove the transition to a capitalist mode of production, in addition to the exodus from the countryside to urban areas, with one of the effects being the creation of a new social subject - the wage labourer or proletariat (Giddens, 1971; Poulantzas, 1979; Kautsky, 1988; Vergara-Camus and Kay, 2017).

Marx also noticed that, when comparing both modes of production (feudalism and capitalism), there was a conversion worth highlighting. On the one hand, in the feudal mode of production, the relationship between lords and peasants was via serfdom, which meant that the peasantry were still entitled to have some control over the means of production (e.g., small plots of land) and thus could be considered economically free but politically oppressed. Meanwhile, the relationship between the proletariat and bourgeoisie was via the former selling their labour power to enterprises, with the latter controlling the means of production (Poulantzas, 1979; Bernstein, 2010). Therefore, the proletariat was politically free but economically oppressed (Byres, 1977).

This transition from feudalism to capitalism can be seen as extremely Eurocentric and teleological. Under these assumptions, the countryside is doomed, as the transition to a capitalist mode of production will inevitably undermine the rural population until its destruction, while the capitalist mode of production builds more momentum. Furthermore, Marx's outlook can be considered as functionalist due to each structure seeming to have the function of fuelling capitalism. On the contrary, it is worth bearing in mind Li's (2010, p. 233) insights when she argues: "The class that required proletarians was different from the one that evicted peasants and separated in time by several centuries". Hence, it should also be considered that the accumulation or control of the means of production has an aspect of contingency.

It is important to acknowledge that Marx's political economy has faced significant criticism for its lack of consideration for gender and race issues. Moreover, from an economic perspective, Marx's framework does not encompass several key variables within his model, such as the role of the state, the invention of credit, investment in human capital, the emergence of the middle class, and the recognition that human needs extend beyond mere reproduction.

Another issue with Marx, but regarding his treatment of rural areas is his foreseeing of a society split into two major class groups, bourgeoisie and proletariat (peasants are regarded as petty bourgeoisie, a temporary class that will transform into one of the two major classes (Goodman and Redclift, 1986)). However, what Marxist theory foresaw never actually occurred; despite there having been a worldwide process of countryside depopulation (Araghi, 1995), it has not happened as quickly as Marxists predicted. Despite large-scale production supposedly being superior, which would inevitably entail the undermining of family producers, it is staggering how the countryside remains very active (Goodman and Redclift, 1986).

For Marx, peasants were conceived as individualistic social subjects due to their self-sufficient features. Surprisingly, Max Weber agreed with this individualism embodied in peasant life too. Despite Weber's point of departure being different, in that rationalisation is the central guiding principle of his theory, he reached the same conclusion about growers. Nonetheless, the caveat is that, in Weber's view, growers are basically entrepreneurs because they have achieved a degree of rationalisation that allows them to run their enterprises in commercial terms; I shall expand on this later. The following two quotes show the reflections on growers of the two founding fathers of sociology, Weber and Marx:

But if anything is characteristic of the rural conditions of the great wheat-producing states of America, it is - to speak in general terms - the absolute economic individualism of the farmer, the quality of the farmer as mere businessman. (Weber, 2007, p. 364)

The smallholding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. [...] The smallholding, admits of no division of labour in its cultivation, no application of science and therefore no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationship. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than intercourse with society. (Marx, 1986, p. 254)

Nonetheless, it has been shown that peasants play a crucial role in the realms of politics and ideology, and in fact they can be quite determinant when it comes to either class struggle or formation of alliances (Kautsky, 1988; Kane and Mann, 1992; Watts, 1996). However, for classic Marxists, the fact that both capital and labour are

not divorced but instead align over a single subject, family farms, is problematic (Goodman and Redclift, 1986).

Therefore, either the transition to a capitalist mode of production has not been completed, or certain features of the countryside have been misinterpreted (Byres, 1977). It follows that better questions are needed to explain the dynamics of agrarian capitalism in the countryside. One question is the so-called “agrarian question”, which is critical to the field of rural sociology. In a nutshell, the agrarian question concerns:

The differentiation of the rural population or the emergence of rich and poor classes among the peasantry and the extent to which pre-existing agrarian structures limit the advance of capitalism in agriculture. (Edelman and Wolford, 2017, p. 936)

By teasing out the agrarian question, two main aspects can be identified. On the one hand, it addresses formation of social classes and their attitudes in regard to both the means of production and the social relations of production. On the other hand, it also tackles those aspects which are part of everyday life and which hinder any capitalist attempts to take over the rural side.

Thus, the agrarian question provides two valuable analytical tools to this academic endeavour. Firstly, it offers insights to aid understanding of the class relationships between my informants in terms of class formation and identity, alongside exploring the interactions among different classes in La Araucania. Secondly, it assists in recognising those elements, whether they hinder or transform the penetration of agrarian capitalism, while moving into La Araucania as a new place to develop capitalist ventures. In short, the agrarian question enables me to study the relationship between capitalism and agriculture.

### **2.3 Capitalism and Agriculture: Elements, Debates and Dilemmas.**

Karl Kautsky (1988) took up the challenge to develop a Marxist theory when exploring the countryside under capitalism conditions; that is to say, to explain the existence of family peasant farming under a capitalist mode of production (Watts, 1996). He embarked on this task intending to identify a feasible way to drag peasants into the revolution, due to their political significance potentially being sufficient to tilt the

balance to one side or another (Banaji, 1990; Watts, 1996). However, Kautsky's value resides in his analysis of the impacts and effects of capitalism on agriculture.

In doing so, Kautsky (1988) suggests that agriculture needs to be considered as an entity connected to the whole mechanism of social production. In other words, delinked from what is occurring in the industrial sector, agriculture cannot be analysed. In effect, he stresses that even though agriculture and industry both follow rules according to their own natures, ultimately, they tend to develop in the same direction.

However, by comparing the agricultural and industrial sectors, he observes that the former's transition to capitalism is more complicated, mainly because of the peculiarities that agriculture entails in terms of its reliance upon nature and its feature of self-exploitation. In regard to the latter, family farms are noteworthy due to the owners of capital and those who provide the labour power being family members of a definite production unit (Goodman and Redclift, 1986). As a result, class struggles or relationships amongst classes become difficult to grasp. The inherent contradiction which family farms exhibit, that of having ownership over the means of production at the same time as supplying labour within the family farm, hinders the development of classic capitalism in agriculture (Mann and Dickinson, 1978; Watts, 1996). Therefore, drawing on Weber's notion, the outsourcing of management from the family farm is a good indicator of agrarian capitalism.

In terms of the means of production, the industrial economy will tend to achieve multiplication with relative ease. Conversely, in the agricultural sector the land is a fixed resource, so even if a capitalist enterprise wished to maximise exploitation this would be finite because intensive farming ultimately leads to land degradation. Furthermore, land as means of production has to be put into perspective, since not all of it is arable nor of the same quality. Drawing on this unique condition of land, it is possible to deduce another distinction between the two sectors. In the industrial sector, centralisation is more likely to be an effect of the accumulation process: "A big capital can form without suppressing the autonomy of the lesser enterprise" (Kautsky, 1988, p. 146). On the contrary, centralisation and accumulation occur hand in hand when it comes to agricultural production. Lastly, the assumption that the

larger enterprise will always be superior in industrial production, in terms of both quality and quantity, lacks merit in agriculture. Instead, it has been shown that there is a point where family farming is more efficient than a larger enterprise when producing food (Kautsky, 1988; Binswanger, Deininger and Feder, 1995). In addition, there exist an array of alternative movements that more highly value the food products produced under the labels of family farms or local farms (McMichael, 2000; Weis, 2007; Rosset, 2008; White, 2018).

Kautsky (1988), in his studies of peasant families, remarks that the principal features of agriculture before encountering capitalism were self-sufficiency alongside a dependence on the work of family members, which enabled them to not be susceptible to the major disruptions of the markets. However, he adds that the turning point in the history of agriculture occurred when peasants started to require cash for a variety of circumstances, from paying the rent (to those landlords that were no longer accepting payment in kind) to purchasing goods produced outside the farm. In the same vein, James Scott (1976) found that a considerable portion of cash flowing outwards from rural households was intended to acquire those commodities that it is not possible to farm, such as kerosene or oil. This necessity for cash led peasant families to seek ways in which to earn it. Thus, the two methods available were either starting to produce cash crops or selling their labour power.

Furthermore, the fact that family farms control both capital and labour becomes problematic in terms of class formation and social relations of production (Goodman and Redclift, 1986; Banaji, 1990). Hence, this theoretical paradox leads to the myriad of guises family farms could take in the countryside (Friedmann, 1980; Bernstein, 2010). Kautsky (1988) solved this dilemma by pointing out how farmers approach the market, either as sellers of labour power or as sellers of food. However, in his view, becoming a seller of labour power, leading to the inevitable proletarianisation of the peasantry, is not as remarkable as the second option. Moreover, stating that capitalism takes over the countryside through the introduction of wage labour risks misleading the discussion (Goodman and Redclift, 1986). In effect, according to Kautsky (1988), what occurs when farmers take the second path and start to become specialised producers is far more interesting, sociologically speaking, since it triggers an array of consequences.

Firstly, based on Marxist theory, commodity production tends to be seen as contrary to peasant production, because the latter produces use value for internal consumption, allowing the subsistence of family farmers and their reproduction (Goodman and Redclift, 1986). Meanwhile, commodity production means that goods are produced in expectation of exchange value. Thus, when peasant families turn into commodity producers to earn cash, the underlying process is that they become dependent on the market.

This transformation into cash crop growers is highly risky for peasant families due to the capitalist mode of production encouraging them to produce as cheaply as possible (Marx, 1986; Kautsky, 1988; Kane and Mann, 1992; Moore, 2015; Patel and Moore, 2017). Hence, in Kautsky's words, "what was once a blessing - a good harvest - became a curse" (1988, p. 16) because, under the market logic of supply and demand, a surplus in production will tend to lead to a plunge in final prices (Watts, 1996; Weis, 2007; McMichael, 2013b). Under the premise that the only way to produce affordable food is by increasing yields, the hegemonic agri-food system tends to seek growers who are yield-driven (Weis, 2007; Bernstein, 2010). However, this leads to another contradiction of agrarian capitalism. On the one hand, farmers strive to achieve high yields in the expectation of being rewarded with good prices. Yet, on the other hand, the agri-food system strives to offer affordable food at the consumer end, which can only be attained by creating a surplus which ultimately impacts agro-commodity prices.

It follows that "modern agriculture displays two basic features: *private property in land, and the commodity-character of agricultural products*" (Kautsky, 1988, p. 59). In addition, modern agriculture could take two forms: farms are either understood as (a) sources of wage labour for other farms; or (b) family farms that are actually enmeshed in the capitalist mode of production, without radically losing their essence. The former represents the classical view, whereby the farm is considered as a provider of labour power. Typically, (a) conceals (b), with the latter revealing that unity of capital and labour is indeed possible. This is reflected in the existence of peasant production, whereby the means of production are under the control of those who also provide labour power in the form of family labour or self-exploitation.

Consequently, Kautsky elaborated an argument in which he challenges the Marxist dualistic vision of two predominant classes, while also criticising the common mistake of lumping together the petty bourgeoisie and peasant families. In so doing, he argues that the extraction of a surplus is carried out through commercial capital and credit institutions, since family peasants, when transforming into commodity producers, also become an essential part of the dynamics of global capitalism when producing agri-food commodities.

Overall, it can be stated that the value of the agrarian question posed by Kautsky resides in its recognition of capitalism as the driving force of agriculture. To some degree, he took up the challenge to make sense of what Marx did when studying the industrial sector (Watts, 1996). Moreover, his contributions have acquired value when it comes to addressing those processes of agricultural transition to capitalism taking place in the Third World (Banaji, 1990; Watts, 1996). As a consequence of Kautsky's profound influence, a distinct body of knowledge known as Neo-Marxism emerged in the field of agrarian studies. Neo-Marxism aimed to broaden the scope of agrarian studies, transitioning from a primary focus on agrarian classes to a more encompassing analysis of food systems, the development of food regimes theory, the study of commodity chain value, and an increased emphasis on understanding the role of social movements within the context of neoliberal governance.

### ***2.3.1 A Note on the Study of Family Farms.***

From this context arises the sociological category of “family farms”. This designation is highly controversial because, even though it represents the worldwide source of most food production (FAO, 2014), the ways in which it is presented today in international forums like FAO tend to be misleading, as family farms can be made to appear homogenous thereby disguising their heterogeneity. For example, although research indicates that family farms account for 90% of farms worldwide (Lowder, Skoet and Singh, 2014) or that about 75% of all arable land is farmed by them (Lowder, Skoet and Raney, 2016), these figures fail to identify what makes family farms different from one another. To this end, further reflection is needed to ground the theoretical notion of the family farm in light of my research, which takes place in a Latin American context.

The only thing that is clear about family farms is that they denote some involvement of the family when running a farm (Goodman and Redclift, 1986). However, they can be either family-owned, family-managed, family-worked, or all three together (Bernstein, 2010). Drawing on agrarian political economy concepts, the analysis of family farms becomes richer. Firstly, one must consider family farms as units of production (Harriet Friedmann, 1980; Hedley, 1981; Lem, 1988). This allows attention to be paid to household dynamics, both internally and in relation to their surroundings. Moreover, when family farms are treated as units of production, their reproduction over time becomes a matter of interest as it highlights the different mechanisms that they employ to achieve this reproduction (Harriet Friedmann, 1980; Van der Ploeg, 2018).

Harriet Friedmann (1980) argues that each unit of production (family farm) is determined by a double force, interacting with both the internal dynamics of the rural household and the external dynamics of the broader rural landscape where there are other farms. Since the interplay of these two forces varies according to each context, it becomes feasible to uncover the different guises which family farms take in the countryside. Friedmann is particularly eager to explain the diverse patterns of family farms worldwide, while unpacking the reasons why farmers pick certain crops and modes of production for reproducing their livelihoods. In so doing, she focuses on domestic labour and the context within which each farm is located; when addressing the latter, the intersection among agrarian classes becomes critical, assuming that each class is located in a rural household.

In terms of the reproduction of the family farm, this operates at more than one level. Firstly, upon the means of production, for instance by adding manure to the soil or providing forage to the cattle during winter, so that the following season the farm can carry out the same tasks (Van der Ploeg, 2018). Secondly, regarding the social relations of production, the labour force and the wider community are the main factors (Harriet Friedmann, 1980). Hedley (1981, p. 73) adds a noteworthy caveat, stating: “Not all social relations involved in the production or related to production are productive relations”. He emphasises that, while the relations of production encompass the extraction of surplus in classic political economy theory, this is less

fundamental in family farming or in those cases where the rural community provides labour based on reciprocity or mutual aid.

It follows that the social dynamics present both within the rural household and among the neighbours' farms are key components when understanding the nature of family farming. In sum, on one hand the role of woman and children in doing certain tasks on the farm and how these are passed on through generations is a good example of reproduction in action upon the social relations of production at the household level. While, on the other hand, the relationship that one family farm has with its community in the form of mutual aid during threshing or the provision of agrarian workers for large holdings are forms of reproduction that take place outside of the household.

The diversity of family farms in rural areas poses another theoretical challenge, which is that the capitalist mode of production is not reflected in each unit of production (Lehmann, 1982). In other words, the co-existence of different farms with a range of modes of production within the same territory. Some of these farms have had to embrace a capitalist mode of production in order to reproduce and become viable enterprises, yet there still exist many holdings that are much closer to the subsistence farming end of the spectrum. In addition, there are other farms that are in the process of transition to a capitalist mode of production or are in between places, such as "petty commodity producers". This is particularly the case in Latin America, as Bernstein (2010, p. 46) states: "Latin America today has perhaps the greatest range of forms of agrarian social relations and farming anywhere in the world". Hence, for Friedmann (1980), looking at the *Hacienda* was so revealing as it represents an alternative route from where simple commodity production could turn into a capitalist venture. Capitalist societies presuppose the disentanglement of capital and labour until a polarising degree is reached, thus leading to the formation of social classes. However, for the family farm version of the petty commodity producer, it is apparent that labour and capital seem to go hand in hand, so class exploitation or class struggle do not operate in the same fashion that Marx predicted (Goodman and Redclift, 1986).

Van der Ploeg (2018) contributes to the discussion by signalling that there are at least three modes of farming in world agriculture that share a common terrain but also are quite distinct from one another. These are: “Capitalist Farming”, “Entrepreneurial Farming” and “Peasant Farming”. While the first one has already been discussed, the other two deserve attention. The main distinction between them is that entrepreneurial farming refers to those production units that have been targeted by aid schemes or rural development programs which sought to hasten their transition toward being more capitalist enterprises. In contrast, peasant farming relies to a higher degree on family labour and, more importantly, on those community networks which are based on reciprocity.

James Scott (1976) employed the “moral economy” concept to study peasant rebellions in Southeast Asia. His contribution resides in the emphasis he gives to the mechanisms which peasants enact to achieve their reproduction; in other words, a reliable source of subsistence. Accordingly, the mix between technical arrangements (e.g., seed varieties, planting techniques, etc.) and social arrangements (e.g., reciprocity, the commons, etc.) generates a safety kit for peasants to cope with risk. It is worth noting that these two sorts of arrangements have the quality of being passed throughout generations, meaning that the techniques have been tested over time and thus have developed into reliable means of survival. Furthermore, he bases his analysis on moral economy due to the survival of the peasantry being facilitated by arrangements which are not commodified. Therefore, once peasants interact with other agrarian classes, such as better-off farmers, and face the subtraction of their surpluses, themes like the notion of exploitation, the legitimacy of that exploitation, and what is fair for peasants acquire more substance. On the same note, Marc Edelman (2005) has shown that moral economy remains a useful concept to highlight the power imbalances growers face when entering into global value chains. Indeed, he remarks that alternative food movements, such as the *via campesina* or the slow food movement, have pushed an agenda based on the non-transgression of certain values that are non-negotiable and deemed to be unfair practices; growers are more likely to encounter these when entering into the global market, due to how the hegemonic agri-food system is shaped.

With regard to the co-existence of family farms with differing modes of production within the same rural context, I employ an ethnographic perspective to solve this theoretical problem. Particularly in a country like Chile, which has been regarded as a neoliberal miracle, explaining the ongoing prevalence of subsistence farming should be a matter of interest. As I shall demonstrate in the upcoming chapter, I argue that subsistence farming owes its vitality to a set of social relations at the community level. Ruth Liepins (2000) provides valuable insights when dealing with rural communities, by observing that they are organised through the interplay among rural dwellers, meanings, practices, and spaces. More importantly, it is a category from which, alongside these four intertwined elements, the diversity and current status of communities can be explored.

Meanwhile, sociologists have previously employed neighbour relations as an analytical concept, demonstrating its ability to yield fascinating insights in terms of understanding communities (Elias, 1994; Ruonavaara, 2021). However, when applying it to a rural reality, there is a caveat. This is because, in contrast to urban areas where wealthy people tend to have more freedom to isolate themselves and choose where to live (resulting in neighbourhoods being stratified according to social class), when it comes to rural communities the better-off farmers could easily be neighbours of smallholders or subsistence plots. Therefore, understanding subsistence farming nowadays becomes plausible by looking at the everyday interactions of these production units.

### ***2.3.2 The Role and Presence of Wage Labour as an Indicator of Agrarian Capitalism.***

According to Banaji (1990), one of the Kautsky's limitations (aside from the issue that his conclusions were drawn only from the Prussian case) was actually the fact that he did not develop a further understanding of what it means to be a member of the wage labour proletariat in the countryside. In this way, what the rural wage labourer, as a sociological category, has to offer to the debate about social relations of production (whether in the fruit industry or the cereal sector) is also highly relevant. For example, being successful in the fruit sector, which is more labour intensive, to some extent rests on having low-cost wage labour at one's disposal (Watts, 1996;

Wells, 1996). Therefore, identifying how agrarian workers regard the means of production when analysing any rural setting is worthwhile (Mintz, 1974).

Banaji (1990) notes that Kautsky lacked a broader approach when addressing agrarian workers. Hence, he compares Kautsky's and Weber's approaches when treating wage labour in the countryside. In so doing, he points out that the former recognised just one form of management and thus just one type of wage labour, thereby explaining Kautsky's optimistic view that permanent wage labour would constitute the major productive force in agriculture. On the other hand, Weber paid more attention to different types of management, such as sharecropping or leasing, concluding that seasonal farmworkers will come to dominate as the expression of wage labour in modern agriculture.

Banaji (1990) ends his analysis by taking a Weberian approach. Therefore, in his view, management rights clauses are the real face of capitalism in agriculture, which means the subordinations occurring within a power relations frame that is highly rationalised. Due to calculability and rationalisation being so central to Weber's analysis of capitalism (Giddens, 1971; Mann, 1990), the role of seasonal wage labour in family farming becomes far more determinant in identifying those capitalist farm ventures than the superficial analysis of the presence of wage labour as an isolated sociological category. For Weber, the reason for making such claims lies in the rationalisation of agriculture being expressed when ownership and management are decoupled: "The obstacle that the peasant who wants to become a modern agriculturist meets urge the separation of ownership from management" (Weber, 2007, p. 368). Similarly, Watts (1996) follows this analytical criterion by showing that contracts are fundamental in how the division of labour is organised at the global scale of food commodity production.

### ***2.3.3 Obstacles Which Agrarian Capitalism Faces: Family Farms.***

Bernstein (2010) takes capital as the starting point when analysing agriculture, leading to suggestions that the presence of capitalism in the countryside will ultimately be adopted. However, some other authors have argued that, due to the nature of agriculture and family farms, capitalism's presence and further development will keep encountering barriers (Mann and Dickinson, 1978; Mann, 1990;

McMichael, 2013b). In a somehow in-between version, Goodman and Redclift (1986) have pointed out that family farmers have adopted capitalism only in economic terms. However, in their view the main obstacles for capitalism to overcome in rural areas are the ideological and political aspects that characterise family farms and the countryside. To exemplify this, when a country decides to liberalise its agriculture, it usually attracts criticism from farmers' groups who regard their farms as being unable to compete in a globalised context (Rosset, 2006).

Mann and Dickinson's (1978) argument has contributed to explaining the presence of family labour on farms in advanced capitalist countries from a lucid point of view. Nevertheless, for Kautsky's followers, the presence of farms run by families is mainly explained by both the efficiency of family farms and the possibility of self-exploitation. In contrast, according to Mann and Dickinson (1978), the main flaw of Kautsky's rationale lies in its technological determinism, in the sense that it conceives improvements coupled with optimal farm sizes as the foundations for the survival of family farmers. Meanwhile, the self-exploitation feature was conceived as part of a subjectivist approach, since it relies on family farmers' attitudes toward labour. Yet neither characteristic of family farms offers a satisfactory response in terms of explaining their presence in the modern world. Instead, the existence of family farms is regarded as stemming from "the requirements of capitalist production" (p. 471), rather than from any internal features of family farming. In other words, the countryside appears as a space which is not as appealing as other sectors for capitalism to operate in. As a result, enough room is left for the co-existence of non-capitalist production alongside capitalist ventures.

#### ***2.3.4 Obstacles Which Agrarian Capitalism Faces: The Role of Time.***

However, in agriculture, contrary to what happens in the industrial sector, the distinction between labour time and production time is quite distinguishable. That is to say, production time tends to surpass labour time because of natural growing rhythms that food production has to follow (Mann and Dickinson, 1978; Bernstein, 2010; Weis, 2010). As such, labour time can be defined as the interaction between humans and the means of production in the creation of a commodity. To put it simply, labour power is applied to objects, whilst production time is the process

required to finish the product, but without absorbing labour power and therefore without creating surplus value.

Mann and Dickinson (1978) apply the Marxist distinction between labour time and production time to the creation of an agricultural commodity. Consequently, they identify three barriers that impede capitalism from operating normally. Firstly, the substantial difference between labour time and production time results in a disadvantage for capitalism when adopting agricultural production, due to agro-products tending to be produced annually. Thus, production time is likely to be constrained by the natural cycles inherent in agro-products, meaning the gap between production time and labour time could be seen as unbearable for a capitalist venture. This also explains why many enterprises have sought through scientific development to align these two factors of production, with the final goal being to overcome or reduce this natural constraint. Secondly, there is a related aspect in agriculture that could make capitalists reluctant to make investments, since most crops take the form of being annually produced (which implies that revenues are also received on an annual basis). The third barrier arises from the perishable aspect that characterises most agro-commodities, in turn affecting the circulation of those commodities. This is due to their perishable use value ultimately affecting their exchange value, making agriculture a sector with limited prospects for capitalist enterprises. In sum, these three limitations disincentivise capitalism, freeing up small farmers from encountering fierce capitalist competition and allowing them to exist within an advanced capitalist society.

Nonetheless, Mann and Dickinson's (1978) thesis about capitalism and agriculture has been theoretically and empirically questioned by Mooney (1982). Theoretically speaking, he argues that seeking to narrow the gap between labour time and production time is not a unique feature of the capitalist mode of production, as this challenge can also be taken up within the socialist or communist modes of production. In addition, he suggests that the former's affirmation that the lack of unity between production time and labour time has impeded the penetration of capitalism in the countryside has also misled the discussion, as it conceals the fact that there are specific points of the year when demand for labour outstrips that which can be supplied by the family. For Mooney (1982), this presence of wage labour

during particular tasks in the agricultural production process stems from the gap between production time and labour time, and should be seen as a marker of capitalist agriculture rather than as a barrier.

In terms of empirical data, Mooney (1982) unpacks his theoretical critique by analysing different agro-commodities and how these vary in relation to: (a) the extent of capitalist development; (b) variability of total labour requirements throughout the production cycle; and (c) perishability. His findings show that capitalism has penetrated the countryside even with regard to those highly perishable commodities such as fruits and vegetables. He adds that these are by far the most capitalist enterprises, despite trees, vines, and orchards needing years to mature and reach the productive stage. This argument draws on the high risks involved in storing perishable commodities, which are such that most petty commodity producers will not do so unless they share the risks with others, such as via a cooperative. Consequently, capitalist farmers have historically taken on this role. Furthermore, many fruits and vegetables cannot be harvested by machinery, thus these enterprises rely on seasonal farmworkers. Indeed, agriculture is one of the sectors with the highest wage labour rates; as has been pointed out, the presence of wage labour is one paradigmatic manifestation of capitalism.

Finally, Mooney (1982) concludes that, when exploring capitalism's effects on agriculture, it is necessary to blend both objective and subjective explanations, a sort of mixing of Marxist and Weberian approaches. Following his lead, on the one hand the present study will employ a Marxist approach to shedding light on the dynamics of agrarian change embodied in the shifting of crops from cereals to fruits. This, in turn, implies a direct change in the material basis and therefore a shift in the human interactions stemming from land use. Consequently, themes such as commodity fetishism in the production of food, through which the relations of production become less evident, will be addressed. On the other hand, as has already been mentioned, capitalism can be adopted in the countryside through the subjective characteristics enacted by each farmer or peasant in the field. This Weberian approach highlights subjectivity coupled with rationality as the main drivers when understanding agrarian capitalism. From this point of view, themes such

as the degree of mechanisation, the role of management, contract production, and off farm employment are more pertinent to the inquiry.

Thus, three analytical spheres can be drawn from the above, using the agrarian political economy framework. These spheres will guide the discussion of how the fruit industry is currently pushing its frontier southwards into La Araucania, in both theoretical and empirical terms. The first sphere will address those aspects regarding fruit production as a major actor in the establishment of agrarian capitalism in the form of cash crops (Mooney, 1982; Friedmann, 1993; Watts, 1996); as Moore (2008, p. 54) puts it: "Agriculture is one of the decisive battlegrounds of neoliberal organisation". Therefore, it is crucial to show how the global agri-food system is organised. In so doing, food regimes and commodity production provide lenses that allow unpacking of the political economy of the transition from grains to fruits as global issues.

The second sphere will explore those aspects concerning the agrarian class structure that operates in the modes of food production in rural Araucania. That is to say, questions about who owns the means of production, and who undertakes the tasks involved in the production process, paying special attention to the expressions of exploitation and on what basis it is legitimised (Scott, 1976; Banaji, 1990; Bernstein, 2010; Bernstein, 2017). In this manner, using concepts such as class struggles and class alliances will allow me to sketch the class dynamics underpinning the modes of production present in south-central Chile.

Finally, the transition towards and establishment of capitalism in the rural areas would presuppose an overthrow of older modes of production, since capitalism breaking through the rural landscape would be presumed to result in any non-capitalist rural enterprises (which are not efficient in economic terms) being doomed. This becomes relevant, especially when dealing with indigenous territories whose approaches to growing food can be seen as subsistence farming or alternatives to hegemony. However, it is worth bearing in mind that what has been laid out in terms of how capitalism operates in the countryside does not recognise the degree of agency that communities could enforce towards agrarian change and agrarian capitalism together. Hence, an approach from below, using ethnographic methods,

will enable identification of those forms where capitalism is contested, transformed, or adopted.

### ***2.3.5 Food Regimes and Commodity Production in the Countryside.***

When analysing the role of agriculture alongside the development of capitalism as being mutually connected, one possible stance is found in the food regimes theory associated with Phillip McMichael (2013b) and Harriet Friedmann (1993). In short, this theory reflects upon how the production and consumption of food operate on a global scale by stressing the political aspect shaping markets (McMichael, 2013b). Meanwhile, the methodology to capture the political dimension affecting agri-food commodities involves recognising the power enmeshed in specific relations of food production and consumption that allow capital accumulation; hence the importance of unravelling the ideology backing food provisioning during a certain period. Furthermore, food regimes are conceived as an attempt to theorise how food shapes the world via its commodification, examining through a historical lens the different types of capital accumulation rooted in the international relations of food production and consumption. Nowadays, the prevailing food regime can be considered neoliberal or corporate-centred.

Friedmann and McMichael (1989) identify three organising epochs: (a) British-centred (1870s-1930s); (b) US hegemony (1950s-1970s); and (c) neoliberal hegemony, also referred as the corporate food regime (since 1980). Within these three epochs, they observe that food regimes are vital components of the development of capitalism as a hegemonic force, due to their role in fuelling processes of capital accumulation via cheap food production. Two things are noticeable regarding the British-centred imperial food regime and how it manifested itself in the Chilean context. Firstly, it can be pointed out that, during that period, British mining exploited the nitrate and guano located in the desert where the borders of Chile, Peru, and Bolivia meet. The nitrate and guano were highly sought after by the British Empire because their fertilising properties could boost its agriculture (Bellamy, Clark and York, 2011), to the extent that the British played a role in backing Chile in the Pacific War in order to protect their commercial interests. Secondly, the British presence was seen in the south of Chile through the export of grains (Verniory, 2001) after the colonisation of La Araucania, and when that region began to be known as the Chilean bowl.

The link between cheap food and capitalism has been explored by Patel and Moore (2017), where they show the necessity for the system to produce a food surplus in order to ensure the material conditions of existence of the working class. In parallel, those who advocate for the liberalisation of agriculture base their arguments on claims that affordable food is only possible through global food supply chains ( Patel and Montenegro de Wit, 2020). Although it is possible to argue that this view falls into urban bias because it focuses on the consumer end, what actually underlies these narratives is a strengthening of a definite socio-political order (McMichael, 2013b).

For instance, nowadays the political tenor of food circuits is shaped by a narrative of free trade agreements. In other words, state support should be rolled back in favour of becoming more open to international markets (P. Rosset, 2006; McKeon, 2015). As such, nations are expected to focus their efforts on producing those agro-commodities where they have a competitive advantage, and to trade with other nations to achieve food security. In a Chilean context, this means promoting salmon, fruits, wines, and timber (Lebdioui, 2019). One of the outcomes of transitioning toward being a commodity producer is the generation of a surplus, due to the logic of producing goods more cheaply in greater quantities; this has also occurred in the agricultural sphere, since “without food surplus, there is no work outside agriculture” (Patel and Moore, 2017, p. 140). For instance, under food surplus conditions, it can be argued that the amount of food produced worldwide is enough to solve hunger problems; nonetheless, famine remains a global issue (Buttel, Magdoff and Foster, 1999; Weis, 2007).

It is worth highlighting that, even though I have been discussing the effects of capitalism in agriculture and the routes through which family farms become involved into the production of agricultural commodities, there is a further level of analysis concerning the global arena whereby the relationships growers have with the market can either be export-oriented or domestic-oriented (Otero, 2012); these interests and agendas differ to a considerable extent. For example, the latter category of growers are more susceptible to taking a hit when their country decides to open up its markets to the world (Fitting, 2006; Rosset, 2006; Otero, 2012), while the former

category are the ones who benefit from trade liberalisation. Among the principal tenets of neoliberalism in agriculture are: (a) the free movement of agricultural commodities; (b) the reduction of state intervention - in this regard subsidies and tariffs are seen as bad signs due to their tendency to hinder free trade agreements; and (c) privatisation is the right approach to deliver services, which has direct consequences when dealing with common goods like seeds, water, and grazing land (Shiva, 1999; Rosset, 2006; McKeon, 2015). In a neoliberal food regime, corporations play a key role in producing, distributing and shaping consumers' diets all over the world, while several critiques have been drawn in terms of how this regime has exercised its power in different places (Long, 1997; Friedmann, 2005; Rosset, 2006; Weis, 2007; McMichael, 2013b). Meanwhile, other authors like Hugh Campbell (2009) have made an effort to conciliate the current neoliberal regime with better environmental practices, by signalling the importance of acknowledging the places where food is produced in opposition to deepening the food from nowhere feature of the corporate food regime.

Friedmann (2005) has shown that the movement from one regime to another is not linear, but rather it has to be considered as a force whose impetus rests on dualistic contradictions, given that elements from one regime can be transferred to the other. Nonetheless, in her view, these contradictions boost the establishment of the subsequent regime. Thus, for instance, the contradiction posed by time, whereby industrial/intensive agriculture aims to override biophysical constraints through science, has in fact given more ground to expansion of the corporate regime through intellectual property being applied to inputs such as seeds, agrochemicals, and plant nurseries (Weis, 2007; Weis, 2010; McMichael, 2015). To date, the current tension is expressed in how the corporate regime marries a neoliberal agenda while addressing those environmental demands for fairer trade, improved animal welfare, and more ethical food production, among other aspects.

When it is said that neoliberal hegemony is characterised by encouragement of freedom of trade, this effectively means the subordination of the state to markets and corporations, a process aligned with the consolidation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Long, 1997; Amin, 2003; Rosset, 2006; Weis, 2007; McMichael, 2009). Furthermore, neoliberal hegemony is linked to the universalisation of agro-

exporting, alongside the acquisition of monocultural patterns of food production (Shiva, 1999; McMichael, 2015a; Patel and Moore, 2017). This results in a social division of labour whereby political and ideological aspects are woven into the food regime, leading to the contemporary status quo: “Northern commercial producers exporting lower-value commodity crops, livestock and dairy, and southern states consolidating high-value agro-exports” (McMichael, 2013b, p. 15).

The consequences of the third regime in the countryside of the Global South are discussed by Amin (2003), P. Rosset (2006), Fitting (2006), Weis (2007), Otero (2012), and Lewis, Le Heron and Campbell (2017), among others. They show that, from 2001, the WTO started to promote agriculture and food production being treated in the same way as any other form of production. This consolidated a process that had already been started through the structural adjustment program fostered by international financial bodies, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, during the 1980s (McMichael, 2013b). The accompanying reduction of agricultural subsidies led to the inevitable elimination of thousands of non-competitive producers in the Global South, yet on the other side of the world developed countries continued to support their local farmers (Friedmann, 2005; McMichael, 2013b).

Another consequence of the current food regime is that food supply chains are becoming longer, implying a separation in time and space between producers and consumers. The availability of non-seasonal food, without questioning where it comes from or under what conditions it is produced, is another expression of the same issue. Some authors have called this the “nowhere aspect” of the corporate regime (Weis, 2007; Campbell, 2009). In the same way, one could make a further link to what Marx saw when he analysed the markets, assuming that markets can be understood as a generalised regime of commodity production where items are produced to be traded therein (Long, 1997). Thus, the measure used to trade commodities is their exchange value, a way to make things comparable. According to Marx (1976), this exchange value depends on the amount of labour applied to the commodity. This inner dynamic that operates in the market drew Marx's attention, since he recognised that humans tend to forget about the use value of commodities and, perhaps more importantly, the relations of production that enable their

creation, leading to a process of consciousness he labelled as “commodity fetishism”. This refers to the process of money arising as a generalised measure for equivalence between things, instead of labour power being conceived as the source of value. This led Marx (1976, p. 166) to conclude, when referring to commodity fetishism, that one of capitalism's characteristics is “material relations between persons and social relations between things”.

During the second food regime, the US government vowed to support a consolidated domestic rural elite by subsidising their production and by controlling imports, resulting in a food surplus (Friedmann, 1993; Weis, 2007; McMichael, 2013b). Fortunately, for the United States' rural elite, the government implemented aid plans for Third World countries, with a twofold aim. On the one hand, the aid was conceived as a way to export the subsidy-generated surplus to the Global South, on the pretext of solving hunger issues abroad. However, underlying this food aid was the dumping of American and European double-subsidised food commodities on Third World countries. In turn, peasants and farmers in such countries became unable to compete with the subsidised grain, forcing them to shift their staple food production into cash crops (such as coffee beans, cacao, sugar, soybeans, and palm oil, among others) and provoking a threat to their food security (Friedmann, 2005; Weis, 2007; McMichael, 2013b).

Meanwhile, on the other hand, the implementation of the Green Revolution sought to ward off any possible support for the perceived menace of communism (Friedmann, 1993; McMichael, 2013b). Byres (1977; 1997) has pointed out how the transition to commodity production can either be encountered through institutional change, as happened in countries which have gone through agrarian or land reforms, or via the Green Revolution, which encompassed the promotion of technical change and the adoption of new updated technologies (such as fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, machinery, and irrigation systems). The technological path is usually represented by India's and Mexico's experiences of implementing the Green Revolution. In the Chilean context, the US regime was visible in the promotion of land reform under Kennedy's administration and his Alliance for Progress project, whilst implementing and teaching growers new farming techniques - the so-called Green Revolution (Kay, 2002; Weis, 2007; Patel, 2013). In chapter five, I expand on this by exploring the

memories elicited from my informants of the interventions carried out by US nationals regarding the enhancement of agricultural production.

However, it should be noted that, aside from preventing targeted countries from falling into communism, the side-effects of the Green Revolution were staggering in terms of the loss of biodiversity resulting from growers shifting their crops from pertinent cultural varieties to more commercial ones (Patel and Moore, 2017). Furthermore, new rhythms of agricultural labour appeared, due to the fact that this new approach to food production required them. As a result, tensions and new dynamics between agro-exportation and local communities started to arise (Buttel, Magdoff and Foster, 1999; Amin, 2003).

To sum up, the commodification of agricultural production plays a key role in this research, enabling reflection on the international social division of labour when producing agro-commodities (Appadurai, 1986; McMichael, 2013b; McMichael, 2015) and showing how the commodification of food is contested by growers in terms of its symbolic and cultural value (McMichael, 2000; Steel, 2020). Accordingly, by comparing growers' perceptions about cereals and fruits, I highlight a complicated and ambiguous set of relations and values that tend to be obscured by the economic logic of supply and demand. In this manner, the commodification of food can be understood as the phenomenon of social relations of production behind commodities becoming less evident to consumers (Weis, 2007). Therefore, by relying on my case study, I intend to gather ethnographic examples to make the social relations of food production more visible in terms of both cereals and fruits.

However, the transition to capitalist agriculture, or in other words, becoming a commodity producer, does not necessarily mean that the agrarian question has been solved, especially in the Latin American context, with more than one mode of production perfectly able to co-exist within the rurality. McMichael (2015) is also aware of the advantages of looking at different forms of value in agrarian studies, because he believes that any feasible response to capitalism would come from the countryside. However, one flaw in his vision is that it is capital-centred, thus those factors in capital relations that are in fact difficult to grasp from a capitalist perspective become overlooked. For instance, it would be a mistake to only consider

the commercial features of crops, given that sometimes the symbolic and intimate relations that growers forge with their crops tend to overlap with their market features, even though the produce is ultimately intended to be sold in the market.

It is revealing to look at fruit production when addressing neoliberal food regimes and their consequences in the Global South, due to fruits and vegetables perhaps being the most conspicuous elements of the third food regime (McMichael, 2009). The reason lies in the market having sought ways to overcome the tendency of food becoming cheaper and cheaper, by adding value. In so doing, McMichael (2013b) observed agribusinesses having moved from producing grain to meat to fresh vegetables, with the adjustment of supply to global demand typically being aligned with a shift in the wealthiest countries' dietary patterns towards acquiring the added value provided by fresh fruits and vegetables (Weis, 2007).

However, these trends are built upon paradoxes that diminishes local livelihoods. For example, when an agro-commodity turns into a “superfood” that encompasses health benefit narratives, the agribusiness based in Third World countries starts seeking to address this lucrative niche, which in turn affects the domestic market and overall food security. In this vein, some authors have argued that fresh fruit and vegetables have always been available for local consumers; however, when supermarkets pursue these profitable opportunities, the products became unaffordable for locals, especially for middle and lower classes (Friedmann, 1993; Patel and Moore, 2017).

Chile provides an attractive empirical setting for the study of commodity relations, due to it frequently being referred to as an excellent example of the development of a thriving non-traditional agro-export industry, and thus worthy of being emulated (Barrientos, 1999; Kay, 2002; Weis, 2007; Bengoa, 2013; Lebdioui, 2019). Furthermore, its status of being one of the first countries to embrace a radical neoliberal agenda makes it an exciting setting to explore how the third regime has unfolded. This can be viewed alongside modern Chile's intercultural social composition, particularly its indigenous rural settings and how the people there imagine their territories (Maher, 2019). Taken together, Chile generally and La

Araucania specifically offer an ideal setting to explore the adoption of agrarian capitalism.

In addition, by taking a qualitative stance, it is possible to overcome Eurocentric and Western points of view, providing a more nuanced and less teleological narrative, in the sense of challenging the notion that the transition to fruit commodity production is inevitable and exempt from contradictions. Also, it enables me to avoid generalisations and reductions following market logic. To that end, shedding light on the intercultural context coupled with the co-existence of different family farms offers a viewpoint to better understand how the commodification of fruits permeates, transforms, or fortifies different symbolic values among different actors in their everyday lives (Long, 1997).

Likewise, the historical conditions of Chile become pivotal. On the one hand, there was the implementation of socialist land reforms during the 1960s and 1970s, accompanied by the Green Revolution. Whereas, on the other hand, neoliberal policies were implemented from the 1980s onwards. These are perceived as being contradictory positions by farmers and other people involved in agriculture. Furthermore, as has already been pointed out, each food regime presupposes a set of ideological values, as does the corporate food regime when establishing its business logic. Accordingly, the neoliberal regime draws its legitimacy from a definite agrarian structure in which both agrarian classes and culture interact in the countryside, and from which the terms of the social relations of production are obtained (Poulantzas, 1979; Kane and Mann, 1992; Long, 1997). Thus, agrarian social classes are central when defining and ensuring the development of the socio-political order over time (McMichael, 2013b) and a definite agrarian structure (Scott, 1976; Friedmann, 1980). These are the topics which I aim to unpack in the following subsection.

### ***2.3.6 Class Structure and Class Relations in the Countryside.***

According to Carlson (2018), there are four variables worth paying attention to when assessing the extent of capitalism within the rurality: (a) the integration of rural producers into international or national markets; (b) the degree of wage labour dependence from agricultural producers; (c) the number of farms; and (d) the size

of the farms. These variables show how the two components of the mode of production (means of production and social relations of production) are set into motion.

The first variable is related to Kautsky's (1988) conclusion that the process whereby family farmers become commodity producers is the real face of capitalism in rural areas. Meanwhile, the second variable takes into account Banaji's (1990) concerns in further explaining the multifaceted conditions of wage labour in the countryside, hence letter (b) incorporates a Weberian approach by being more receptive to the role of management when exploring the social relations within an agro-enterprise. Finally, the number and size of farms is particularly crucial because it affects who owns the land or, in other words, who controls the largest share of the means of production when it comes to agriculture.

In addition, identifying tenancy types when production is market-oriented is also important, since each category (plantation, ranch, or *Hacienda*) implies different sorts of class relations and therefore different types of lifestyles in the countryside (Stinchcombe, 1961; Friedmann, 1980). Thus, the last two variables address primitive accumulation and its consequences in defining a set of social relations of production rooted in land ownership. As such, private property arises as a condition for developing capitalism in the countryside. Consequently, land as a means to accumulate capital, together with commodity production and the presence of wage labour, collectively function as expressions of agrarian capitalism. All of these elements are intertwined when shaping both class structures and class relationships in the countryside.

However, when Byres (1977, p. 269) states that “capitalism is not thoroughly dominant in the countryside”, he also suggests that the variables reflected in the social relations of production and members' attitudes toward the means of production should be questioned, clarified, and revisited. This takes us back to a key concept for agrarian political economy, which rests on the divorce between capital (ownership of the means of production) and labour (ownership of labour power) from where class differentiation ultimately arises. In this way, it becomes both relevant and problematic to apply this distinction to those family farms which have become

commodity producers, because it is unclear who is the grower and who is the agrarian worker, raising issues in relation to wage labour, the nature of surplus, and class relations (Goodman and Redclift, 1986).

Let us now return to the notion of family farmers and the idea that they produce around 70% of the world's food (Lowder, Skoet and Raney, 2016; Herrero *et al.*, 2017), which has been repeated in different international forums such as FAO (2014) and IFAD (2019). It is necessary to unpack the family farm concept in order to make such a declaration more nuanced, due to it being a rather vague claim given the individual characteristics of each family farm. Thus, notwithstanding the figure being true, authors such as Byres (1997), Bernstein (2010) and Van der Ploeg (2018) have advocated stressing the diversity embedded in family farms across the world. In effect, Bernstein (2010) has shown there to be empirical and analytical differences between farms that are family-owned, family-managed and family-worked, all of which can surprisingly be collected under the family farm label. As such, when defining family farms, one should look for those features that complement their condition of being a farm organised by a family and its members.

At the global level, another example can be found of how blurred the boundaries of the family farming concept are, due to there being ideological and political elements reflected in power relations between countries which betray their differences (T. Weis, 2007; Philip McMichael, 2013b). The distinction between those family farmers in the Global North and those in Third World countries is certainly not a trivial one. While the former have the good fortune to be able to count on state subsidies, the latter are dependent upon financial juggling in order to survive constantly falling prices. Therefore, the ways in which they normally overcome this problem is via credit, adopting cash crops, turning into export-oriented commodity producers, leasing/selling their plots, or working off farm (Rosset, 2006).

Moreover, when the Green Revolution was deployed in the Third World, it turned out that improving yields and shifting crops led to the consolidation of the rural elites of those countries (Byres, 1977; Patel, 2013). This is because not every farmer could afford to make the desired improvements, with determining factors including

amount of land, access to credit, and entitlement to public subsidies, among others. Therefore, within the context of commodity production, family farms can be divided into those that benefitted from the Green Revolution and public schemes and those that became marginalised from them, alongside an underlying process of class differentiation within the countryside.

It is essential for this research to determine the contours of social classes in the Chilean countryside. To this end, it is worth revisiting the analytical categories retrieved from the political economy. However, it is also necessary to grasp those mechanisms that are significant when indicating the relationships which family farms maintain with one another, such as “moral economy” and “neighbour relations”, which in turn facilitate their co-existence. By looking at these everyday practices, one can overcome static depictions of categories such as agrarian social classes, which are in fact fluid and hybrid.

Moreover, the feminist critique of classical agrarian political economy highlights a fundamental gender disparity in rural contexts, where women and men encounter distinct challenges. This emphasises the significance of examining intra-household dynamics when analysing family farms. In essence, social relations of production are intricately woven within the household, allowing for the coexistence of different class positions within the same rural household. In this context, Carmen Deere (1995) has drawn attention to the heterogeneous gender division of labour in rural areas. She argues that the household's sustainability is intricately tied to the contributions of various family members responsible for care and subsistence activities. Furthermore, Deere demonstrates that taking a gender perspective in agrarian class analysis helps clarify the often blurry distinctions between subsistence and commercial activities. Consequently, feminist research within rural studies raises questions about determining the class position of the family farm by only considering the class position of the male-headed household.

With regard to agrarian social classes, I must distinguish two layers of analysis. On the one hand, there is the structural level, where political, ideological and economic aspects operate in determining the place a class occupies in the productive process, which can be conceived as an “empty place”. On the other hand, there is a level of

analysis that focuses on “people”, which is to say, actors with agency operating upon the material world and in a sense “filling” those “empty places” (Poulantzas, 1979; Wright, 1997). To put it simply, let us imagine that an export-oriented farm, which relies on seasonal wage labour, one year hires x number of workers. Assuming that all of them have the good fortune to move upwards to a better position the following year, it is unlikely that the agro-enterprise will eliminate those vacancies left by the seasonal farm workers in the second year. Thus, for analytical purposes, the structural aspects of social class and the agency performed by actors are to some extent independent and thus can be treated separately.

However, when defining the concept of class, it is worth highlighting that it is a relational category (Poulantzas, 1979; Wright, 1997; Bernstein, 2010). This means that, for instance, income or land by themselves cannot define class, even though it is through their relationships with others who have less or more income or land that agrarian classes gain their substantiality. On some occasions, what underlies these relationships is the notion of “class struggle”. In this respect, Marx said that “every class struggle is a political struggle” (1986, p. 232); thus the concepts of “class structure” and “class struggle” are mutually influenced by one another. Yet “class structure” is viewed as relating to those structural boundaries which outline class relationships. In so doing, the political and ideological aspects of the current food regime are put forward, which also constitutes how resources (access to the means of production) and opportunities to act upon them (privileges) are laid out.

Because classes are interdependent, “class structure” deploys certain mechanisms at political and ideological levels, constraining the capacity of actors in realising how opportunities, resources, and privileges are distributed within society. In other words, the ways in which they are being exploited are concealed, while the dominant class tends to cement its own power by reproducing the class structure (Lukács, 1974; Poulantzas, 1979; Wright, 1997). Meanwhile, “class formation” relates to the social relations *within* one social class, where common interests enable the mobilisation of members toward a common objective, thereby making them feel part of a social class in the production process. Thus, it is quite the opposite to “class structure”, which points to the social relations *between* classes (Wright, 1997).

Nevertheless, in Marx's view farmers lacked social relations between them and therefore did not have any political horizons; hence, they cannot be termed as a class, which resulted in a great lie (Kane and Mann, 1992). These social categories are the basic ideas upon which to sustain any social class analysis, even in the countryside. With regard to the present research, I use the term agrarian structure as a way to refer to the class structure within the countryside. In particular, I base my analysis on class struggles as well as class alliances to demonstrate the dynamic nature of class relations.

Meanwhile, class differentiation within the countryside can be addressed from different perspectives (Marsden, 1998; Bernstein, 2010). For instance, Byres (1977), following the classical approach represented by Lenin and Mao, has recognised a fivefold classification of peasants or farmers according to the size of holding and presence of wage labour. Thus, firstly, (a) "landless peasants" are social subjects that have neither land nor the tools to work it, and hence they have to engage with the industry by selling their labour power to survive. Secondly, there are (b) "poor peasants" or "small farmers", who can take various forms in order to cope with the uneven distribution of land. Generally, the size of their holdings are adjusted to their family labour, and their production can be labelled as either "subsistence agriculture" or "petty commodity production". The former refers to the production of food for self-consumption, while the latter is a unique method of small-scale commodity production oriented towards the market (Bernstein, 2010). The third classification is (c) "middle peasants", who mostly operate by relying on their family labour and whose capacity to be less constrained by the credit system makes them comparatively less indebted. In terms of this research, Bengoa (2013) has observed that the turning point in the consolidation of the middle class stems from land reform and counter-reform. Fourthly, (d) "rich peasants" represent a stratum that relies permanently on wage labour, with their production usually consisting of high-value crops (e.g., fruits) and mainly going to the market; if they do so it means that the transition to capitalism has taken place. This stratum might be considered as "proto-capitalists", being a class in the making towards the final class, namely "rural capitalists", hence they are usually lumped together. However, it is not the case that every rich peasant is necessarily capitalist, due to a remarkable characteristic in regard to their treatment of wage labourers. Instead, a more Weberian approach

is apparent, since the relationship between rich peasants and wage labourers appears to be bounded not in its free character (of being free wage labourers who sell their labour power) but rather as being a remnant of a previous mode of production (for instance, feudalism or the *Hacienda*).

These five strata of peasants within the countryside are worth bearing in mind when analysing the agrarian classes within the case study. Even though they can be regarded as an essentialist portrayal of the actors in rural areas (of course, the reality is more complex), for heuristic reasons these categories represent a helpful point of departure when shedding light on the agrarian structure. In addition, while the simplest distinction between growers and workers could be useful in identifying the agrarian class positions of capital and labour, Mintz (1974) has shown that even landless workers might come from families that possess land, so members of two opposing classes can in effect be allies in cases where they belong the same family, as it also occurs with gender. For this reason, the distinction between growers and workers becomes significant for this research insofar as it enables me to at least demonstrate the existence of class struggle or class alliance in their relationships.

Equally, if one wishes to contribute to the deconstruction of class dynamics in the countryside, family farms need to be filled with substance. This is because, in terms of production, they can either be involved in capitalist farming, entrepreneurial farming, or peasant farming (Van der Ploeg, 2018), with the latter being open to further differentiation into subsistence farming or petty commodity production. These two classes presuppose a great challenge to comprehend them, because they are usually intertwined in the form of community relations or even household relations. For example, Barbara Harriss-White (2014) has shown that petty commodity producers in India employ a great degree of disguised labour, which leads one to wonder what sort of labour has been commodified and turned into wage labour, something I shall reflect on and discuss with reference to my own case study in the following chapters. Furthermore, by teasing out the dynamics of subsistence farming and the petty commodity producer, one can obtain a sound explanation of the persistence of subsistence farming in light of the current times (Harriss-White, 2014; Rupakula, 2016).

Likewise, as long as one can recognise how keen farmers are to transition from “farming” to “agriculture”, family farms can be defined even more substantially. These last two concepts are frequently used synonymously, yet what they each signal is actually quite distinctive. While farming is a localised form of production aligned to the environmental rhythms of the earth, the term agriculture has the opposite meaning since it is driven by the economic interests of those seeking to enhance their yields to engage the market (Bernstein, 2010). In this way, one could assume an interest underlying this transition from farming to agriculture and ultimately to joining the market. As such, there is also a process of class formation provided that collective interests can be mobilised, hence it can also lead to class struggles or class alliances. Nonetheless, it has been demonstrated that practices closer to “farming” can be highly productive and lucrative, especially for smallholders (Altieri, Funes-Monzote and Petersen, 2012), thereby offering a viable option for their reproduction and also entailing a definite set of interests that clash with those of farmers who embrace more intensive agriculture.

Meanwhile, what occurs in the process of turning the agricultural sector into a matter of interest for public policy is the deepening of class differentiation through support for the rural elite (Byres, 1997; Patel, 2013) or smallholders (Rosset, 2006; Ramanamurthy, 2016). Therefore, state-led efforts to promote rural development, through fostering and strengthening market networks or a specific sector of agriculture, actually result in making rural class boundaries more evident. The integration of a market-exchange logic can vary; for example, interested parties can gather as small producers into cooperatives to ensure production volume, a strategy promoted by the current government of Chile in its rural development agenda (Korovkin, 1992; Warwick 2006; Challies and Murray, 2011; Clark, 2011; Gobierno de Chile, 2018). Meanwhile, another way in which small farmers can be integrated to the market logic is by working off farm, often through hiring themselves out as seasonal farmworkers (Clark, 2011; Neira, 2012; Valdés, 2012).

Class struggle is also present to a further degree beyond rurality, since some authors have argued that global agriculture in neoliberal times has led to a “depeasantisation” process (Araghi, 1995), partially explained by the transition from “farming” to “agriculture”. This struggle is reflected in the current conditions of

production in the countryside, as highlighted by Bernstein (2010), in which rural producers are locked up within a neoliberal logic in a double sense, namely “upstream” and “downstream”. “Upstream” conditions are those that allow the undertaking of farming production, which comprises machinery, fertilisers, pesticides, and seeds. Coercion operates over the means of production, since countryside producers need to acquire them to thrive. In “upstream” conditions, it is not trivial that many of the suppliers are corporations involved in the agribusiness model, especially when it comes to access to the aforementioned inputs leading to dependency (Weis, 2007). On the other hand, “downstream” coercion occurs when crops or livestock leave the farm and are involved in the distribution process within the market logic; in other words, the degree of power that supermarkets have over countryside producers.

What lies here is another example of class differentiation among farmers, whereby large-scale farmers and agribusiness corporations are better off when adopting the neoliberal agenda, regardless of the market swings. Meanwhile, small farmers or petty commodity producers must strive to maintain their production to a competitive standard. Consequently, it is important to remember that the struggle between classes can equally arise in a broader context outside of the countryside.

All things considered, the fruit sector emerges as “good to think with” for exploring the agrarian structure and class relations in at least two ways. Firstly, and despite the penetration of technology coupled with the mechanisation of work within the countryside, fruit production is still highly dependent on labour power, compared with other areas of monoculture production such as wheat. For instance, Miriam Wells (1996), in her ethnography about California's Central Coast strawberry industry, notices that demand for labour varies according to the tasks being carried out, including maintenance, harvesting, pruning, and planting, which are linked to various stages of the annual cycle of production. Secondly, she recognises that the majority of the work is done by seasonal agricultural workers, where gender and ethnicity issues operate as the background of their subjectivity. Furthermore, the fruit leaving the farm also involves another set of social relations of production, such as in the packaging process being performed mainly by women (Barrientos, 1999). Therefore, each social subject involved in the production of an agro-commodity

should be examined in order to identify their class position. In addition, it is vital to identify their interests, perceptions and struggles regarding their position when producing such a commodity, as these lead to capturing the agrarian structure stemming from those relations of production.

When uncovering the definite class structure sustaining the mode of production, whether in the fruit or the cereal sector, certain questions must be addressed in terms of the agrarian structure. These include identifying who owns or provides the means of production, understanding how the surplus is taken, and considering how relationships between landlords and agrarian workers are forged and what makes exploitation tolerated and legitimised. While I emphasise those aspects which are related to agrarian social classes, I also acknowledge that non-class elements could be more revealing. Nonetheless, those elements, after all, operate within a class structure (Wright, 1997). Thus, the literature on agrarian political economy provides the analytical tools to comprehend agrarian capitalism.

### ***2.3.7 Grounding the Discussion to the Chilean Reality and the Specific Research Site.***

This research focuses on intermingled themes: agrarian capitalism, family farms and agrarian class relations. As such, the ways in which the agrarian transition to capitalism (and subsequently to neoliberalism) have been manifested require me to apply these themes to a more empirical reality in this subsection.

When analysing the process of embracing fruit production in La Araucania, it can be seen that success is dependent upon on the array of mechanisms mobilised by those interested in promoting cash crops. Consequently, switching crops means shifting the material basis, and thus rearranging the relationships people have with their territory (Li, 2007). Given the material conditions of living, this suggests a mutual interplay between the means of production and the social relations of production, leading to the emergence of a specific mode of production. However, the transition to a more neoliberal mode of production mirrored in the fruit industry does not occur free from contradictions, with one of the consequences being the process of differentiation (Hinkson and Stead, 2022).

For instance, although neither the corporate regime nor the Chilean state (being a democratic entity) can obligate producers to shift crops, they can nonetheless employ an array of incentives to stimulate the adoption of fruit production among growers. In view of this, La Araucania's agrarian structure and its actors (defined as European settlers' descendants, Mapuche indigenous communities, and Chileans) will react to fruit production according to their class position. This process of agrarian change implies a division, with the dominant group being those who benefit from this export-oriented mode of production and who are therefore more likely to protect their interests by using the available political and ideological apparatus. In contrast, those negatively affected by this transition will take different forms in the struggle. Exploring the ways in which these actors transform, accept, or contest a neoliberal agenda is an essential component of this academic endeavour.

To fully contextualise the discussion about agrarian capitalism, a few ideas must be reviewed. Firstly, it is worth remembering that Chile underwent several rapid processes of agrarian change, from the dissolution of the *Hacienda* through land reform (1964-1973), which brought about the abolition of *inquilinos* as the labour regime extended across the Chilean countryside, and the successive counter-agrarian reform (1974-1980), which led to the consolidation of a new rural elite and the agrarian middle class (Feder, 1965; Gómez and Echenique, 1988; Bellisario, 2007; Bengoa, 2013). In parallel, on the one hand the liberalisation of agriculture in Latin America was accompanied by the aforementioned structural adjustment program (Weis, 2007), whereby countries in the region saw exponential growth in their agricultural exports (Llambi, 1994; Carter, Barham and Mesbah, 1996; Lebdioui, 2019). On the other hand, until it joined the OECD in 2010, Chile was a recipient of an array of rural development aid interventions. This initially was in the shape of land reform coupled with the Green Revolution under the Alliance for Progress program (Feder, 1965; Gómez and Echenique, 1988; Raj Patel, 2013), but many NGOs also made interventions in the succeeding years (Petras, 1997; Clark, 2011; Richards, 2013). As a result, Chilean agriculture became well regarded as a successful example of liberalisation, to the extent that some authors have claimed it to be the biggest off-season exporter of fresh fruits and vegetables (Llambi, 1994; Watkins, 1996; McMichael, 2000). It is noteworthy that these modern interventions toward

agriculture occurred in just a couple of decades, in contrast to what happened in Europe.

It follows that Latin America today might have the greatest variety of forms of agrarian social relations (Bernstein, 2010). This means that different modes of production interact within the same territory, with different groups engaging in myriad social dynamics. Agriculture and farming take place simultaneously, encompassing small-scale indigenous subsistence producers, petty commodity producers, export-oriented producers and large-scale farms controlled by transnationals. All of these co-exist and serve to outline the contours of the different forms of social relations of production, or even non-productive relations, within and between groups.

The impact of the Chilean fruit sector on rural livelihoods has been widely researched. For example, Tanya Korovkin (1992) has observed how smallholders of the Chilean Central Valley were affected by the expansion of agribusiness, specifically grapes and tobacco. The integration of these smallholders through farming contracts caused the consolidation of the capitalist peasantry, while the previously dominant peasant community was dismantled. On the other hand, Warwick (2006) has shown that those smallholders who were eager to switch their crops toward fruits have, in fact, become more dependent on agribusinesses while triggering land concentration. Moreover, Challies and Murray (2011) examined the benefits for smallholders' livelihoods of growing raspberries intended for export, and signalled that one of the edges smallholders have when adopting cash crops is that the necessary labour can come from the own households. On a gender-centred note, and given that the fruit sector relies so much on human labour power, some authors have noted that the success of the Chilean case was only possible because of the female labour that characterised the fruit orchards and processing plants (Collins, 1995; Barrientos, 1997; Valdés and Araujo, 1997; Barrientos, 1999). Barrientos further elaborates on the human labour required by fruits and vegetables, and signals that, although labour contractors are key in shaping these supply chains due to the mobility of seasonal farm workers, the statistics fail to adequately capture these workers (Barrientos, 2013). Accordingly, all of these studies focus on the Central Valley, where the industry was first developed and established (Gómez and

Echenique, 1988; Bengoa, 2013), while the present ethnography examines how the fruit sector has entered and interacted with the rural dwellers in the new frontier of La Araucania. While the Chilean fruit sector undoubtedly enjoyed a bright past, its future is still a story to uncover (Retamales and Sepúlveda, 2011).

Meanwhile, the study of La Araucania as a landscape worthy of exploration has had the flaw of being indigenous-centred. The three matters of importance that have drawn most attention from within academia are: (a) the political dimension of Mapuche struggle; (b) the ethnobotanical dimension when it comes to natural assets; and (c) the struggle faced by Mapuche people in terms of the degradation of their habitats (Bañales-Seguel *et al.*, 2020). With respect to the political struggle, most authors have taken the stance of advocating for Mapuche people in their story of dispossession (e.g., Faron (1969); J. Bengoa (2007); Levil (2006); Naguil (2016)). Subsequently, Mapuche indigenous territory as a deprived area has been tackled through considering the relationships between its people and the state, and the role of the latter in providing welfare to indigenous rural dwellers (Vergara and Barton, 2013; de la Maza and Bolomey 2019b).

However, while comparatively little research has been conducted in regard to intercultural relations and the roles of elites, some exceptions can be found. For instance, de Cea, Heredia and Valdivieso (2016) have explored the role of the political elite, although their study can be deemed as urban biased as it looked at how the urban elite perceive the indigenous issue. Meanwhile, Richards (2010; 2013) has explored the intercultural relationships present in the territory in greater depth, yet nonetheless succumbs to a depiction of goodies and baddies, stressing that Chileans are essentially racist. I seek to overcome the limitations of these narratives by providing more encompassing material from the research site, irrespective of growers' races or their holding sizes.

At the crossroads between Mapuche people's livelihoods and rural affairs, the environmental aspect features in a considerable proportion of studies (Aagesen, 2004; Carruthers and Rodriguez, 2009; Maher, 2019). The link between agriculture and the environment in this region has been explored by Escalona and Barton (2021). They have shown how the indigenous territory was disputed in order to exercise the

power of an incipient state, by turning the region into Chile's wheat bowl. However, the shortcoming of this view is that it overestimates the role of wheat as a device of power, and it does not consider the intimate relationship which Mapuche people have with these grains; I shall expand on the latter in the following chapters. Somewhat similarly, Escalona *et al.* (2014) observe the shift in La Araucania's landscape by tracing the expansion of fruit orchards within the region; nonetheless, their study is lacking in terms of its coverage of human agency, and also does not unpack the societal arena behind such a shift in agricultural production. On the topic of shifts, Barreau *et al.* (2019) have signalled how the Mapuche diet has evolved from diverse local foodstuffs to less diverse market-based foods.

In this context, there exists fertile terrain to unpack the problematic relationship between a neoliberal agrarian structure and other modes of productions, thereby challenging the notion of food as a mere token of exchange value. Thus, other types of value in regard to culture and ecology emerge when food is produced ( McMichael, 2013b; 2015). These values are embedded in the different farming modes, resulting in constant friction within the agrarian structure under a neoliberal food regime. For this reason, to begin highlighting the symbolic aspects of food enables us to grasp how different modes of production take place within the countryside (Bellamy, Clark and York, 2011; McMichael, 2015; Moore, 2015). For example, it reveals to us the role of cereals within society in terms of achieving food security and also how their cultivation is entangled within local culture.

## **2.8 Concluding Remarks.**

In summary, this chapter has provided an account that justifies my theoretical decisions, enabling me to connect agrarian capitalism, family farms, and agrarian classes in light of processes of agrarian change, represented in the irruption of the fruit sector in La Araucania. Therefore, in this chapter, I have sought to set out the theoretical foundations that provide the conceptual tools to explain the switch from one crop to another. Agrarian political economy was chosen as the tradition best-suited to comprehending a definite agrarian structure underlying the process of agrarian change. In so doing, it was necessary to implement certain tweaks, especially in relation to Weberian insights, in order to avoid the pitfall of not paying

sufficient attention to calculability, rationality, and subjective factors in regard to the markets when teasing out agrarian social classes.

The challenges that presuppose the study of family farms have been reviewed, with routes to solving these problems being proposed. In short, these involve conceiving each family farm as a unit of production and thereby examining the mechanisms they employ to reproduce themselves over time. Thus, concepts such as moral economy and neighbour relations are useful in order to grasp these dynamics whilst highlighting relationships among family farms within the same territory. Further to this, the diversity of family farms with differing modes of production in La Araucania supports a relational approach as being the optimal way to tackle the topic of family farming.

Furthermore, the chapter has accounted for the transition to agrarian capitalism not being linear, with several barriers and debates being encountered on the path to a capitalist state. It was shown how Chile, despite waves of modernisation in agriculture, has not fully completed the transition to agrarian capitalism given that a considerable number of holdings can be deemed as subsistence farms. In addition, even though the Chilean fruit sector has been acknowledged as a success story within the liberalisation of its agriculture, the barriers posed by perishability, dependency on wage labour, and production time continue to hinder the development of agrarian capitalism in rural settings.

The discussion has been accompanied by food regime analysis, in order to provide a narrative based on the broader socio-political context that drives production, consumption, and public policies in relation to food at the global level. Accordingly, I identified how the three main epochs affected the Chilean context. In this way, and in light of the current neoliberal food regime, this chapter then unravelled how capitalism and family farms determine a specific agrarian class structure. I then proposed class struggle and class alliances as favourable indicators to outline agrarian classes, as they emphasise the relationships among the actors. Subsequently, a typology of agrarian classes was drafted, showing that those strata which exist between the two ends of the scale are the hardest to grasp.

Finally, I reviewed the literature regarding La Araucania as a site worthy of attention. I also highlighted the main trends along with the main shortcomings, such as the failure to incorporate the perspectives of the rural elite and the framing of the rural landscape without consideration of human interaction, which justifies the necessity of exploring the symbolic aspects of crops and food so that the agrarian transition to neoliberalism becomes less teleological. These weaknesses identified in the literature review will be revisited and complemented by the findings of the ethnography in chapters five and six.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction.

This chapter explores the scope of the methodology in detail, together with reflections on those circumstances encountered during the collection of data that acted as either barriers or enablers while carrying out the research. Therefore, the tenor of this chapter is both descriptive and reflexive because it follows an ethnographic stance that falls within the qualitative realm of social inquiry. As such, the informed choices made while conducting this study are highlighted retrospectively to justify my decision-making and its ethical effects.

The chapter starts with a discussion that seeks to provide a general understanding of qualitative inquiry. Through this, it will be shown how ethnography offers an edge when undertaking rural studies and is thus the most suitable approach for exploring the agrarian structure of La Araucania and its ongoing agrarian change (whereby fruit production is pushing the frontier southward whilst making its way through the countryside).

The aforementioned discussion is followed by detailing the main events that affected my inquiry, such as Covid-19, or to paraphrase Brewer (2002), practical contingencies that led to data elicitation. Drawing on these events, reflection is undertaken in order to describe the process of how the research has been shaped, which in turn enables the reader to understand the context upon which the arguments of this thesis are built.

The case study is then introduced, through presenting three settings in which most of the interviews were conducted. Furthermore, a more comprehensive section delves into the stories of the participants from one Mapuche indigenous community where I undertook a considerable portion of the fieldwork. Building upon that, the interactions I had with my informants are unpacked. In addition, three ethnographic techniques are unravelled to clarify their roles in shaping the present study. Next,

the chapter explains the coding process and how these codes engage with definite themes that address the research questions. Finally, this chapter concludes by emphasising the limitations of this research and outlining how ethical issues were handled.

### **3.2 Qualitative Inquiry and Ethnography.**

Qualitative research differs from other styles of social research, mainly through the way that research questions are formulated. As Burawoy (1998, p.30) suggests, “it is not the problem that determines the method but the method that shapes the problem”. Quantitative research aims to numerate and standardise variables in order to answer questions formulated in a measurable fashion (Brewer, 2002; Punch, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). In contrast, qualitative inquiry focuses on the contexts where social processes take place, so questions are posed in terms of *how* social life unfolds rather than *what* variables can be used to measure or test a definite social phenomenon.

The merits of embarking upon qualitative inquiry reside in examining contextualised social meanings, which are often rather complicated to achieve through quantification. Thus, the present academic endeavour adopts Creswell and Poth's (2017, p. 44) view when referring to qualitative inquiry:

Qualitative research begins with the assumptions and the use of interpretative/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and the places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or call for change.

Nonetheless, once the qualitative style of social research has been adopted and findings presented to an academic audience, concerns over the trustworthiness of the research are frequently raised (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In particular, aspects such as validity, reliability and generalisation are frequently mentioned in order to cast doubt upon social inquiry (Brewer, 2002). On one hand, reliability rests on the objectivity of the procedures, whereby the role of the researcher must be reduced

to non-involvement in the production of data, thus allowing the eventual replication of the research by another researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Meanwhile, validity relates to the accuracy of the measurements applied to a particular subject; therefore, it is somewhat linked with aspects of theory, in the sense of using the right concept or label for the right phenomena (Kirk and Miller, 1986). Finally, generalisation refers to a form of prediction based on a sense of law that underpins social interactions and can be transposed into different scenarios allowing comparisons (Giddens, 1996; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

However, “when judging qualitative research, it is not appropriate to apply the criteria ordinarily used to assess quantitative studies” (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 16). Consequently, the aforementioned three ways of assessing academic research are somewhat elusive when applied to qualitative inquiry. This is because, by nature, it aims to explore the social meanings of institutions such as family, community, the state, class structure, the division of labour, among others (Brewer, 2002). Moreover, it seeks to understand the cultural meanings endowed by specific actors to certain actions or objects in their social lives (Willis, 2000; Brewer, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). To this end, the role of the qualitative researcher emerges as a person who actually takes a hands-on approach, in the sense of being a tool, among other things, in the production of data (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Creswell and Poth, 2017).

As a result, the outcome of this academic endeavour is dependent to a great extent on my skills of being sensitive to both my surroundings and subjects during fieldwork (by participating, witnessing, collecting documents, or asking the participants their points of view regarding farming). Thus, there always needed to be a certain degree of interpretation carried out by me. Consequently, the research is inevitably highly subjective, yet this does not equate to a lack of rigour or accuracy (Flyvbjerg, 2006). On the contrary, multiple methods have been used to provide a solid and rich foundation when exploring the agrarian structure of La Araucania and the irruption of the fruit sector. From this perspective, qualitative researchers might be seen as artisans who collect and assemble multiple voices, narratives, and sources of data in order to capture social meanings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Consequently, putting together the pieces collected by the researcher ensures a rich and textured

representation of the social phenomena under investigation. This process of making links among different sources of data is usually referred to as triangulation, a key feature of qualitative inquiry. For example, Bryman (2012), when explaining triangulation, points out that ethnographers usually test their observations using other methods, such as interviews, in order to either reject or confirm their interpretations of social phenomena.

With regard to generalisation, Flyvbjerg (2006) casts doubt upon the dogma that researchers should not generalise from a single case study. Instead, he suggests that progress in the social sciences and humanities relies upon sound case studies that demonstrate their worthiness to the discipline, the so-called "black swans." Hence, drawing on Popper's notion of "falsification," Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that social theory benefits from spotting "black swans," as these stimulate debate. Furthermore, it leads to complement knowledge already created by increasing the number of empirical examples, thus potentially challenging existing theories by offering counterexamples.

To put it differently, qualitative inquiry deals with generalisation from an angle that differs from quantitative inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Flyvbjerg, 2006). While quantitative research relies on probabilistic samples as the starting point for achieving generalisability, qualitative research places a strong emphasis on understanding the contextualised human experience as one of its central components. As a result, qualitative approaches delve into the specifics through in-depth examinations of the cases under analysis. This approach allows for a critical examination of the extent to which highly abstract theories, such as agrarian political economy, reflect the intricacies of social life through real-world examples. These differences, regardless of their scale, are not intended for broad generalisation but are crucial elements to consider when comparing them to other cases (Burawoy, 1998).

Therefore, it is suggested that qualitative research engages with generalisation through the concept of "transferability," which involves assessing the applicability of

findings to different cases (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this context, it is important to note that the present ethnography constitutes a comprehensive case study, where concepts like family farming and the peasantry are explored within the context of agrarian change. This allows me to not only confirm what theory has already acknowledged but also shed light on elements that have received less attention in the literature.

Having access to both the social meanings allocated to social institutions and the actors' actions performed within a definite context are key to qualitative inquirers being able to engage in human affairs. However, this way of conducting research potentially invites the critique of not contributing anything beyond common sense. This is due to the fact that social meaning is deeply rooted in everyday life, meaning that "social research doesn't, and can't remain separate from the social world it describes" (Giddens, 1996, p. 4). Similarly, Flyvbjerg (2006, p.224) observes that "we have only specific cases and context-dependent knowledge" when referring to social sciences and humanities. For these reasons, qualitative approaches are frequently compared with mere journalism (Brewer, 2002). Yet, in the present study, efforts have been made to overcome a plain description of the agrarian structure of La Araucania by analysing the relationships among differing strata of farmers, where their voices are heard and explored.

Through blending the data collected with social theory, one can avoid the pitfall of falling into mere description. Paul Willis (2000) called this as the ethnographic imagination, or in other words, the theoretical capacity of the researcher to combine at least three elements: the creative meaning-making ability of social actors; the forms that material reality turns into a cultural object after being affected by the human agency; and the relations that these everyday manifestations have with broader social institutions, which provide structural conditions of existence. To this end, it has been suggested that ethnographic researchers have an advantage in dealing with groups either neglected or overshadowed by academia, providing a voice through which they can feel recognised (Cloke, 1997; Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008). Arguably, showcasing these downplayed cases, groups and stories, together with the interactions therein, can lead to a better understanding of the

social relations of production and the corresponding class relations within the countryside.

Therefore, this academic endeavour strives to show the connections between different classes of farmers within La Araucania, which academia has hitherto neglected by either focusing only on the indigenous farmers or only on the elite rural class. In contrast, by means of qualitative inquiry, this research seeks to bridge the gap between those two aspects that have previously only been treated in isolation from one another. In so doing, the transition from cereals to fruit production is used as a lens to explore class formation and social relations of production. Furthermore, as I shall elaborate, the present study conceives rural settings as fertile terrain to inquire into class relations.

In addition, qualitative inquiry through observation allows the untangling of the complex network which enmeshes human beings within wider structures (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940). As such, qualitative researchers strive to make generalisable claims to expand theory towards those aspects which have been dismissed or overlooked (Yin, 2018). Likewise, generalisation is not possible without comparison (Smelser, 2003), so it is worth highlighting that, by bringing up those dismissed cases, stories and counter-intuitive cases, qualitative researchers are helping to give texture and density to the whole (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This, in turn, assists in avoiding the shortcomings of making essentialist claims, such as drawing on the “noble savage” portrayal (Hames, 2007), where indigenous groups are depicted as eco-friendly. Similarly, qualitative advocates highlight the advantages that their approach offers when capturing the nuances of the social world (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To this end, a certain degree of involvement in the natural settings where everyday life takes place is critical in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of those aspects that shape daily lives.

Merton (1972), by analysing the privilege of observing things from inside, coined the term “insider doctrine”. This refers to the idea that the shared knowledge of a specific group or collective can only be acquired by having membership or by being

granted access to the group. Heley (2011) and Leyshon (2002) illustrate this point in their rural-based ethnographies, by showing how privileged they were in being allowed to mingle into the everyday lives of societal groups in rural settings that are ordinarily quite challenging to access, such as the rural gentry and the youth.

Nonetheless, this ability to capture and experience life from the inside, and thereby convey its meanings to a vast audience, is given because everyone lives within a culture which differs from other cultures at different levels (Giddens, 1996). In disclosing these differences, being an outsider to some degree is also crucial in order to grasp those cultural aspects at stake and reflect upon them critically. Merton (1972) also explored this way of approaching social phenomena and named it the “outsider doctrine”, which holds that unbiased knowledge concerning social collectives is only accessible to strangers.

Nevertheless, in my view, neither the insider doctrine nor the outsider doctrine can be fully applied; rather, both are statuses that the researcher transits in both directions as the research develops and according to the events under observation. Bell (1994, p. 243) eloquently highlights the previous point: “I think most villagers saw me as in part an outsider and in part an insider [...] I saw them much the same way”. He adds that qualitative fieldwork does not offer literal truth but rather “littoral truth” - a position located on the margins of social phenomena, somewhere between the insiders’ point of view (near to the subjects but not too near), and the outsider’s point of view (far but not too far) (Bell, 1994; Orne and Bell, 2015). I shall return to this matter in section 3.4 “The Ethnographer” to illustrate how my background and the respondents’ impressions of me generated a definite set of data in this research.

However, certain challenges emerge when seeking to gain a balanced perspective between the two doctrines so as to enable contribution to scientific knowledge. This is especially relevant when studying those highly differentiated societies where the degree of complexity is such that different groups are interconnected through different mechanisms and dynamics. Therefore, a useful concept within social

sciences is “intersectionality”, which can assist in coping with these complexities and which asserts that the identity of one person can be bonded to different social categories (such as class, gender, race, age). But, more importantly, it highlights how these social differences articulate to one other in a way that manifests hierarchies and power imbalances (Crenshaw, 1991; Gillborn, 2015). In short, either a group of people or an individual person could face more than one source of felling marginalised, even though those sources of discrimination (based on social differentiation) may simultaneously involve the acquisition of certain perks or rewards, depending on the group or the person under analysis. For example, being female and indigenous could lead to either being doubly discriminated against or being doubly rewarded, as frequently happens when public policies are introduced to address calls for social justice.

Embarking on the mission of fully unpacking the social differences intersecting those groups under examination is certainly tempting, although it also has the potential downside of causing inability to make further progress, as units can be tackled from countless angles (Gillborn, 2015). Hence, it would be more helpful to embrace the notion of intersectionality concerning rural studies in terms of how family farmers are affected by different analytical lenses. Thus, the present academic endeavour employs class, gender, race, and age as the social categories that entail processes of differentiation over family farming to demonstrate their role in the wider agri-food system. This intersectional approach accompanies the findings in chapters 5 and 6 by disclosing how class interacts with other social groups such as race, gender, and age in the Chilean countryside. Accordingly, the participants in this ethnographic project show the ways intersectoral categories simultaneously express sources of contemporary agrarian struggle, as well as common grounds in terms of class alliances. These two contradictory outcomes are not mutually exclusive and can be found either in a single rural household or an entire rural community (Borras and Franco, 2023). Park, White, and Julia (2015) illustrate the previous point by showing how food sovereignty enters into contradictions when engaging with gender. They note that rural women have different interests, which vary according to the locations in which they dwell within the agri-food system. As a result, aspects such as access to land, paramount for food sovereignty, become temporarily less appealing for some

women who benefit from engaging with agri-food corporations, either as out-growers or agrarian workers.

When addressing agrarian studies through an ethnographic lens, many of the tensions and contradictions reviewed in the previous paragraphs manifest in the forms of everyday life practices. Hence, I argue that ethnography offers an advantage when dealing with the research questions. As such, this ethnographic project has taken a hands-on approach that illuminates the complex dynamics featuring the agrarian structure before and after adopting cash crops. In doing so, it focuses on the specific to provide an account that mirrors subsistence farms, rural enterprises, and agrarian workers, creating a more comprehensive understanding of class relations in the Chilean countryside. Ethnographic methods allow me to move away from idyllic portrayals by emphasising the kaleidoscope of groupings within the rural fabric (Cloke, 1997). In other words, ethnography centres on the varied experiences social actors have regarding a particular topic (Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008).

Furthermore, ethnography through participant observation draws attention to other factors accompanying class dynamics, leading to the capturing of struggles, alliances, and differentiation among the rural inhabitants of La Araucania. Finally, the present study benefits from its ethnographic outlook because it shows the multiple effects of high-value crops in a new frontier (La Araucania). Consequently, it emphasizes the ground-level dynamics, used to demonstrate that many of the conceptual labels provided by the agrarian political economy must be contextualised in light of the case studies.

### **3.3 Philosophical Assumptions: How I Deem Reality.**

It is worth noting how reality is accessible and thus subject to being assessed by me, a researcher who takes a qualitative approach and sways between the insider and outsider doctrines when conducting social inquiry. Along these lines, the distinction suggested by Brewer (2002) between methods and methodology is helpful in order to identify philosophical premises that shape reality's status and make it accessible to

be studied. In his view, methods refer to the set of procedures that allow a researcher to collect data or, in other words, reality as being accessible. For instance, this includes participant observation, in-depth interviews, shadowing and other techniques used when gathering data. On the other hand, methodology is where these procedures gain their validation by subscribing to certain philosophical assumptions, that is, how the researcher conceives reality and the creation of knowledge.

Although it may sound ambiguous because both methods and methodology are intrinsically intertwined, in terms of this particular study, I deem ethnography as both method and methodology. This strategy of merging methods and methodology has already been considered by Chambers (2000), who states that researchers tend to regard ethnography and qualitative research as synonymous. Thus, one typically finds broad definitions of ethnography, in which either methods and methodology are seen to be enmeshed or where the latter does not confine the former. For example, Brewer (2002, p. 6) defines ethnography as follows:

Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or fields by methods of data collection which capture their social meaning and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally.

Drawing on a loose definition of this nature does not pose a problem in itself, as long as the premises are laid out such that the form that the ethnography will take can be deduced. Indeed, this flexibility when defining ethnography derives from its ever-shifting role over the course of the years (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Nonetheless, it is worth highlighting that ethnography has one key feature that has not changed over the years, which is relying on methods that involve “direct and sustained social contact with agents” (Willis and Trondman, 2002, p. 394). Thus, participant observation and informal conversation are usually the chief sources of data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). On top of that, the outcome that an ethnography ought to be pursuing is a representation of the human experience which reshapes theory (Willis and Trondman, 2002). Consequently, despite the methods which ethnography relies upon being fairly recognisable insofar as they contribute to shedding light on contextualised social meaning, this is not necessarily the case when the nature of reality is under discussion. Since ethnography can lead to different

forms depending on its philosophical assumptions, these assumptions must be made explicit. In so doing, it is important to identify both the nature of reality (ontology) and how knowledge can be built up (epistemology).

These philosophical assumptions assist in locating the parameters upon which social research is grounded and also accompany the theoretical framework, which in the present academic endeavour is the agrarian political economy. In this way, the primary assumption driving this academic endeavour is to use fruit production as a lens to study the penetration of capitalism into an agrarian society. That is to say, how agriculture becomes subjected to a capitalist rationale. As such, through exploring the patterns that cause farmers to either become willing to switch crops to fruits or to reject this transition by continuing their devotion to cereal production, it becomes feasible to grasp agrarian capitalism. In this way, when shifting to cash crops, the fruit sector sets a particular process in motion, not only in terms of the material basis (which is evident) but also in terms of the relations of production operating on the soil, due to fruit production being both more labour intensive and less mechanised than cereal production.

It is therefore essential to identify a proper set of ideas upon which these premises can be sustained and, in so doing, shape the form that the present ethnography takes. Positivism and naturalism are two significant philosophical traditions that validate social research; these have been paired with quantitative and qualitative methods (Brewer, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). As for the present research, I took the decision to reject positivism as a point of departure as its way of conceiving reality does not enhance ethnography. This is because, according to positivist theory, “the real world is revealed to us, not constructed by us [...] there is a fixed and unchanging reality which research can accurately access and tap” (Brewer, 2002, p. 30). Furthermore, social researchers who subscribe to positivism usually frame their studies so as to “employ the language of objectivity, distance, and control” (Greenwood and Levin, 2000, p. 92). The latter is somewhat troubling, especially in terms of how the role of the researcher is conceived as someone whose role must be controlled and eliminated (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). In this study, aside from official documents, most of the data was produced by means of

me being personally present in the field, wherein the effects of the observer are deemed as a crucial part of the academic endeavour.

Contrastingly, naturalism offers appealing features to be retrieved as it provides fruitful terrain from where qualitative inquiry in the form of ethnography can depart. Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p. 3) are well aware of naturalism infusing qualitative research as they highlight that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. With respect to the present study, naturalism is used in two senses. Firstly, two particular secondary sources (which have been used thoroughly) are highly influenced by naturalism as well as having ethnographic features. One is an account carried out by Claude Gay (1800-1873), a French botanist who travelled into La Araucania by mandate of the Chilean government to research the natural assets of the country during the 1860s. It is striking that his journey took place in the years prior to the military occupation of La Araucania. The other account used is the memoirs of Gustave Verniory, a Belgian engineer who lived in La Araucania a few years after the indigenous territory’s military occupation and helped design and build the railway line there. What is valuable about these two accounts is their historical/naturalist descriptions, from which preliminary forms of agricultural production present in La Araucania can be noticed, together with descriptions of the landscape. Friedmann (1980) has shown that transformations in the agrarian structure can take different directions as they are subjected to the specific conditions of agrarian production. Thus, the starting point provided by these two naturalistic accounts makes it feasible to sketch the forms that agricultural production takes over time.

Secondly, naturalism has also inspired this academic endeavour due to its concerns having to do with:

The study of social life in real naturally occurring settings; the experiencing, observing, describing, understanding, and analysing of the features of social life [...] as they occurred independently of scientific manipulation. (Brewer, 2002, p. 33)

From this perspective, the researcher should not be taken away from the field where social institutions and social relations are unfolding. To this end, natural settings are expected to be the primary source of data (Zussman, 2004; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Thus, when a naturalist approach is taken, humans and other entities such as institutions, artefacts, or even nature itself interact with each other in an ecological manner (Viveiros de Castro, 1998). Furthermore, the Chicago School of Sociology merged the naturalist rationale with social sciences by using ethnographic approaches aimed at capturing the different elements and rules shaping the cultures and social processes under study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). To some extent, a naturalist approach was adopted in this research, especially in terms of being part of the everyday life of the rural village, which in turn allowed the study to engage with different classes of farmers in their natural surroundings.

In addition, naturalism in its ethnographic version has an unparalleled power that other ways of conceiving reality cannot match. That is to say, it offers opportunities to acknowledge those social processes that unfold whilst fieldwork develops. Some of these events are impossible to foreshadow, so incorporating them into the research as they happen enables the study to add more elements in its explanations and depictions of the societal arena under investigation. Integrating events such as a truckers' union strike (Figure 4), the seizure of local municipalities, and a global pandemic as part of the analysis was possible because a sort of naturalism was impregnated into the way of deeming reality.

Nonetheless, there is a noteworthy caveat surrounding naturalism due to its rationale stemming from natural sciences, specifically biology and ecology, meaning that it has a particular way of conceiving reality. Simply put, naturalist approaches aim to portray the social world on its own terms (Brewer, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). However, this challenge to describe the world naturalistically might lead to a self-righteous attitude, in the sense of becoming a truth carrier who follows an ideal type of ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). To some extent, "the lone ethnographer" character carries this burden (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018), being someone who observes, over an extended period of time, exotic cultures in their

own natural settings with the purpose of unravelling the cultural and social aspects of the subjects under study. This romantic conception has at least two shortcomings. Firstly, it takes the outsider doctrine to an extreme: from this perspective, only the ethnographer is able to understand the social world. The second flaw (which stems for the first one) is that, in light of naturalism, the ethnographer needs to turn the cultural and the social into concrete objects in order to claim literal representation of social life. Cumulatively, this approach to deeming reality and constructing knowledge can fall into “naïve realism” (Brewer, 2002), which is highly problematic because it does not recognise the politics between the ethnographers and the subjects under study. For instance, the very act of naming rural social phenomena in an academic fashion or applying universal place-based concepts in order to explain rural phenomena might produce a gap whereby lay countryside people would find it hard to reassemble their everyday lives from these academic accounts (Gkartzios, Toishi and Woods, 2020)



Figure 4: Truckers' demonstration, displaying a truck affected by an arson attack in the context of the conflict (Picture by the author).

Moreover, having to translate documents, interviews and fieldnotes from Spanish to English is intrinsically a power-infused process. This is partly due to the status of English within academia (Ammon, 2011), which incorporates colonialist connotations as it was utilised when the first ethnographers paved the way for the spread of

imperialism (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). In addition, it is linked to the concern that local meanings cannot always be captured by the process of translation (Gkartzios; Toishi and Woods, 2020).

Therefore, the political dimension executed by me when representing the agrarian structure of La Araucania becomes particularly acute. Firstly, one challenge when working with a group as historically marginalised as the Mapuche indigenous people is not to reproduce derogative assumptions such as alcoholic behaviour, idleness, or backwardness, especially because “social sciences have not been generous [...] to the non-Western world in terms of their choice to comparative categories” (Smelser, 2003, p. 648). In other words, it is essential to engage with the Mapuche people without succumbing to any stereotypes which reproduce their status as a subordinated group. In so doing, validating their local knowledge is vital, in spite of the language barriers often encountered. These arose partly due to not all Mapuche people having completed full education at school (although most do have a fair Spanish proficiency at the oral level). In addition, those elderly who are native in their indigenous language, and had therefore learnt Spanish as a second language, tend to sound different, albeit not in terms of a distinct accent but rather an undertone.

Personally, there were many times when I found myself struggling, including posing questions, especially regarding costs of production, unpacking their thoughts about sustainability, or when I could not understand their responses:

“Three lads of about 14-years-old were in the grain sheds with shovels and buckets, ready to make room with their tools whenever the grain trailer full of oats was meant to be delivered (see figure 5). They told me they usually work during the threshing, otherwise, the summer could turn really dull. Among them was another worker in the site, their uncle indeed, a man who I reckoned was in his mid-fifties; he approached me and gave directions about what I was supposed to do. However, I could not understand anything whatsoever. The situation triggered a huge laugh among the lads, who didn’t hesitate to make fun of their uncle whenever he addressed me, and of course, they naturally became my interpreters between him and me. Nonetheless, after 5 hours of work and due to the grown-up worker being a bit harsh when dealing with the lads, they decided not to take any more mistreatment so leave the grain shed and enjoy the river. So, it was the two of us without my young interpreters to assist. But it turns out that after a day of work, I managed to understand the uncle. Moreover, I realised he is part of the households of one of the plots of the Tromilen-Malleo indigenous community that I haven’t had

the chance to know under what conditions this plot was being worked.” (Fieldnotes, 21st January 2021)



Figure 5: The author alongside the lads and the uncle helping to make room for the grain trailer to come (picture by Maria Cortes).

In addition, when dealing with “experts”, whether local farmers, agronomists, or high-ranked corporate farm managers, I had to become familiar with their ways of referring to particular subjects. These three groups shared a plethora of concepts when explaining agriculture that are fairly similar among them, but only clear in meaning to someone related to farming. For example, local farmers tended to use concepts that are quite hard to grasp for anyone not raised in the southern Chilean countryside nor moderately involved in farming. Nevertheless, this barrier was not impossible to overcome for a native Spanish speaker such as myself who spent more than a year conducting fieldwork. A pertinent example is that local farmers, regardless of class, refer to Roundup™ (the glyphosate-based herbicide) as *rango* - in fact, the first time I heard this, I thought that they were referring to a wild animal. Agronomists and managers usually expressed their expertise in a technical fashion, so they tended to bring up themes regarding chemistry, botany and economics. This also posed a challenge, despite my formal educational background, because I had to navigate these unknown fields. However, in retrospect, on those occasions when I appeared naïve the experts were keen to furnish me with their knowledge.

Postmodernism encapsulates the political dimension of research and offers insights regarding the role of language when representing social phenomena, as it carries an unavoidable political burden; therefore, it cannot be neutral (Fairclough, 2003). Along these lines, it casts doubt over the representations that researchers make in their studies. This is because, for postmodernists, all knowledge is partial in that it derives from an observer, no matter how objective they claim to be (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Therefore, the relationship between the observer and the observed social phenomena is inevitably one mediated by power, and thus is a concern of politics. While there is no easy way to respond to postmodern critiques since everything could be considered relative, it can also be pointed out that these critiques lead toward “reflexivity” as one of the key elements connected to ethnography as well as to qualitative inquiry.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2019), reflexivity is critical when conducting social research as it includes the role of the researcher within their own parameters of social inquiry. This allows practitioners of ethnography to be open and explicit about their agendas, their philosophical assumptions, and the conditions under which data is gathered. Along these lines, Burroway (1998) suggests that, whereas positivism and naturalism aim to reduce the intervention of the observer, reflexivity seeks to promote an open-ended process, a dialogue between the observer and participants. Therefore, it can be derived from the aforementioned that, when ethnography adopts a reflexive view, it deals with both the matter of power relations and the crisis of representation/relativism (Brewer, 2002).

In the context of this doctoral research, in order to recognise the objective agrarian structure that permeates the everyday lives of rural dwellers in La Araucania, both the appearance of myself in the field and the sequence of events are worthy of being discussed. Accordingly, what follows consists of my descriptions and reflections on these topics and how they interacted with the development of my fieldwork.

### 3.4 The Ethnographer.

Michael Bell (1994, p. 243), in his ethnography of an English village called Childerly, was aware that his features as American, white, and a family man, among others, were crucial when producing data. In this way, he stresses, “we need to recognise that ethnographers by their very presence in the field help construct the social context they observe”. Thus, he encouraged readers to consider his personal characteristics when assessing his research. So, following his lead, let me describe how I believe the people of Perquenco saw me and consequently how these judgments helped me to access the field:

“My family and I arrived in Perquenco, a town comprised of approximately 7,000 people. It coincided with the blueberry fair [*festival del arándano*], a celebration that I deemed as an excellent opportunity to find a house. As it seems in these towns, face-to-face interaction prevails over the internet, where my housing search was pretty much unsuccessful. Indeed, we got the house that sheltered us for the entire year through word-of-mouth during the blueberry fair.” (Fieldnotes, 26th January 2020)

My status of being a 30-year-old hetero *mestizo* married to Maria and having a 3-year-old child while undertaking the fieldwork of my PhD represented the first layer of myself for Perquenco’s dwellers. Of course, I faced questions like: why did I pick Perquenco to carry out my research? (this was very common as, for the locals, it was the last place on earth to choose to be). I usually replied that my interest was to explore the breakthrough of fruit production within the region, which elicited responses such as “oh, you’re in the right place here”.

Also, my surname is a key component in how my informants saw me, as it can be linked to those Swiss settlers who came to the region during the last part of the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth century. Contrary to my initial thoughts that having European ancestors would give me an edge and therefore grant me the access to the rural elite, this did not transpire. Nevertheless, my surname somehow validated me when I interviewed them. Furthermore, being educated and raised in Santiago sometimes led to me being seen as too urban and posh in the villagers’ eyes, as one of my informants confessed to me after a year of being in the field:

“The first time you appeared in the farmers’ market, we wondered with other members about you; who is this *cuico*? [posh person in Chilean slang]. Of course, we recognised you as an outsider cos the town is sufficiently small to identify those who are not from here. Plus, the way you speak, and dress are clearly not from here.” (Conversation with Fatima, 22nd January 2021)

Laura Rodriguez Castro (2018) describes similar reflections when talking about her identity as a hetero female *mestiza* from a middle-class educated background while working with peasant women in Colombia. These attributes somehow smoothed out the process of engaging with local participants while at the same time marking stark differences between them and her, especially in terms of social class.

In my case, what did give me an edge in accessing the farmers was my son. One day, on 2nd October 2020, I took a stroll in the farmers’ market and, to my surprise, every stallholder knew my son’s name, even more than they knew mine. This caused me to wonder whether an LGBTQ+ person or someone representing a “non-traditional family” would have been engaged with in the same way as I was by the participants. With hindsight, what I know for sure is that presenting myself as a family guy somehow made the farmers lower their guards and become more accessible to inquiry.

Meanwhile, my access to interview members of the rural elite of the region was gained through different strategies. Half of the interviews were possible thanks to a member of the city council, whom I first met as the son-in-law of my landlord in the area before we eventually became friends. The other half of the rural elite were contacts of my own family, particularly an uncle and one cousin, who were both raised in the region. A sidenote is that only one mid-sized export-oriented farmer was reached via snowball sampling; yet, when I conducted the interview, it turned out that he knew my family which made him comfortable and keen to help me. Likewise, the two corporate farm interviewees were contacted by different means. One of them simply replied to an email showing interest in my research (Forcella Hazelnut Company), which was remarkable as it was the only corporate farm that actually responded to my emails. In contrast, the other corporate farm (Blue Dwell)

was reached due to it being a customer of a friend of mine from school, who sells specialised machinery employed in harvesting fruit orchards.

Carrying out research in La Araucania is not an easy task since the ongoing conflict heavily influences it. Thus, on the one hand, access to indigenous farmers is hard because they typically do not trust the *huinca* [non-indigenous people] and are fed up with extractive research (studies that only draw knowledge from the informants and do not offer anything in return). Furthermore, McKinley and Deyhle (2000) have shown that it is not a good idea to flood indigenous participants with questions, even when rapport has already been acquired, as it can be seen as a sign of disrespect. One of the smallholders Mapuche indigenous peasant interviewees echoed these points, after a nice meal we shared on his parcel and certainly at a point when I thought rapport had been acquired:

“Hey Carlitos<sup>7</sup> don’t get upset though, but what is the point of answering so many questions. So many questions you make, and I don’t see the benefits for us.”  
**(Interview with Leonel, 3rd February 2021)**

On the other hand, approaching the better-off farmers is also challenging as they try to remain low-profile in case they are targeted in future arson attacks or seizures of their land. One farmer, who was a contact of my uncle and whom I could not interview face-to-face (although I did speak to him on the phone), told me:

“I’m not sure what I can add to your research beyond those things I’m sure you have witnessed in Perquenco, the conflict is out of our hands, and the government doesn’t do anything!”  
**(Fieldnotes, 16th November 2020)**

In the same vein, another mid-sized Chilean farmer export-oriented I interviewed refused to be recorded and ended our meeting by saying:

“Please ensure that I remain anonymous. I don’t want to face any problems in the future.”  
**(Interview with Adrian, 13th November 2020)**

Hence, returning to the discussion of Merton (1972) and Bell (1994), I was both an insider and an outsider during the fieldwork. The former resulted from my nationality, plus my family’s history in La Araucania region:

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<sup>7</sup> Term used to show both endearment and age difference.

“One of my uncles told me when I showed him a letter inviting the better-off farmers to participate in the research, said ‘you don’t have to state that you were born in the region; people will know from your surname that you are from here’ - It took me a while to realise this, but he was right.” (Fieldnotes, 10th September 2020)

My age (I turned 31 during fieldwork) did not play a huge role when accessing the field, although in a way it helped me to feel more comfortable when mingling with those informants who were around my age. Among the participants I spent time with the most, one was a rural development official who regularly invited me to play football and drink beer, two were men from the indigenous community who were really generous in addition to inviting me to barbecues, and a further two were members of the city council with whom I became good friends.

The outsider character was manifested in the sense of not being raised in the town where the fieldwork was conducted, on top of having certain characteristics that could be linked to Santiago (the capital) or the upper classes, such as being educated or studying in the UK. Furthermore, my social scientist background was also deemed to be that of an outsider. This was both by the rural development officials, whose backgrounds were closer to natural sciences like agronomy or veterinary, and also by the farmers who saw me pretty much as an incompetent when it came to any farming tasks. The features mentioned above followed me throughout my fieldwork, shaping how Perquenos’ inhabitants saw me and, in retrospect, how I now regard myself within the fieldwork terrain. Nonetheless, it is worth highlighting that, as my fieldwork progressed and rapport was acquired, I started to transition towards being conceived by them more as an insider.

The layers of my personality, unpacked above, reveal whether I felt more acquainted with one pole or another of the insider/outsider distinction. Being a family man in his early thirties with an educated background linked to urban areas and possessing a *mestizo* outlook with European roots determined the way data was elicited. More importantly, these factors indicate that the distinction between outsider/insider is not mutually exclusive; it depends on the context and the event under observation. For example, being considered too urban but having a family history in the region of

analysis illustrates the transition between the two poles. Relatedly, these personal features also highlight my positionality in the field.

In this vein, being a scholar aware of the dispossession and displacement experienced by the Mapuche indigenous people had an impact on how I approached the territory. I empathised with their condition of being turned into smallholders with little land to reproduce their rural livelihood, and thus, I saw myself as an ally. However, due to my previous research experiences in the region, the literature review, and my engagement with Mapuche claims, Mapuche people in Perquenco often perceived that I knew more about their culture than they did.

On the other hand, my Swiss heritage exerted acute pressure on how to navigate issues related to indigenous land dispossession while engaging with various strata of agrarian classes, especially the rural elite who were likely to be targeted for seizure and arson attacks. Consequently, despite my understanding of the negative outcomes provoked by colonisation, I strove to maintain a distance that allowed me to comprehend contextualised class dynamics. In other words, I aimed to be as open as possible to the multiple interpretations that social actors in La Araucania gave to their surroundings.

### **3.5 Access to the Settings and Milestones.**

Although both my own presence and positionality in the field were essential elements in the way data was elicited and gathered, access to particular settings was also central in allowing the interviews to be conducted. Specifically, most of the interviews stemmed from three settings: the PDTI, the farmers' market, and one indigenous community (Tromilen-Malleo).

From the outset, I was aware of the intrinsic barriers when researching La Araucania in terms of accessing potential informants, either Mapuche indigenous peasants/farmers or members of the rural elite. There was also the broader political climate associated with unprecedented uprisings taking place throughout Chile,

which was worth adding to the fieldwork design. The 19-O revolution started with student demonstrations over a spike of 30 Chilean pesos in the metro fare. These protests gained the support and validation of different sectors of Chilean society, who joined the students and took to the streets, with chants of “It's not about 30 pesos, it's about 30 years” and “Dignity” in reference to the hardcore neoliberal model imposed during Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990) and further crystallised by the subsequent democratically-elected governments. During that period Chile became regarded as a neoliberal economic miracle, as poverty was considerably reduced along with inflation (Friedman, 1982; Harvey, 2007). Moreover, in the long run, and after 30 years of entrenchment of the neoliberal development model, the country became one of the most developed countries in Latin America. However, despite having one of the biggest GDP per capita in Latin America and being a member of the select group of OECD countries, staggering levels of everyday inequality continued to be experienced by Chileans. Thus, as the protests gained momentum, the president of Chile suddenly found himself overwhelmed and unfortunately declared war upon his own people. The subsequent repression applied by the police and the military was ruthless, resulting in constant violations of human rights (Human Rights Watch, 2019; Amnesty International, 2021).

The aftermath was that politicians in Congress came out with a pledge to make peace and stop the violence, which consisted of calling a referendum on the Chilean constitution to be held on 25th October 2020. Remarkably, the percentage of people who voted in favour of an elected citizen assembly (with both gender parity and the inclusion of indigenous people) accounted for 79% of the total ballot, which meant that a new social pact was underway. Moreover, another landmark event occurred once the assembly members were elected: Dr Elisa Loncon, a Mapuche female activist, was chosen by her peers to lead the assembly. This chain of previously unforeseen events, notably the chance to overthrow the old Chilean constitution and the leadership role in the assembly of Elisa Loncon (whose background is linked to two marginalised groups, women and indigenous people), is something that has been coined by laypeople as “The new Chile”.

This structural and all-encompassing process, which is still ongoing, is worth acknowledging because both national symbols and the neoliberal development model previously embraced by Chile were seriously called into question by the people (Benwell, Núñez and Amigo, 2021) Furthermore, this academic endeavour is centred on exploring the consequences of adopting fruit production within La Araucania, a transition that has been promoted by the state and following an export-oriented productivity model because of their profitability. In short, this transition toward cash crops is the paradigmatic face of Chile's neoliberal export model, when it comes to agriculture (Barrientos, 1997; Kay, 2002)

Therefore, it is justifiable to ponder the question of whether the existence of a rural development model is shared and validated by rural dwellers and, if so, on what grounds. Nonetheless, the protests of October 2019 were just the tip of the iceberg compared with the series of events that unfolded during the year 2020. These inevitably shaped the collection of data, and therefore prompted minor tweaks to the fieldwork design.



Figure 4: art summarising the 19-O revolution and one of its outcomes (art by Ciscaluna Luna), source: [Instagram@ciscaluna.arteydiseno](https://Instagram@ciscaluna.arteydiseno).

### 3.5.1 The PDTI.

Bearing in mind the intrinsic barriers to carrying out research in La Araucania plus the impact of the 19-O revolution, I developed a fieldwork strategy in which access to potential informants would be gained through a combination of my Swiss heritage and the local office of rural development, also known as PDTI [*Programa de Desarrollo Territorial Indígena*], which is in charge of implementing the policies and schemes designed by INDAP [*Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agropecuario*], the latter being a department of the Chilean Ministry of Agriculture.

As mentioned above, my Swiss heritage did not directly help me to access the rural elite; instead, this was gained through my personal network (i.e. my uncle) and a local politician who facilitated my access to the better-off farmers. However, as intended, the PDTI became a central research site at the beginning of my fieldwork, at least to access its beneficiaries who mostly consisted of indigenous family farmers. Access to this setting (PDTI) was possible because it is a public department with a certain level of obligation to cooperate with researchers like me, subject to following certain protocols:

“Nursery hasn’t started yet, and my wife begins to work, leaving us with a challenge to face since we don’t have childcare. And tomorrow, I have a meeting with the mayor of the city, which was requested as a condition by the chief of the PDTI to carry on with my research. Fortunately, a couple of farmers became our saviours. My wife had had a good impression of them during the previous days in the farmers’ market, so she asked the woman if she would be up for doing some childcare for us, of course, on a pay rate basis.

The next day, Fatima came to our house and looked after my 3-year-old son from 8:30 am to 1 pm. In the meantime, I was receiving the blessing of the mayor to carry out my research. Afterwards, when I was back to take over the childcare task, I asked how much I owed her, but surprisingly she replied that I should consider it a favour, adding that we’ll get back to you whenever we need something.

This interaction made me think how solidarity, mutual aid and moral economy are dynamics that play a huge role in rural everyday life and access to cash might be secondary. Probably now I was socially indebted to them.” (**Fieldnotes, 2nd March 2020**)

Once the mayor endorsed me with permission, it enabled me to attend the local rural development office on a regular basis. Thus, my data collection stemmed from the PDTI setting, with the data elicited here taking the form of rumours, informal conversations, and shadowing. The latter was carried out whilst the officials allowed

me to accompany them on their tours, where technical advice was mainly given to indigenous family farmers. At this point, the Covid-19 outbreak suddenly erupted, leading to a national lockdown that caused both the PDTI and the farmers' market to cease operations. As a result, these approaches to tackling the agrarian structure of La Araucania were unavoidably brief, lasting only three weeks at the beginning of fieldwork and then resuming intermittently as pandemic restrictions evolved.

As a direct consequence of the pandemic, I had to halt the fieldwork and whatever face-to-face interaction I was having with my informants for almost three months (see figure 5), making it even harder to examine the fruit orchards as strict protocols were being implemented in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. In fact, I could not fully grasp the overall mode of fruit production as my fieldwork design had intended, especially in those cases where the supply chain was long (because it was impossible to follow the commodity once it departed toward the market). Nevertheless, it was possible to address the contested nature of fruit production as a niche to be implemented in La Araucania through the voices of officials, experts and local farmers.

On a brighter note, the pandemic actually offered a timely opportunity to reflect upon the notion of risk among family farmers, and to ponder the extent to which this crisis affected different strata of farmers. Thus, questions regarding how Covid affected them and their responses were incorporated into both the question guide and my own observations (see appendix 4).

# Access Timeline: Milestone events

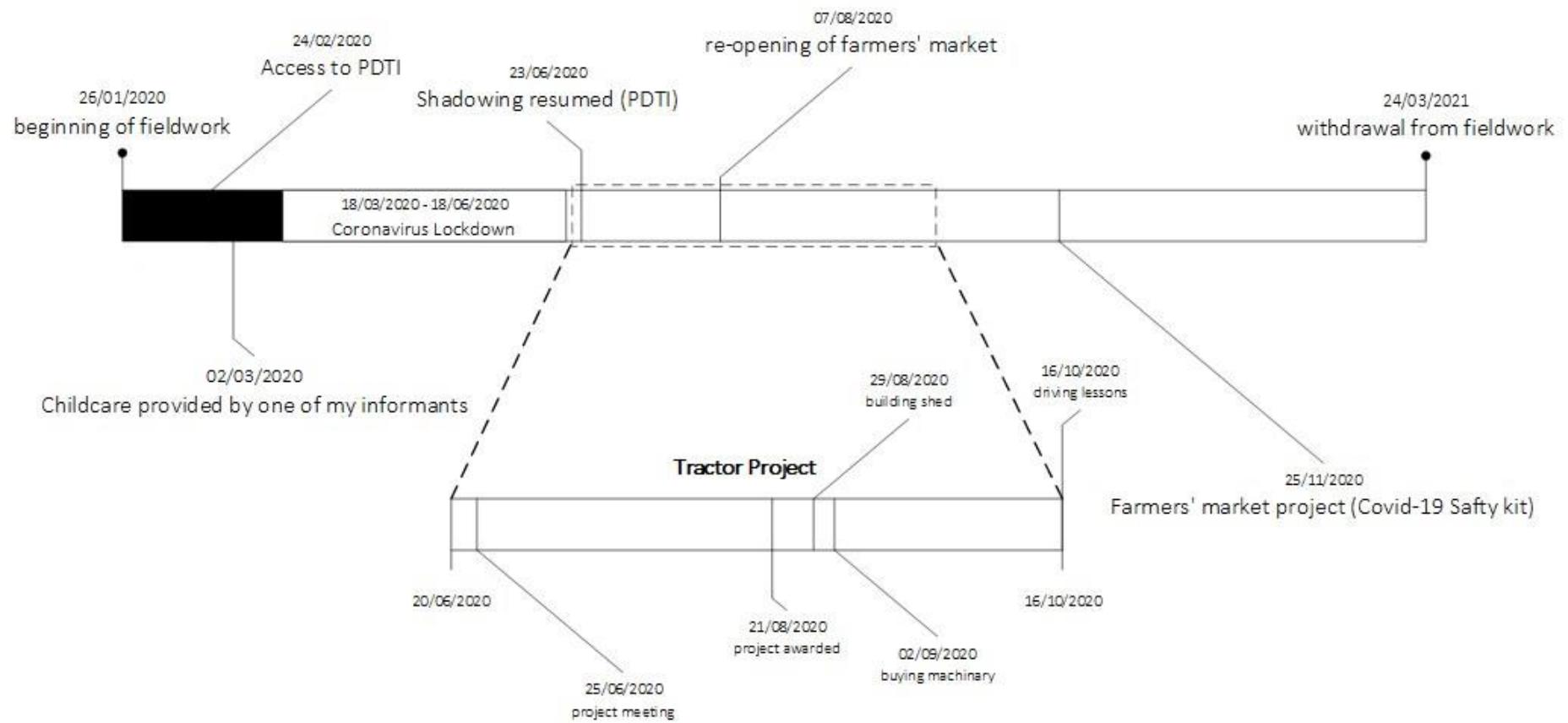


Figure 5 : Timeline and Milestone events, source: Own creation drawing on personal fieldnotes.

### ***3.5.2 The Indigenous Community.***

During the lockdown period, the only contact I had with my informants was through buying products from those farmers who were struggling with the closure of the farmers' market. This weekly shopping did allow me to have brief conversations regarding the current agricultural tasks they were performing, but these informal chats were superficial. As such, it was not until 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020 that I could adequately delve into my fieldwork. On that day, the same farming couple who aided us in providing childcare came to ask me a favour, which consisted of helping their indigenous community (Tromilen-Malleo) to apply for a public grant.



Figure 6: Manual Plough used by one of the members of Tromilen-Malleo before purchasing the machinery (Picture by author).

One barrier that this indigenous community sought to overcome as food producers was the difficulty in acquiring machinery. In fact, some authors have observed that most of the labour carried out by agrarian workers relies on manual methods, and

that access to tractors is a privilege available to only 1% of this group worldwide (Losch, 2016; Dedieu *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, these indigenous peasants were constrained by needing to either hire tractors from neighbouring communities or ploughing their plots with minimal resources such as human labour or animal-driven ploughs (see figure 6).

Thus, they saw an opportunity to apply for a public grant aimed at buying farming equipment for those indigenous people who were beneficiaries of CONADI's land purchasing. However, in order to apply for this grant, a project needed to be designed, presenting an internal barrier in cases where the intended eventual beneficiaries had not had the privilege of being formally educated.

It transpired that being willing and able to design a project for this indigenous community (See figure 7) became a turning point in terms of my fieldwork access. The project itself became a rich source of community data due to the need to outline features relating to the types of crops they grew, the size of their holdings, and their natural assets. Furthermore, after winning the bid, and based on reciprocity, the process of asking the members of this indigenous community to be interviewed for my research's purposes was incredibly smooth. Nevertheless, I could still not interview all of them because a few were working off the farm, specifically in the north of Chile as seasonal farm workers.

In addition, as the project developed, I had the privilege of witnessing how the types of tractor and equipment to purchase was decided, which was not exempt from controversy within the community. Furthermore, I was able to observe the formulation of the "terms and conditions" when using the machinery, which was characterised by heated arguments among the members. Moreover, a key moment was conducting participant observations during the construction of the shed where the machinery was stored. This is because, by that time, I had already dropped the idea of studying seasonal farm workers and had started channelling all of my efforts toward exploring the concept of family farming (due to the aforementioned impossibility of accessing fruit orchards daily). However, while building the shed, the community members began to chat about their experiences as seasonal farm workers

in the north of Chile. Amazed by this, I asked them how likely they were to work as seasonal farm workers in the fruit industry. They found my question funny, since one of them said that almost all of them had worked at least one season as a seasonal farm worker (whether in the past or as their current job), but that now that they owned land things had changed. Thus, this particular encounter, in which a naïve question was asked, had the dual impact of distinguishing me as an outsider figure while also giving me a new impetus to reframe my inquiry toward seasonal farm workers.

All of these issues highlight the differentiation among Mapuche indigenous farmers, particularly within this specific indigenous community in terms of social classes, as they represent an upward mobility within the agrarian structure—evidenced by the transition from being landless to landed. It is crucial to consider that, to some extent, I played a role in facilitating a subsequent upward transition within the agrarian class structure. This shift, from being previously deprived of machinery to becoming the types of indigenous people more likely to thrive, allowed for their placement within the agrarian class structure. Consequently, this made it possible to emphasise their attitudes regarding relations of production and markets.

### ***3.5.3 The Farmers' Market.***

The third setting where interviews were carried out was the farmers' market (see figure 8). It arose as a valuable setting when seeking to elicit data because of its nature in terms of being an interface between buyers and farmers. As such, it enabled me to meet the farmers based on the buyer/seller relationship. In addition, three households of Tromilen-Malleo routinely attended the market to sell their products. However, they were members of different organisations within the farmers' market. Another remarkable thing about this place is that even though its establishment was made possible by means of collective action, the three organisations within it nonetheless pushed for their own agendas, leading to a degree of differentiation among them and therefore providing valuable insights when exploring the specific components of indigenous family farming. For instance, among the producers and the resellers, a group who proclaimed themselves as the “originals” were regarded by others as the “mafia”, because they could sell their

products at the farmers' market on Tuesdays (an entitlement limited to only the "original" group).

Thus, during the first month of fieldwork, I consistently attended the farmers' market in order to familiarise myself with the products offered and the prices the farmers asked for them. The pandemic also impacted this setting by closing it down entirely, despite it offering essential commodities such as food. Shockingly, products were not allowed to be sold from 16th March 2020 until 7th August 2020:

"Fatima told me she tried to sell her produce outside the municipal gym on payday, but she was threatened with calling the police on her. So, the farmers were almost five months without being allowed to sell their products. It certainly draws my attention that this town was so long without its farmers' market. The flexibility showed by nearby cities with their fairs and markets normally running, where agglomeration of people is way higher, made me think that there is something fishy here." (*Fieldnotes, 7th August 2020*)



Figure 7: Farmers' Markets, picture taken from one of the stalls (picture by the author).

It was at this point I realised that, because of the nature of the farmers' market as a grassroots organisation, its members were always in tension with the local municipality. So, its day-to-day operation has never been easy. I came to learn this when another milestone in terms of access emerged. On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the vice president of one of the groups composing the farmers' market asked me whether

I was available to design a project aimed at acquiring a “safety kit” for the market. In this manner, they could offer a service with all the necessary contingencies to be Covid-secure. In fact, in so doing she effectively bypassed the institutional route by coming directly to me and not asking the municipality for assistance.

As occurred with the indigenous community Tromilen-Malleo, I agreed to help the farmers’ market, by drafting the project in which all three groups agreed to participate. Fortunately, as occurred with the tractor project, we won the bid, making the project itself turn into a rich data repository. Afterwards, the vice president introduced me to her comrades and warned me: “not everybody here is a producer, many of the stalls are resellers, but I can point you out to the ones who are proper farmers”. Therefore, I followed her suggestion and only interviewed those sellers who were farmers. However, as the interviews were carried out, I began to notice that even these so-called “proper” indigenous farmers sometimes involved themselves in reselling. This was particularly the case when demand exceeded their available supply, either due to a crop failure or simply because of an influx of customers. In such cases, they tended to rely on their neighbours’ networks to increase their own supply. Another situation in which they usually drew on their family connections or neighbours’ relations was when they offered blueberries for sale. Since these tend to be grown by either corporations or better-off farmers, encountering them in the stalls of the farmers’ market is rather strange. In these cases, what occurs is that members of the family or the community work as seasonal farm workers and simply steal part of the harvest from the orchard where they are employed.

### ***3.5.4 Other Milestones.***

On top of the milestones mentioned above, which granted me access to the three settings where most of the interviews were conducted, I regarded a few others as part of the broader political arena. In the same way as the events pointed out above, these also marked how I observed social phenomena, particularly those concerning the conflict between the Mapuche, the Chileans and the state. As these milestones were taking place, I started adding them into my question guide and conversations,

allowing me to explore my informants' attitudes toward the social conflict. Although they might seem extraordinary, these events underpin an ongoing struggle.

In short, each year one can encounter different ways in which the conflict manifests itself, which could be more or less radical. However, what underlies these events is the very same struggle. For instance, when I chose Perquenco to be my headquarters at the beginning of fieldwork on 16th May 2020, I bought the *Diario Austral* [regional newspaper]. One of the headlines alluded to a farmer from Perquenco who had suffered an arson attack on his plot. My immediate reaction was that I was venturing into the lion's den, especially as my landlord had mentioned that his sister was also a victim of one of these arson attacks.

Furthermore, several unfortunate but noteworthy events took place during the year of my fieldwork. First of all, by the end of July 2020, five local municipalities in La Araucania region had been occupied. These incidents were led by Mapuche indigenous people in different territories across the region, who demanded that the Chilean state apply the ILO169 convention to Mapuche prisoners. Unfortunately, this collective action sparked a backlash, whereby Chilean citizens went to their local municipalities to expel those who were occupying the municipal buildings. In addition, local Chilean people sang racist chants against the Mapuche:

“Even though I live in a relatively peaceful town, the conflict is grounded in the territory. In fact, Perquenco is just between two of the five municipalities affected by the seizures. I came across a demonstration that took place in Perquenco’s *plaza* in solidarity with the Mapuche people. It reminded me that the conflict is a constant presence, as it took me back to the news that I read when I was just arriving in the town.” (*Fieldnotes, 1st August 2020*)

Secondly, on 27th August 2020, I woke up to hear the news that the truckers’ union had gone on strike. They sought to push an agenda consisting of 13 points that would tackle violence and guarantee their security on the motorway. It is worth mentioning that they were active players within the conflict, as they had been targeted by the arson attacks which the most radical groups carry out. In addition, they felt abandoned by the right-wing government, which had negotiated with Mapuche prisoners to make them end their hunger strikes. Finally, on 7th January 2021, a non-

indigenous farmer was shot dead close to Perquenco, and on the same day there was a massive police raid on an indigenous community. All of this happened while the justice court was issuing a verdict in regard to Camilo Catrillanca's murder.

While my fieldwork was developing, in order to make sense of this very complex situation, I began to notice some grey areas and nuances that had not been so evident initially. By way of illustration, I felt there to be a lack of common sense regarding these issues among many La Araucania inhabitants, in the sense that they tended to outline the conflict as being between the goodies versus the baddies or between indigenous terrorists and fascist landowners, together with other kinds of negative epithets.

This research contributes to identifying the common ground from which common knowledge could stem, whether in relation to farmers, peasants, indigenous or Chileans. In so doing, my point of departure is quite different from other research previously conducted in La Araucania. Firstly, I focus on the relations between groups rather than just one group or subgroup in particular. Secondly, I consider the process of rural differentiation already in place. Therefore, instead of looking at the groups, I rather prefer to examine the ways in which the individual beliefs and interests are put forward. This, in turn, allows me to knit together the perceptions of farmers from different backgrounds, leading to identifying that common ground regardless of sectional identities.

Finally, since farming cannot be decoupled from natural cycles (Bernstein, 2010), and in spite of attempts to equate production time and labour time by means of technological improvements (Bellamy, Clark and York, 2011; Mann and Dickinson, 1978; Weiss, 2010), I paid particular attention to those natural events that marked the 2019/2020 agricultural year in my fieldwork. One of the officials gave a useful summary of the year:

"It was a bizarre year, on so many levels, and I'm not considering Covid-19 and all the political things we faced. But on the environmental level, we had low temperatures out of the usual range at the beginning of the year. As a result, a shortage in the fodder available for the livestock was common among our recipients.

Afterwards, the year was also characterised by unusual heat waves during spring. This means that plants began to be seeding even before they were supposed to be harvested; therefore, production was affected and severely reduced. For instance, if you look at the oats, these were out of control because of the unusual warm weather; just remember that in September, we had almost 30 degrees Celsius.” (Conversation with Leon PDTI official, 28th December 2020)

On top of his analysis, I would add three other natural events experienced by the farmers in Perquenco: frosts (see figure 9), pests, and one solar eclipse. The first two of these shed light on how farmers cope with risk, so offer valuable insights when attempting to unravel the characteristics of family farming in terms of security. On the other hand, although a solar eclipse is a natural phenomenon, it has cultural repercussions when combined with indigenous thinking.



Figure 8: Failure in a lentil cultivation at Veronica-Tromilen indigenous community due to a frost hit in late November 2020 (Picture by the author).

### 3.6 Field Relations.

The field relations between myself and the participants arose and developed amid the sequence of events described above. Both my identity and my access to the research sites, where most of my informants carried out their everyday routines, aided me in shaping a certain degree of involvement with the participants. By

focusing on field relations in more detail, one can state that adopting a qualitative stance is linked to the mere act of socialising (Appadurai, 1997; McKinley and Deyhle, 2000; Brewer, 2002; Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Hence the ethnographic approach pursued here shows the multiple encounters with the informants as key sources of data. On a similar note, Hörschelmann and Stenning (2008) suggest that moving into the aspect of field relations during ethnographic research allows a certain reflection on the degree of intimacy of these encounters; in turn, this offers the chance to be critical in two ways, both toward the informants and toward one's own positionality. Therefore, in the present study the relationship between myself and both my informants and the field was rather dialogic. This is not only due to participants' livelihoods being improved through my project designs, but mainly because they challenged my rural imagination.

Beyond the previous discussion, which outlined the attributes of the ethnographer together with an exploration my own background, two main themes will be analysed in relation to field relations: firstly, how rapport was built, and secondly, the moment I had to withdraw myself from the field.

### ***3.6.1 Building Rapport.***

Because ethnography is based on interacting with people in their natural settings, gaining rapport appears to be a precondition to success when examining human affairs. The use of rapport as a necessary means to create knowledge validates ethnographers putting forward their interpretations of social reality (Springwood and King, 2001). Although ethnography demands a degree of involvement with informants, these encounters are not exempt from being sometimes unsettling:

“I had such a nice interview with one of the “big” cereal cultivators. He was really kind in providing in-depth and rich data about the cereal world. However, there was this thing that keeps bothering me. When he invited me to his office there was a quite big painting of Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean dictator, that I couldn’t ignore and caused me goosebumps.” (**Fieldnotes, 2nd November 2020**)

The previous fieldnote highlights that, when conducting research, informants are not recruited on the same basis that someone chooses a friend. Indeed, sometimes informants can be remarkably annoying (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). There is also the issue of the extent to which one's own political beliefs can be revealed when making human inquiries, due to there being a fine line that the ethnographer must not cross. While there is a temptation to challenge informants' beliefs in order to elicit further elaboration of their perceptions, it is critical not to appear rude as this could lead to the ethnographer being excluded from accessing certain groups. Ostrander (1993) argues that rapport tends to be overrated when dealing with the elite, although she warns that having access to them is not the same as obtaining useful information by means of trust. To some extent this is consistent with my own experience, as I found it far more useful to ensure mutual respect than to seek further relations with them. Another matter to consider is that the rural elite usually talk considerably more than the peasantry. Many times, I found myself telling the rural elite to hold their thoughts so I could turn on the recorder, while with the peasantry I had to stimulate their responses at the risk of being dismissed.

Once the gatekeepers paved the way towards accessing corporations and the rural elite, being respectful was generally all it took for me to have a fruitful conversation, but this was not the case when seeking to engage with the smallholders and the indigenous peasantry. Thus, initially, my socialisation with them followed a customer/farmer relationship. Nevertheless, these encounters helped me in two important ways: firstly, farmers had a chance to get to know me, and secondly, I eventually became part of their everyday lives as a customer, thus a certain degree of rapport was established. Later, during these apparently mundane social interactions, I was able to sound out their opinions in regard to farming. Nonetheless, at some point during my fieldwork I had to make myself useful in their eyes so I could become enmeshed within their routines with a higher degree of proximity. Helping with the design of the two projects mentioned above was a turning point in building trust and was also beneficial in terms of reciprocity, as once we had won the bids I was not ashamed to ask if they could spare some time to carry out interviews with me.

On other occasions, minor services were provided. For instance, farmers sometimes relied on my educational background to check whether the ratio between water and agrochemicals was about right. Similarly, during lockdown, those who wanted to go anywhere outside their households were required to carry a special document issued through the police web page on their phones, so they usually came to me in order to find assistance on this matter. Likewise, giving lifts created remarkable opportunities to both build trust and make inquiries of the participants. Along these lines, I noticed that an even greater degree of intimacy was achieved when participants invited me to come inside their houses after a lift was given. Obviously, there was some sort of reciprocity inherent in these invitations. Being invited into their kitchens was something important, due to this particular place being bestowed with all sorts of symbolism. Firstly, it showed that the researcher had achieved a degree of being accepted in the field. Secondly, it is the place where much of the food produced by the farmers is cooked in a particular manner. Taken together, themes such as gender relations within the households and the notion of food as something that entails cultures, relations and traditions (Rosset, 2008), are ripe for exploration. The following fieldnote illustrates this point:

“After accompanying the members of Tromilen-Malleo to quote the machinery they were seeking to buy, I offered a lift to Osvaldo who has been rather elusive to me, because he is always on the move, working off the farm [...] He invited me to come in and I met his mum, she greeted me in *mapuzungun* [indigenous language] and offered me *mate* [infused drink] with fried eggs. Next, she served me a free-range pork brawn, the kids around helped themselves and I took one slice because of peer pressure. While having these items, she comments they’ve got a new goat, as a gift. But she argues the goat is harmful to the *chakra* [vegetable garden] so she can’t wait to eat it. Finally, I left their house with my hands filled with gifts, among others: one kilo of lentils, a vessel and a door mat made up of *pita* [vegetal fibre], in addition to a jar of quince.” (Fieldnotes, 17th June 2020)

Another issue rural ethnographers face when establishing rapport is not to appear too reluctant to help. Luckily, I was warned about this in one of my first interviews with the mayor of the town:

“Farming involves a considerable amount of physical effort, especially in those cases which are less mechanised. Among the peasantry the know-how and the craft are highly valuable [...] Mind yourself Carlos and don’t make a fool of yourself, otherwise the peasantry won’t listen to you.” (Interview with the Mayor of Perquenco, 2nd April 2020)

His insight was clearly useful, but as with the matter of how much of one's own political beliefs to disclose, here the ethnographer must try to find balance too. Sometimes being viewed as useless or incompetent can have positive outcomes, such as naïve comments leading to being informed about those taken-for-granted aspects (as happened when I asked how likely it was for my informants to work as seasonal farm workers). Furthermore, showing an incompetent attitude could soften the atmosphere, prompting a good laugh among the researcher and the informants. Once that occurs it can be seen as a sign of rapport, because a certain degree of trust is needed in order to mock. Therefore, with regard to situations where practical knowledge is far more valuable than theoretical knowledge, in my experience the learning period is key: that time-lapse when the ethnographer transitions from making naïve comments and showing himself to be clumsy to a state where he fits in among the informants.

### ***3.6.2 Withdrawing from the Field.***

While accessing the sites and building relationships played a key role in shaping this ethnography, withdrawing from the field deserves the same amount of reflection as it is not exempt from controversy (Iversen, 2009). In my case, my departure had to be postponed three times because my return tickets to the UK were cancelled due to the pandemic. In fact, the first time that my flight was postponed turned out to be beneficial as it allowed me to witness the threshing. In addition, it enabled me to participate in a webinar about rural development organised by one of my informants, a member of the city council, where I could offer insights drawing upon my fieldwork.

Between my second and third attempts to catch a flight to the UK I moved to Santiago, but soon after realising that no flights were going to depart I decided to return to Perquenco for one week (without my family) to see if could arrange some more interviews. During this week, the last batch of interviews were conducted with the town's veterinarian, one manager of a multinational that grows blueberries, and one household of the Tromilen-Malleo indigenous community (whose members were previously rather elusive because of their off farm working routines). In addition, I

attended my last barbecue with the members of the indigenous community. On that occasion the region was again experiencing a lot of tension, due to people demanding greater police and military presence in the region so that violence could be stopped. While we were discussing this issue, one of the members told me:

“Carlos, you know it’s funny that history has turned around, a long time ago Mapuche people were running in fear and being forced to live in indigenous reserves, but nowadays the *winkas* [non-indigenous people] are the ones who are scared.”  
(Conversation with Pablo, 13th January 2021)

He did not intend it as a threat, because he defines himself as a pacifist, but rather he was putting forward a sense of divine justice or events turning full circle, in terms of the relationship between the Mapuche people and Chileans. With regard to the question of whether I truly left the field after this barbecue, this it is hard to answer because, although I am no longer physically in Perquenco, emotionally I am still highly attached. In fact, I have not lost contact with the community and neither has my wife. As a result, completing the interviews and participant observations signalled the end of my fieldwork, but certainly not the end of our relationship. Moreover, it is worth noting that staying in touch with them is relevant to this academic endeavour because, while I am writing up this thesis, if any doubts arise or some kind of follow-up is needed, I can easily reach them via WhatsApp.

### **3.7 Role of Shadowing, In-depth Interviews, and Participant Observations in Shaping the Ethnography.**

Turning to the methods employed during fieldwork, these were shadowing, in-depth interviews, and participant observations. The first two were employed intermittently throughout the fieldwork period, mainly as a result of the lockdown imposed across Chile. A few key points must be mentioned with regard to the ways in which these two approaches were used to elicit and complement the findings. In turn, these support the feasibility of the present research in terms of grasping the agrarian structure through narratives.

For instance, when examining the state and its relations with rural areas, shadowing yielded fascinating insights, which implies that the ethnographer must follow and monitor the actions of public servants. Indeed, Norman Long (1997) argues that, even though the presence of the state could be perceived as being very distant from the countryside (especially when its interventions are delivered in a top-down fashion), its officials are nonetheless key actors due to their being at the frontline of public policy implementation. Thus, when studying institutions, the value of shadowing lies in generating contextualised and current data, and in highlighting the relationships between the social subjects and their surroundings, rather than as single units (Quinlan, 2008). Taken together, the relationships between public servants and state social welfare recipients are vital in helping to understand how the state operates in the countryside. Proctor *et al.* (2012) have shown shadowing to be a worthwhile technique by examining how certain schemes and knowledge were conveyed by advisors to farmers. These encounters, witnessed using the shadowing approach, allowed the authors to explain that the future of farming envisioned by governmental institutions needed to be negotiated in the field between the advisors and the farmers. In other words, within these mundane interactions, the different agendas pursued by institutions come to fruition.

In my case, shadowing was used to engage with both the officials in charge of implementing the aforementioned PDTI and its recipients. However, it turned out to be especially useful when gaining the officials' perspectives about public policies aimed at rural development, and how the officials conceived the farmers targeted under the scheme. Thus, at the beginning I accompanied the officials during their routine duties, when pieces of advice were given to smallholders. These generally consisted of assessments of their means of production, such as their greenhouses or irrigation systems. From the recipient perspective, having an official visit was a blessing because it offered an opportunity to ask about any current threats to their crops (if they did not appear fully healthy). Eventually Covid hit, so shadowing was no longer possible. But then a window suddenly opened, when the officials invited me to shadow them during the scheduled periods of deworming and castration, which took place in June and September respectively. What struck me about these occasions was that, despite some of these procedures being highly standardised, officials exhibited a degree of manoeuvre whereby they could circumvent the top-

down order and make implementation more pragmatic. In the same way, as the ones in charge of implementing various interventions, they were tremendously critical about the role of the state with regard to rural development.

Moving on to the role of in-depth interviews, these were valuable in at least three ways. Firstly, once some initial ideas had been collected by means of informal conversations (unstructured by their very nature), the interviews then offered opportunities to verify and explore those themes in greater depth and more systematically. For instance, as my research progressed, I came across a range of interventions which had been implemented in Perquenco over the years, so I had to add them to my guidelines and ask specific questions about them:

Carlos: “Does a medicinal herb project ring a bell?”

Claudia: “I forgot about that one! It looks like you have been doing your homework.”

Carlos: “Yes, I have traced the major intervention and now I’m checking if it was as big as I imagined.”

Claudia: “To be honest there have been so many pilots, projects, interventions, and schemes that one tends to forget. But yeah, that one was a big one, fifteen farmers embarked on cultivating medicinal herbs and the funding came from the regional fund.” **(Interview with Claudia-PDTI official, 25th September 2020)**

Secondly, in-depth interviews are valuable not only to verify one’s findings, but also to generate and improve overall data. It is widely accepted that most of the assumptions that a researcher carries stem from the literature review and his theoretical framework, not to mention his own background. Consequently, it is quite remarkable how much these assumptions can constrain an ethnographer’s thoughts, right up until the point where he faces a reality in the field that does not echo that which he read about prior to fieldwork. To illustrate this point, when I was interviewing the participants about their means of production, I limited myself to asking questions in regard to land, tools, machinery, input and labour power. Nevertheless, as these questions were answered, a vast world appeared to me that had not been acknowledged in advance, especially with regard to inputs like seeds and agrochemicals. Furthermore, after spending several months interviewing farmers, I realised that access to land, which I had deemed to be at the core of the means of production when farming (Friedmann, 1980), is actually only important in cultural or political terms but not so much in terms of production. In reality, when

it comes to producing food, other types of relations (such as leasing land or sharecropping) become more crucial than the mere fact of ownership over land.

Thirdly, interviews were used to stimulate responses from the research subjects, which led to the ethnographer exploring interviewees' memories. These narratives drew upon the mutual influences that existed between the researcher and respondents, so one must be also be aware of those things left unsaid during interviewing (Brewer, 2002; Gemignani, 2014). However, most of the interviews were conducted at the last stage of fieldwork, which means that a relationship of sorts had already been built with most informants. In the same vein, because neither interviews nor farming phenomena can be decoupled from a definite time and context, these encounters assisted in locating those events within the timeline, especially ones related to hazards and risk management.

Fifty-six interviews were conducted during fieldwork altogether. Among these, only two were not recorded (at the informants' request); instead, note-taking was used on these occasions. Moreover, the interviews addressing multinational corporations were conducted via Zoom. A total of seven interviewees were classified as "experts", due to these informants being characterised as rubbing shoulders with people involved at the national level (rather than at the local or regional level), in addition to having a more encompassing view with regard to national farming. Conversely, those people interviewed in La Araucania were comprised of farmers and officials, although a few officials were actually also growers too (as can happen with local politicians). However, for analytical purposes I decided to divide them into two groups: the growers and the officials. A table showing the main features concerning the growers can be found in the appendix.

Given that participant observation is the main tool for any ethnographic endeavour, it is difficult to conceive of an ethnographic study not using some type of participant observation. This is due to its advantageous capacity to capture the social meanings created and enacted by the people under study in their natural settings (Brewer, 2002). In so doing, the roles which the ethnographer takes vary according to his

background and the rapport acquired through ethnography. These issues have been explored in the subsections above, yet what deserves a little more reflection is the role of participant observation when dealing with rural places in general and with farming in particular.

It has already been shown that ethnographers can take on different roles, ranging from simply making observations to participating in most of the daily routines of participants (Bell, 1994; Brewer, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). These two poles and the roles in between are largely contingent upon the type of access, rapport and background. However, it is clearly impossible to take on roles that one cannot perform, for instance those constrained by age or gender or physical ability. For this reason, the ethnographer is both an insider and outsider depending on the occasion under analysis. As outlined above, I started as a customer of the farmers and slowly transited into a more familiar face within the indigenous community. This was facilitated by numerous participatory actions, such as building a shed for the tractors, taking tractor driving lessons with them, planting blackberries, playing football games, attending birthday and graduation parties, helping with the threshing, and dancing in the rain to pay tribute to the *Ñuke Mapu* [Mother earth]. I also witnessed crop failures, sheep becoming ill, and a politician seeking local votes.

On those occasions, I wrote down things which drew my attention. However, when I felt sure of having acquired an insider status in our relationship, an awkward moment briefly returned me to the outsider position. Remarkably, when participants asked to have a look at my diary, which happened twice at advanced stages of my fieldwork:

“Today a senator came to the Tromilen-Malleo indigenous community, the purpose of his visit was to show support to one guy who was running for mayor. Nonetheless, his visit also meant that members of Tromilen-Malleo could raise the issues facing the community like the lack of tap water and electricity, so hopefully the senator might be able to pull some strings. Before the meeting started, two women were exchanging information, since they were working as *temporeras* [seasonal farm workers] in two different blueberry orchards, so they were talking about the length of the shifts, how much money they were paid for each tray picked (piece work) and how much fruit was in the shrubs. I found it so interesting that obviously I tried to join the conversation with my journal in hand. After chatting for a few minutes, Melinda asked me why I was writing all the time, and if she could have a look at it. I felt vulnerable and an outsider, but I replied that ‘I write because otherwise I

would have forgotten some valuable information'. Next, I handed her my diary, she skimmed it and she gave me a laugh followed by: 'You are just like me Carlos' then she showed me her hand which was written with the orders her co-workers in the blueberry orchard had made to her. I could read: lettuces, peas, beetroots and green beans." (Fieldnotes, 8th January 2021)

In addition, when the ethnographer attempts to participate in those agricultural tasks that make rural everyday life so unique, the hard work inherent in family labour is one aspect worth bearing in mind. This is especially so because, within rural studies, family labour has been lengthily discussed as a specific component of family farms (Friedmann, 1980; Lehmann, 1982; Kautsky, 1988; Bernstein, 2010). By extension, there is a degree of self-exploitation that rural households must withstand in order to sustain themselves as productive units. Obviously, the degree of self-exploitation that any rural family unit must tolerate will vary according to the levels of mechanisation and labourers involved in each task. Thus, undertaking participant observation in those agricultural tasks that demand physical effort is not clear-cut and deserves attention. Usually, participation is dependent on the extent to which the ethnographer is keen to take a hands-on approach, plus the degree of being allowed to do so.

Rural communities are fairly accustomed to community labour, whose role is key to reproduction (Friedmann, 1980). Nonetheless, there is a boundary between the kind of labour that fits within categories based on kinship, solidarity, mutual aid, reciprocity, or payments in kinds, and the kind that has been commoditised and is thus considered wage labour by the villagers. A good example is what occurs during threshing, where the mobilisation of communal relations is crucial for it to succeed, yet the member of the community who drives the machinery receives a payment in cash.

Therefore, the distinction between labour based on communal relations versus labour based on market relations marks how much the ethnographer is able to participate. The former is easy to carry out as long as rapport and access have been acquired. On such occasions the incompetent role is useful to adopt, as shown in the following anecdote:

“I was ready to help the members of the indigenous community in building the shed, where the machineries were going to be sheltered. Franco told me that in the countryside you have to do the things on your own, so you don’t pay for wage labour. After a while, he shouted to the other guys: ‘Hey! Don’t exploit Carlitos, he might break!'; followed by: ‘You better come next to me *amigo* [friend], I’ll give you the easy tasks, go and get me the nails’. As a result, I became Franco’s helper, which meant to hold the leader, to hand the nails, screws, bolts, and to get the tools whenever he needed.” (Fieldnotes, 29th August 2020)

Seeking to participate in those activities that involve physical labour might be possible for the ethnographer. However, completing these agricultural tasks in the same way that farmers do, consistently every day, is extremely far-fetched. To illustrate this point, I was able to pick fruit on many occasions, but these were scattered across time. On the other hand, once the orchards start to bear fruit, family farmers engaged in fruit entrepreneurship need to pick every day or every two days (depending on the fruit) for the entire length of the season. If they do not pick the fruit at the necessary rate it will begin to spoil and will be considered a failure. For these reasons, my experience as a fruit picker cannot be compared to the experiences that family farm members have when picking fruit. Therefore, participant observation on its own is clearly not enough, and needs to be complemented with other means of data gathering.

### 3.8 The Process of Coding and the Limitations of the Research.

During the process of organising and analysing the data, NVivo was employed in order to assist in storing and making sense of the data collected, through the creation of codes. However, its primary purpose as software was to serve as a repository, ensuring that the data remained centralised and accessible in one location. Due to ethnographers tending to deal with large amounts of data from different sources, knowing one’s data is vital (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). As such, revisiting the sources and reading them in detail allows the researcher to elucidate certain structures and patterns across the data (Brewer, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). To this end, typologies and themes are required, some being created beforehand as they stem from the literature review, but many others being elicited while I was reviewing the data. In the same way, various sub-themes arose during the process of coding. Consequently, the themes and typologies employed in

explaining La Araucania's agrarian structure will appear between quotation marks for the remainder of this subsection.

Thus, in the present study, the first lines I drew when organising the data were those regarding "who says what". Hence, categories like "growers", "farm workers", "officials", "experts" seemed a good idea as a starting point, because they would allow me to untangle the "relations of production". However, this analysis was far more complex in reality, since these categories are not mutually exclusive when applied to the present research. The very distinction between "growers" and "farm workers" poses considerable challenges, especially with respect to "family farming" where this distinction is not so obvious because actors have dual roles. Moreover, family farm households usually being involved to some extent with "off farm labour" further complicates the picture. Likewise, "officials" can also be "growers" as was pointed out before, and the same applies to the notion of expertise, as everyone can be an "expert" in their own subject (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, despite this messiness that the ethnographer must grapple with when depicting empirical reality, decisions are made on the grounds of analytical purpose. For this reason, it is important to note that, rather than locate a particular interviewee within a definite category, it is more important to know how the narratives shed light on a definite agrarian phenomena.

Aside from organising my data based on "who says what", the other main theme used when structuring the evidence was "time". Through this lens I started coding the moments at which things occurred, such as when the "pest" hit, when the "spraying" of bushes or "stubble burning" were carried out, and so on. It has been shown that agriculture and farming cannot be decoupled from time; for example, there is debate between "labour time" and "production time" in rural studies. Thus it is useful to analyse rural affairs from this perspective, because under this broad umbrella of "time", sub-themes like the months of the year and the "seasons" might be matched with the "agricultural tasks" undertaken, in addition to the "hazards" or other events which unfolded. Along the same lines, "time" enabled me to delve into narratives linked with the "past", "present", and "future" of farming, and, in this way, identify processes of "agrarian change".

“Agri-food system” was another important thread guiding the process of coding. Under this umbrella I limited myself to putting those narratives related to “global” matters, such as the perceptions of farmers regarding other countries: “Argentina”, “US”, “New Zealand”, “Peru”, “Canada”, among others. Alongside these were “free trade agreements” and other elements characterising the “food supply chain”, involving either “long” or “short” chains before reaching the “consumer” end. In addition, “mills”, “exporters”, “diet trends”, the role of the “state” and its “policies”, and the role of “corporations” all fell within this broad theme. Meanwhile, on a more specific note, the “agrarian structure” was comprised of the interplay between the “means of productions” and the “social relations of productions”. Thus, an array of inputs were identified under the label of the former, such as: “access to water”, “access to land”, “agrochemical”, “plough animal”, “machinery”, “greenhouses”, “chakras” and “seeds” to name but a few. On the other hand, “relations of production” refers to how different actors relate each other in order to shape a distinct “mode of production”. Hence, during the process of analysis, I had to identify both actors and their agency. On the whole, I focused on sociodemographic characteristics like “class”, “race”, “gender”, and “age”, but I also concentrated on personal features, for instance: “being landless”, “returning to the countryside”, “being seasonal farm worker” or “being single mother”.

In addition, through my coding I sought to recognise those farmers’ attitudes, in terms of what they deemed to be either legitimate or illegitimate, which are linked to the realm of “moral economy” (Scott, 1976; Edelman, 2005). Furthermore, using this code enabled me to uncover those actions through which farmers engage in “resistance”, especially when taking on waged labour posts. Conversely, some attitudes and perceptions coalesced into what I refer to as “common ground”, which is present regardless of farmers’ backgrounds. At the same time, “neighbours relations” yielded fascinating insights when teasing out “class relations” among different classes of farmers. Finally, the specific crops farmers grew, as well as whether they were involved in monoculture or polyculture practices, were also key in bringing more texture to the typology of farmers, the purpose of which is to justify the ongoing process of “stratification of farmers”. At one pole lies the “subsistence

farmer”, while at the opposite end resides the fully “market-oriented farmer”. The latter is further divided into two categories, those “domestic oriented” and those “export oriented”. It is worth highlighting that other categories also exist between the two poles, such as the “petty commodity producer”. What is more, because “class relations” are not linear nor exclusive, these categories are also intertwined with notions of “smallholders”, “middle farmers”, “large farmers” and “capitalist farmers”. Meanwhile, with regard to the relations that exist within a productive unit (such as the “family farm”), concepts like “family managed”, “family labour” and “family owned” are useful to highlight the nuances of rural livelihood.

### **3.9 Limitations of this research**

In terms of the limitations of this research, the outbreak of Covid-19 prevented the in-depth development of certain aspects of the research originally designed before the fieldwork commenced. In this regard, the primary shortcoming is the thesis's lack of expansion on the role of the state, which would have contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the case study. As previously mentioned, I regularly attended the PDTI office for a few months until the virus forced its closure, making it impossible to conduct interviews. Consequently, state actors are not as involved as planned. Another unintentional omission resulting from mobility restrictions is the failure to provide an account reflecting the perceptions of other key actors in the value chain, such as traders, exporters, mill operators, and farm managers.

My initial intention was to follow the fruit from the orchard to the port, where produce is then shipped onwards to international markets. However, this was impossible to achieve because of the mobility restrictions implemented by the Chilean government during Covid-19. Likewise, when investigating cereal and fruit growers, I soon realised that exporters and mills are not only vital components of the supply chain but also represent market relations, in the sense of how growers access the market when selling their products. However, having access to the points of view of traders (mills and exporters) was not possible, so only the farmers' perceptions about them are included.

The pandemic also played a role in making it hard to contact the farmers as everyone was reluctant to have social contact, so I could not interview growers specialised in hazelnuts, nor winemakers. Nevertheless, something interesting occurred in terms of hierarchies, as even when I did manage to interview farm owners I was still somehow denied the possibility of also interviewing the farm managers; as one farmer replied to me once: “Why would you care to talk to him if you’re talking to me?”. Consequently, I could not conduct any interviews with managers, unless they worked for a multinational. Similarly, I could not interview any labour contractors, who undoubtably play a key role in the fruit sector through mobilising and providing the labour force to the orchards. However, this flaw was partially mitigated because one of my informants (whose late father had been a labour contractor) provided me with valuable information about the role. Lastly, something that I regret not exploring further was the material conditions of the camps, which the seasonal farm workers brought up quite often when depicting their experiences as “*temporeros*”[seasonal farm workers] in the north of Chile. Taking pictures of those camps would have required travelling to the north of Chile (where the fruit sector is more developed) but was unfortunately impossible in light of Covid-19.

### **3.10 A Note on Ethics.**

Aside from the process of gaining access to and building trust with informants so that they may be interviewed, observed, and inquired, qualitative researchers also face ethical challenges throughout the whole period of fieldwork. I meticulously followed Newcastle University protocols by submitting an ethical assessment form, which was reviewed and approved on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. With hindsight, I came to realise that many of the requirements stipulated by Western institutions (such as universities) might become counterproductive when practicalities come to the fore (Rodríguez 2021). In my view, all of this paperwork amounts to a concealed means of legally protecting the institution rather than the participants, resulting in ethics boards being highly obsessed with signatures and written consents. In the same way, ensuring anonymity is not always the most ethical approach, for the following reasons.

When working with indigenous people, whose lives have been profoundly shaped by processes of colonisation (which on many occasions involved stealing their land by means of various subterfuges such as written documents), a researcher cannot simply expect to turn up in the field and ask for a written consent form to be signed in order to proceed with his research. Moreover, some people are illiterate and will tend to panic or object if someone wants them to sign a document. Therefore, an arguably more ethical approach is to seek oral consent, or in other words one should aim for quality rather than format (American Anthropological Association, 2012).

While the matter of anonymity of informants and places is dependent on each individual case, as previously mentioned some requested to remain anonymous, especially members of the elite, because they had tended to be targets of arson attacks. A special case is Madam Felicinda Gallardo, a peasant tortured by the military dictatorship, who kindly shared her testimony with me but sadly passed away in 2021 because of Covid-19. One of her daughters contacted me after her passing to ask me for her transcript and audiotape, and we also agreed that in honour of her memory I would refer to her by her real name and not use any pseudonym. Thus, anonymity in academia needs more reflection and attention within institutional review boards, since it leads to a contradiction whereby many of those people who deserve to be acknowledged, especially when knowledge is at stake. In short, giving appropriate credit to the voices of informants is sometimes the more ethical path.

Taken as a whole, the research of human affairs inevitably entails ethical choices that the ethnographer must weigh up. In order to overcome the aforementioned challenges, I followed the American Anthropological Association (AAA) guidelines in particular. For instance, I was completely frank about my purpose in Perquenco so everyone was informed that I was conducting research, with my role as a PhD student in the town being transparent and never disguised. Whenever obtaining written consent was not possible, I received permission to carry out my research through oral consent. Moreover, during the whole process of data gathering, analysing and writing up, I committed to provoking no harm to the people involved in my research. Hence, on a case-by-case basis, two principles were weighed up when deciding whether or not to use pseudonyms when dealing with participants and places. These were the

“no harm” principle and the principle of giving credit to my informants. As a result, this ethnography presents oral accounts which give credit to people through recognition of their wisdom and their names, but at the same time uses aliases where needed in order to protect those informants likely to be at risk of harm if their identities were disclosed.

### **3.11 Final Remarks.**

To recapitulate, this chapter has highlighted pertinent aspects related to ethnography in terms of both methodology and methods (Brewer, 2002). Firstly, qualitative inquiry was characterised as a distinct form of doing research, which focuses on how social dynamics occur and the nuances involved when these take place. Furthermore, the advantages that ethnography offers when researching rural affairs were highlighted, especially through adding those unexpected events into the analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). For example, one of ethnography’s main advantages is the study of people in their natural settings. In addition, by taking a reflexive stance, together with the role of naturalism. Blending these approaches assists in tackling both the social structures and the material basis together. In other words, it becomes possible to grasp the results and the unintended consequences of the ongoing changes in the material basis of La Araucania, reflected in the adoption of cash crops within a new agrarian frontier.

Secondly, several arguments were put forward in relation to the different roles I undertook when observing the settings, either as an insider or outsider. These two roles shaped the ways in which the ethnography was conducted, and certainly varied according to the settings and the people subject to my inquiries. Based upon my background (age, gender, marital status, etc.), I showed how access and rapport were achieved, and explained how making myself useful during fieldwork through the design of projects was crucial, not only for gaining access but also to build trust and develop relationships with my informants. In addition, the other methods employed during the ethnography, such as interviews, shadowing and participant observation, were also discussed, showing their strengths and weaknesses together with the issues faced when applying them.

Finally, the processes of data analysis, coding and making sense of the data were outlined. This was coupled with an outline of what I had planned but could not achieve because of various constraints. Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that, despite the impact of Covid-19, I was still able to conduct an ethnography due to one of its advantages being the fact of physically being there and truly experiencing the everyday lives of those rural dwellers in La Araucania, who also saw how the pandemic affected their own rural livelihoods.

## **Chapter 4: The Making of an Indigenous Community: The Case of Tromilen Malleo**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this rather short chapter, I present a specific case of upward agrarian class mobility. Drawing upon my field notes, interviews, and conversations with members of a relatively new Indigenous Mapuche community, I narrate the story behind the creation of a rural Indigenous community comprised of formerly landless or nearly landless smallholder Mapuche Indigenous peasants. They were relocated as beneficiaries of a state land subsidy. This case study serves as an excellent starting point to explore the complexity of class relations in rural settings, demonstrating how the members of this indigenous community are immersed in dynamics of class differentiation, despite sharing vital experiences such as gaining land after barely having access to it. Consequently, the focus is on illustrating both the dynamics related to building up the community and the limits established by processes of class differentiation among community members, as expressed in household dynamics.

### **4.2 The Case Study**

The indigenous community Tromilen-Malleo is located in Perquenco, and it stems from the indigenous community Veronica-Tromilen. The latter is characterised by the fragmentation of its land, causing its inhabitants to be constrained by this material condition. Despite having very limited holdings, these smallholders still allow their descendants to either rent or use small subdivisions of their land, a situation which barely enables the next generation to become growers or sustain their livelihoods. As a result, this situation has forced many of them to find work off the farm and be driven into the labour market, in roles such as seasonal farm workers, permanent agrarian wage labourers, maids and childminders. Others, meanwhile, converted to being sharecroppers, providing the labour for their parents' enterprises:

“Veronica-Tromilen is an indigenous community that looks like a shantytown. It is packed with houses, one next to the other. Unfortunately, the availability of land for the next generations is constantly shrinking, that's the reality over there, so there wasn't enough room for us to stay [...] I used to work as a sharecropper with

my mom and dad. I was in charge of selling the raspberries and strawberries.” (Interview with Melinda, 30th October 2020)

Her sister concurred:

“I didn’t have a place to live, so my dad allowed me to stay at his plot and have my house garden for subsistence, yet I wasn’t allowed to sow cereals on his property because it wasn’t my land, so it was a lot of hassle since I had to ask permission for everything I intended to grow over there.” (Interview with Adriana, 28th December 2020)

In this way, Veronica-Tromilen indigenous community was, at the family level, the source of subsistence for these landless and near landless indigenous peasants in James Scott’s (1976) fashion. Nonetheless, in 2011, a meeting was held in this indigenous community to address the land struggles experienced by some of its members. During that assembly, the cultural delegate revealed that he had a contact with political capital who was in a position to pull some strings in order to assist the community in applying for land subsidies, specifically the 20-A route of the land and water fund<sup>8</sup>. Thus, the delegate, now self-proclaimed *lonko* [chief] of the community, along with the individual who supposedly had claimed to have mastered the application process, started to knock on doors trying to encourage people to get on board with an eventual land application:

“One day, the *lonko* appeared at my door saying that he sought to create a group in order to apply for land and if I was interested in joining them. My first response was no, because I had applied before and I didn’t have faith in the process, but he was so persuading that finally, I embarked on it.” (Interview with Mireya, 16th March 2021)

Meanwhile, those members interested in applying needed to ensure they met the following requirements: up-to-date indigenous ID, up-to-date social welfare file, and

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<sup>8</sup> When the indigenous law was enacted in 1993, it also created the *Fondo de tierra y aguas* [fund of land and water] managed by CONADI and mentioned in article 20 of the law. In that article, the mechanisms aimed at solving the lack of land experienced by indigenous peoples are outlined. As such, the fund consists of three subsidies, section 20-A and section 20-B for land, alongside 20-C which is for buying water rights. The difference between 20-A and 20-B lies in that the former seeks to acquire land for those indigenous communities or indigenous individuals who struggle to access it, while the latter attempts to resolve conflicts which emerge when land is under dispute (usually if the farm that is being reclaimed was part of a *Titulos de Merced* (land grants given during the military occupation), such farms generally being marked by Mapuche flags or seized).

\$50,000 CLP<sup>9</sup> in their bank accounts at the moment of applying. By the time this opportunity arose, many members of Veronica-Tromilen had already unsuccessfully applied for grants in the past, either as individuals or as part of the community, so there was naturally a certain degree of suspicion and reluctance. In spite of these successive failures, around 40 people signed up initially. Yet in the long run only 17 remained, as many were either frustrated by the system, did not have the money to apply, or simply did not believe in such schemes after successive setbacks. Nonetheless, a few members who had previously experienced failure did decide to try for a subsidy once more.

The whole process was impressively rapid, as it began during the last months of 2011 and notification of the award was received in the first months of 2012. In fact, according to some members, everything happening so quickly actually created a barrier for potential applicants as not everyone had \$50,000 CLP in their bank accounts when it was required:

“At the very beginning, there were roughly 40 people interested in participating in the application process, but when they were informed that \$50,000 CLP were required to proceed, many of them held back. They didn’t want to pay that amount of money, and neither did I. In fact, I remember that it was close to Christmas, and you know there are lots of expenses between Christmas and New Year’s Eve. I had only \$70,000 CLP in my account by that time, so I spoke to my sister to tell her that I was about to withdraw from the application process, but she was really annoying and insistent in convincing me not to do it. I’m telling you, I was on the brink between paying the contribution or not, that’s why I went on the very last date, the deadline actually, to the bank and made the deposit. But just imagine that I spent Christmas and New year with only \$20,000 CLP!” (Interview with Adriana, 28th December 2020)

In 2012, four indigenous communities of Perquenco were selected to receive land subsidies. This represented an extraordinary event for the municipality, as many people had been applying for over 20 years without success. However, once they had been informed about having being chosen, people began to realise that the amounts granted to purchase land were not equal to the subsidies given in previous years, apparently due to budget cuts. In fact, the subsidy dropped to \$15m CLP per household that year, when previously \$20m CLP per family had been allocated. As a result, a backlash occurred, with the Mapuche people blocking the *ruta 5* [the major

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<sup>9</sup> \$1,000 CLP roughly equates to £1 GBP

inter-regional motorway of the country], demanding an increase to their subsidies. Fortunately, the government compromised by adding a further \$3m CLP on top of their original offer.

After the final budget of \$17m CLP per household was eventually agreed, the 17 members began to hunt for places where all of them could fit, that is to say, with at least 3 hectares per household<sup>10</sup>. Although they even searched in different towns across the La Araucania region, none of the farms they visited met their criteria:

“We went to check on five or six different farms scattered across the region. We went to Curacautin, Lautaro, Selva Oscura, different places, we were even offered the *Fundo California*, it was beautiful, close to the Andes, but those farms are not arable, then we went to Galvarino, that farm was large, but again replete with pine and eucalyptus, so it was for logging not for growing crops.”(**Interview with Victor, 22nd December 2020**)

Moreover, the process of purchasing new land was not exempt from barriers and internal controversies, as they simply could not find a farm that was large enough for all 17 of them to be settled. Thus, they ended up purchasing land in two different locations. One of them was near their original base, so Veronica-Tromilen absorbed those four households. In other words, those who were assigned to live there continued to be part of the Veronica-Tromilen indigenous community. The other farm, meanwhile, was part of a land reclamation being carried out by another indigenous community. However, this last community did not have sufficient resources to buy the whole farm under dispute, so they proposed that the remaining 13 members of the Tromilen-Malleo indigenous community banded together with them in order to acquire the entire farm:

“First, we went to see a few farms, but we didn’t like them. Next, the Warria-We indigenous community had a chance to buy land they were reclaiming. However, they didn’t have the budget to get the whole plot, and the ex-owner wasn’t willing to sell a portion of the farm - it was everything or nothing. So they came to us, and we teamed up. From my point of view, the downside of this deal was that because they are the ancient owners and we were relocated, they got the best land.”(**Interview with Amelia, 21st January 2021**)

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<sup>10</sup> 3 hectares is the minimum threshold allowed under the Indigenous Law for an individual rural household when it comes to Indigenous property.

In this way, the original 17 who had started the application in Veronica-Tromilen became split into two groups. Thirteen were allocated into what is now known as Tromilen-Malleo (42.72 hectares), while the remaining four were placed just next to their original community. This division was also fuelled because, according to some members, the *lonko* [chief] began to patronise them shortly after winning the bid, which led to his expulsion and assignment to the parcels next to Veronica-Tromilen indigenous community. It also resulted in Tromilen-Malleo becoming an indigenous community characterised by the presence of relatively young farmers.

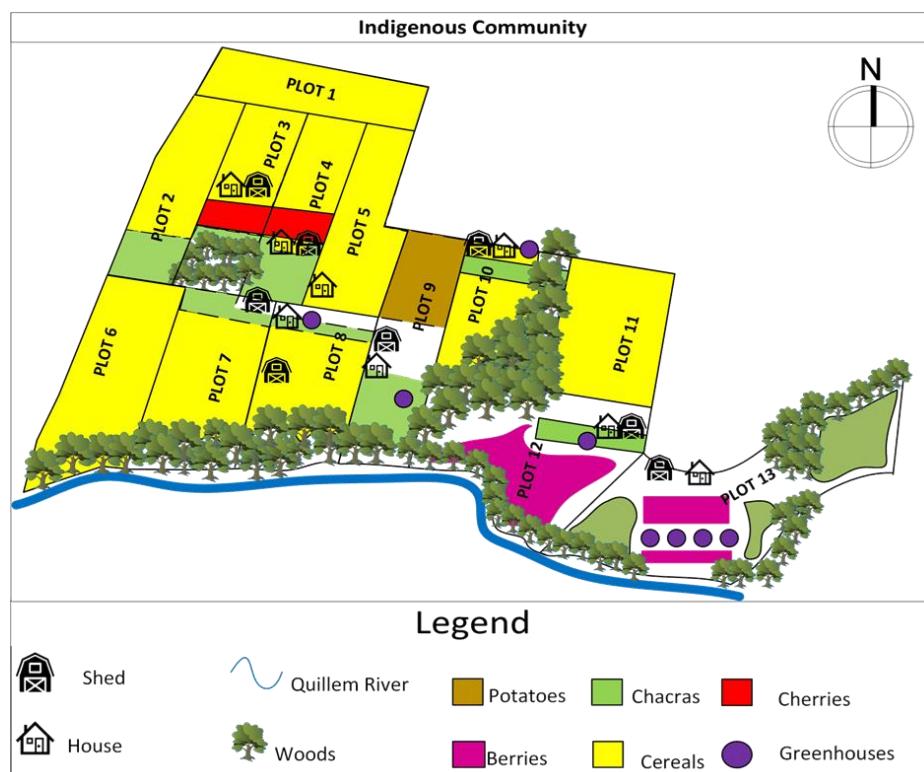


Figure 9: Map of the indigenous community with their assets and crops (map made by the author).

However, their problems were far from at an end, as the next issue concerned how they could fairly divide up the farm and distribute the resulting plots among the 13 members. Thus, in the process of the farm being divided up, different households raised a number of demands. For instance, two siblings had found another farm next to Veronica-Tromilen and, thanks to their arrangements, this land was available for purchase. However, they were then compelled to swap their parcels with those of the *lonko* (chief), as the other members wanted him to be kicked out of Tromilen-

Malleo by any means. Therefore, these two growers requested that their plots in Tromilen-Malleo be kept together. Another issue to be overcome was connected to their devotion to particular crops, as some fields had slopes and forests:

“At the beginning, they wanted me to be located at the very end of the farm where all the hills are, and I told them to fuck off. What the hell, they didn’t consider that I grow cereals, not horticulture like others, so I refused, and of course, I was the troublemaker.” (Interview with Amelia, 21st January 2021)

After a round of negotiations among the members, a compromise arose which drew upon their interests as growers. With respect to the concessions made, these derived from the threat of losing the subsidy entirely if they could not move forward. Overall, the subdivision of the farm was settled as follows: those allocated the plots at the distant end of the community received 4.75 hectares; those allocated relatively flat plots with only slight slopes were entitled to 3.3 hectares; and the remainder who wanted flat land were each allocated 3 hectares.

This controversy shows how indigenous communities are not free from processes of differentiation and class formation. At the same time, it sheds light on the tensions between the individual and the group, since the enterprises in this case study are based on households rather than on the indigenous community as a whole. However, there is one caveat, as these two forces (namely the individual and the social) are in a state of constant negotiation depending on the nature of the problem ahead. For instance, despite their crops being linked to household entrepreneurship, there are certain “means of production” acquired through collective action. Hence, one of the members explained to me why they created the Tromilen-Malleo indigenous community as a means to leverage public resources aimed at enhancing their material conditions:

“When I was president, we faced a problem since the other four wanted the same things we obtained. An irrigating system comprised of hoses and sprayings, which in turn made us feel constrained in the sense that we would have to ask the 17 for their approval and signature for any potential project. Hence, we came up with the idea of making our own community. According to the indigenous law, you need over ten people to create one, so we gathered and added our partners and some of the kids who were over 18 at that time, resulting in this small indigenous community called Tromilen-Malleo, but now we’re independent!” (Interview with Melinda, 30th October 2020)

In addition, it is worth highlighting that, because their farm was purchased through the aforementioned 20-A subsidy route (named “part of a community”), the acquired land was legally deemed as being co-owned by the 13 members, leaving them only entitled to 1,000 mt<sup>2</sup> of fully possession. Moreover, only after 20 years could they apply for individual titling. So, in theory, and legally speaking, they could exploit every natural asset of their community without seeking consent of the other members. Nonetheless, they have not done that, and instead respect the enclosures implemented by them. On one occasion Fatima told me an anecdote that illustrates this point:

“If you look closer to the other indigenous communities around, it is just chaos out there because people exploit their natural resources often without being consensual. In contrast, in Tromilen-Malleo, everyone has their own plot and decides what to do with their natural assets. For instance, once Osvaldo came to me asking for my partner, you can tell there, that the Mapuche culture is *machista* [sexist] because I’m the co-owner. Anyway, I pointed him to where my husband was. He wanted to make stakes out of the wood because his plot is flat and it doesn’t have forest, so he offered us to team up on sharecropping, that is to say, we put in the wood and he the labour. We also needed stakes, so it came about the right time, therefore my husband agreed with the deal. But that’s extremely rare and is not the norm, because Osvaldo is actually co-owner of the woodland, so if he wants to, he could exploit the forest without asking, and that would be lawful.” (Fieldnotes, 20th March 2021)

Last but not least, being bestowed with land did not automatically mean that they could sustain their livelihoods, as the subsidy did not come accompanied by any basic services such as access to tap water or electricity (aside from machinery and other schemes directed toward rural development that they had to apply for in the following years). Thus far, they have successfully been granted the following benefits: *Cierre perimetral* [enclosures], warehouse, water rights, irrigation system, dirt road, machinery (two tractors with their gears) in 2020, and state-of-the-art greenhouses in 2022. To put this in context, when the group initially acquired the farm, it lacked a proper dirt road that would allow them to reach their own fields until they successfully applied for a new grant to address the route issue. Hence, it is reasonable to wonder about the degree to which the policy in question actually reproduces rural poverty and deepens state dependency. The current president of Tromilen-Malleo commented upon this matter:

“The four households that moved right after we got chosen for the land subsidy were those which were with the water up to the neck, in terms of land access. I think the others are waiting for the electricity to arrive. Still, our kids are in school,

so it's sad to see them now in pandemic without being able to connect to their classes [...] How long have I been without electricity? Mmm, around eight years." (Interview with Pablo, 12th December 2020)

#### 4.3 Final Remarks

Overall, this particular case study of Tromilen-Malleo provides an empirical foundation from which to examine processes of agrarian change. It has enabled me to explore the meanings of landless or indigenous smallholders and their transitions to becoming landed and growers, as well as exploring the ways in which they have engaged either in the labour market or in their families' enterprises. Meanwhile, it was shown that growers' attitudes toward farming indicate subsequent class differentiation in the case study, which became apparent when they distinguished themselves from the rest of the community by revealing which crops they are devoted to. Thus, it is suggested that these class dynamics stem from the role of the community and the limits imposed by the rural households shaping that community. In what follows, these class dynamics are elaborated to a greater extent, where the dynamics of agrarian class differentiation will be articulated, bearing in mind both subjective and material factors.

## **Chapter 5: Breaking Through a New Frontier- The Expansion of the Fruit Sector Into La Araucania**

### **5.1 Introduction.**

This chapter introduces the findings discovered throughout the ethnography. While some elements have already been mentioned in the previous chapters, in accordance with the ethnographic impetus to blend description, analysis, and theory (Willis, 2000), chapter four marks the beginning of the analysis. As such, the key findings are examined in more depth in both the present chapter and the one which follows. Taken together, chapters four and five will provide an analytical understanding of agrarian change in La Araucania and its effects on the agrarian structure there.

Thus, this fourth chapter focuses on the fruit sector's breakthrough in La Araucania. To this end, it is broken down into seven subsections. Firstly, the contemporary state of fruit production in the region under study is outlined, showing the role certain crops have in shaping La Araucania's agrarian devotion while introducing the idea that crops compete with each other's presence in a process that is imbued with forces that extend beyond natural affairs. At the same time, the question of who is making the transition from cereals to fruits will begin to be discussed. Secondly, by drawing on official data, a critique is put forward in order to show the limitations of this data when examining fruit growers. Thirdly, an argument that knits together memories and perceptions, comparing grains and fruits, is put forward, using both informants' narratives and secondary sources (old travellers' chronicles). These frames consider the rural as a food source while recognising its role in shaping both diets and the agrarian structure through identifying key staple foods. Fourthly, the chapter explores frost as one of the key natural hazards that peasants and farmers must cope with, as well as the consequences that emerge when dealing with frosts in terms of what is grown. Next, the symbolic aspects embedded in traditional crops are addressed, showing why cereal has withstood the fruit sector's deployment despite the latter seeming more profitable. Subsequently, the sixth subsection draws upon my fieldnotes, to examine the different types of fruits in terms of production time and labour time. Finally, a note on the role of corporations in regard to the fruit sector is offered. In this way, I aim to show the roles of growers, corporations,

and traders, and how these engage with the chapter's final part, which examines the enablers and barriers involved in establishing the fruit sector in a new frontier.

## 5.2 The Breakthrough of Fruit Production Into La Araucania.

Gomez and Echenique (1988) anticipated that the fruit sector would turn into one of the most vibrant and active sectors in the Chilean agrarian economy. However, they restricted its presence to a definite geographical zone: the Central Valley. In contrast, Escalona *et al.* (2014) observed the shifts in the productive patterns within La Araucania by drawing on both historical censuses and *catastros frutícolas* [fruit land use reports]. They noted how fruit orchards began to extend their presence from 1975 onwards, while they also pointed out that cereals were losing terrain *vis a vis* other crops. Table 2 shows the role of cereals and *chacras* [vegetable gardens] in shaping La Araucania's agrarian devotion. Cereals in particular merit special attention because, as I shall demonstrate, they are a vital source of food security, meaning that they are embedded in everyday life practices.

**Table 2: Trends in the productivity dynamics in La Araucania from 1964 to 2007**

Use	1964-1965		1975-1976		1997		2007	
	Surface (Ha)	%						
Cereals and <i>chacras</i>	255,166	48.2	243,7559	44.8	221,734	39.8	184,983	34.1
Industrial crops	42,620	8.06	27,199	5	17,981	3.2	26,852	4.9
Vegetables and flowers	679	1.2	7,854	1.4	4,595	0.8	4,6111	0.8
Fodder crops	156,719	29.6	139,860	25.7	23,652	4.2	89,646	16.5
Fruits	7,464	1.4	6,871	1.2	11,996	2.1	12,373	2.2
Vineyards	510	0.1	168	0.03	11.4	0.002	30,8	0.005
Forestry	59,240	11.2	118,015	21.7	276,015	49.6	2224,471	41.3
Total	528,512	99.76	543,730	99.83	555,985	99.70	542,969	99.80

Table 2 Adapted and translated by the author, source: Escalona *et al.* (2014, p. 123, table 1).

Tables 2 and 3 support the thesis of a steadily spreading fruit sector in La Araucanía, in terms of both surfaces used and the numbers of farms devoted to these cash crops, signalling the aforementioned shifting crops process. Underlying this dynamic of agrarian change are a number of key issues to be addressed, such as who is making the transition to fruit production and on what basis. This is due to decisions about what is grown being constrained by what the climate permits and access to the means of production. At the same time, there are other factors which heavily influence what is cultivated in the countryside, such as culture and power relations.

**Table 3: Changes in fruit growing surface areas by region 2003-2018 (hectares)**

Region	2003	2018	% Change
Arica y Parinacota	0	995	N/A
Tarapacá	0	235	N/A
Atacama	10,479	8,934	-15%
Coquimbo	20,350	27,308	34%
Valparaíso	42,710	52,312	22%
Metropolitana	45,391	57,328	26%
O'Higgins	62,511	89,412	43%
Maule	42,441	74,269	75%
Ñuble	3,843	13,845	260%
Biobío	1,814	4,934	172%
<b>La Araucanía</b>	<b>3,206</b>	<b>13,655</b>	<b>326%</b>
Los Lagos	902	1,632	81%
Los Ríos	1,289	2,903	125%
Aysén	0	213	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>234,935</b>	<b>347,973</b>	<b>48%</b>

Table 3 Translated by the author, source: Apey (2019, p. 10, table 3).

These tables also show how the sector is concentrated between the Coquimbo and Maule regions of Chile, revealing a pattern of expansion towards both the north and, to a greater extent, the south. In this respect, Table 3 illustrates how La Araucanía is the region where fruit production has grown most vigorously, moving from 3,206 hectares in 2003 to 13,655 hectares in 2018. At first glance these figures might not appear consistent with Table 2, with 7,464 hectares already seen to be devoted to

fruit in the period 1964-1965. However, as the years progress, so do the figures of both studies, and they show a tendency to converge. Meanwhile, Table 4 details the presence of farms committed to the fruit sector, showing a surge in most categories in La Araucania (except for those farms exceeding 500 hectares in size).

### **5.3 Hidden Fruits and the Limitations of Official Data.**

Although the authors of previous data have made it obvious that fruit production has broken through into a new frontier, there nonetheless exist some flaws at the levels of both theory and methods. For example, these studies have failed to recognise the people underpinning the process of agrarian change. Consequently, the relations of production involved in the fruit sector cannot be seen within the data. Thus, one could argue that these types of studies lack human agency, resulting in an exacerbation of the process of commodity fetishism. In other words, the impression is given that it is more important to measure commodities than the social agency involved in fruit production. In terms of methods, another shortcoming arose when I compared my own field experience with the formal figures shown in the reports. Something curious did not make sense to me because many plots I visited had less than 0.5 hectares oriented to fruit production, with typically one eighth or one quarter of a hectare being dedicated to such cash crops. My suspicions were confirmed when interviewing one of the ODEPA officials:

Carlos: “I can’t help to wonder why those plots under 0.5 hectares are not considered in your reports. Does it mean they are not relevant at all, or there is no data from those smallholdings?”

ODEPA Official: “There is no data. The fruit land use reports have that methodology, I couldn’t explain to you why, but we only record agricultural exploitation over 0.5 hectares. We consider those below that threshold as subsistence plots, a production that is not market-oriented.” (**Interview with ODEPA official, 14th September 2020**)

Aside from discounting many smallholders from their records, the means by which officials estimate fruit production's magnitude within the countryside reveal certain contradictions and also shows how top-down these assessments can be. For instance, if fruits are considered cash crops *per se*, then plots growing them cannot be deemed as subsistence plots just because of the overall size of the holding. Indeed, a fruit orchard of less than 0.5 hectares can still be highly productive; hundreds of kilos are

harvested each day during the season, making these farms quite different from subsistence farm units or even more market-oriented ones. This was emphasised when I relayed my encounter with the ODEPA official to the local development officials of Perquenco, resulting in them taking me to visit those plots of less than a hectare which were fully market-oriented:

“We arrived at Edgar’s plot; he grows one quarter of a hectare of strawberries and one eighth of raspberries. The strawberries are in the peak of production as it is their second year, so it means strawberries must be picked every two days. He reckoned he had harvested 250 kilos of strawberries in a single day, just before we showed up.” (**Fieldnotes, 17th November 2020**)

In the same vein, I asked my informants how many hectares of their total holdings were allocated to fruit production purposes. They could not answer in terms of surface area, but instead replied by telling me the numbers of plants. Some common responses were: “7,000 strawberry plants” (**Interview with Yvonne, 8th January 2021**), “4,000 blackberry plants” (**Interview with Silvio, 9th November 2020**), and “8,000 raspberry plants” (**Interview with Pablo, 12th December 2020**). In this regard, insisting that these volumes of plants reflect subsistence practices demonstrates how out of touch the Chilean state can be.

Given that fruit production is well-regarded due to its higher return, the state (through the PDTI) offers subsidies of 70% to 80% to purchase seedlings. However, these projects are also implemented in a top-down manner, with farmers being expected to allot at least 1 hectare of their land to fruit production. In turn, local officials must rely on their manoeuvrability so that the funds can actually be utilised. Victor from Tromilen-Malleo explained to me how he obtained his cherry trees:

“I asked him what made him willing to embark on cherries, as he grows one quarter of a hectare of them. He replied that he always felt attracted to this fruit. Besides, cherries have a good price, you can sell them for \$2,000 CLP [£2] per kilo. Then, he explained he benefitted from a subsidy from the PDTI, which accounted for 70% of the total investment, adding that he didn’t want to go for the whole hectare even though the subsidy was meant to cover that surface. But thanks to one of the local officials of the PDTI, he could circumvent this requirement because the local official found three more farmers also willing to embark on cherry production.” (**Fieldnotes, 29th August 2020**)

Although official reports fail to recognise those orchards below 0.5 hectares as producing fruits, the above accounts show that smallholders are likely to be keen to adopt cash crops like fruits, albeit not in the exact way conceived by the state. In

fact, looking at table 4, one can notice that the smallholders in La Araucania are the ones who are making the transition toward fruits. Furthermore, another critical matter to consider when discussing fruit production adoption in La Araucania is that peasants have an aversion to risk (Scott, 1976), and so do farmers. In my first interview, which happened to be with a better-off farmer, I was told: "You never put all the eggs in one basket. Agriculture is too risky, so one way to build up resilience is by diversifying your risk" (**Interview with Andres ,2nd November 2020**). This overlaps with James Scott's (1976) moral economy theory, whereby he observes that peasants tend to be reluctant to innovate because it involves a higher risk to their livelihoods. However, as already shown, smallholders are in fact keen to switch crops and innovate, but never in the manner envisioned by the rural development planner - a whole hectare would be an enormous leap of faith for many of them.

Table 4: Number of fruit orchards by size (hectares)

Region	1999					2018				
	Size Band (Ha)					Size Band (Ha)				
	0.5 to 4.9	5 to 49.9	50 to 499.9	500 and over	Total	0.5 to 4.9	5 to 49.9	50 to 499.9	500 and over	Total
Arica y Parinacota	0	0	0	0	0	387	36	2	0	425
Tarapacá	0	0	0	0	0	214	8	0	0	222
Atacama	242	187	58	15	502	307	105	49	3	464
Coquimbo	544	809	204	50	1,607	1,220	421	140	6	1,787
Valparaíso	2,982	1,275	90	0	4,347	1,897	1,250	200	5	3,352
Metropolitana	787	1,466	448	67	2,768	661	935	235	6	1,837
O'Higgins	604	1,819	538	45	3,006	1,005	1,748	391	5	3,149
Maule	206	948	455	39	1,648	1,992	1,316	309	6	3,623
Biobío	68	194	182	16	460	883	478	59	0	1,420
La Araucanía	6	39	33	7	85	202	163	59	1	425
Los Ríos	0	0	0	0	0	55	40	18	0	113
Los Lagos	4	38	52	4	98	17	37	8	0	62
Aysén	0	0	0	0	0	34	10	0	0	44
Total	5,443	6,775	2,060	243	14,521	8,874	6,547	1,470	32	16,923

Table 4 translated by the author, source: Pefaur (2020, p. 6, table 3).

#### 5.4 Articulating Narratives from the Past and Present: La Araucanía's Rural Landscape as a Food Source.

When French naturalist Claude Gay (1800-1873) depicted the customs of Mapuche indigenous people he included successive chapters on agriculture and cuisine in his study. In so doing, he made evident the relationships between rural landscapes and how access to food becomes culturally transformed into a particular cuisine. The way he views agriculture and culinary customs as mirroring each other also shows how external influences over the former affect the latter, and *vice versa*. For instance, interaction and trade with outsider cultures, such as the *Incas* [Peruvians] and Europeans, had influenced the crops grown and the livestock bred; cows, horses,

sheep, pigs, and fowls were introduced by Europeans, while Peruvians played a role in bringing key ingredients for peasant food:

“The Peruvians introduced many plants that today grow in abundance. These plants were maize, chilli, beans, [...], pumpkin, [...], quinoa in a wild state and potatoes also in a wild state.” (translation by the author) (Gay, 2018, p. 180)

By blending Claude Gay’s study of La Araucania with my own field experience, I could identify the staple foods that are culturally important for the region examined. Table 5 summarises the most significant plants paired with the food they provide. However, certain plants are not displayed, despite playing a vital role in achieving food security among rural inhabitants. These include chillies, lettuces, beetroots, tomatoes, potatoes, and pumpkins, which are typical even nowadays in most smallholders’ *chacras* [vegetable gardens] and greenhouses. The decision to exclude these was taken in order to emphasise the process of crops shifting toward fruits; moreover, cereals usually occupy larger surfaces and wheat is linked with an array of peasant food.

Likewise, other types of foods are equally crucial in terms of food security. Nevertheless, they are not examined in great depth here, particularly those that have not yet been domesticated and are instead accessed through foraging and gathering practices; for example, the *digüeñe* (*Cyttaria espinosae Lloyd*), a parasite fungus capable of provoking mouth-watering among La Araucania’s inhabitants. It is also worth noting that access to fruits was not something new in the region, as its inhabitants were accustomed to foraging for berries such as wild strawberries, (*Fragaria chiloensis*) and *maqui* (*Aristotelia chilensis*) among others. Also, once the enclosure process was well-advanced, people started to allocate a portion of their plots to *quintas* [orchards], where apples, cherries, hazelnuts, walnuts, grapevines, and pears were grown. Thus, even before the colonisation of the indigenous territory was completed, fruit trees were found. According to Gay:

“The summer temperatures are not high enough to make fruits ripe. The missionaries or the army planted the cherries we encountered. Likewise, with the walnut and the hazelnut trees. Nonetheless, there are manuscripts mentioning the role of hazelnuts in periods of hunger, while the grapevines can be seen here and there, pear and apple trees are pretty common, and the apples are practically inedible, yet they make an excellent cider.” (translation by the author) (Gay, 2018, p. 190)

From this French naturalist's observations, two ideas can be discerned. Firstly, the notion that the weather in those years was not ideal for cultivating fruits. Secondly, the fruits grown in La Araucania were not commercial varieties; instead, they were closer to the personal consumption range of varieties. However, this tradition of growing fruits in a less sophisticated fashion in fact paved the way for introducing commercial varieties. One high-ranked manager of an Italian multinational shed light on this point:

“The south of Chile has a climate that’s pretty similar to what the north of Italy has, so introducing hazelnuts trees was a safe bet. It doesn’t mean it was exempt from trial and error because you deal with spring frost here in Chile. But there is also another thing to consider, it’s true we introduced mass production and intensive farming when it comes to hazelnuts, yet the hazelnut tree was already here in La Araucania, not the same variety, sure, but there are exemplars over a hundred years old.” (**Interview with manager of Forcella Hazelnut Company, 20th October 2020**)

Table 5: Staple Plant Food

Type	Plant	Food
Cereals	barley ( <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> )	
	maize ( <i>Zea mays</i> )	
	oat ( <i>Avena sativa</i> )	
	quinoa ( <i>Chenopodium quinoa</i> )	
	rye ( <i>Secale cereale</i> )	
	wheat ( <i>Triticum aestivum L.</i> )	<i>tortilla de rescoldo</i> (Ash bread) <i>mote</i> <i>locro</i> <i>café de trigo</i> <i>pavo de harina</i> <i>harina tostada</i> <i>sopaipillas</i> <i>helado con harina</i> [Ice cream with flour]
Pulses	beans - [poroto pallar] ( <i>Phaseolus coccineus L.</i> )	salads
	beans ( <i>Phaseolus vulgaris L.</i> )	soups (greens beans with <i>locro</i> )
	broad beans ( <i>Vicia faba L.</i> )	stews
	chicharos ( <i>Lathyrus sativus L.</i> )	
	lentils ( <i>Lens culinaris</i> )	
	peas ( <i>Pisum sativum L.</i> )	

Source: Own creation drawing on personal fieldnotes and complemented with the works of Claude Gay (2018) and a document elaborated by FIA (2018).

## 5.5 Dealing with Frost.

Both peasants and farmers are acquainted with springtime frosts in La Araucania. This natural hazard certainly has shaped what is grown in the countryside, affecting even those crops mastered by previous generations. Specific crops and fruits are vulnerable when frost hits, such as pulses, maize, cherries, and blueberries. For example, one market-oriented indigenous smallholder shared a memory of a crop failure:

Tomas: “One year, we harvested 200 kilos of lentils from 1.25 hectares. That is 15% of what we usually get, so you can imagine how bad was it, but we carried on.”

Carlos: “What happened?”

Tomas: "Spring frost. Those are just lethal for us." (**Interview with Tomas, 3rd February 2021**)

An export-oriented large holder cherry grower elaborated upon what dealing with this hazard entails:

Santino: "There are a few methods you might employ to save your production against frost. For example, you can get a helicopter to fly over your orchard during the frost. But you don't have that option here, and it is something you rather see in the north of Chile."

Carlos: "I bet it is expensive to hire a helicopter."

Santino: "We are talking about one and a half million pesos per hour (£1,500). I mean, if you are telling me I'm going to save all the production, where do I sign? But as I said that option, you can't find it here. You can also sprinkle water if you have an irrigation system, but that doesn't work with larger surfaces like mine. So basically, you play roulette with this."

Carlos: "What about roofing them?"

Santino: "That's the best option for this region, and I've got a portion of the orchard under the roof, but it is bloody expensive. After five seasons, it starts to pay off." (**Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020**)

While other plants like wheat and strawberries are more resilient against frost, it can still have an impact depending upon its magnitude and timing. Regarding the former, one farmer said:

"When it comes to wheat, the frosts that knock you down are the ones below minus three degrees Celsius. Those between minus one or minus two, they may or not affect you, besides you can always sprinkle water to counteract them." (**Interview with Andres ,2nd November 2020**)

In terms of timing, when a frost hits, the results can be less or more tolerable depending on the stage of the plant life cycle that has been reached. The time which growers want to avoid the most, the blooming time, ironically is in springtime. The local official in charge of the fruit sector explained to me why he always tries to convince smallholders to plant strawberries instead of other fruits:

"Strawberries are amazing, because if they are affected by a frost, you will only miss the flower of the week, but the next week it will bloom again. That doesn't happen with cherries or blueberries. When it is production time, the strawberry blooms, blooms, blooms every week. So, if there is a frost, who cares...? You won't be able to harvest only one week. The next one, you can catch up." (**Interview with Benjamin-PDTI official, 19th November 2020**)

The available strategies to address frost are also dependent upon the agricultural and management practices enacted by growers. As noted above, sprinkling water is

an effective measure. Nonetheless, it requires an irrigation system on the farm, and not all growers have this. Another way to be a step ahead is to sow in different periods across the plots, as one cereal grower revealed to me. As a result, one will experience differing bloom times within the farm, so if a frost does hit then only a portion of the total would be affected. Thus, wheat brings certain qualities that enable cultivators to overcome frosts, making it suitable for La Araucania's natural conditions. However, it is necessary to delve into the underlying factors relating to this crop in order to obtain a deeper understanding of La Araucania. This is because, despite the existence of competition from other crops, the devotion growers have towards wheat in this region is striking.

## **5.6 The Main Barrier: Grains at the Heart of Rural Everyday Life.**

In 1891 the Belgium engineer Verniory chose the word “sea” to describe the immensity of the landscape with which he was starting to feel acquainted: “From my window in Lautaro<sup>11</sup>, I have been noticing for a while, women and kids immersed in a sea of wheat” (Verniory, 2001, p. 166). Meanwhile, Claude Gay (2018) observed years earlier that the territory possesses the quality that crops can be rain-fed (so no irrigation system is needed), explaining much of the devotion growers have towards cereals, regardless of the size of the holdings. One of the better-off farmers interviewed, who was already shifting his crops toward cherry production, opined:

“For cultivating cereals, La Araucania region has, if not the best climate, one of the better ones.” (Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)

Along the same lines, one anecdote was shared by the Mayor of Perquenco (with reference to when he had been involved in implementing different rural development schemes across Chile) which corroborates that idea that cereals thrive in La Araucania’s soil without much effort:

“We arrived at the region and saw that people employed broadcast sowing methods and didn’t use fertiliser, so it was pretty rustic. Nonetheless, they yielded an amount of grain that people from other places where my team had worked before would have been jealous of. I remember perfectly here in La Araucania that one sack of seeds yielded 10 sacks without fertilisers! And in the south, to match that

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<sup>11</sup> Lautaro is one of the 32 communes that comprises La Araucania region and is located next to Perquenco.

performance 1:10, we had to provide manure, nitrogen and an array of inputs.”  
**(Interview with the Mayor of Perquenco, March 18th 2021)**

This fact, which the mayor had noticed during his heyday as a rural developer, was also observed by the aforementioned French naturalist very many years before: “Some legume grains were covered with soil, but without adding *guano* nor manure, while the Peruvian has a different sowing approach, the Mapuche concedes the growing to the forces of nature” (Gay, 2018, p. 185). Chileans began to harness the generosity of this natural environment for cultivating cereals soon after the occupation of the Mapuche indigenous territory (1860-1883) and its subsequent annexation to the national territory. Consequently, the area started to become known as the Chilean wheat bowl, as it began to provide grain for both national and international customers (Escalona and Barton, 2021). For instance, in 1890, Verniory (2001) wrote about the people he used to encounter, mentioning the executive of a wheat warehouse owned by a large British company (named Williamson and Balfour) which traded wheat for export.

During a time period when a ready source of cheap food for the working classes was vital for the expansion of capitalism (Patel and Moore, 2017), taking advantage of La Araucania’s natural quality to produce cereal reveals how the British-centred food regime (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989) operated in a remote area of South America. Meanwhile, Escalona and Barton (2021) emphasise that the configuration of the cereal landscape in La Araucania was a process infused with politics and power relations. In this regard, they pay particular attention to the making of La Araucania as the Chilean wheat bowl as a process driven by both the state and the elite. Nevertheless, in so doing they overlook the existing relationship which Mapuche people had with the production of cereals since before the conquest took place. In short, the authors propose that the cereal landscape resulted from an endeavour carried out by the state and the elites. However, this is highly misleading because, according to my own fieldwork experience, both better-off farmers and subsistence peasants are equally cultivators of grain. Moreover, portraying the cereal landscape as an outcome imposed from above by powerful groups contributes to obscuring the meaning cereals have for indigenous peasants, in terms of food security and place-based cuisine.

Instead, I assert that the reasons cereals became popular among farmers and peasants reside in both the material world and in subjective attitudes toward grains. Both aspects have made cereals a reliable source to ensure food security and safe business. Firstly, the favourable natural conditions in terms of coping with frost, and secondly, the fact that grains need very little in order to thrive, with soil and rainfall being just enough. The vice president of the regional farmers' union confirmed my conjecture:

“I think you’ve captured the nitty-gritty of the region as a rain-fed zone, that’s why the cereals stand out. For instance, take my case, I don’t have access to water so there is no way I’ll switch crops toward fruits, I’m going to stick with cereals.”  
**(Interview with Ernesto, 23rd March 2021)**

Thus, the natural conditions endowed upon the region have allowed these crops to be cultivated through a rain-fed system and with a low degree of mechanisation for many years, at least until the advent of the Green Revolution coupled with several interventions following its principles:

“As a country [Chile], wheat was the first crop we achieved full mechanisation of, thanks to the Green Revolution in the sixties. We managed to mechanise from sowing until harvest, before that every task was done manually.”  
**(Interview with agricultural expert, 10th February 2020)**

The early mechanisation of cereals brought about a staggering reduction in the labour force required to carry out agricultural tasks concerning grains. Before mechanisation, one retired Mapuche peasant who worked at a *Fundo* [large holding] under a patron-client arrangement, commented that weeding was executed by as many as 40 to 50 people and involved pulling out the weeds manually. Furthermore, by drawing on the appendix, one can perhaps discern that the most noticeable distinction between cereals and fruits concerns the relative quantities of wage labour required to carry out associated agricultural tasks. Because fruits are still in their incipient phase of mechanisation, they remain highly dependent on the labour force. To illustrate this point further, those farms in the process of transition to fruits can offer valuable insight (see appendix). Thus, for example, one 570 hectare farm which coexists with a 6 hectare blueberry orchard employs 13 workers for cereals and 53 for blueberries. Another farm of 950 hectares, 30 hectares of which

are assigned as a cherry orchard, utilises 10 workers for cereals and 100 workers to labour on the cherry trees.

With regard to improving cereal production, three indigenous peasants who experienced the land reform (1962-1973) recalled the assistance of *gringos* [US nationals] when adopting new ways of farming. After my encounters with them, I realised that they were referring to the Alliance for Progress, an aid program focused on preventing Latin American countries from ending up as Cuba had by choosing the communist path. To achieve this objective, the implementation of the Green Revolution and the promotion of land reforms were essential (Feder, 1965; Weis, 2010). Although land reform could not ultimately meet its land distribution goals, it did mark the end of patron-client relations in the countryside, while the deployment of the Green Revolution was successful as can be seen in the widespread adoption of intensive farming.

According to the three informants, in terms of modes of production, the *gringos* introduced high-yield seeds, fertilisers and machinery; but perhaps the game-changer was the transition from *siembra al voleo* [broadcast sowing] toward *cola de buey* [row sowing]. The former system was less efficient because, during the scattering of the seeds, birds usually plundered a sizeable portion of the total. In contrast, the latter consists of ploughing the land, making furrows, placing the seeds, then adding fertiliser before covering everything up with soil; all of this is done following a linear pattern, which serves to allow a certain distance between seeds. The three informants confessed that, when they began to adopt the *cola de buey* approach, the wheat yield skyrocketed; one even told me that he had to take the furniture out of his house to make room to store the wheat.

The organising principle shaping the agrarian structure during this period, when US nationals were transferring knowledge to Chilean indigenous peasants, was the US food regime, employing Friedmann and McMichael's (1989) terminology. Nonetheless, the downside of this upgrade was that it resulted in a speeding up of the transition toward more specialised agriculture, leading to more intensive ways of farming. In

other words, farmers became fully cereal growers or fully livestock breeders, especially the market-oriented ones. This was verified by three other interviewees whose families underwent land reform and had their holdings expropriated. In each case, when they inherited their estates, this was accompanied by the decision to further specialise in one subsector. One of the better-off farmers told me that the first thing he did when taking over the farm was to get rid of the cattle, adding:

“When we had livestock, we followed a crop rotation: oat-livestock-wheat, there wasn’t the lupin (legume) or the rapeseed in our mode of production, that came after. Besides, people were accustomed to leaving the land in a fallow state, but it was because everything was *slower* (word stressed), plus there wasn’t the capacity in terms of the workforce to labour it. So that land in the idle state was left one, two, three years to feed the livestock, just covered with clover and fodder.”  
(Interview with Andres ,2nd November 2020)

After the implementation of land reform the available land was then further partitioned, resulting in farmers having to seek niches where they could make a profit. In parallel with this, they began to subscribe to a logic whereby land could not be left fallow since they were output-driven, leading to the adoption of agricultural practices such as crop rotation within the same plot and stubble burning (see figure 11). Although Gay (2018) identified stubble burning during his earlier journey into Mapuche territory, it is still rather striking that farmers and peasants continue to engage in practices so harmful to the soil in light of the current environmental crisis.

Due to cereals being annual crops, cultivators need to engage in crop rotation following one of two patterns: either wheat (year 1), oat (year 2), legume (year 3); or wheat (year 1), oat (year 2), wheat (year 3), rapeseed (year 4). It is notable that the rotation is required to culminate in a crop that assists in improving the soil, either by nourishing it or fixing nutrients. The rotation pattern chosen will depend on the place farmers are located within the class structure. For example, rapeseed tends to be cultivated by better-off farmers, while smallholders favour lupin. According to one elderly indigenous peasant, the adoption of intensive agricultural practices like the ones mentioned above has ushered in soil depletion:

“The soil was thick and rich, yet the reason soil started to spoil was stubble burning. Before, during this time (December), people were threshing and then in April/May, they centred on sowing. After the harvest was held, the land was left fallow, and

then the straw was reincorporated into the soil. Then people started to restlessly till the land.” (Interview with Salvador, 11th December 2020)

The consequence of this new farming approach was that growers could not afford to have idle land anymore. Moreover, farmers began to incorporate commercial crops which gave something back to the soil in return. For example, rapeseed requires a higher concentration of fertilisers and leaves the ground in a better state for the next crop, plus it can be reincorporated into the soil with specialised machinery. Lupin, meanwhile, is a legume so it helps to fix the nutrients in the soil. Although these two commercial crops culminate the crop rotation, each season ends/starts with stubble burning (see figure 10), followed by sowing. Despite the fact that most farmers are aware of the damage they cause to the soil, they still employ intensive monocultural practices. The reason for so doing lies in one particular weed called *ballica* (*Lolium multiflorum Lam*), which creates headaches among those grain cultivators growing cereals. Hence, when I asked them why they burn the straw after harvest, they blamed the *ballica* and said that stubble burning is the most cost-effective way to tackle the weed. Nonetheless, after the soil is exposed to fire, growers must then treat it by adding *urea* [nitrate].

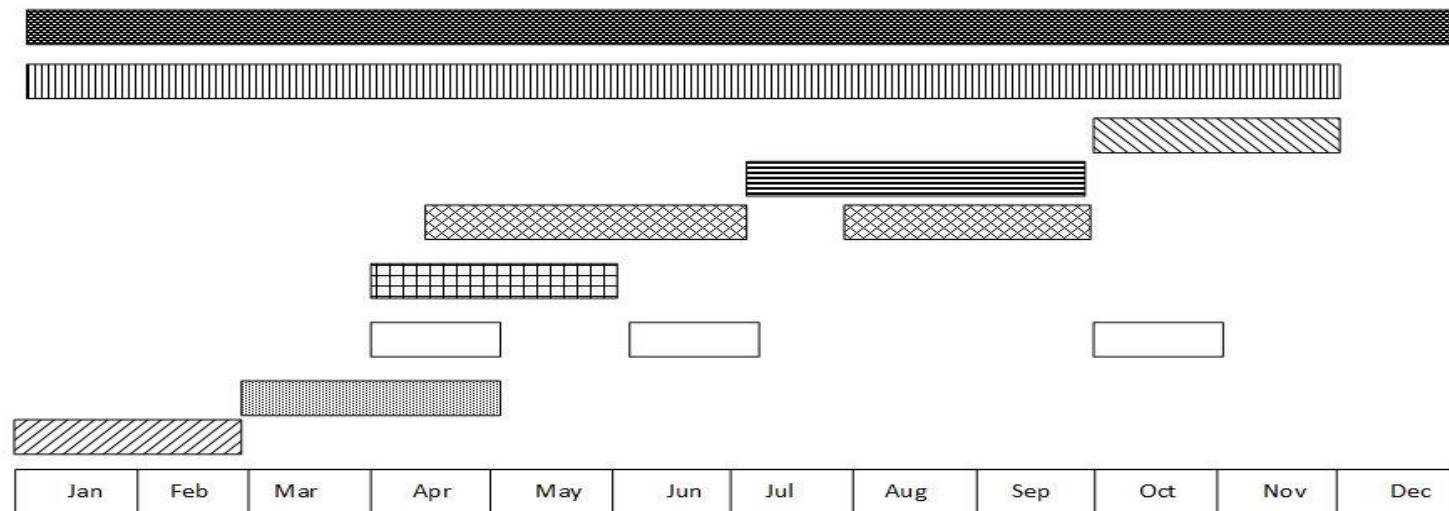


Figure 10: Lad carrying out the stubble burning task, picture taken by the author.

Clearly there is a vicious cycle in existence, making growers yet further dependent on inputs such as herbicides and fertilisers. These, in turn, enable both farmers and peasants to continue working the land almost infinitely. Some authors have observed that this way of farming makes growers prisoners of their own mode of production,

due to agricultural inputs taking a significant share of production costs (Van der Ploeg, 2018). For example, Bernstein (2010) calls upstream to the coercion executed by input providers driven by profit. Along the same lines, Weis (2007) has shown that most of the suppliers involved in sourcing the agricultural inputs come from the pharma industry. Hence, once the Green Revolution had established a definite way of growing food, the third food regime centred on the role of multinationals and the liberalisation of agriculture came to the fore, and the growers in La Araucania were not free from it. This is because, even though they are not market-oriented themselves, many inputs used by subsistence indigenous peasants are provided by multinationals.

## Wheat Annual Cycle



### Legend : Tasks

	Threshing		Chemical weed control		Sowing		Fungicide and Insecticide application		Production Time
	Stubble Burning		Ploughing		Nitrate application (Urea)		Labour Time		

Figure 11: Wheat production tasks within an annual cycle, the sowing time depends on whether farmers aim to do it in winter (April-June) or Spring (August-Sept). Figure elaborated by the author drawing on fieldnotes.

Although the material basis (soil) provides an edge in growing cereals in the region, and despite the changes implemented through the years when cultivating grains, there is an even deeper reason for ongoing devotion to them. Indeed, the loyalty of peasants and farmers resides in something somewhat subjective, linked to a sense of security. To illustrate this point, I learned during fieldwork that farmers refer to the cereal sector as *agricultura tradicional* [traditional agriculture] or *cultivos tradicionales* [traditional crops], marking a connection with the past. This does not mean that innovation is out of reach, as many of them were already highly mechanised or on the way to becoming so, but it stresses that the condition of these crops had been tested through many generations.

Likewise, those farmers who are both cereal growers and market-oriented deem this niche as a secure source of doing business against a background of violence and social conflict. The following extract, from an interview with the largest cereal grower I had access to, sheds light on this matter:

Carlos: “Mister, have you thought of switching crops to fruits?”

Andres: “Are you crazy? No way.”

Carlos: “Why is that?”

Andres: “How I see it, if you decide to invest in fruits you have to consider many things. First of all, the costs are too high. Take for example cherry trees, which are now trendy. To plant 1 hectare of cherry, it means an investment of \$30M CLP (roughly £30,000), but then you have to wait to start harvesting them five or six years, right? On top, there is a social conflict in front of our noses. So, I won’t be willing to switch.

I once thought about it, I even purchased the water rights because I was exploring planting hazelnut trees, but then what happened? My house was set on fire [...]. If things were different, everyone would have switched to fruits already. Even I would have.”

Carlos: “So, cereals give you security?”

Andres: “Because they are annual crops, yes. I don’t have to deal with a problem that encompasses the next five years, so the conflict affects me in the short-term rather than in the long-term. Well, you indeed have to carry a burden each year, moving on to the next one, and so on. But I believe I can bear it better. Whereas with fruits, everything changes because you have to wait five or six years, so the trees start to produce, then recover the investment a couple of more years and from there begin to make a profit. I’m trying to say that the context of violence does constrain businesses.” (Interview with Andres, 2nd November 2020)

There are two aspects to highlight here. The first is the notion of time, and how annual crops are better positioned to provide business security to farmers in the context of violence. The second is that large holders appear to be more reluctant to switch crops, based on the logic that the larger the holding the more significant the investment. Therefore, if the better-off farmers embark upon shifting crops they will be relatively slow in doing it, which explains the edge smallholders have when switching towards cash crops. This is supported by the findings of Challies and Murray (2011) in the Chilean Central Valley.

With regard to indigenous smallholders and what cereals mean to them, they are embedded in everyday life as a reliable source of food. Two informants shared their opinions about these crops:

“Wheat is vital, especially for impoverished people. An indigenous peasant never sows to earn money. On the contrary, they do it for personal consumption purposes or for feeding the livestock, which in the end are the same thing.

Wheat is the grains that will feed the household. It’s one of the few things you can secure in the context of extreme poverty. Just think, if something pretty bad happens, say you lost your job or someone gets ill, at least you have your wheat so you can make *mote*, *harina tostada*, *locro*, and in some way you manage to survive.

We grow cereals because they have a long shelf-life quality, so they are not perishable. I mean, they could be affected by pests like beetles. However, it is a food that can be easily deposited and stored for a long time, so if you are organised enough, you can manage to make it last until the following harvest.” (Interview with Sonia, 27th November 2020)

Furthermore, since cereals are a key source of food security, growing them ensures food access throughout the year for rural inhabitants. Other social mechanisms are also employed, such as peer-to-peer lending:

Adriana: “My cellar at this time of the year (December) is almost empty, the cereal left is to feed the livestock.”

Carlos: “You take the wheat to the mill?”

Adriana: “Yes, I pay for milling rights.”

Carlos: “And you usually grow enough for the whole year?”

Adriana: “The last milling I did (a month ago], I took 110 kilos of wheat, and the mill gave me 100 kilos of flour. But I lent some of it to my sister and my mum, so I’ll have mine back when they send their wheat to the mill. I think I still have 25 kilos left of flour. I stored it in an old washing machine, so the mice don’t break in [...]. Flour is handy you know, it gives you safety, you can make bread, pulses with

flour, and if you don't have rice or pasta, you can always rely on the flour to pull through." (Interview with Adriana, 28th December 2020)

Although wheat has entered the spotlight as a reliable crop for both business and food security, it is fair to wonder what happened to other crops noted by the French naturalist (such as pulses, maize, and quinoa), and why these have not received the same amount of attention nor seen the degree of exploitation that wheat has. The reasons for this lack of devotion are manifold, but two are of particular relevance to the present study. Firstly, during my ethnographic experience, I encountered four instances of frost in November and December. On those occasions, the smallholders described crop failures affecting lentils, broad beans, green beans, pumpkins, peas, maize and even tomatoes, but they never mentioned any loss of cereal because of the frost. Meanwhile, a second answer could derive from looking at the food regime and the current hegemony operating over the production of food and its consequent impact on agriculture. In other words, the connection between crops, food, and power. For example, figure 12 shows one subsistence farm within the Tromilen-Malleo Indigenous community where plants of quinoa and maize are grown next to each other. However, access to new foods such as rice or pasta implies a shift in some attitudes toward crops:

"We went out so she could show me the state of her crops. She pointed to the quinoa and said Camila (her neighbour) had arrived with the seed. I asked her how she cooks the quinoa. She replied: 'Actually, I intend to feed the poultry with it. I didn't know you could eat it [...]. Is it like rice?'" (Fieldnotes, 21st March 2021)

I would not exactly say that she was detached from nature, because her indigenous and peasant background clearly point in the opposite direction. Still, something had occurred over the years that meant people had come to forget about quinoa use. Indeed, quinoa, in particular, is one of the crops whose culinary use people lost track of in Perquenco. In fact, one of the local officials in charge of agroecology told me about her attempts to revitalise quinoa across Perquenco, adding that only the elderly recalled the grain. In my research experience, I came across many plots where quinoa was cultivated, but these had resulted from Mapuche indigenous women (seed keepers) teaming up with local PDTI officials seeking to spread use of the grain.

In this way, what nature favours does indeed influence crops. Yet, ultimately what is cultivated in the countryside is not determined by a mere choice of what nature entitles to the cultivators, but rather stems from a complex process involving cultural exchanges infused by power, development schemes, class structure, power structure, gender roles, culinary culture, and time. With respect to the last element, most growers, when derailed from what they usually do, tend to justify their subsequent decisions on the basis that they were behind in their tasks. For instance, one peasant told me that he chose to grow potatoes instead of wheat because it was too late to sow cereals, while a large holder admitted that whenever he falls behind schedule he is obliged to sow a variety of wheat that he does not like.



Figure 12: subsistence farm in Tromilen-Malleo, maize (left) and quinoa (centre) grown next to each other (Picture taken by the author).

Furthermore, when a grower decides to adopt one crop it is usually accompanied by the rejection of another crop. This portrayal might be more accurate for those farmers who have undergone agricultural specialisation in one subsector of agriculture, meaning an extended period subsumed in market relations. In contrast, less specialised farmers generally carry out polyculture practices, growing and breeding those crops and livestock that previous generations had tested before them. Regarding what makes them keen to choose one crop over the other, the role of time

must be disentangled in order to enhance comprehension of what it means to cultivate fruits.

### **5.7 Fruit and Time.**

When Mooney (1982) engaged in a debate with Mann and Dickinson (1978) about whether fruit production would be a sector controlled by capitalism or not, their arguments were framed mostly by addressing the matter of time and its effects on agriculture. Both positions entailed fine-grained analysis of labour time and production time, and how the latter exceeds the former in agriculture given that fruits and vegetables need time to grow. As a result, most agricultural activities are organised with reference to production time, meaning that there are portions of the year during which growers just wait for the forces of nature to act. However, science and technology have done incredible work in narrowing this gap between production and labour time; for instance, the use of cutting-edge fertilisers can speed up production time.

In the same way, new crop varieties have emerged, offering to bear fruit earlier or many times within the same year. Yet there is another aspect, noted by Singer, Green and Gilles (1983), that turnover time heavily influences growers' decisions when assessing whether to adopt cash crops or not. Likewise, perishability derives from the effects of time and makes fruit growers either shy away from or be eager to embark on fruits.

Which position is correct will depend mainly on whether a long food supply chain or a short one is under examination. Hence, it largely comes down to a matter of angle and what sort of food systems are at stake. The first thing to consider is that, although production and labour time both vary according to the fruit in question, some generalities exist. Regarding labour time and only looking at the picking season, these periods are short and labour intensive. In addition, the size of the orchard and the amount of work hired are directly proportional. Accordingly, one manager of a 520 hectare orchard owned by a multinational mentioned that they started the

harvest season by hiring 1,500 seasonal farm workers. As the season progressed they reached a peak of 4,000 seasonal farm workers, and, by the end of the season, 700 agricultural workers remained to pick blueberries.

Fruits are labour intensive regardless of orchard size. Furthermore, due to the current state of family farms, labour mobility is more likely nowadays; hence, this production unit draws on different mechanisms to ensure labour during this period. For instance, to maintain a size of orchard which is consistent with the labour that can be employed is fairly rational, but when an orchard reaches its peak of production it might occur that the amount of work required outgrows the available labour at a family farm. To put it differently, an overflowing amount of fruit must be picked, and if the productive unit struggles to cope with this amount, some fruit waste is very likely to be encountered. I noticed in my fieldwork that, during the weekends, those who had left the countryside returned to the small orchards in order to assist their family businesses, but this family labour could not happen daily as required by the fruit. Instead, it could only take place during weekends or extended holidays, so many of them end up hiring wage labour.

One indigenous blackberry grower told me that she hires her sister and also uses her daughter's labour, but she wondered what she would do next year because her daughter was about to start university. The latter concern points in the opposite direction of the classic theoretical notion that family farms have family labour at their disposal. In fact, that is an essentialist portrayal that does not recognise off farm work or rural youth's expectations. Nowadays, family members' mobility and expectations might not be aligned with what the family farm needs in terms of labour; therefore, they cannot simply count on the family to till the land. To put it in another way, family farms also experience labour shortages, and the family labour force is not as reliable as it was in the past. Hence, in those cases, labour is likely to be required in the form of self-exploitation or even hired workers.

Viewed from the perspective of seasonal farm workers, labour time can extend for as long as 10 months. However, this is a consequence of orchards being scattered

across the map and having different varieties, so they bear fruits in different periods of the year. While, at the very local level of a single orchard the main harvest season is brief (typically just two to three months), offering consistent quality. Afterwards, the harvest could endure for a couple of extra months, but with a decline in overall yield and quality. Obviously, agricultural workers must carry out other tasks, such as pruning, trimming, fruit thinning, and spraying before harvesting. Still, these are also brief and specific in the sense that, once the task is done, the growers must wait (production time) until the time to carry out the subsequent task arrives. For instance, during my fieldwork I noticed how growers coped with the fruit fly (*Drosophila suzukii*). On those occasions, the choices of what pesticide to spray were based on the withdrawal period. That is to say, they were expecting to narrow the gap between labour time and production time.

When comparing cereals and fruits in terms of labour time, one farmer (who is in the process of making the transition) used a pertinent metaphor: “Grains are like having one child, and fruit is like having triplets” (**Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020**). In the same way, a PDTI official expressed his concerns about the fruit transition:

“Fruits are more fragile than cereals, they need more attention, that’s why I always tell the smallholders if they want to adopt fruits, it’s alright, but they’ll have to put their big boy pants on.” (**Interview with Benjamin-PDTI official, 28th September 2020**)

In addition, degree of mechanisation directly affects labour time, but such improvements have not been democratised to all growers nor are they suitable for all fruits. For example, hazelnuts are almost fully mechanised because the fruits are picked from the ground (by employing machines that are like hoovers). On the other hand, apples and cherries are handpicked, so improvements are geared towards keeping the trees low so that agricultural workers do not waste too much time using ladders to reach the fruit. Moreover, in cherry orchards it is common to see hydraulic platforms controlled by joysticks being used to move workers from one tree to another, an upgrade which also reduces the labour time involved in carrying a ladder around the orchard. On the other hand, blueberries and raspberries have the

technology to be harvested by machines. Yet, such perks cannot be enjoyed at all by the Chilean growers, especially those who are export-oriented:

“I could have a few people hired and harvest everything with machines, there is the technology to do so. However, out of 100% of my total yield, I would only be able to export 50% because the fruit gets bumped and bruises start to appear over the days, so more innovation is needed.”(**Interview with the owner/manager of Saint Anne, 2nd December 2020**)

Given that it takes time to reach the markets in which fruits are to be sold, mechanisation cannot be fully implemented in Chile. This is in contrast to what occurs in Canada or the US, where automation of berry production is relatively standard. The reason lies in the American and Canadian orchards’ target markets being located much closer to them, meaning they do not have to deal with bruises to the extent that Chilean growers do. To put this into perspective, the number of days that the fruit needs to last from a Chilean port to a foreign port varies according to the destination and shipping logistics, but it amounts to roughly 50 days for Asia, 40 days for Europe, and 30 days for North America. As such, when I asked export-oriented growers why they had not adopted mechanisation, they raised the issue that if they employed machinery then most fresh fruits would be rejected for export, making them more dependent on the care and skill of seasonal farm workers. Thus, the locations where fruits are cultivated and the markets in which these are intended to arrive also influence the length of labour and production times. To put it simply, the location of an orchard directly affects whether machinery can be employed or not.

In terms of production time, not all fruits are the same. In fact, there are short cycle fruits like berries (e.g., raspberries, strawberries and blueberries) which, depending on the varieties and when they are planted, could bear fruit within the same year. In this way, strawberries (which are usually grown by smallholders) are fascinating because they allow farmers to harvest the first year and then reach the peak of production in the second year, but (for the same reasons) consultants recommend renewing strawberry orchards every two years. While raspberries and blueberries are also considered short cycle fruits, they do not reach their peak of production until after the third year, and their life cycle encompasses around 15 years (although consultants recommend renewing the orchards after the seventh year if growers are

more commercially inclined). In contrast, apples, cherries and hazelnuts are deemed long cycle fruits, meaning that producers are obliged to wait throughout the growing phase without seeing any revenues whatsoever. For instance, after the fourth year, the grower enters into a demanding labour phase for apples and cherries, whilst hazelnuts need at least three years to start producing fruit. Thus, one way in which the industry lures growers into embarking on long cycle trees is through contracts:

“We offer a nine-year contract because a good farmer, in general, will reach the break-even point during the ninth year. So, we developed this form of contract that covers the most challenging part of the investment, the growing phase.” (**Interview with manager of Forcella Hazelnut Company, 20th October 2020**)

Meanwhile, the turnover time variable deserves attention, taking into account the years a grower must wait in order to see some revenues. Given the nature of the agricultural sector, money usually comes in after the harvest; therefore, it could be just once a year, depending on what is cultivated. In this way, short cycle fruits offer an advantage. Furthermore, if virtuous varieties are grown, cultivators can prolong the length of the season to even five months, as occurs with raspberries (December to April). However, the point at which growers receive their returns essentially depends on the length of the supply chain.

Thus, the closer the consumers are to the producers, the faster the growers get paid, as happens with the farmers’ market. Nonetheless, because fruit perishability creates pressure on growers to a degree that cereal cultivators are not familiar with, the domestic-oriented fruit growers draw on other social mechanisms when selling fruit. To give an example, a better-off cereal grower confessed to me that the first thing he did once he took over the farm was to build a barn. This is because of the long shelf life grains provide, meaning he can harvest, store, and then wait for a reasonable price at which to sell his grains. Conversely, fruit growers obtain a good price when they sell their produce fresh. While they could use a cold storage system in order to prolong the life of their fruit, frozen fruits are less valuable so the incentive is to sell as fresh as possible.

In this vein, one approach which the growers began to employ more often once Covid hit was selling through social media. Indeed, the *callejero* method is remarkable

because it represents a reliable selling practice if growers do not have access to an established market like a fair. This selling practice consists of shouting and offering fruit to nearby cities. The following ethnographic vignette reflects on how growers decide to sell their fruit:

“I asked Yvonne if she has ever considered exporting her fruit. She responded that many times export companies have offered to buy her whole production at once, but at a lower price than she’s accustomed to selling at. She commented on the *callejeo* practices, highlighting the good prices she could get for her fruit. In this way, she mentioned that the only thing that made her consider the exporters’ proposals was that she could have sold everything in one go. Nonetheless, she also stated the gossip she’s heard regarding export companies in terms of the punishment they carry out over growers’ fruit quality, along with the delay of payments. In sum, she was just fine selling her fruit through the *callejeo* approach.” (Fieldnotes, 30th November 2020)

On the other hand, export-oriented growers go through exporters to sell their products. These intermediaries usually hold the payment until they are sure there is no debt in terms of royalties and services provided (such as packing, certifications, fruit selection, quick freezing process, etc.). Aside from all of these services that export companies offer, one export-oriented blueberry grower told me that the main one is reaching markets which, for an individual farmer, would be too difficult:

“Economically speaking, it’s way better if you can export on your own, but the market exporters have is 10 times bigger than the one I could reach. So, if I have too much fruit, I have to call an exporter because these companies are based in Chile, Peru, Mexico, etc. They supply fruit all year round to the supermarkets. The downside is they pay you 90, 120, 160, 180, or even 200 days after you deliver the fruit to them, so you need capital to keep running the orchard.” (Interview with the owner/manager of Saint Anne, 2nd December 2020)

It can be suggested that the volume of fruit produced determines whether a short or long supply chain offers better ways to cope with perishability. Another export-oriented grower, who actually exported directly for four years but then ceased due to the hassle involved, confessed to me that fruits are generally paid for right away, but there are in-between costs that cause exporters to withhold the money:

“The exporter pays you in June or July when the Chinese have already paid in February. I know this because I used to export myself. Once you had hauled the fruit to the port, you send a picture to certify that the fruit is in the container and then the Chinese deposit you an advance payment, but the exporters don’t tell you that.” (Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)

It follows the agri-food system deals with ensuring an all year round supply by having different locations of production across the world, meaning that the food industry can take advantage of seasonality instead of being constrained by it, which is consistent with Mooney's logic. The Italian firm referred to above is a good example:

"The company started to grow, so the necessity to secure high-quality raw materials also soared, hence this project. We did the research and analysed the pros and cons. We sought places where we could establish the European hazelnut industry in the counter season, so the availability of fresh hazelnuts wasn't compromised. Then we arrived here in Chile in the 1990s. There is another branch in Argentina, and two other plants in the study phase in South Africa and Australia." (Interview with manager of Forcella Hazelnut Company, 20th October 2020)

Differences between countries, geographically speaking, locate them either in better or worse positions regarding certain crops. For example, in terms of climate, Peru is a fierce competitor to Chile when providing off-season fruit to the Northern Hemisphere. Two informants, one in the process of downsizing his blueberry orchard and another who had disposed of all of his blueberries and had instead began planting cherry trees, explained that Peru has better conditions regarding production and turnover times:

"Here, after the third year, you begin to see some money coming in. In Peru within the year! Plus they harvest twice per year." (Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)

As for the other grower:

"Even though Peru does not have Mediterranean weather, they have adjusted the varieties to their geography. So, they can grow them, and the size of the fruits is bigger than the ones we produce here. Because of their tropical weather, the quality is worse as they lack taste, given their nights are warmer, so the diurnal temperature variation is not as stark as occurs in Chile. You know the fruits need those amplitudes from day and night to get sweeter. Still, it seems the consumers don't care. Plus, they can harvest several times within the year depending on where the orchard is. In Chile, the blueberry season is three months, while in Peru, probably closer to 10 months." (Interview with Adrian, 13th November 2020)

These two Chilean export-oriented fruit growers mentioned the capacity of Peruvian blueberries to bear fruit twice during production time. This is something that I saw with raspberries in domestic-oriented smallholding indigenous plots, and which they highlighted as a special feature because it allows them to have five months of production including an in-between month of rest. The other aspect raised by the growers was the improved varieties. Since these improvements have been created

by the intellectual efforts of scientists seeking to align production and labour time, growers must pay royalties until a variety enters into the public domain after several years. However, the greatest challenge in the Chilean fruit industry (beyond harnessing production time) lies in creating varieties that can withstand long hauls. An official of the agriculture ministry shared his thoughts with me:

“A fruit grower must assess at least three things when deciding which variety to choose. First, is it a variety that bears fruit earlier than the others? Alternatively, is it a variety that bears fruit later than main ones? Third, could the variety last several days after harvest?” (Interview with ODEPA official, 14th September 2020)

Consequently, the length of the season emerges as something that gives countries certain margins over others; in other words, how long a country can offer a steady supply of fruits. However, there is also the matter of timing, since offering fruit when no one else does is highly valuable within the business at the farm level. This helps to explain the expansion of the fruit frontier southward into La Araucania’s territory, given its relative delay in bearing fruit compared with the orchards in the Central Valley of Chile. The aforementioned grower, who pulled out of blueberry production and now grows cherries, shed some light on this:

Santino: “You can’t compare the yield we have here to the one orchards get in the Central Valley. If they are pretty good at producing, they can easily reach 15,000 kilos of cherries per hectare, while my performance at full capacity is 5,000 kilos per hectare.”

Carlos: “Where is the business then?”

Santino: “Well, first of all, the Chinese pay ridiculous money for Chilean cherries. Even with a low yield, you can make a profit. The other thing is timing. You know there is a moment in the year when the production of the Central Valley plunges, making the price rebound again, so the growers here in La Araucania take advantage of that second boost.” (Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)

In summary, it has been shown that short and long cycle fruits are cultivated in La Araucania, both entailing different issues regarding time and its direct impact on perishability. Regardless of cycle length, several attempts to shorten labour and production times are manifested through machinery or innovation. Nevertheless, other relevant aspects of time, such as turnover and shipping times, underlie many of the cultivators’ attitudes. Since fruit growers come in many guises and deal differently with the issues posed by time, further notes on how companies organise the sector must be provided.

## 5.8 A Note About the Role of the Exporters and Companies in Shaping the Sector.

So far, the roles of farmers regarding cereal and fruit have been explored, but little has been said about farmers' perceptions toward exporters. Accordingly, when I contacted Adrian, one of the very first blueberry growers in La Araucania (whose fruit entrepreneurship started back in the 1990s), he immediately mentioned that the fruit sector was too vertically integrated and he was currently in the process of downsizing his blueberry orchard:

"Let me explain to you how selling fruit to export works. First, out of 100% of your yield, the exporters will categorise the portion the meets their criteria. If you are a good farmer, I'd say over 75% acceptance rate is pretty good. As for what is left, they offer to buy it at a lower price, not as fresh fruit. Then there is roughly 5% they don't pay for because it is deemed overweight, and the fruit loses weight on the trip. On top, they charge you around 2% as operational expenses.

Meanwhile, 20% of your fruit is paid at \$0.90 USD because it goes into the individual quick-frozen (IQF) process. Thus, the average price you'll get per kilo is around \$2.30 USD (...) You know, I went to Australia a few years ago, and I saw Chilean blueberries, they were sold at \$100 USD per kilo, more or less. It struck me because when the blueberry price is high, I usually get a bit less than \$3 USD per kilo, so who gets the profit? Some people blame the exporters and others the supermarkets in creaming off the profits." (Interview with Adrian, 13th November 2020)

He was not the only one to complain about the exporters; in fact this was repeated by many export-oriented growers. Among the unfair trading practices raised were the aforementioned delays in payments, and also the penalties imposed when selecting fruits based upon strict export criteria:

"The first time I sent cherries to the processing plant, they called me and said only 50% of my fruit could be sold as fresh fruit and the other half had to be processed as a subproduct. (...) They ripped me off, but I learnt and I hired someone who is in the Central Valley where all exporters are based. So whenever they come with this bullshit again, I make one call to this employee, so he can check first hand if the percentage they are telling me is true or not." (Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)

Along the same lines, an indigenous cooperative that exports apples described some of the costs that the exporters charge them:

Carlos: "So, you send the bins to the packing plant?"

Rauque: "Yes, they do all the work there. Obviously, they charge us for everything, they charge us for the lorry, the cold store system, even the bins!"

Carlos: "And what about your acceptance rate in fresh fruit?"

Rauqe: "Well, our acceptance rate is about 78%, that would be the mean among all the varieties we grow. There are some varieties like the Elstar, where we have an acceptance rate of over 90% to sell it as fresh." **(Interview with cooperative Rauqe, 19th March 2021)**

However, it is worth noting that exporters do offer some services that would be unaffordable for growers on their own:

"There are a few benefits when working with export companies. For example, they do the packing service. That is, I send the fresh cherries in boxes of 10 kilos each, but in the processing plant, they gauge the fruits according to their size and colour, then they pack the cherries in tiny boxes ranging from 500 grams to 5 kilos. Another thing to consider is when you do it yourself, you need to arrange the transport. Some growers say: 'Ok, I'll buy the lorry, but then just imagine something happened on the way to the processing plant or the port, say the lorry breaks down, what are you going to do while waiting for some solution and in the meantime, your fresh fruits are spoiling?'. On the other hand, exporters deal with many growers per day, so they have 200 lorries or who knows how many they have, so if something like that occurs, they could replace the lorry easily." **(Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)**

Thus, some fruit cultivators have embarked on enhancing their facilities, seeking to gain more independence from exporters. These investments are rather expensive because they involve the acquisition of technology, hence their access is based on credit or capital. For example, one blueberry grower told me she had recently bought two computerised machines from New Zealand, each one costing \$150,000 USD. These devices allow her to take 60 pictures of each fruit with just a snap, and thereby gauge them. At the same time, they recognise and dismiss those blueberries on the conveyor belt which do not meet the export criteria in terms of aesthetics.

It can be suggested that growers are one more component of a long and complex engine within the long supply chain. The power they can execute basically resides in the volume and timing of offering fruit to market, which is determined by the size and age of the orchards and the varieties they grow. For example, the same grower who learned having a person at the other end of the supply chain (to check the state of his fruit at its destination in order to not get fooled) shed light on the matter. He told me that, in the first year he began to export, his volume was not ideal as his orchard was at a youthful stage; but now that he produces more, he is vested with a certain bargaining power. Due to there being many exporters, all of whom need a daily supply of fruit to serve a market that demands it all year round, the producers

have options and can consider which companies offer them better deals. Nonetheless, as Adrian stated, the power executed by export companies lies in controlling the various stages of processing and distributing the commodities.

These long supply chains entail the unintended consequence of promoting alliances among farmers (especially smallholders, whose yields tend to be lower) to counterbalance the power exercised by exporters, since greater volume would furnish them with greater bargaining power. However, looking at the bigger picture, growers are minuscule actors in long supply chains even when acting collectively:

“We gathered with three other fruit growers seeking to export direct, we did it for four years. We even managed to have someone at the other end of the trip in China, checking the state of our fruit, which is critical in this business. But then we understood we were not a player but rather a pawn, we were able to fill up two or three containers per season in the ship that carries hundreds of containers, so you know what I mean.” (**Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020**)

In this way, it is possible to link Mann and Dickinson’s (1978) theory with what has been pointed out above; that is, family farmers within the countryside will persist with even those perishable and labour dependent crops like fruits. The reason is quite simple, and it lies in there being no need for corporations to become involved in production if they have ownership of the distribution channels and the stages of processing the commodities and raw materials or, to put it in Bernstein’s (2010) terms, downstream coercion. Consequently, the path is relatively free for farmers to adopt cash crops. In turn, it is expected that they deal with perishability and wage labour, which are two main factors in defining modes of fruit production. However, it is still also possible for corporations to take over fruit production as producers. In so doing, a reliable reserve army of labour is vital to establishing an orchard. One of the managers of a blueberry orchard owned by a US investment fund disclosed:

“The fact La Araucania is one of the most impoverished regions means there is a surplus of wage labour. Despite all the conflict and trouble here, we still believe there is a reliable source of wage labour. Because blueberries are quite demanding of labour, that’s why the orchard was settled here.” (**Interview with manager of Blue Dwell, 24th March 2021**)

Furthermore, companies can also influence the production of agricultural commodities and thereby the subsequent expansion of the agricultural frontiers in other ways, as an executive of the Italian transnational explained:

“When Forcella Hazelnut Company decided to invest in Chile, it had three business development options. First, the company could have bought all the necessary land to establish the industry, say 30,000 to 40,000 hectares, there was no limit to do so. It could have purchased, planted, and exported its raw material to Italy. The second option was to make a club with large-sized producers, you know to recruit 50 or 60 owners and do business only with them. In contrast, the third option, and the one chosen, was to establish a hazelnut sector. We opened up the industry to anyone willing to embark on this. We provided the nursery for the plants and technical advice to the growers. We also offered them a nine-year contract to cover the initial risk involved in making this sort of decision. The contract is offered regardless of the size, gender or race of the growers. Twenty-five years later, Chile is the sixth-largest producer of hazelnuts worldwide and probably the number one off-season. It tells you that the sector is thriving.” (**Interview with manager of Forcella Hazelnut Company, 20th October 2020**)

Drawing on the previous vignette, it is possible to note that the power exercised by this firm takes place at both downstream and upstream levels. The former occurs because they own the tree nurseries in addition to providing advice and guidance to the farmers engaged in growing the European hazelnut. Meanwhile, the latter is reflected not only in the contract but also in the stages the raw material undergoes once it leaves the farms and enters the firm’s processing plants. However, perhaps the most striking data provided by the executive relates to the typology of corporations shaping the agro-industry.

The first of these is when a corporation takes the form of exporter or owner of the distribution channels and leaves production in the farmers’ hands. Alternatively, corporations can purchase land and establish an orchard as long as the wage labour is accessible in nearby areas (as in the above case of the blueberry orchard owned by a US investment fund). Another type of corporation is able to shape the agricultural sector by creating a growers’ club and dealing directly with its members. Although I did not witness this latter typology directly, it resembles something I explored when tracing development schemes:

“Back from the local development office, when I asked the local officials about the biggest interventions they had ever seen, one of them told me about a medicinal herb project between 2002 and 2003. He said there were a couple of hundred million

Chilean pesos involved, and the project consisted of preparing the farmers for organic production. Their role was to select the smallholders with better capacities, so they picked 15 who began to work with a German company.” (Fieldnotes, 1st February 2021)

The final type of corporation that can determine agricultural production is the one represented by the Italian multinational; farmers are provided with all of the necessary inputs and assistance, then all of the production is bought from them. It should be noted that these four types of corporations affecting the agricultural mode of production are neither exhaustive nor exclusive, since further empirical studies are needed to broaden their explanatory capacity. Nonetheless, these four types can be found in the present ethnographic research, and therefore offer a more contextualised perspective on agrarian capitalism.

### **5.9 Concluding Remarks: Enablers and Barriers to Establishing Fruit Production within La Araucania.**

This chapter has problematised the expansion of fruit production in such a fashion that it is possible to identify, from the ground, the social forces shaping and driving the process of shifting crops towards fruits. I have paid particular attention to the agency enacted by rural actors when producing food, specifically cereals and fruits, so that the gains and the losses may be weighed up. It is suggested that the decision to cultivate one crop is usually coupled with dismissing another crop. Nevertheless, what makes farmers keen to adopt fruit in their mode of production is determined by material conditions, subjective factors, traditions, and the power exercised by other entities. As a result, what might represent a barrier for one grower when adopting cash crops could serve as an enabler for another farmer.

Thus, fruit requires high investment when establishing an orchard and locating growers in different places while assessing how to manage the transition toward fruit production. This is not only in terms of inputs, such as the access to irrigation systems or machinery, but the labour needed and the time affecting production and business turnover must also be considered. Along these lines, smallholders certainly have an edge over large holders since their investments would be comparatively lower based

upon the size of their holdings. However, this could also operate the other way around, because access to capital or credit is key to making such investments.

The corporation's role lies partly in making these investments bearable, through long-term contracts and providing inputs and advice to lure farmers. Likewise, rural development schemes and state subsidies have emerged as a way to support those who lack capital. Nonetheless, these rural development schemes promoting fruit production among smallholders assumed that they would provide the family labour, which turned into a pitfall as such a view over-romanticises the current state of La Araucania's smallholders. Also, this chapter has shown that the destination of the production, whether domestic or abroad, along with the perishability factor results in different outcomes and poses differing challenges according to the length of the supply chain. Furthermore, the sector being organised predominantly into long food supply chains tends to disincentivise growers because they do not own the means of distribution, potentially exposing them to unfair practices. Nonetheless, superpowers such as China play a massive role in making growers willing to embark on fruit production, insofar as they pay high prices. On the other hand, those growers engaged in short food supply chain are able to enjoy the financial perks of fruit production without having to deal with traders, with the *callejeo* practice emerging as a vital mechanism through which to conduct sales and overcome perishability.

Furthermore, the subjective and the symbolic aspects enmeshed in production of cereals and fruits have been compared. Fruit production involves a different mindset from the cultivators because the produce is more fragile (meaning that management requires more attention and commercialisation has to be undertaken quickly to cope with perishability), plus these cash crops do not have the support of long-standing tradition whereas cereals do. Therefore, grains are at the heart of rural everyday life and reflect the culinary culture as well as being a reliable source of achieving food security. Furthermore, their long shelf life, annual production time cycle, and ability to cope with frost all give growers a sense of security, which is reinforced by the background of poverty and social conflict. It thus follows that the most significant barrier to establishing a new agrarian frontier for fruit production stems from the cultural devotion growers and indigenous peasants have to cereals.

## Chapter 6: Stratification in the countryside and common ground among family farmers

### 6.1 Introduction.

Certainly, not all growers in La Araucania are equal, especially since Chile was one of the first countries to liberalise its agricultural sector (Gómez and Echenique, 1988; Kay, 2002; Weis, 2007), resulting in a deepening of the already existing stratification within rural classes. This is in contrast to what happened in advanced capitalist societies like Europe, where the establishment of capitalist farmers was a process that lasted a few hundred years (Marx, 2007; Li, 2010). As for La Araucania, the region has experienced several cycles of modernisation, from colonisation until today: the initial colonisation of indigenous territory (Bengoa, 2000; Pinto, 2003; Naguil, 2016), privatisation of land along with the direct consequence of diminishing indigenous commons (Foerster and Montecino, 1988; Bengoa, 2000), land reform, counter-reform, the implementation of the Green Revolution via the Alliance for Progress (Kay, 2002; Weis, 2007; Patel, 2013), the successive interventions of rural development schemes over the years (Bello, 2007; de la Maza and Bolomey 2019b), and the early liberalisation of agriculture (Carter, Barham and Mesbah, 1996; Kay, 2002). Hence, it can be suggested that the establishment of agrarian capitalism in La Araucania occurred too quickly, spanning no more than three to four generations, and leading to stratification among rural inhabitants in a very peculiar way.

Nonetheless, despite all of these events hastening the development of agrarian capitalism, they were not successful in reaching every corner of La Araucania's countryside. This is evident because quite a number of smallholder peasants continue employing traditional methods of agriculture to this day. Remarkably, these are based on reciprocity where horizontal ties of the community come to the fore, such as seed keeping and *Trafkintu* [seed exchange]. Also, the mere act of relying on pooling for labour for specific agricultural tasks (such as threshing) is an expression of old farming methods. Similarly, using manure, ploughing with animals, or farming using polyculture approaches are all agrarian practices which smallholders engage in when seeking reproduction. Since most of these traditional farming methods were sometimes wrongly deemed as "less developed", they are almost on the brink of

vanishing. However, a backlash occurred once these agricultural practices began to be conceived as more ecological than intensive farming, making rural developers keen to support them. It follows that there currently a co-existence between subsistence farming rural households and market-oriented ones, which entails something rather peculiar within the agrarian political economy, namely that class structure stems from varying forms of family farming. Furthermore, these are indeed family farms, yet they employ different means to achieve their reproduction.

Within this context, if one aims to understand the class structure stemming from La Araucania's countryside, family farms and their relations are critical. However, given that the rural class structure in La Araucania arises from different farms and sometimes involves contrasting way of farming within the same territory, looking at the association between family farms is more appropriate in order to grasp the deployment of agrarian capitalism. In this way, the chapter seeks to engage with two broad themes that mirror one another and are therefore intertwined: (a) family farms and (b) agrarian classes; but, for the sake of analysis, the latter will stem from the former. Consequently, this chapter strives to reveal the links among these holdings by emphasising dynamics of class alliance and struggle rather than to display the class structure as a continuum, say from landless, to subsistence, to petty commodity producer, to fully market-oriented, to wealthy farmers. It also, looks at those cultural aspects which in turn reinforces notions of agrarian class formation.

To that end, the present chapter begins by posing the problem of family farms in light of official reports, the literature, and my fieldwork. In this way, a critique is developed by showing that the reduction of the family farm level into statistics does not capture the complexity of these rural households, and by arguing that reality tends to be more chaotic and therefore does not always mirror the figures proposed in the statistics. Next, the chapter delves into unpacking the Chilean definition of a family farm while contrasting it with findings from my own field experience. The third section focuses on the shifting nature of family farms in La Araucania. It describes family farms by illustrating how these rural households have evolved over time, and also stresses the importance of considering relationships between them as interdependent rural household units when defining them.

Following on from this, and based on my informants' memories, the chapter establishes the *Fundo* as offering better leverage when giving texture to La Araucania's rural landscape than the *Hacienda*. As such, the making of the rural elites, as well as the obligations landowners must fulfil to workers, are analysed. Thus, a baseline comprised of three types of family farm is suggested: the *Fundo*, the landless peasants, and the indigenous peasants, where the interplay of their agency gives life to the rural social fabric. Building on these three rural holdings allows a narrative that captures the agrarian changes provoked by time and identifies those agrarian practices that resist disappearing.

Further to this, a more contemporary rural scenario will be examined whereby neighbour relations come to the fore in order to ground the discussion about how different types of family farms achieve their reproduction from a relational perspective. In addition, a biographical vignette is employed to explain that rural inhabitants must be viewed from a perspective that does not detach them from their rural households or agricultural communities. Thus, the role of the both landless and the better-off farmers is explored, which leads to arguing that class alliances and class struggles assist in outlining different rural classes. Finally, after identifying those elements involved in class differentiation regarding family farms, the chapter turns to identifying the common ground which growers nonetheless share against a background of ongoing social conflicts.

## **6.2 Posing the Problem of Family Farming and The Agrarian Class Structure.**

Whether capitalist or not, most statistics show that family farms are key components of the agri-food system, representing 90% of all farms worldwide (Lowder; Skoet and Singh, 2014). Furthermore, 75% of the agricultural world's land is run by family farms (Lowder; Skoet and Raney, 2016), and between 51% and 77% of the food produced globally comes from farms sized less than 50 hectares (Herrero *et al.*, 2017). Meanwhile, FAO (2014) have estimated that more than 80% of food is produced under the rubric of family farming. By the same token, productive units run by natural persons account for over 90% of all farms in Chile (Berdegué and Rojas, 2014; Salcedo and Guzmán, 2014; ODEPA, 2022).

The persistence of family farms after years of capitalist development and the subsequent neoliberal hegemony has been a matter of lengthy debate among scholars in rural studies (Friedmann, 1980; Goodman and Redclift, 1986; Banaji, 1990; Mann, 1990; Watts, 1996; Bernstein, 2010; McMichael, 2013a; Van der Ploeg, 2018). Depending on the viewpoint, the presence of family farms within the countryside demonstrates they could either benefit from capitalist, neoliberal relations, or resist their impact through enacting social practices (Friedmann, 2016). This tension can be summarised in the debate between Phillip McMichael (2015) and Henry Bernstein (2014), where the latter author has suggested that the countryside will inevitably be subsumed into a capitalist rationale, in other words in Bernstein's view there is not peasantry left in the countryside and all have been affected by processes of capitalisation or proletarianisation. In contrast, the former advocates for the idea that, if there is any hope for an alternative way that will counterbalance capitalism, it would come from farming the countryside.

Although these figures regarding the significance of family farms have been stated and replicated in different forums, the only clear point they show is that corporations and multinational agribusinesses are not interested in owning the land where food is cultivated in the same fashion as they did before. Accordingly, many scholars have noted that the typical approach that multinationals used to take when deploying their influence in the Global South was via land ownership (Mintz, 1974; Friedmann and McMichael, 1989; Araghi, 1995; Weis, 2007; Araghi, 2009). However, by looking at these statistics together with chapter four, it can be suggested that corporations, at least in Chile, have moved toward a business model of controlling the channels of distribution, the industrial plants where the raw materials are processed, or even controlling and sourcing the inputs necessary to embark on certain crops. Thus, corporations do not compete in the area of food production and have left the road free for farmers or peasants to do so. Therefore, in terms of defining the nitty-gritty of family farms and their differences, the statistics about do not shed light on the discussion of agrarian capitalism to a very great extent; in fact, the figures can be highly misleading when seeking to comprehend the diversity of family farms.

Moreover, because each nation defines its family farms according to its own criteria, there is not much consistency among Latin American countries, further complicating the feasibility of making comparisons (Salcedo and Guzmán, 2014). Regarding Chile, INDAP is the institutional body in charge of defining the attributes of those considered family farmers and therefore entitled to receive certain benefits. The criteria set by INDAP are as follows: (A) being a natural person, (B) labouring not more than 12 BIH (Basic Irrigated Hectare)<sup>12</sup>, (C) having active assets of 3,500 UF<sup>13</sup> (*unidad de fomento*)<sup>14</sup> at the most, (D) income deriving mainly from agricultural activities, and (E) working the land, regardless of land tenure.

Drawing on these criteria, the official in charge of implementing the Indigenous Territorial Development Program (PDTI) in Perquenco, La Araucania (one of INDAP's more famous schemes), grounded them in light of her recipients in Perquenco:

“We target 459 recipients, whose average land ownership is 0.5 hectares, and I reckon 99% are Mapuche indigenous people. Most of our recipients are deemed as subsistence farming, and a smaller portion of them I'd say are becoming more specialised in one sector, so are more market-oriented.” (**Interview with Michelle-PDTI official, 20th December 2020**)

Meanwhile, the last Chilean rural census employed a different methodology when tackling farms, so a comparison with FAO and OECD standards is possible. That is, the rural census separated the productive units into two categories, namely: (A) holdings over two hectares and market-oriented, and (B) holdings with less than two hectares and without selling purposes, referring to the latter as subsistence farming.

However, reality turns out to be more chaotic when comparing both approaches with my field experience, particularly the replies my informants gave me once I asked them whether they considered themselves to be family farms or not. Hence, a first misconception when grasping family farms through top-down principles appears: the

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<sup>12</sup> During land reform the officials systematised a unit called BIH (in Spanish: HRB - *Hectarea de Riego Basico*) that allowed them to compare land of different quality. 1 BIH denotes the ideal type of land, taking as a reference the most productive and fertile land in Chile which is located in the Central Valley.

<sup>13</sup> 1 UF = \$32,136 CLP = £32 GBP; hence 3,500 UF = £105,270 GBP

<sup>14</sup> A Chilean non-circulating currency and unit of account that is not affected by inflation as much as the Chilean peso (CLP); properties, stock markets, insurances, loans are traded employing UF

naivety in equating family farms with smallholdings, a flaw embedded in INDAP's definition. Although every smallholding would most likely be a family farm, applying the same logic the other way around is inaccurate because there are massive family farms as well (Amin, 2003; Ricciardi *et al.*, 2018). By looking at my informants' data (see appendix), one can make that claim since the surfaces laboured by family farms in the present study range from 0.5 hectares to 950 hectares. Nonetheless, a caveat worth noting is that the size of a farm does not necessarily equate to ownership of the land; in fact, those mid-sized and large-sized cereal farmers stated that the majority of the land they worked was under lease agreements.

The second mistake when employing rigid definitions that position rural units of production under the same label is the inevitable outcome of obscuring the relationships among these units. In this way, it becomes harder to grasp the mechanisms family farms employ when ensuring their reproduction from a relational perspective. This is especially relevant when their reproduction is determined through household relations or unique forms of hierarchies, such as patron-client ties or the gender relations reflected in the division of labour within many rural households (Friedmann, 1980; Hedley, 1981; Lem, 1988). For instance, the last rural census identified two different productive family farming units in the Chilean countryside: market-oriented and subsistence. However, presenting the former and the latter as lacking any relationship denies the opportunity to understand the current state of subsistence farming and the mechanisms employed to ensure reproduction in light of processes of agrarian change (such as access to technology, the presence of fruit orchards, and the decline of patron-client relations).

For these reasons, I consider self-identification and subjective explanations as superior methods to tackle the topic of family farming. However, this comparison between INDAP's definition and my fieldwork offers a point of departure for unravelling family farming units and the differentiation among them. In so doing, striking contrasts between my ethnographic experience and institutional definitions are apparent when addressing family farms. It is also worth noting that I do not rely only on INDAP's recipients' accounts, but rather consider the entire range of my informants, officials included.

### 6.3 Starting from Somewhere: Unpacking INDAP's Criteria.

When breaking down the criteria employed by INDAP one by one, it is possible to argue the following. Criterion (A) is perhaps the most accurate principle, because it draws a clear line between those farms run by people and those farms run by corporations. Nevertheless, it is still not exempt from controversy, at least in the realm of ideas. Some growers did not consider themselves family farmers in their immediate responses, because they saw themselves as enterprises:

“Because of my yield, I'd say at first this is an enterprise rather than a family farm, but it is family-owned and family-managed, so I don't know how to put it.”  
**(Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)**

Conversely, some growers who acknowledged having a business model in running their farms did not seem conflicted in embracing the family farm label:

“Like it or not, running a farm is running a business. You deal with costs, returns, credits, etc. One time I read family farms don't hire wage labour, but that is not true, especially in the fruit sector where the labour is high. I believe family farms are more associated with a sense of pride, an identity, livelihood, you know, in the broadest sense possible. There is a lot of romanticism, like expecting that all children and women would labour like they used to do it 10 or 20 years ago, but that is simply out of touch. Just to give an example, nowadays education is compulsory at the school level, so you can't rely on child labour the way it was before.”  
**(Interview with a member of FEDAFRUC, September 15th 2020)**

The previous account brought up two aspects worth highlighting. The first is the importance of having a dynamic notion of family farms which remains relevant in contemporary times. Secondly, the feelings of identity and pride should mark the contours of the family farm concept. This idea is also reflected in the following account, provided by a female export-oriented truffle grower:

“I consider myself as family farming because it is tradition, it was something I inherited from my ancestors, as I said before, my grandparents started with this. So, the love for the land and their attachment was passed on. Besides, it doesn't matter whether you hire labour or not, running a farm entails lots of sacrifices, it is almost impossible to go on holidays, it's a 24/7 job.”  
**(Interview with Gina, 23rd August 2020)**

This female farmer stressed that the family farm definition should be based on customs. As she put it, her farm had been run and managed by the family for three generations, which is her main point. Also, it is possible to tell from her account that

the notion of self-exploitation is a clear indicator of family farms, which is extraordinary in the sense that classic rural studies endowed that characteristic upon peasants but not upon farmers due to the latter representing a type of grower who would depend more on wage labour (Scott, 1976; Lehmann, 1982; Kautsky, 1988; Bernstein, 2017).

Furthermore, the empirical confusion which farm enterprises provoke among growers' perceptions of not conceiving their farms as family farms is problematic. This has already been noted by authors such as Van der Ploeg (2018) or Goodman and Redclift (1986) at the theoretical level, when they refer to both family farms and farm enterprises as being a messy grey area, due to the limitations the former imposes on the latter. This limitation stems from not providing a feasible way to understand wage labour and the further consequences of class relations within the farm. However, two insights can be put forward to comprehend this grey area better. Firstly, the confusion farm enterprises generate might be an outcome of putting smallholdings, family farms, and subsistence farming within the same bracket. This implies that, once farmers become more market-oriented, they would tend to reject the family farm label, insofar as this concept is associated with subsistence and not commercial farming in their imaginations.

A second insight that sheds light on the misconceptions the family farm label triggers among growers has to do with academia, since its primary focus has been tackling the contested term of family farming without offering a clear approach to the multiple forms of agribusiness that take place within the countryside. To put it differently, defining by negation has always been a route social sciences and humanities have taken in order to address human affairs. However, to state that family farms are not corporations seems insufficient because it leaves room to speculate about successful family farm enterprises, making them susceptible to being referred to as being akin to corporations, yet these are not the same. Hence, in order to avoid this pitfall, it is necessary to keep corporation typology in mind (see chapter four).

Moving on to criterion (B) of INDAP's definition, it is stated that farm size determines whether growers could fall within the rubric of family farms or not. It can be claimed that the size of the farm does not mean much on its own, assuming one attempts to classify farms according to the agrarian class structure. This is because other variables, such as types of crops, access to capital, access to water, and personal attitudes, would influence the kind of farm under examination. In addition, it is prudent to remember that smallholdings could be more efficient than large estates (Binswanger, Deininger and Feder, 1995). Indeed, to some extent, land reform was implemented in Chile because large estate holdings were deemed highly inefficient (Bellisario, 2007a; Weis, 2007). Hence, hypothetically speaking, a smallholding run by a proficient farmer who grows cash crops could be ranked more highly within the agrarian class structure than one with more land, worse farming attitudes, and less valuable crops. In other words, poorly managed large estates could be ranked as more or less on a par with subsistence farming or petty commodity producers within the agrarian class structure. Besides, not all soils are gifted with the same natural quality; while they can be enhanced through the application of inputs, doing so is highly contingent on access to capital, credit, or being a recipient of certain state interventions that seek to improve soil.

INDAP deals with the variability of soils across Chile by setting a 12 BIH threshold, which allows the entity to gauge farmers or peasants as being potentially eligible for its public policies. Thus, for farmers and peasants from places where the soils are not as rich as in the Central Valley, more land would be needed to reach the threshold of 12 BIH as the physical land must be multiplied by a conversion factor stated in law N° 18.910. In this sense, it is worth remembering that being rain-fed is one of the main features of La Araucania's arable land. Therefore, according to the law, those plots in La Araucania must be multiplied by a factor of 0.123. This leads to the conclusion that plots sized roughly 98 hectares could fit under INDAP's definition, which is equivalent to claiming that a large surface of land could be seen as a small farm.

However, in the present study, recipients of INDAP's welfare did not own large land surfaces, and those who worked larger patches typically did so by leasing land. On

many occasions, this access to more land was in the form of oral agreements rather than formal written contracts, making it harder to quantify how much land is worked by one rural household:

Carlos: "Here in the indigenous community, I reckon you're one of those who till more land?"

Franco: "Hahaha, I only own 1.3 hectares though, the other 38.7 hectares is *arriendo pirata* [pirate leasing]."

Carlos: "What do you mean by pirate leasing?"

Franco: "You know, here in the indigenous communities, there is not much certainty about who actually owns the land. It's hard to find a paper or something affirming you own a plot, especially when the former owner has passed away and left a bunch of heirs. So, we make oral agreements instead. Here in the countryside, a pledge has such a force that we still use it even though it doesn't have legal status." **(Interview with Franco, 20th January 2021)**

This exchange describes how smallholders cope with land constraints, by employing social mechanisms that enable them to increase their available land for their reproduction purposes as rural households. It is more critical to examine the notion that large surfaces could be deemed as small farms in La Araucania, because it implies a few aspects that redefine the rural class struggle. In theory, classes as social categories should be seen in relation to one another and never in isolation, making social classes understood as interdependent (Poulantzas, 1979). In this vein, by considering the context of the present study (whereby indigenous peasants and smallholders engage in land seizures or demonstrations, alluding to insufficient land for their reproduction as rural inhabitants), it is possible to observe class struggle along with class formation in the making, as the landless/indigenous smallholders clearly oppose the landed or better-off farmers. Nonetheless, this manifestation of such class struggles takes as a premise something ideological rather than factual. Hence, the notion of *latifundista* [large estate holders] must be questioned and requires further empirical data, given that these "rich farmers" who are frequently affected by arson attacks or seizures are simultaneously both landlords and tenants.

Drawing on my informants' characteristics (see appendix), those pertaining to ones who can be called better-off farmers shed some light on this matter. For example, Adrian works 570 hectares but owns 120 hectares. Meanwhile, Ernesto labours 320 hectares and owns 30 hectares. Both farmers could be located within the class

structure between mid-sized and large-sized farmers because, compared with other rural holdings, the sizes of the farms worked by them point in that direction, even though large amounts of their surfaces are leased. Likewise, it is remarkable that Ernesto, without considering the land leased, could be eligible for INDAP welfare as he is under the 12 BIH threshold. Meanwhile, two other farmers falling within the range closer to 1,000 worked hectares did not clearly state how many hectares they owned, although they did say that most of their land was leased:

“There are a few farmers that till large surfaces of land like I do, but we are not owners, most of the land is worked under lease agreements, the *latifundia* [large estate holding] was finished with the land reform and the inheritance processes, you know land started to become fractioned.” (Interview with Andres, 2nd November 2020)

Given that this study only considers a small portion of all growers of La Araucania, further research must be conducted to uncover who owns the land. However, drawing on my fieldwork makes it possible to claim that the status of large and medium-sized farmers as owners of the land, one of the key means of production in agriculture, is in fact deceptive. In terms of land ownership, the different classes of farmers might actually be closer than expected within the agrarian class structure, especially in a region where most of the land is not irrigated.

The third (C) criterion employed when outlining Chilean family farming is the active assets curb per productive unit. The main flaw of constraining family farms below a specific limit of possible revenues lies in designating family farms as closer to subsistence level rather than to enterprises or entrepreneurial farming. The latter leads to confusion when growers seek new strategies to be more competitive by creating cooperatives, teaming up with other farmers, or adopting cash crops, among others. For example, an indigenous cooperative hesitated in categorising themselves as a family farm, arguing they are comprised of indigenous households whose members embarked on a cooperative project seeking to unlock their potential in farming, adding:

“For the total revenues we manage and the workplaces we offer during harvest season, this farm is an enterprise. I’m not sure if we can call it family farming, although all the households of the indigenous community are in a way involved.” (Interview with cooperative Rauque, 19th March 2021)

The fourth (D) principle operates by making farmers eligible to become recipients of INDAP support as long as a significant portion of their income derives from their productive units. This criterion is particularly contradictory, because it contains glimpses of a romanticised rural inhabitant. As pointed out above, the co-existence of farms with different ends in terms of their production sheds light on the mechanisms employed by peasants and farmers when reproducing their households. Regarding INDAP's beneficiaries, an official from the rural local development office explained to me that they usually circumvent this requirement because otherwise they would not have any recipients to assist at all:

Carlos: "About the rural inhabitants, do they still engage in patron-client relations, or do they work their land, or maybe they do off farm work in the north of Chile?"

PDTI official: "A bit of everything. I mean, they have to rely on other sources of income, that's a reality. Otherwise, they would fall into poverty. In that regard, we have to look the other way because you know that to be eligible for INDAP welfare, most of your income should come from your farm. But what can smallholders do if they own less than half a hectare? I'd say when it comes to our recipients, between 70% and 80% of their income is from off farm labour." **(Interview with David-PDTI official, 12th November 2020)**

Complementing this official account, once I had started noticing that off farm labour was one of the mechanisms used by indigenous peasants to ensure their reproduction, I was able to address this topic directly by asking these rural inhabitants their reasons for engaging in such a practice:

Carlos: "I still don't get why people engage in off farm labour. Why is that? I mean, how is it possible to juggle between your own crops, then head off to the north of Chile and give that labour to a vineyard or an export-oriented farm instead of applying that labour to your own crops?"

Tomas: "Because of necessity. I could sell all my lentils, but the way I see it, we work off the farm in order to save up money, to contribute to our pensions and our social security. My savings are the money I earn while working off farm as a seasonal farmworker."

Henry: "Take into account also that there are periods when many hands labouring here aren't needed, one or two are enough. The more demanding periods are at the beginning of the season and then the harvest, so during those periods when you just wait for the plant to grow you begin to seek opportunities outside the farm and probably become a seasonal farmworker." **(Conversation with Tomas and Henry, 28th January 2021)**

Finally, the last principle (E) that INDAP applies to potential recipients is to assess them according to whether rural inhabitants work the land or not. In this way, the governmental body stresses that land ownership should not act as a limitation and

so recognises different tenure types. However, in practice, the institution hardly recognises oral agreements or other types of tenures based on customs. As a result, small family farm holders or the landless, who might work more land than that acknowledged by INDAP, usually face some challenges when seeking to become targetable for state welfare:

“There is a lot of red tape when we'd like to transfer some welfare and justify our decision to INDAP. I'll give you an example, an indigenous peasant who doesn't possess land but has access to land via leasing, say 0.5 hectares, comes to the office because wants to build a shed.

I must tell that peasant that we could do it, but to make INDAP approve the release of funds, we unfortunately can't use a slab of concrete and instead think of building the shed upon the air using another sort of foundation or anchor that enables moving the shed around, because they are not the “legal” tenant. I'm telling you, this has happened to me a lot. After telling them the conditions, people got annoyed and walked away, and you know public institutions are very hierarchical, so it comes from upstream.” (**Interview with Michelle-PDTI official, 20th December 2020**)

After comparing my ethnographic experience against the five principles INDAP applies to select its beneficiaries, a more contextualised reality shaping the family farm concept has been laid out. However, the changing nature of family farms through the years is another factor to consider, making the family farm concept even more complicated. In that regard, I now turn to showing how farms have evolved in La Araucania and consider their relations as interdependent rural households.

## **6.4 A Dynamic Notion of Family Farms in Light of Agrarian Change.**

### **6.4.1 *Fundos* [Large Estate Holdings].**

In an effort to ground the term peasant, Friedmann (1980) suggested focusing on the interaction of a double force: (a) one force operating at the level of the household or within it, and (b) the other force acting around the household, hence it could be another household or the broader context in general. Thus, one can specify the form peasant production would embody by combining both forces. As such, in her initial distinction, Friedmann proposed four forms of peasant production worth paying attention to, with the *Hacienda* being the last of them. She was influenced by Kay's (1974) study, where he observed that large estate holdings, the manorial and the *Hacienda*, were the main social systems that organised rural social life in Europe and Latin America, respectively. Kay also identified two types of *Hacienda* (see table 6). In this way, before undertaking my fieldwork, I was sure the *Hacienda* would work

as an excellent lever to study the social relations of production in the Chilean countryside. Besides, the *Hacienda* as a concept provided me with the confidence to carry out the research, as it is supported by the tradition of latinomaricanist researchers who had built their theories around the *Hacienda* as a socio-economic complex that explained a big portion of the Latin American ethos (Echavarría, 1963; Morandé, 1984).

Nonetheless, the *Hacienda* did not appear in my informants' narratives. This is similar to what occurred with the term Green Revolution, which was often encountered in my reading but never heard in my informants' statements. Yet the present case is slightly different because, in spite of the Green Revolution not being directly mentioned, my informants did at least recall the role played by US nationals in teaching row sowing back in the 1960s (see chapter four). In contrast, the *Hacienda* concept did not resemble either their memories or their everyday lives. In fact, these indigenous smallholders referred to *Fundos* whenever discussing large estates, without distinguishing whether they were addressing agribusinesses or family farms, so it was essentially a matter of size for them. In the same way, the rural elite referred to their own holdings as *Fundos* [large estate holdings] or *campos* [country = large estate holdings].

Consequently, aside from showing a distance between the textbooks and how people put the social processes shaping their personhoods and everyday lives into their own words, this issue made me wonder whether I was applying the right concept to the place I was examining (La Araucania). In this regard, and without intending to throw the baby out with the bathwater, I continued subscribing to Friedmann's suggestion when seeking to grasp the forms of production indigenous peasants and farmers embodied on La Araucania's land. That is to say, to examine how this double force affects La Araucania's countryside, while nonetheless seeking to make the necessary amendments to the model, which at first glance was not working out at all.

Table 6: Two types of *Hacienda* (based on Kay, 1974)

Land Use	Labour regime	Form of surplus appropriation
A. Multi-farm estate (principally peasant farms)	Peasant cultivation of land allocated to them and control of the labour process	Rent in kind, rent in money, crop shares
B. Landlord estate (landlord's farm plus peasant "subsistence" plots or <i>minifundia</i> )	Peasants work increasingly on landlord's (enlarged) farms while maintaining their subsistence plots	Labour rent (unpaid labour on landlord's farm)

Source: (Bernstein, 2010, p. 44 ,table 3.1).

Since it is hard to accurately determine how rural life was before the Chilean state deployed its army during the colonisation of the indigenous territory (1860-1883), and even harder before the consolidation of the Chilean state, a brief recapitulation of my historical assumptions driving the analysis is helpful at this point. Thus, according to Gay (the French naturalist), the state of agriculture before the invasion of the Spanish was highly influenced by the *Incas* [Peruvians]:

"The Mapuche, more stubborn and proud of their freedom than the Chileans were, never asked for anything from the Peruvians who were more civilised. Although Peruvians' development permeated Mapuche indigenous territory indirectly [...] making Mapuche people tame the plants more quickly and efficiently than people in the north." (Gay, 2018, p. 182)

Following the first encounters between Native Americans and Europeans, Claude Gay added:

"Cows, sheep, and goats did not take long to populate the vast grassland in an idle state. Thus Mapuche people turned with high devotion into breeding the livestock Europeans brought, to the point the livestock sector was one of the most vibrant and profitable." (Gay, 2018, p. 182)

Similarly, some authors suggest that Mapuche people were cattle breeders or ranchers rather than growers (León, 1990; Bello, 2011). However, these writers do not pay much attention to the roles of Mapuche indigenous women in the reproduction of rural households through food production, observed in practices such

as being in charge of the *chakras* [vegetable gardens] and seed keeping. However, the possession of livestock is critical to understanding the form of production indigenous peasants enact, as it has to do with relations between farms; I shall address this later.

In addition, one of the legacies of the Chilean occupation of indigenous territory (1860-1883) was the displacement of indigenous people, who were rounded up and relocated to *reducciones indigenas* [indigenous reservations]. This led to the Mapuche social fabric being dismantled, due to the *lonkos* [chiefs] and the *konas* [subaltern underclass] being put together within the same plots (Foerster and Montecino, 1988), and with it the collapse of any previous agrarian structure the Mapuche had had. Along these lines, Faron (1969) noted that Mapuche people became increasingly more devoted to agriculture once they “lost” the war.

On the other hand, with a lesser degree of speculation, what can be assumed with confidence are the types of production indigenous peasants and farmers embraced to reproduce their households during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Given that La Araucania was one of the last territories to be annexed by the Chilean state, its history as a Chilean territory is relatively recent, spanning no more than three to four generations altogether.

#### **6.4.2 Two Sources of Agrarian Workers in the Fundo.**

During my ethnography, I witnessed how the word *Fundo* usually triggered a deep melancholy among elderly peasants because it shed light on the type of labour regime they had been subsumed into. A peasant born in 1929 shared his life story with me, stressing how he arrived at the *Fundo*:

“We were landless, so my dad was seeking here and there a patron [landlord] who could have us [a family of five] and give us a place to live, the so-called *puebla*. We ended up here in the *Fundo Los Quiques*, and I worked for the Caminohondo family until I retired. When I grew up, I was the agricultural machinery operator.”  
(Conversation with Don Miguel, 4th December 2020)

According to local historians, people referred to the *puebla* as the physical space the *patrón* [landlord] allocated to the *inquilinos* [tenants] (Sandoval and Gonzales, 2010). Hence, one could assume that the type (b) *Hacienda* (see table 6) is the most suitable form of production when describing the organisation of large estate holdings in La Araucania. However, indigenous smallholders (landed peasants) played a significant role in providing labour to these extensive estate holdings as well:

Melipar: “When I was a kid, we didn’t have a clear working shift at all, so when the diuca [*Diuca diuca*] chirped, which was a little bird that sang in the morning [...]. In the past those sounds in the countryside were pretty common, while nowadays you can hardly come across them, there are not many birds left. I think they’ve got poisoned by the agrochemicals people began to employ to grow cereals. Anyway, the diuca started to sing around 4:00 am, a bit later sometimes, so that sound meant that my uncle and I were supposed to be on our way to work to the *Fundo* [large estate holdings], the other thing we had to pay attention to was the brightest star in the sky [Venus], if we were able to see it, we knew we weren’t running late, then we worked from dawn to dusk.”

Carlos: “Can I ask how were the working conditions, like in terms of wages? Was the payment in kind, or did they pay you in money?”

Melipar: “So those who were tenants, most of their labour was paid in kind, but they also received small sums of money, while in our case, we received a salary. Although in the *Fundo* there were big cellars where you could find lard, kerosene, salt, sugar, *mate* [infusion herb], clothes, and we had access to those goods, but then it was deducted from our salary. The other thing was the payments weren’t consistent, every three to four months, at least until the employment laws started to appear.” (Interview with Melipar, 15th June 2020)

This biographical vignette from an elderly Mapuche indigenous peasant shows fascinating things about the connection between the landscape, the wildlife, and the labour regimes. He also raised lack of legislation as a reason for being exploited, which was reflected in the long shifts along with other abusive practices such as child labour. Nonetheless, he highlighted that *Fundos* operated as a source of achieving food security and, perhaps more interestingly, securing goods that are hard to obtain through farming methods. The latter supports the idea that social classes are interdependent, even when one is attempting to unpack rural subsistence households. As James Scott (1976) noted, there are subsistence commodities such as kerosene, sugar, and oil that peasants cannot produce on their own but are essential for their reproduction as a household. Hence, subsistence farms seek, within their repertoires, strategies that are based upon either the moral economy or market relations, which in turn enable them to access those subsistence commodities. It follows that any exploitative relations become bearable as long as there is an implicit

social pact that enforces the landlord to not only provide subsistence commodities which are not limited to a portion of the harvest, but also to give access to those commodities that cannot be grown. In turn, there is also an expectation of having cheap labour on hand for the agricultural tasks which the *Fundo* requires to maintain its production.

Thus, Marx's (1986) sack of potatoes metaphor was a long way from doing justice to this feature of subsistence farming. Yet in the same manner, Kautsky's (1988) depiction of the peasantry as a unit of production and consumption (thus having a greater degree of self-sufficiency in comparison with urban households) constrains the analysis of rural subsistence households in contemporary times. A sound understanding of subsistence farming should recognise that self-sufficiency at the household level is hardly applicable, so peasants or smallholders are obliged to seek complementary strategies. Therefore, any new theorisations about the subsistence farming unit should acknowledge that self-sufficiency and subsistence farming might be linked but are not equal. Furthermore, subsistence peasants, like everyone else, exist as part of a larger society, so their relations to their surroundings are as integral as their internal household practices. These relations with their surroundings can be understood as neighbour relations or co-existence among different units of production, which are not all mediated by market relations nor capitalist in essence. Although it can be argued that members of the subsistence farm can fulfil other social categories such as rural proletariat or semi-proletariat peasantry, these are not exclusive when addressed from the family farm perspective because their roles either as agrarian labourers or small indigenous peasants are not fixed.

The neighbour relations maintained among these units of production (family farms) shed light on processes of differentiation and stratification, through highlighting both the social mechanisms employed when seeking their reproduction and their attitudes toward the means of production and the market. It follows that looking at the La Araucania case is not as simple as putting the relationship between the patron and the peasant at the centre of the analysis, because those who provide the labour stem from two different subsistence family farm units that were already differentiated.

Accordingly, Don Miguel account represents one rural household: landless peasants who ended up as *inquilino* [tenant]. In contrast, Melipar's account indicates that both landed and smallholding indigenous peasants can function as sources of labour. The latter subsistence production farm engages in hierarchical and market relations with the patron in a peculiar way, which the former subsistence production unit does not. This is because landed indigenous smallholder peasants have the support of both their indigenous communities and the large estate holdings where they sell their labour, thus implying some degree of freedom. In contrast, the landless who become tenants only receive support from the *Fundo* and lack the additional support of an indigenous community.

In this way, as my fieldwork developed, I realised that asking my informants if they had ever worked as *apatronados* [under patron-client relations], was key to comprehending class alliance dynamics among family farms within the countryside. Usually, the youngest generation was less engaged in this type of relationship because more opportunities had emerged outside the *Fundo* over the years. However, from the point of view of the household, these relationships have not been completely erased.

#### **6.4.3 The Farmers (The Owners).**

Drawing on the features of those informants, whom I designated as better-off farmers (see appendix), it is plausible to claim that the making of the rural elite in La Araucania resulted from different routes which converged and consolidated them as an agrarian elite class. Accordingly, one path derived from the process embodied the European settlers, whereby some of these families were able to thrive in a rather hostile environment and, after the second or third generations, a rural elite had become fairly established. For example, farmer Andres described his German settler family roots: his father was born in 1902, and after working in the mill for many years he was able to negotiate for a large estate which a family from Santiago used to own. This cereal farmer also pointed out that his father's holding was expropriated during land reform with circa 600 hectares being forfeited.

The European settlers benefitted from certain perks which the Chilean state had offered them as soon as they arrived in La Araucania. The means of production for farming were largely covered, with the aid package including components such as land, a yoke of oxen, a plough, timber, nails and other building materials, seeds, and access to credit (Verniory, 2001; Schifferli, 2007). However, most of these European settlers were not farmers back in their countries of origin but rather artisans (Schifferli, 2007). Therefore, those who thrived and went on to become better-off farmers could be regarded as the special ones. In contrast, many failed in their agricultural endeavours and sought new opportunities in urban areas:

“My roots come from Swiss settlers, they went to extreme lengths to settle here. Even though the Chilean state lured them with 40 hectares of land per family plus other perks, it wasn’t for free, they had to pay it back. So just a few of them were able to settle down and increase their holdings.” (Interview with Adrian, 13th November 2020)

Meanwhile, a second route can be observed in the rural elite, who had strong ties with the political class. For example, female farmers Gina and Mercedes are cousins, and in different interviews they explained to me how their ancestors were members of the political elite. First of all, their grandfather was a well-known farmer who took over the role of deputy and senator in the early 1930s. Latterly, the father of one of the cousins became mayor, deputy, and also senator in the 1960s. Both female farmers acknowledge that the original *Fundo* was impacted by land reform, so the current size of their farms is less than it used to be. In addition, another mid-sized farmer shared his life story with me and told me that his father was a mayor in one of the towns of La Araucania before taking over the role of deputy in the Chilean congress. However, during the land reform, 1,600 hectares were expropriated from the original *Fundo*.

Lastly, a third route is linked to those people based in the northern part of the country who expanded their investments once the territory was colonised:

“Before the *patrones* were accustomed to coming during holidays to their *Fundo*, and then, when school started, they returned to Santiago. You know my dad was the manager of the *Fundo*, so I remember the *patrones* lived in Santiago.” (Interview with Eileen, 1st October 2020)

Thus, these three routes began overlapping after a while, as the rural elite also sought their own reproduction as a social class. Yet, the second and third routes are more closely intertwined because, from the political economy perspective, having economic power is intrinsically connected with having political power and *vice versa*. In this case, it applies in the sense that the rural elite has always had links with metropolitan areas such as Santiago.

#### ***6.4.4 Relationships Between the Owners and the Workers.***

Taken as a whole, the agrarian structure under analysis is characterised by the co-existence of at least three types of family farm: the *Fundo* [large estate holding], the landless who became tenants, and the smallholders indigenous peasants. Therefore, I now turn to unpacking how these units interact with each other highlighting the dynamics of alliances and struggle characterising their relationship.

One approach to addressing the relationships between these three types of family farm is to look at the obligations the patron must fulfil to the agrarian workers. Generally, these are hard to quantify because they are not limited to just wages. In addition, there are payments in kind and services that might be divisible, but their symbolic value tends to exceed the raw figures of such agreements. For instance, a patron's welfare provision might take the form of football pitches or other sorts of services that are not divisible because they signify experiences or something rather practical. Thus, the ethnographic approach taken in this study is advantageous when capturing the social meaning involved in these exchanges:

“Dario (PDTI official) and I went further down, to a place that used to be part of the *Fundo* called Los quiques, as our gaze focused on someone riding his bike carrying an axe. Although scary, the guy explained his intention immediately after seeing us. He was heading to the *Fundo* seeking to sharpen his axe. Then, as he was looking to make conversation, he asked me if I knew the football pitch while showing pride. According to him, in old times, the patron had allocated another space for the recreational facility. He added that the patron had always acknowledged the rights of the peasant community to a place where they could play football, to the extent that the patron conveyed the same to his heirs. Thus, their obligation to respect and provide a space for the local team was why the pitch was relocated instead of being dismantled.” (Fieldnotes, 2nd February 2021)

In this context, delving into the paternalistic bond expressed in these everyday life practices becomes critical when shedding light on the agrarian class structure. This

is because the presence or absence of this bond entails a transition in the relationships with family farms as they apparently become subjected to market forces to a greater degree. Along these same lines, a common response among the rural elite when describing their relationships was the loyalty the agrarian workers felt toward the *Fundo*, even during moments of social turmoil:

“My dad always said that one morning he saw people from the socialist government [CORA<sup>15</sup>] outside the warehouse encouraging the agrarian workers to seize the *Fundo*. Just imagine how politicised everything was during land reform. Fortunately, the people here have always been loyal, and those disruptions weren’t triggered, so the *Fundo* was finally expropriated and not seized as in other parts of the countryside.” (Interview with Adrian, 13th November 2020)

Furthermore, when studying rural societies and their class structures, because most are influenced to a great extent by traditions, the question of the relationships between farms becomes more relevant than social mobility in itself (Scott, 1976). In turn, adopting this perspective enables identification as to whether their relationship is mainly exploitative or somewhat collaborative (e.g., sharecropping, mutual aid, etc.). In addition, if exploitative relations emerge when describing the class relations between the farmer and rural labourer, then it is possible to argue on what basis that exploitation is legitimated. For example, in the following statement, the aspect of social mobility is basically zero, which goes hand in hand with a mode of authority based on tradition, in Weberian terms:

“During the threshing, everybody worked. I agree you can’t make kids work on those tasks anymore, but the children were extra hands for their parents, who took all the burden. There was something that it’s hard to find nowadays: loyalty. See, here I’ve got two brothers who work for me, their parents used to work for my parents, and their grandparents worked for my grandparents.” (Interview with Gina, 23rd August 2020)

The loyalty signalled by the wealthy farmers, which operated as an expression of the bond between rural classes, became relatively rare once land reform unfolded. Hence there is a consensus that land reform’s most outstanding achievement was not the distribution of land, due to the subsequent counter-reform implemented during the dictatorship (1973-1990), but rather the elimination of serfdom and exploitative relations between patrons and tenants (Kay, 1975; Bellisario, 2006; Bellisario, 2007a). In this respect, a few insights can be offered by drawing on the rural elite’s

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<sup>15</sup> The state agency in charge of implementing the land reform

accounts of the agrarian reform and what it entailed for their relationships with rural workers, in addition to further problematising the notion of family farms:

“After the *Fundo* got expropriated, it broke up into several plots. Obviously, the agrarian workers didn’t know how to continue the farm business [...], I mean, people think it’s easy to be a good farmer. I think that’s why lawyers or doctors purchase land seeking to embark on farming and then what happens? They sell the *campo* or *Fundo* back. Anyway, those who benefitted from the land reform sold their plots, and we bought those plots. We bought the debt they had with the CORA. So many of them weren’t capable of keeping the farm running because they lacked the knowledge to do so, to be fair [they lacked] access to credit as well, even though there were plenty of opportunities, but I guess many of them didn’t know the opportunities for credit and other things were there.” (Interview with Andres ,2nd November 2020)

The previous extract problematises the notion of family farming (mainly subsistence farming) by showing that land and family labour do not seem enough when establishing a thriving rural class. It also highlights that access to credit appears to be critical when seeking to run a market-oriented farm. In parallel, this farmer’s memory casts doubt upon how linear the mobility among rural classes from one stratum to another can actually be in practice. The failure of agrarian reform in distributing land shows social mobility in rural settings might be highly contingent on the relationship among family farms since it surpasses the mere fact of owning the means of production when it comes to farming as a business.

Meanwhile, another farmer elaborated on the current social conflict characterising the region, by pointing out that the relationship between the owner and the rural labourer changed for the worse after land reform:

“According to this female farmer, the relationships among the rural inhabitants were peaceful before because the patron-client bond allowed the subsistence of the poor peasants. Whereas now, the labour legislation has undermined the way people used to treat each other. She added that, some time ago, farmers had to allocate a *goce*, so the peasants came with their families, the ladies worked as maids, and they had their *chakra* [vegetable gardens]. Nowadays the labour relations are just different.” (Fieldnotes, 22nd September 2020)

Moreover, the shift provoked by land reform and counter-reform (1964-1980) not only brought about the dissolution of the landless who became tenants in La Araucania, but it also led to a new form of relationship among family farms that can be viewed as the consolidation of the wage labourers within the *Fundos*. Thus, the

configuration of the rural landscape of La Araucania shifted from three types of family farm in different guises toward a new rural landscape consisting of diminished *Fundos*, indigenous communities that underwent a process of individual enclosures during Pinochet's dictatorship, and mid-sized landed peasants who benefitted from land reform and were able to keep the land.

Therefore, the social stratum comprised of the landless who became tenants turns out to be less likely to be encountered in the countryside. On the other hand, indigenous communities became a factory of both rural wage labour and landless indigenous peasants with the arrival of new generations. However, there is a caveat worth highlighting. Although these rural social class categories operate at the individual level, when they are analysed from the perspective of the family farm unit, a grey area that is hard to outline arises. Mintz (1974) observed something similar in the sugar cane sector in the Caribbean, where landless rural wage labourers had strong familiar ties with the small-sized family farms where they grew up. This means that the emergence of social categories like the rural proletariat is not as straightforward as claiming that, once rural inhabitants have experienced land dispossession or are evicted, it will lead to the immediate consequence of becoming either rural wage labourers or a sort of proletariat. I shall expand on this matter in the following subsection.

On the other hand, traditional practices have prevailed and refused to go away despite waves of modernisation implemented in La Araucania, with land reform being a prime example (but not the only one). One remarkable practice is the obligations of *Fundos* to provide a *goce* to smallholders, whether indigenous or Chilean. *Goce* means joy, literally speaking, yet how people employ it in the countryside diverges from its regular use as it is grounded in the physical access to land or in other words informal land concession. Depending on the perspective, this right or obligation acquires so much importance within rural everyday life, especially for the reproduction of small-sized family farms that rely on a relational social mechanism with other farms. The way I realised its significance was through looking at the livestock. After a few rounds shadowing the local official, the possession of cattle among smallholders attracted my attention since I could not conceive how, despite a lack of large areas for grazing, the subsistence farmer did not seem inclined to put

a cap on their livestock production. I confirmed my doubts once I had spoken to the local veterinarian:

Carlos: “The cattle stocking rate held by INDAP’s recipients doesn’t match their tenancy, am I right?”

Local vet: “That’s one of the main problems we’ve got here in town, our recipients have too many cattle on small surfaces.”

Carlos: “Is there any rule or formula to know how many they should have?”

Local vet: “Yes, around 450 kilos per hectare, so it’s basically one cow or between six and eight sheep per hectare. You know there are people here who own less than 0.5 hectares, that’s our reality.” (**Interview with local vet, 20th March 2021**)

Likewise, the following ethnographic vignette shows the co-existence among family farms, which take the empirical form of neighbour relations as a vital way to secure their reproduction. The tacit social mechanism between the large holders and the smallholders allows the compatibility between smallholding and cattle breeding:

“I’ve been accompanying one of PDTI official lately to deworm the cattle. During the tour, something that struck me was that three subsistence family farms entitled to receive INDAP’s welfare also had strong labour bonds with the *Coyanco Fundo*. As such, in the first household, the man was the gatekeeper of the *Fundo*. His household possesses nine cows, yet they have their *goce* that allows the family to fatten their livestock on the patron’s grazing land. The second household we visited were indigenous peasants who had 11 cows, and the man worked in fencing at the *Fundo*. Like the first household, this subsistence family farm also had the right to put their cattle on the *Fundo*’s property. Meanwhile, the third house was slightly different because it was an elderly couple, the man began to work in the *Fundo* at the age of 15, and now he’s retired. However, sometimes he does little jobs in the *Fundo*. Furthermore, this indigenous peasant household owns almost 7 hectares and seventeen cows, which places them in a better position than other smallholders. After leaving their plot, the local official, almost as if he was reading my mind, stated, yes, they also send their cattle to the *Fundo*.” (**Fieldnotes, 24th June 2020**)

The social mechanism employed to keep the cattle, despite land constraints through the *goce*, is quite ethereal because it does not take the form of a legally binding document. Hence it can quickly become a matter of dispute among rural neighbours. I touched upon this subject with another local official, who replied:

“The cattle here lick stones to survive, that’s why we are trying to promote sheep instead of cows<sup>16</sup>.” (**Conversation with David-PDTI official, 28th September 2020**).

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<sup>16</sup> The *banco ovino* [sheep bank] was another rural development scheme implemented in Perquenco and still active to date; it first started as an aid project developed by Dutch NGOs during the 1980s

Furthermore, when I interviewed the rural elite about how they deal with livestock trespassing onto their properties, I encountered rather divergent responses. Some were fed up while others cracked a smile, followed by an “It’s all part of the job” kind of response.

There are other agricultural practices in La Araucania’s countryside that are inefficient in the eyes of formal experts such as agronomists or veterinarians. Many of these are close to subsistence farming, upon which I shall expand in the following subsection. However, it is worth highlighting that the presence of these inefficient practices, like having more cattle than they should have, stem from the links that the peasantry have with their surroundings. In other words, different production units enmesh into an interplay of neighbour relations, allowing each family farm to maintain its reproduction over time. Hence, quite a few rural dwellers are both growers and rural workers depending on the agricultural calendar, with the latter role enabling them to claim certain rights and perks.

Having considered loss of prominence of the patron-client bond following land reform and the emergence of labour regulations, I will now discuss how different family farms reproduce their holdings in a more contemporary scenario. To this end, I pay attention to the new features the relationships among family farms have gained, adding to the analysis of the role of the fruit sector (see chapter four) as a provider of jobs for the landless and small holders, along with exploring the consequences produced by the shift in the material base from cereals to fruits for family farms in terms of their reproduction.

#### ***6.4.5 Contemporary Rural Araucania and Family Farms.***

The argument that I am building is based upon my ethnographic experience from observing the co-existence among family farms within the territory that belong to

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and then, when the Europeans withdrew from the territory, the program was transferred to the local rural development office.

different agrarian classes. This fact has allowed me to locate them at two different ends within an agrarian class structure: subsistence peasantry and the rural elite. Of course, there are also in-between categories such as petty commodity producers. However, as my fieldwork developed, I soon realised that neighbours' relations among farms were critical when analysing the agrarian social structure. Similarly, the members of each family farm might ascribe to a definite social class, say landless or agrarian wage labourer. Yet, at the same time, they offer their labour or capital to the family farm they belong to, remarkably following irregular patterns. Therefore, those intersections provoke almost myriad possibilities in terms of the shapes taken by family farm units.

Therefore, rural classes are both dynamic and quite hard to grasp, especially if the perspective employed does not seek to display each social subject as a member of a rural household. Likewise, these units of production must be conceived as family farms entangled in a set of social relations that allow them to achieve their reproduction. These social relations, to some extent, operate as an interplay between units of production, whether family farms, corporate agribusinesses (such as the fruit sector), or ploughing a neighbour's land with a tractor.

In addition, the distinction between the grower and the agricultural worker has driven the analysis when exploring agrarian capitalism in a specific territory. This distinction must also be considered alongside the nuances of rural everyday life. One way to do so is by looking at the co-existence of different family farms and how these articulate to each other through the various social mechanisms.

#### ***6.4.6 The Roles of Landless Indigenous Peasants and Their Contributions to Family Farms: Working on and off the Farm.***

The following fieldnote contributes to bringing family farms up to date in a more complex fashion, by shedding light on how indigenous family farms deal with the issue of labour:

“In retrospect, today was one of those days where contradictions appeared everywhere in my attempt to tackle the agrarian class structure. Amid touring Perquenco with the officials whilst accompanying them in their duties, I spoke to three indigenous peasants. Then in the evening, I went to have tea with Felix, one of my informants from Tromilen-Malleo indigenous community. Four encounters with indigenous rural dwellers made me think about the complexities entailed in the family farm concept, especially in terms of how labour is performed to support the reproduction of the rural household along with its dynamic nature.

First, there was an indigenous woman who, after working as a maid in Santiago for over 45 years, decided to return to her community for good. She approached the local officials, wondering if there was any aid available for fencing her small plot. To this they replied that she must fill out some documents in order to register on INDAP’s list of recipients.

On a second visit, I met a young indigenous peasant whose mother was the one entitled to receive INDAP’s welfare. The son had left the countryside long ago, pursuing a career in the mining sector in the north of Chile. Nonetheless, when Covid hit, he became unemployed. As a result, he was obliged to return to the countryside where, in a bid to boost his mother’s plot, he started to provide both capital and labour, transforming the previous subsistence plot into a small farm enterprise where coriander, chives, and parsley are grown, selling their products to the local supermarket.

Similarly, on my third visit to another plot, I was able to speak to Irene a female indigenous peasant member of the farmers’ market. When I asked her if she intended to go to the farmers’ market the next day, she replied ‘Of course’, adding that it was the only secure source of cash. This was something she seemed to appreciate because Covid had brought two of her daughters back to the countryside, meaning two more mouths to feed. In regard to her daughters, one worked as an optician in Temuco (the regional capital), and the other one was a waitress, so, in Irene’s words, they weren’t good at farming.

Meanwhile, in my conversation with Felix, he described his career as a rural worker. He doesn’t consider himself landless because he possesses a few hectares in his indigenous community of origin, which were inherited from his grandmother. However, he refuses to work on that land because it is too isolated, far away in the mountains, so he leases it to one of his uncles in exchange for wheat. He told me that Mapuche children start learning to work the farm as soon as they can look after the livestock, since their first agrarian task is to learn how to herd them. Yet, his first proper job as a rural wage labourer was as a seasonal farm worker when he was a teenager. This was in a blueberry orchard, where he met his partner. It drew my attention that they weren’t the only couple who had met in a fruit orchard, as another couple within the same indigenous community had met in an apple orchard.

Then, when his partner became pregnant, they decided to move up north, and he became a tenant in a *Fundo* which specialised in breeding Aberdeen cattle. However, he didn’t last there long because of mistreatment, so they headed further north and settled in Rancagua, where the fruit industry is very active. His father was a labour contractor whose role was to provide seasonal farm workers to the many orchards near to the area in the Chilean Central Valley, so they lived there for a couple of years until his dad passed away. As a result, they moved again, but this time back to La Araucania. Felix’s mother-in-law allocated him and his family (a wife and two daughters) a plot in Tromilen-Malleo. They can be considered part of Yvonne’s farm enterprise, where blackberries and raspberries are grown.

Felix is highly valued within the indigenous community because he knows how to drive a tractor. Also, he does small tasks for his neighbours like fencing or ploughing

with the tractor, especially for those members who are single mothers, in exchange for cash or a portion of the harvest like potatoes or broad beans. Yet his true passion starts in summer during fire season when he becomes a wildland firefighter.” (Fieldnotes, 17th November 2020)

The four individuals depicted in this ethnographic vignette exhibit a few variables worth unpacking when addressing the family farm concept in La Araucania in a more up-to-date fashion. For example, one aspect relates to labour mobility and how the countryside embodies a source of security. In a sense, the country represents the notion of food security, whether through consuming what is grown or selling farm products in exchange for cash, which ultimately leads to access to subsistence commodities. In this way, the farm arises as the site where basic needs are satisfied regardless of age, particularly for rural indigenous people.

It is worth bearing in mind that the mechanisation of cereals (see chapter four) had brought about a considerable decrease in the numbers of hands required to work the land in the large estates. Meanwhile, the detachment between patrons and agrarian workers occurred almost simultaneously. As a result, many Mapuche indigenous people sought opportunities outside the countryside because subsistence indigenous family farms operated so close to the survival margin. Regarding mobility, authors like McAreavey (2017) have depicted migration as a social phenomenon that usually entails more than simply arriving at the destination. Hence, in the present study, the labour mobility embraced by those indigenous peasants might be more accurately framed as a back-and-forth movement that never loses sight of the family farm:

Carlos: “Have you ever worked as something else not related to farming?”

Yvonne: “Yes, as a maid in La Dehesa, the posh neighbourhood in Santiago.”

Carlos: “How old were you when you left the countryside?”

Yvonne: “I was around 25. I left because I got pregnant, so I asked my mom to look after the girls. Meanwhile, I was working in Santiago because my partner was useless at that time. So, I was with one foot in the city and another in the countryside as the girls were here. Before that, I worked as a seasonal farm worker when I was younger, but that is related to farming.” (Interview with Yvonne, 8th January 2021)

To put it differently, the patron-client bond might have gone, but on the other hand, the link between the Mapuche and the countryside has become more evident and

therefore strengthened. Thus, underlying the working off farm phenomenon an inverse flux operates, bringing people back to the countryside.

My intentions here are not to romanticise Mapuche people as being very attached to the land, particularly given that the majority of them live in Santiago (Levil, 2006; Bengoa, 2007; Álvarez and Imilan, 2008; Imilan, 2017), but rather to point out that they tend to eventually return to the countryside, no matter how long it takes, because of the security which emanates from the rural setting.

Thus, there comes a moment in their lives when they decide to leave the farm and begin to work off farm. These periods involve differing time periods depending on each person's life story and subjectivity. As noted above, some of them work their entire adult life in urban areas then return to the countryside whenever they feel it is time to do so, while others engage in a sort of coming and going movement that is more constant. Either way, these indigenous communities see the countryside as a space they can rely on, especially during times of crisis.

Furthermore, among those practices that are deemed utterly inefficient in experts' eyes, one is related to the fact that there are many members of the indigenous community who work outside of the countryside. The so-called *visitas* [call in] is a custom that involves a brief return from a family farm member who is working off farm. This typically occurs in summer time when labour on the farm is quite demanding as the harvest season is approaching. This practice consists of the subsistence family farm slaughtering and preparing one of its livestock to welcome the member back into the community. I observed multiple times how local officials struggled to convince smallholders to dispense with their pigs or cows. The rationale behind the officials' advice was that the holdings were too small to keep livestock. Moreover, the additional maintenance costs of animal husbandry (particularly in terms of feed) was another point they raised, arguing that it would be far more efficient for these indigenous people to simply buy meat in the supermarket. In short, the officials were trying to persuade indigenous peasants to adopt cash crops like

strawberries or fresh vegetables, but in order to do so they would need to dispose of their livestock.

However, the local officials overlooked the symbolic power of gifts from a sociological lens; that is, the function of the gift in order to strengthen social bonds (Mauss, 2002). Therefore, breeding livestock is entirely different from buying meat in a supermarket. The former means of offering food to one of their offspring is imbued with aspects related to culture, personhood, and feelings, while the latter approach does not feel the same (in spite of it being more efficient to rely on the supermarket to show love and care). Therefore, the *visitas* practice emerges as a clear example adopted by subsistence family farms where market forces have not yet imposed their rationale.

There are other elements to ponder when addressing the movement of people off of the farm before their eventual return. For instance, the safe space the indigenous community embodies is, to some extent, given by the legal status indigenous land has in terms of being imprescriptible and inembargable according to Chilean legislation (Bauer, 2016). This implies tremendous certainty that the indigenous land will remain in their hands for all time. However, the downside is a lack of clarity concerning who actually owns the land, as it is difficult to find legal documents showing ownership. This translates into indigenous peasants being more prone to abandoning farm duties, because of the demographic pressure they exercise over limited indigenous land.

In this regard, at least two outcomes are worth noting. The first is the creation of indigenous landless. In other words, the co-existence of different generations within one plot near subsistence, based upon the eventual allocation of a tiny fraction of the already tiny holding once the children grow up and start new families of their own (see case study). Consequently, these young landless peasants are obliged to juggle between on and off farm work until their parents either inherit the farm or secure a subsidy to purchase new land, which was the situation for many subjects of the case study. In contrast, the other possible outcome is that the plot becomes

available to be leased because the owners are working off farm, which is relevant in terms of neighbour relations as the better-off farmers tend to start looking at these plots as fertile terrain to expand their enterprises. Therefore, ownership of land and food production do not necessarily coincide. As has been noted above, many extensive estate holdings and mid-sized farms stem from lease agreements, especially those of cereal growers who are market-oriented:

Carlos: “The land you lease, how does it work?”

Silvio: “That’s an inheritance, like 22 hectares, but they are like eight brothers, so they have a huge mess. Besides, they left the countryside, and they are in Santiago at the moment. So, in the meantime, we work that land.”

Carlos: “What about the *gringo* [wealthy white farmer], your neighbour [...], does he also lease here in the indigenous community?”

Silvio: “Oh, that’s another problem. In my opinion, indigenous shouldn’t be allowed to lease their plots to outsiders, as simple as that. So, you can promote a sort of endogenous development. But what happens, there is envy among us, so Mapuche indigenous people prefer to lease their land to a rich farmer instead of someone from the community. You see, here, the rich farmer has access to hundreds of hectares and people agreed to lease their plots.” (**Interview with Silvio, 9th November 2020**)

In terms of the work performed by the subsistence indigenous peasants off the farm, although these vary, some jobs are more likely to be filled by rural dwellers. In rural settings, the more traditional jobs involve working *apatronados* (in the *Fundos*) or as seasonal farm workers in the fruit orchards, whether in the north or in the new orchards that have been emerging within the region. Also, rural men can seek work as wildland firefighters or as chainsaw operators in the timber sector. However, the caveat is that all these jobs are fairly seasonal, so they complement the nature of farming as an activity that is heavily influenced by time, to some extent. Meanwhile, in terms of urban jobs, gender and age are the variables driving the life paths that rural inhabitants might follow when deciding to leave the countryside. For example, the youngest generations have had more educational opportunities than their predecessors so are not necessarily constrained to following one definite path.

In contrast, for the generations who did not have the privilege of education, gender is quite revealing. It was a recurrent theme in my interviews that indigenous women left their communities at early ages to work as maids, childminders or housekeepers in wealthy neighbours in Santiago (Rain, Pujal and Mora 2020). Although it is known

that some Mapuche men migrate to work in the construction sector and bakeries (Álvarez and Imilan, 2008), in the present study only two male informants had apparently done those jobs. Thus, the oldest Mapuche generation, by and large, have typically performed blue-collar jobs upon leaving the farm.

In the present ethnography, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, a common response from indigenous peasants was that they approached the labour market as seasonal farm workers. Thus the fruit sector plays a significant role in providing workplaces for rural dwellers, regardless of age or gender. Some authors have observed that the Chilean fruit sector highly appreciates female labour (Barrientos, 1997; Valdés, 2012). Yet, when I interviewed the farmers and companies that grow fruit for export, they signalled that there was a fair gender parity among their seasonal farm workers. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that women were generally more tender in treating the fruits, and that this was an asset in the industry, especially for export purposes, because of the perishability issue.

Looking at this from the point of view of female indigenous landless peasants, they are highly appreciative of the momentum that the fruit industry is gaining within the region, basically because it is seasonal work that is paid on a piece work basis, meaning they can make a lot of money in a short period of time. In addition, the orchards are moving closer and closer to their communities. All of these features have lured them to work as seasonal farm workers, mainly because the orchards allow the female indigenous peasant to juggle childcare and work. Nonetheless, working as a seasonal farm worker in fruit orchards is not for everyone. Even though most of this group have done it, others quit at the first possible opportunity, for instance if they become landed:

Carlos: "What are your thoughts about all the orchards appearing around here?"

Mireya: "You know I only worked once in an apple orchard in the Central Valley many years ago, and I hated it [...], I got sunburned, couldn't cope with it. I'd rather work as a housekeeper. But I think it's convenient having the orchard around, the lads and lasses don't believe it when you tell them people used to travel thousands of kilometres to the north of Chile to work on the fruit. Nowadays they have the opportunity within the same *comuna* [town]. See the lasses here, especially the single mothers, I couldn't do what they do now. I had to leave my kids with my mom and work as a maid. Nowadays, the work is just a stone's throw away. Luckily we've got our little plot here in Tromilen-Malleo, and Stefano (her partner) is the one who

works off farm while I'm in charge of the *chakra* [vegetable garden].” (Interview with Mireya, 16th March 2021)

Other rural dwellers, meanwhile, still engage in seasonal farm work in the fruit orchards every year since it is a secure way to raise cash. In turn, the landless indigenous peasants, if they feel a powerful commitment to the family farm enterprise, will be keen to invest their earnings there after working off farm:

Carlos: “Hey Silvio, do you have any ways of saving up?”

Silvio: “Whenever I’m short, I sell a pig or a cow. That’s my bank, hahaha.”

Carlos: “That’s really interesting.”

Silvio: “Aside from that, you asked why we work as seasonal farm workers, whereas we could apply the labour to the family farm. Well, sometimes the farm needs money instead of hands. I’ll give you an example. I’ve just returned from the Central Valley, I was pruning the vineyards. Then why did I leave the farm? Because we needed to dig a well and start designing the blackberries’ irrigation system. Hence my brother and I headed to the north and worked a bit off the farm for about 20 days.” (Interview with Silvio, 9th November 2020)

This repertoire of options that smallholders have at their disposal to achieve their reproduction represents only a fraction of how the countryside is configurated nowadays. Therefore, it is equally important to tackle how wealthy farmers complement the rural landscape thus far laid out.

#### ***6.4.7 The Better-off Farmers and Neighbour Relations.***

The better-off farmer class is in itself rather ambiguous too. Relying solely upon farm size can be misleading if the farm lacks an irrigation system or if the crops grown do not fetch a high price in the market. When it comes to cereal growers, good farmers are judged by their peers according to their yield sizes. Consequently, they aim for a high yield, roughly 100 *quintales*<sup>17</sup> per hectare:

Andres: “In cereals, the business comes down to volume, so in order to have a good yield, you basically apply economies of scale - the larger the surface you can farm, the more yield you’ll get. So, when I became a farmer, the first thing I did was to look at my neighbours and assess their output. I immediately noticed those who got good yields and I tried to copy them. Do you know how much it costs to produce wheat like a pro?”

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<sup>17</sup> A unit of volume that is used to measure agricultural production; 1 *quintal* = 100 kilos

Carlos: "No idea!"

Andres: "Around \$800,000 CLP, that's one hectare, from sowing to harvest. It's madness, but that's what it costs."

Carlos: "So at least 80 *quintales* per hectare would make a good return?"

Andres: "Yes, but it would depend on the market price [he takes a calculator out of the drawer]. Let's say the *quintal* is \$15,000 CLP, so 80 times \$15,000 CLP equals \$1.2m CLP. So you get a profit margin of \$400,000 CLP. But since running a farm is a business, let's maximise the yield. So I aim for 100 *quintales* per hectare. I could get more or less, but that's my target, anyone who calls himself a good cereal grower should aim at that figure. 100 *quintales* with a market price of \$15,000 CLP is \$1.5m CLP. Last year the price was \$19,000 CLP, so \$1.9m CLP per hectare. I made \$1m CLP per hectare, but it's easier said than done. It requires you to be diligent and pragmatic [...], that's what it takes." **(Interview with Andres, 2nd November 2020)**

Another wealthy farmer shared a similar reflection:

"Hands down, La Araucania is the best place to grow cereals. But from what I see around the neighbourhood, smallholders have a peak of production that is low, no more than 50 *quintales* per hectare. Taking into account the cost is around 40 *quintales* per hectare, so they get a profit margin of 10 *quintales*. If I'm generous that's \$20,000 CLP per *quintal*, that is \$200,000 CLP per year, then you have to divide that by 12 months. What I'm trying to tell you is that, for smallholders, cereals are not business at all. While for us, it is business because we work more land, and we have a yield per hectare that's at least double what they have." **(Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)**

Thus, through the lens of the crop type (cereals) and the yield, this stratum needs to combine at least three factors to succeed: large surfaces, technology, and remarkable work ethic. As discussed in the first part of this chapter, the former factor does not necessarily entail ownership and instead takes the form of leasing agreements. Those lease agreements, which in many cases are not formal and are paid in cash and kind, are another expression of how neighbour relations in the countryside allow the reproduction of family farm units which are fully market-oriented. Therefore, underlying the formation of the most thriving class operates the notion that rural classes are interdependent, even in terms of accessing land.

Although access to technology and its adoption is chiefly mediated by capital, class alliances also play a significant role and offer another way to frame neighbour relations. As discussed previously (chapter four), the changes in farming methods implemented during the Green Revolution brought about a soar in cereal yields. This

shift, promoted by the Alliance for Progress, has been embraced by most growers regardless of the agrarian class to which they belong. In contrast, the second boost came thanks to enhanced seeds, cutting-edge fertilisers, and irrigation systems. All these means of production are traded in the market, so what would determine how accessible these inputs are is the class location of the farmers within the agrarian class structure.

For example, after learning that most of La Araucania's countryside was rain-fed, something that drew my attention was the presence of centre-pivot irrigation systems as a feature of the rural landscape. Nonetheless, after some time in the field, I realised that these were contingency plans wealthy farmers had in case of drought and, to a lesser extent, to increase their production. Meanwhile, the adoption of enhanced seeds and fertilisers is possible because these better-off farmers have the means to hire advisors (agronomists), whose role (aside from monitoring their crops) is to keep them up to date on the direction of the industry. Another way in which they become aware of the latest innovations in regard to farming is through the *Grupos de Transferencia Tecnologica* or GTT, which is a non-profit organisation that organises discussion sessions according to the interests of the farmers in each region of Chile. During each session, the members seek to deepen their knowledge of one particular aspect, such as fruits, cattle breeding, cereals, etc. Whether or not a particular farmer is a GTT member has proven to be a useful indicator when trying to locate them within the class structure, since all of the members who I deemed to be better-off farmers have been involved. Furthermore, a highly appreciated therapeutic aspect of the GTT sessions involves gathering and sharing experiences. In addition, some members wait until it is their turn to host the GTT on their own farm before making key decisions:

Ernesto: "You know many farmers wait to host the GTT to make a big decision."

Carlos: "Really?"

Ernesto: "Basically, it is a showcase, so you host the GTT and show your farm to the farmers. The idea is that you have to be as honest as possible because the group will ask you critical questions and will point out the good, the bad and the ugly. Like why is that calf limping? What type of wire are you using for fencing? We saw the leaves of your wheat weren't vigorous enough, what sort of fungicide are you using, and so on. But because we're all farmers and friends it's not like you are being mean just because the idea is that you can improve your production."  
(Interview with Ernesto, 23rd March 2021)

In this vein, the better-off farmers use spaces like the GTT to enhance their production and thereby achieve their reproduction as rural households. The class formation can be observed due to these spaces where they mingle, share values and expectations existing within their own strata, or at least within rural classes that are relatively close. It can be suggested that better-off farmers require peer review in order to be competitive and to navigate a sector like agriculture which has been liberalised (meaning that if the food can be grown more cheaply offshore then the state will most likely lean toward that direction instead of promoting its own growers). Therefore, this type of alliance among the better-off farmers has yielded promising results up to now.

Similarly, when it comes to agrochemicals, farmers within this class also seek to team up with others so that they can buy in bulk and access better prices. Since they are already large-sized farmers in their own right, banding together with others of the same kind enables them to purchase many tonnes of inputs like fertilisers or enhanced seeds for even better prices:

Carlos: “Are you involved in any organisation or co-op?”

Andres: “Yes, we’ve got this enterprise comprised of 13 farmers. We made it because, many years ago, the intermediaries of agrochemicals were profiting too much and pushing our revenues down. So, we decided to create an enterprise to buy fertilisers in bulk directly from the providers. To date this has been one of the most brilliant ideas we have had.”

Carlos: “Many farmers have brought up the same issue about the middlemen and the intermediaries.”

Andres: “There was a year when the prices of fertilisers skyrocketed, we quickly reacted with this company as we have a contact in Mexico. We bought the fertilisers directly, we got Monoammonium Phosphate and Triple Superphosphate, it was great as we could get a big bargain and you know what, in Mexico, they fill up the ship by eye! They don’t weigh the fertilisers at all, so you usually get a bit more, hahaha!”  
**(Interview with Andres, 2nd November 2020)**

#### ***6.4.8 Assistance to the Smallholders.***

Access to a better price for inputs that are traded in the market entails a kind of class alliance between the better-off farmers and the smallholders, but one which is

hard to grasp if someone is not in the field asking and observing neighbour relations among classes of growers. As such, the role of better-off farmers in providing both technical assistance and inputs to smallholders generates a mechanism of differentiation among those who are less privileged with land but have certain features that large-sized farmers admire, like the work ethic embedded in those smallholders who wish to become entrepreneurs. Therefore, the elevated location within the class structure of certain smallholders can be explained by them being beneficiaries of their relationships with wealthy farmers.

The wealthy farmers no longer have a moral obligation to provide for those less favoured any more, due to the dissolution of patron-client relations. However, if they are lucky enough, those smallholders who appear fit to embark on rural enterprises might receive the blessing of a better-off farmer, which translates into a massive load off their backs. Since these family farms act as both owners and agrarian workers, it is interesting to assert that upward mobility within the class structure is to some extent facilitated by the relationships between the wealthy farmers and the smallholders. This social mechanism is based on the generosity of better-off growers to the smallholders. I noticed this when a few smallholders told me their improvements were thanks to the agency of rich neighbours:

“Today Felicinda told me she got a new fence, because her neighbour acknowledged her plot was well kept and beautiful, highlighting the flowers and the poultry. Her neighbour also compared her plot against the other ones, claiming she had something that the others didn’t have as she had pulled out the weed on her own, resulting in him offering to enclose Felicinda’s plot free of charge.” (**Fieldnotes, 4th December 2020**)

Likewise, when I was interviewing the capitalist farmers, everyone said that they usually assisted a few rural people. For instance, the farmer who secures agrochemicals at a lower price, because he buys in bulk and imports directly, then re-sells the fertilisers or enhanced seeds at the same rate, that is to say at a fair price, but only to a few smallholders who he deems to be good growers. Another example of the same is that better-off farmers also provide technical assistance and knowledge transfer to the smallholders, in addition to ploughing the land with their machinery:

Adrian: “I don’t do it with everyone. You can count them on the fingers of one hand, but yeah, if I can help, I’ll do it. For example, a few extra hectares don’t add up to much when I’m ploughing with the tractor. I sow 500 hectares, so if a neighbour needs to plough one or two hectares, I’ll do it [...], not a big deal.” (**Interview with Adrian, 13th November 2020**)

The latter account shows the importance of neighbour relations and class alliances when accessing the means of production, such as machinery, which can be hard to obtain through market relations, especially for smallholders. Furthermore, as explained in the case study, when smallholders lack machinery they normally have to rely on hiring it. Still, because their surfaces are too small, they are usually at the back of the queue. This leads to delays in the agrarian tasks they need to perform, which in turn can impact their overall yield. Thus, I observed how tractors and machinery were generally vital for moving in an upward direction within the agrarian class structure.

#### ***6.4.9 Class Struggles and Class Alliances.***

A more traditional approach to tackling class relations within the countryside is to examine the conflict between classes. Class struggle is generally seen as the main force driving history (Giddens, 1971; Poulantzas, 1979). Accordingly, a line between two different classes is drawn, and clashes over the means of production will shape the trajectory of history. Thus, in the present ethnography, class struggle alongside mechanisms of sabotage and resistance were witnessed in different ways in the countryside. The ones I was able to witness (either while they were unfolding or their aftermaths) were arson attacks, tossing herbicide over crops, burning of crops, and farm seizures. In effect, the struggle is manifold, yet it would be far-fetched to hope to fully unpack it here, since transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches are much more appropriate to deal with such a complex matter.

It is useful to recapitulate some of the main elements shaping the politics of Mapuche land reclamation. In 1996, with democracy being reinstated in Chile, the Chilean state introduced Indigenous Law 19.253. Specifically, when the law was enacted, Article 20 created the Fondo de Tierra y Aguas (fund of land and water) as the

institutional means to compensate for indigenous displacement and the encroachment of their territory provoked by the Chilean State's occupation of Mapuche indigenous territory (1860-1883). However, one should be aware that Mapuche people can be categorised into several sub-groups, signalling territorial identities, such as Pewenches, Nagches, Huilliches, or Tehuelches (Millalén et al., 2006). Consequently, land reclamation becomes a complex subject if one does not recognise the fact that differentiated Indigenous groups are all pursuing the recovery of a finite asset, such as land.

Along these lines, Ugarte, Melin, and Caniguán (2021) delved into the Mapuche people's understanding of territory to propose a decolonised view of territorial planning. They argue that Indigenous planning is a powerful tool to assess both Indigenous territorial loss and potential land reclamation attempts. However, by treating Mapuche ethnic identity as a whole, they overlooked the tensions and alliances provoked by land purchasing driven by institutional action, which entails relocation. Thus, even though Indigenous people can legitimately claim compensation and access to territory, tensions and contradictions still emerge in terms of who has the right to reclaim land. This is especially the case in relation to the arrival of newcomers, such as new generations or Indigenous groups that have been relocated (Li, 2007). In fact, Di Giminiani (2018) has uncovered the implicit contest over land among Indigenous communities seeking land compensation via the institutional pathway. Therefore, it can be seen that the intervention of the Chilean State in addressing the land shortages suffered by Mapuche Indigenous people has triggered competition within the same Indigenous group.

Meanwhile, Bauer (2016) has observed that some of these tensions stem from differing conceptualisations of land and territory when the policy was originally framed. This distance between land and territory suggests that the conceptualisation of the latter outgrows the former, in the sense that it considers historical, political, cultural, economic, and societal components. Conversely, Chilean public policies have fallen short in addressing Indigenous land struggle by failing to fully recognise the multiplicity of elements shaping Mapuche Indigenous territory. Indeed, the Chilean State approaches the land issue mainly by highlighting its economic use over

societal relations, seemingly prioritising efforts to overcome Mapuche rural impoverishment rather than engaging with broader Indigenous demands associated with the notion of territory.

As can be noticed, the aspect of land ownership is a cornerstone. Hence, the seizures of *Fundos* exercised by indigenous peasants are recurrent and are an evident expression of the class struggle. At the same time, they can also signal some sort of class alliance. Therefore, in order to provide a more detailed context of the rural political landscape in question, at least two important ideas need to be put forward.



Figure 13: *Fundo* marked with mapuche flags (Picture taken by the author).

Firstly, one has to acknowledge that marking a plot does not necessarily mean that the farm will be seized, as it could mean quite the opposite. The following ethnographic vignette, which comes from a conversation I had during the celebration of a birthday party in the Tromilen-Malleo indigenous community, serves to illustrate this point:

Carlos: "I'm really struck by the aesthetics involved in the marking and the seizure of farms, like how you intervene the bus stops with graffiti and the flags Mapuche people use to declare they want to reclaim the land (see figure 13)."

Sonia: "Don't believe in everything you see Carlitos, hahaha!"

Carlos: "What do you mean?"

Sonia: "At least the plots marked in Veronica-Tromilen are bullshit. Many fields are marked to back up the wealthy farmers, it is just for show [...], a facade."

Felix: "Although in my community of origin, people are for real, you remember when I took you to play football there?"

Carlos: "Indeed, I remember I felt like I was entering into quite an autonomous territory."

Felix: "The thing is indigenous people here in Perquenco are too tamed, they've got *ahuincaron* [westernised]."

Fatima: "I'm afraid I have to disagree. We have fought for our rights here too. It's more complex than that, Carlos. Many indigenous people are reclaiming land so they can become landed or expand their territory. There was a rumour that indigenous communities from the north were looking for farms here and marking them. As a result, people started to mark the plots to prevent outsider indigenous people from relocating here. And yes, to some extent, it's true that if the rich farmer is a good neighbour, better the devil you know than the devil you don't." (**Conversation with Sonia, Felix and Fatima, 19th October 2020**)

Secondly, the consequences of the struggle are not always faced just by the most powerful or better-off growers, since those affected by protest action could also be indigenous peasants located at the very bottom of the agrarian class structure. Hence, I assert that the conflict cannot be simply reduced to a David *versus* Goliath battle, as to do so would be an awful mistake; yet the media and scholars such as Patricia Richards (2010) or Jose Bengoa (2007) have usually portrayed the conflict in that fashion.

Embracing that narrative would lead to obscuring the synergies and relationships among different strata of farmers, mainly due to them being scattered within the same territory. This means that, even if the attacks target wealthy farmers, the consequences for rural smallholders' neighbours must also be considered in order to paint a fuller picture. The following ethnographic extract assists in this:

"I was driving to meet Franco so that I could conduct one of my last interviews. He is one of the few indigenous community members that own a tractor. Therefore, he's always in high demand as his neighbours call him constantly to plough or harvest their plots (on a paid basis). January and February are particularly busy for him because people are in the middle of threshing.

When I entered the indigenous community, I saw big black smoke coming from the cereal fields in the distance. Then when I arrived at his place, Amelia (his partner) told me he was asleep because yesterday he worked till late. She added: 'You see, his phone won't stop ringing, people are in a hurry because there are many attacks on the crops.'

'Yes, I saw black smoke on my way', I said.

She replied: ‘It’s the conflict, those who are more radical ask the rich to give up a portion of their harvest. Otherwise, they’ll burn the crops. The downside is that we are all growers, some of us are small, others are mid-sized, to have a fire at this time of the year is not ideal [...], just one spark, and you can lose your harvest. That’s why everyone is calling Franco, so they can do their threshing ASAP.’” **(Fieldnotes, 21st January 2021)**

By only looking at the matter of land and by drawing on a relational perspective, I suggest that, on the one hand, it is true that many indigenous peasants are landless, or their holdings are too small to enable reproduction. Therefore, their chances of making a living from farming are limited. In that context, the government, in response to calls for social justice, introduced a public policy to address Mapuche indigenous people’s lack of territory, which consisted of purchasing land and distributing it among those entitled to such a benefit (see the case study). On the other hand, the rich farmers who are in possession of farms might feel pressurised to sell their estates once they are marked by Mapuche flags. This inevitably leads to a period of hard bargaining between the indigenous people (who want to become landed, increase their estates, or reclaim their ancient territory), the better-off farmers, and the state.

A number of the wealthy farmers offered statements regarding their perceptions about this issue. One female farmer shared her vision about the conflict: “If something is rightfully mine, why do I have to sell it? It’s just inappropriate.” **(Interview with Gina, 23rd August 2020)**. Another farmer, who sold a portion of his farm, told me his reasons: “After years of struggle, I decided to sell the farm. There is a point when you just want peace of mind.” **(Interview with Santino, 10th October 2020)**. Along the same lines, one of the most prominent farmers I interviewed told me that he was considering selling a portion of his farm, stating that he did not want to have problems with his neighbours:

Andres: “On 19th February 2019, a warehouse we had in my mom’s plot was burned to ashes. This year (2020), that land was seized by the Mapuche people.”

Carlos: “From here or outside?”

Andres: “They’re from here. To be honest, we have had an excellent relationship with them since always, but they were looking for farms and couldn’t find any, so they decided to seize my mom’s plot. I told them that field, although I work it, is not mine. We’re five brothers and sisters, so any decision has to be talked through with them. So, we are thinking of just giving up that field.”

Carlos: "Via CONADI (the state)?"

Andres: "Of course, so here we are, sending the first letters that we are keen to sell it, so CONADI can make us an offer. Because the main thing is to keep having a friendly relationship with them, we are neighbours!" (**Interview with Andres, 2nd November 2020**)

This process of selling and purchasing land is laden with red tape and could take years to be finalised. Thus, those who are less favoured and seek to reclaim land have radicalised their tactics to speed up the process, such as by blocking motorways (see case study) or demonstrating at the airport (the indigenous Mapuche who exported apples mentioned doing that). Nonetheless, land ownership might be better viewed from a cultural or political perspective, since food production does not play a significant role due to everything that has been laid out before. In a nutshell, large-sized farms base their production on leasing out land, while indigenous peasants rely on a set of social mechanisms that allow them to continue. On some occasions, because the transfer of land does not come with a package of complementary benefits (such as houses, electricity, access to tap water, etc.), the land acquired becomes just an empty field. Consequently, indigenous peasant beneficiaries (who might lack capital despite being newly landed) are forced to head toward the labour market, and the land eventually becomes available for a grower.

The intromission of the state through this public policy has triggered certain outcomes that, in effect, seem to run counter to its spirit. Donoso (2017) has shown how the policy provoked a distortion of the land market, which I was also able to corroborate during my interviews when I asked a better-off farmer why he does not buy land:

Carlos: "Hey Marcelo, you said most of the land you work is under leased agreements. Why don't you buy more land?"

Ernesto: "Yes, almost everything is leased. I used to have a *Fundo* but had to sell it because I was indebted. So, currently, I own 25 hectares, and the other 280 are leased. Nowadays, it is impossible to buy land because CONADI [the state] has incentivised high prices in the land market, \$10m CLP per hectare when usually it was \$4m CLP. There's no way a farmer could afford those prices." (**Interview with Ernesto, 23rd March 2021**)

Furthermore, underlying the process of purchasing land through CONADI is the disruption caused in the rural social fabric when an indigenous community is being

relocated. From the point of view of local municipalities, each new indigenous community arriving in their territory entails more complexity for their local services, which will experience more demand in terms of rubbish collections, access to tap water, and other routine services. Meanwhile, from the viewpoint of wealthy farmers, these new communities could lead to mayhem within “the rural neighbourhood”. During my fieldwork I encountered two local stories which illustrated the disruption that new indigenous communities can provoke to the rural social fabric.

In Perquenco, there is an apple orchard that has been portrayed in the media as a successful case of land being purchased by the state and transferred to an indigenous community (whose original location was close to the airport, roughly 100 kilometres away). As a result of achieving relative success in becoming a rural cooperative that exports tonnes of apples to different markets abroad, this group’s case is frequently brought up by local politicians as an example worthy of being emulated. However, when I interviewed the leader of the cooperative, a female Mapuche, about the challenges they had faced in establishing their company and how she felt about being an outsider when relocated, she said that the relationship was initially complicated, but they had to work it out and it is now apparently going better:

Carlos: “You’re surrounded by orchards here?”

Rauque: “Good grief! A bunch of rich farmers are our neighbours.”

Carlos: “How does that work? I mean, because you are, in a way, outsiders.”

Rauque: “There is a farmer who grows cherries just around the corner. Do you know him?”

Carlos: “Indeed, I met him and interviewed him.”

Rauque: “So, this guy came when we first were starting this company, and because he had problems with Mapuche before, he wanted us to swap land because he’s got another farm, so he wanted us out. But I told him that I still had money from the compensation CONADI gave us from our *Titulo de Merced*, and if he was too bothered about us I could buy his orchard [...]. You know these people think they can solve everything with money, so I played the same game.”

Carlos: “I knew he had a problem with Mapuche people, but why was he like that with you?”

Rauque: “Because wealthy farmers are racist Carlos, they put us all in the same bracket. So, this guy did everything to kick us out, but one year his tractor broke down, and he was behind in his work, so he came here, and we helped him. Another time he came for the sprayer and we handed it over, because we need to work things out, we are neighbours and can’t fight like cat and dog forever.” (**Interview with cooperative Rauque, 19th March 2021**)

Along the same lines, when I asked Mercedes (a female farmer who is also a local politician) about her indigenous neighbours, she told me that she believed the relationship was good, by and large; but she did refer to one relocated indigenous community as being more mischievous, stressing that she was fed up with their livestock trespassing on her property and mentioning a time when they attempted to mark her farm with a Mapuche flag. But the bottom line in her rationale was that they were not from there: “We’ve had a good relationship with our indigenous neighbours, but since the other ones arrived they’ve started to kick the hornet’s nest.” (**interview with Mercedes, 6th November 2020**). A few months later, I had the opportunity to chat with the *lonko* [chief] of this new community that she was referring to, and asked him about the incident with the flag and his perceptions regarding the territory:

Carlos: “You know, some people think this is a sort of conflictive indigenous community.”

Jose: “Yeah, I’m aware, the rich farmers freaked out when they realised indigenous people from Lumaco were going to settle here in Perquenco,ahaha. When we arrived here, I encountered Mapuche people that weren’t living as we do, they were westernised, they’d lost our language, heritage, our culture [...]. I think the Mapuche were too accustomed to the patron’s welfare, many of them were arse-lickers, but not anymore. So now we are teaching them.”

Carlos: “What happened with your neighbour?”

Jose: “Oh, you heard about that? The thing is that when we arrived, we told the rich farmers that we weren’t looking for trouble and that we were going to work the land, and so it has been for over 10 years since we got relocated. But last year, we made a bit of noise, but there was a reason.”

Carlos: “Which is?”

Jose: “The lads came to talk, seeking advice. They had become aware they didn’t have enough land to survive. So, I told them I would support them in whatever action was needed. So, one day we gathered, and we went to visit her, she wasn’t there, so we marked it, and we put down our flag and a banner that we wanted to reclaim this land, but like everyone else does it. She panicked, she called the police. But I told her it wasn’t our intention to seize her farm. We rather wanted to buy it via CONADI. That’s the story.” (**Interview with Jose, 20th January 2021**)

James Scott (1976) claims that it is almost impossible to know beforehand when the dynamite is about to explode in agrarian societies undergoing class struggle, hence social scientists should instead focus on the components of the dynamite. Thus, what has been laid out shows how class struggle becomes shaped by neighbour relations within the countryside. These can take different directions according to how the

family farms intertwine from one to another. As such, the development of the relationships among different classes of farmers have their ups and downs. However, variables such as race and age can heavily fuel clashes between classes of farmers. On the other hand, friendly relationships, expressed in access to machinery for instance, can really make a difference in making the agrarian social fabric more cohesive, irrespective of inequality.

To define which variable carries more weight in shaping agrarian social class relationships is not something that I particularly seek to pursue in this academic endeavour, but rather I wish to highlight that these variables underpin the route by which historical materialism will lean in a specific direction. To put it differently, the relationship among farmers is highly contingent as it can transition from class alliance to class struggle and back again. Therefore, control over land is undoubtedly vital to determining agrarian classes, yet it cannot be reduced entirely to that matter.

## **6.5 Back to the Beginning: Common Ground in Family Farms.**

Considering that La Araucania suffers from a backdrop of social violence, identifying those shared elements that are common to both peasants and farmers, both within their social imaginary and their agrarian practice, appears pivotal when seeking spaces where social cohesion can be obtained. Although most of this chapter has dealt with the routes family farms have taken in their differentiation, through the lens of class, it is equally important to pay attention to the common ground that growers share. To this end, I explore the practices and attitudes where there are similarities, regardless of size of holdings or how deeply subsumed growers were in market relations. In this way, the family farm unit, in its entire complexity as a place of production where labour and capital are fixed together, along with how they approach the market, functions as an empirical basis from which to recognise the similarities that family farms in La Araucania have.

Two spheres of the everyday rural life that family farms face will be highlighted: firstly, stubble burning, which is an agrarian practice related to agriculture, carried out by all regardless of class; and secondly, the challenges imposed by market relations in terms of circulation of commodities. This approach will allow me to argue that the way in which food systems are organised has detrimental effects on the livelihoods of rural households irrespective of class, mainly because of the paradox which the value chain posits when conceiving food production and food consumption in that fashion. Although these are two sides of the same coin, many problems that growers encounter stem from the apparent distance between these two elements.

When interacting with the environment through farming methods, most cultivators deal with the double pressures of how to harmonise caring for the environment whilst growing food to certain standards. In this vein, the question of what types of farmers have the best practices directly echoes differentiation patterns. However, after years of modernisation in agriculture, with cereals being the prime example of an intensive mode of production driven by yield, a set of farming practices have been embraced and therefore shared by most of the growers in La Araucania. These shared agrarian practices cast doubt on the importance of capital when mitigating those practices that are most harmful to the environment, due to them not being mediated by class. Chapter four showed the importance of grain for rural inhabitants and described the effects of it becoming the first agricultural sector to achieve full mechanisation, a way of agriculture that is to some extent fully democratised among growers. That agrarian change brought about a definite way to tackle the cultivation of grains. Remarkably, people stopped leaving the land in an idle state and sought crop rotation, a feasible way in which to grow cereals every year.

Burning stubble, which is a fundamental task that marks either the beginning or the end of each season when growing cereals, emerges as one of those agrarian practices worth reflecting on because it is widely used by grain cultivators regardless of class. This agrarian practice shakes the conviction that indigenous or smallholders might be more sustainable than other growers, and leads to arguing that the specific agrarian sector at stake plays a more significant role in determining the agency each production unit enacts when growing food:

“At least burning stubble has now been regularised [...], there is a calendar where you are allowed to do it. Before people did it without following any pattern, so there was mayhem, especially because the fire can get out of control and reach houses, schools, or any infrastructure. So it is not something we are glad to do, there is a lot of remorse in doing it, yet it is something that everybody does.”  
**(Interview with Victor, 22nd December 2020)**

It is interesting to point out that, when I asked the grain cultivators if they burn stubble, their nods were usually accompanied by an expression of guilt or shame. They are aware that this practice is not well received by the planet nor by their neighbours. However, the caveat again lies in how the cereal sector has been structured by wider forces, or as one mid-sized farmer eloquently put it:

Ernesto: “You know who covers the cost when the food does not meet the standard?”

Carlos: “I don’t know.”

Ernesto: “The farmer does. Furthermore, there are a series of indicators that the end consumers don’t even know about, like now the mills look for a falling number<sup>18</sup>, the strength, the percentage of gluten. Even though they need different qualities of wheat, the mills punish the price you get according to your performance on these indicators. [...] Then, of course, we have to do things that are not good for the environment, like burning the stubble, or depending on agrochemicals, because the system encourages you to maximise yield. In fact, I’ve done no tilling and no burning, and the yields are one third of the usual. Besides, we have a severe issue with the weed that is out of control. That’s why we have to burn. Ok, so that’s one thing [...]. We cover the cost of being productive and we feed people with our grain. On top, we have the pressure of being sustainable. I mean, c’mom, cut me some slack. I would be keen to grow more sustainably, but then give me a better price for less yield. That is not going to happen, and people from the city don’t understand that.”  
**(Interview with Ernesto, 23rd March 2021)**

What is noteworthy here is that eco-friendly farming practices require an incentive in order to be embraced by the cultivators. Therefore, it can be suggested that, if there is a market that values the effort needed to become more sustainable, the growers will tend to walk that path:

“All these new alternative modes of production, say agroecology or organic ones, are welcome, but you need to secure a market and cut out the middleman. The farmers are generally asked to produce affordable food, and you do that through volume. So, there is a lot of urban bias in this new wave of becoming more sustainable. I was organic, but I’ve never got a good market to sell my products.”  
**(Interview with a member of FEDAFRUC, September 15th 2020)**

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<sup>18</sup> A method employed by mills to determine the quality of the grain; a lower number is associated with damage during germination due to exposure to damp or rainy weather conditions, which can accelerate sprouting and affect bread quality.

Along these lines, Ernesto noted how quality and food standards have a direct effect on the final prices obtained, yet at the same time complained about the indicators applied by mills to assess his production. What can be inferred is that those indicators do not show whether the food is up to standard concerning safety, but rather have to do with quality, making food an opaque commodity in the eyes of consumers.

Thus, the emphasis on how the sector is organised and what farmers would change about it enables delving into certain similarities shared by most growers. Some of these issues exist regardless of whether cereals or fruits are grown, hence this group is affected as a collective. Drawing on the moral economy concept and fieldwork experience, it can be suggested that most of the burden growers carry stems from attitudes which they deem as “unfair”.

For example, the agency carried out by food processing plants, whether fruit exporters or mills, is an indication of unfair trading practices in the agricultural and food supply chain, and also emphasises the middleman's power over the growers. The unfair trading practices pointed out by the informants include unsold wasted products due to problems at the logistics and distribution end, and late payments and excessive attention to finding “made-up” flaws in order to penalise the final price. The following extract succinctly puts this point across:

“One of the first years that we began to export apples, we had an issue in the UK. Something happened in the ship so we had to repackage the apples. It turns out some of the fruit got spoiled on the way to the UK, and we had to pay for that. Which is ok, but what makes me angry is that the exporter is supposed to ensure a controlled atmosphere in the containers, and if something comes up on the way, the risk should be split between the growers and the exporters.” (**Interview with cooperative Rauque, 19th March 2021**)

Another farmer told me a similar story, where he lost a percentage of the production in the ship, but because it was not a total loss, the insurance did not cover it. While an export-oriented blueberry grower explained to me that the main issues with exporters are late payments and rejection of fruit that has already been delivered:

Saint Anne: “There have been some instances where the exporters held the payment for over 200 days.”

Carlos: "Can you ask for an advance or something to speed things up?"

Saint Anne: "Some exporters offer advance payment, but they charge you interest. I know they get the money straightaway once they hand the product over, but they hold the payment and start charging you for the packing, the customs, the ship, the insurance and many other things. I don't have problems with that, but why take 90, 120, 160, 180 or 200 days in realising the funds? That's what I found unfair."  
(Interview with the owner/manager of Saint Anne, 2nd December 2020)

Likewise, growers repeatedly complained of receiving phone calls from food processing plants claiming that a lower-than-expected percentage of their delivered fruit met the requirements to be paid at the (higher) fresh fruit rate. Therefore, most growers highlight the importance of having someone trusted at the other end of the value chain. Cereal growers face similar problems when they approach the mills because, according to most farmers, these processing plants look for every detail that will lead to punishing the price:

Ernesto: "Today, the battle we are having is to get a sample and a counter sample law when it comes to oats, because mills always look for the flaws in your grain. While wheat is a bit different because we've made some progress. A law enforces the mills to take your grain in case of any discrepancy about the quality, and of course, after a sample and counter sample process.

I'll tell you the story since I was pretty involved [...]. I remember our position, the farmers were pushing to get paid according to the protein level, while mills insisted on paying in accordance with the gluten in the wheat. Finally, we made a table of prices based on gluten, the more gluten you have, the better the price you get. But guess what [...], quite a few mills today look for protein rather than gluten!"

Ernesto: "So the law must be amended?"

Marcelo: "That's right, because the law is very clear about gluten but doesn't mention protein. I'll tell you more, after deciding that the gluten index would be the main factor in reaching a fair price, the mills made a huge fuss because the machines might have an error when assessing the wheat gluten component percentage. Could you believe it? They started to advocate that the figure should be rounded down to 0.5 because of the error [...]. It was just unbelievable."  
(Interview with Ernesto, 23rd March 2021)

Even at the local level, small things such as what figure will determine the price are negotiated, showing that agricultural markets are socially constructed. Furthermore, drawing on this discussion about the common ground shared by growers, it is possible to argue that the way to assess the worth of food is becoming too sophisticated, to the extent that consumers are wholly detached from their food sources. Meanwhile, in terms of social differentiation, this subsection has shed light on the fact that

growers can still be understood as a collective whose demands do not vary when analysed through the lens of what they deem to be just or unjust.

## 6.6 Summary.

The chapter has analysed the concept of family farms, one of the most contested topics in critical agrarian studies. In doing so, it has also criticised the romanticised portrayal of family farms. While not exempt from problems, the inclusion of additional perspectives from voices within the Chilean state and stakeholders throughout the food supply chain, including traders and managers, could have provided further insights on family farmers. Nevertheless, the chapter effectively has highlighted those areas that make family farms hard to conceptualise.

For example, it has been suggested that agribusinesses and corporations provoke confusion and merit more attention in order to distinguish them from family farming, especially capitalist and entrepreneurial farmers. Meanwhile, problematising certain variables, like the size of a farm, has led to the claim that farmers might be closer together than expected within the agrarian structure. Thus, I have argued that the best method for tackling family farms is to consider them as interdependent, which boils down to looking at dynamics of alliances and struggle in the countryside. On some occasions, these relationships take the form of landowner/agrarian worker, yet the source of how the individuals end up performing these roles is highly contingent. For instance, the agrarian ruling class has at least three routes to reaching that point, while workers could at the same time be growers. For that reason, and on top of the first analytical distinction (landowner/agrarian worker), I have added the distinction of rural household/rural inhabitant, which allows highlighting of the contributions that landless peasants make to their family farms by providing capital for investment purposes.

Furthermore, various strategies enabling their reproduction as rural households have been identified, based on the relationships these family farms maintain. I have paid particular attention to those strategies considered less efficient, and, in turn,

explained how the co-existence of family farms with different goals and farming practices enables the persistence of subsistence farming in the twenty-first century. The approach taken to addressing class dynamics has shown how the agrarian class structure is shaped by neighbour relations in the countryside. Therefore, themes such as class alliance and class struggle, when nuanced according to everyday rural social life, reveal that the transition from one class to another seems quite feasible. As such, growers can be regarded as a collective despite processes of differentiation and stratification, with their common understanding of what is it fair or unfair appearing to be the element that bridges the diversity among them.

## Chapter 7: Conclusions

### 7.1 Introduction.

In this section, I pay attention to the main themes covered across the thesis, highlighting how they intersect with critical agrarian studies. This is achieved by drawing upon an extensive ethnographic reflection about the ongoing process of agrarian change, which can be reduced to the shift in the material basis from cereal to fruits. This final chapter reiterates the main arguments shaping this academic endeavour. In addition, it highlights the contributions made with regard to theory, methodology, and the empirical material elicited, indicating those aspects which contest the literature together with the gaps that are either filled or nuanced when viewed through an ethnographic lens. Subsequently, this chapter revisits the research questions in light of the ethnographic data presented. Finally, I suggest possible directions for future research.

### 7.2 Main Arguments.

This ethnography adheres to one of the tenets of political economy, which indicates that both the means of production and the social relations of production are entangled at the very base of material reality. This claim becomes highly critical when studying human affairs that are closely associated with agriculture or farming, given that agricultural activities encompass direct action upon the soil. As such, if one strives to study the implications of a shift in crops towards alternatives conceived as being better for business (as in the case of fruits), the immediate response is that the social relations of production will be affected to a considerable extent and therefore are worthy of attention. Thus, the importance of researching this type of social phenomenon lies in fruit production having always been portrayed as a prime expression of agrarian capitalism (Mooney, 1982; Kautsky, 1988; Mann, 1990). Likewise, fruits are the visible side of agrarian neoliberalism as these agricultural commodities are usually referred to as non-traditional agricultural export (NTAE), which provided a boost to developing countries when they first liberalised their

economies (Kay, 2002). Thus, any study which seeks to enhance comprehension of the interaction of capital with rural areas is worthwhile, because this issue is tied to the foundations of rural sociology.

Along these lines, I have embraced a naturalist stance which in turn has allowed me to treat La Araucania as a natural laboratory. As such, I have been able to observe and assess the shifts that occurred over the material basis, taking into account its history as the nation's grain bowl amid the ongoing penetration of the fruit sector. The latter is certainly not completely new, but its contemporary presence differs from how fruits were grown in the past. This has led me to suggest that one of the key sectors of Chile's agrarian economy has found (in La Araucania) a new terrain in which to expand its agrarian frontier.

This shift in the material basis in rural settings encompasses intended and unintended consequences which, on many occasions, are not entirely straightforward. For example, the most evident pattern of change has to do with labour, since fruits are very labour intensive whereas cereals are largely mechanised. In this respect, the extent to which certain elements are prohibitive for growers (such as machinery in terms of capital, or intended product destinations whether domestic or abroad) are factors which have been unpacked. Furthermore, fruits usually provide a higher return than cereals, making it worth the effort to switch crops. Nonetheless, due to their perishability, the risk component causes farmers and peasants to be hesitant about fully embracing these cash crops.

Consequently, this study has drawn upon different sociological traditions in order to make sense of the reality under investigation. As a result, materialistic and subjective aspects have been laid out and discussed in light of the process of agrarian change. To some extent, the focus has been on those elements encountered by the forces pushing the agrarian frontier of the fruit sector southwards when establishing new orchards. Accordingly, I have suggested that the main barrier faced by the fruit sector in La Araucania lies in the interplay between cultural and material factors. In other words, this ethnography has shown how cereals and grains are endowed with

a symbolic value that ultimately is linked to the biological necessity to achieve food security.

This approach, which blends rurality, farming, food, and human affairs can legitimately be deemed classical. However, agrarian scholars have largely rejected it and instead engaged in more novel discussions in line with the new rural paradigm, which focuses on trying to avoid equating the rural with agriculture. In my view, this has had the negative effect of obscuring the human agency involved in food production. That is to say, it has further deepened food commodity fetishism. It appears that rural sociologists, when applying the new paradigms associated with rural studies, have lost sight of or at least forgotten to include agriculture, food and the countryside as mechanisms to achieve justice. Therefore, this academic endeavour can be seen as a humble attempt to put food, agriculture, and society again at the centre of the discussion, in a way that helps to imagine fairer societies through food.

The other two arguments explored through this thesis stem from the previous idea that seeks to understand agrarian capitalism, in other words, how capitalism takes place in the countryside. The paradox that lies therein, which has been a matter of lengthy debate (Bernstein, 2010; McMichael, 2013b; Bernstein, 2014; McMichael, 2015; Friedmann, 2016), can be summarised as follows. Although the countryside has been identified as the birthplace of capitalism, at least in its version of privatising commons through the enclosure of rural land, it also seems to be the last place to fully embrace a capitalist logic as there still exist practices which draw upon reciprocity and other mechanisms deemed less efficient.

Along these lines, the present study has woven a narrative about the emergence and establishment of the rural elite within a context where these farmers coexist with subsistence farming plots. Two intertwined topics were also unfolded by infusing them with ethnographic texture. Firstly, the concept of family farms as a critical component of the rural landscape was addressed. More significantly, the various forms family farms take were noted as a matter of particular interest because farms

with contrasting approaches to farming can share the same space. Consequently, this thesis has demonstrated that shifting the focus towards relations between rural neighbours provides better leverage when shedding light on family farms. Thus, the everyday practices and the agency enacted relationally by different family farms when seeking to reproduce themselves have been emphasised through analysing dynamics of conflict and alliances between farmers.

A second discussion concerning agrarian classes has accompanied the first one, intersecting the narrative whenever pertinent. Despite agrarian classes being a broader matter than family farms, these two areas mirror each other because classes are interdependent and, more importantly, individuals are members of families and rural communities. Thus, by applying this notion to both the overall research site and the individual family farms that embody different mechanisms to achieve their reproduction, it has been possible to achieve a much richer analysis of the agrarian structure of La Araucania. In this vein, the classical distinction between grower/agrarian worker drove part of the discussion. Additionally, matters regarding attitudes toward the market and the types of crops to focus on were unpacked. To achieve a better comprehension of agrarian classes, it was suggested that individuals, especially those with ties to rural communities, must be seen in a context where they are both members of rural communities and members of a family farm.

### **7.3 Research Contributions and Key Findings.**

The extensive fieldwork has added valuable insights to the field of rural studies, particularly within a context where numerous farms, each expressing agriculture in various ways, are intricately interwoven. As a result, much of the emerging process of agrarian change and its main consequences for indigenous and non-indigenous peasants/farmers have been explained. In this regard, I have argued that the process of agrarian change, usually depicted as a force that comes from above, cannot be understood as a mere act of laying out its principles upon rural inhabitants as if they were entirely homogenous empty recipients. Instead, this ethnography has challenged that sort of approach by offering a fine-grained analysis of those rural

dwellers who are already differentiated and, for that reason, react in many different ways when confronted with the force that the fruit sector embodies. Therefore, the present study has brought up themes such as the symbolic value endowed upon food, La Araucania's history, the natural conditions of the region as the driver of what crop will tend to thrive over others, the agricultural practices inherited from previous generations, the new techniques that challenge tradition, the relations among farms, and the everyday interactions that rural inhabitants engage in to achieve their reproduction.

In addition, this study, on its own merits, has portrayed my ethnographic work as a whole by encompassing a methodology which offers an edge when reflecting on ethical matters as well as on unforeseen problems like Covid-19. Thus, the contributions and the findings can be summarised in two streams. On the one hand, how the elicited material complements the existing literature and assists in pushing the boundaries and, on the other hand, those methodological issues that are critical when carrying out ethnographic work. Of course, both streams speak to one another in a dialectical manner.

Most of the literature examining La Araucania and Mapuche people as themes worthy of attention within social research has done so only in a narrow way. That is, by only shedding light on one section of the inhabitants who make up the social fabric of the countryside in question, provoking the impossibility of capturing those somehow contradictory expressions of everyday rural life. Above all, the literature has yielded a narrative that tends to focus on the struggle Mapuche people have had over the years (for example, by emphasising land dispossession, colonialism, exploitation, and racism among the social dynamics emerging from La Araucania). Thus, when conducting a literature review in regard to Mapuche people and La Araucania, it is common to come across many articles that highlight power imbalances and structural forces acting from above. In addition to academic endeavours that have shown a more diverse collection of voices from La Araucania, for instance, Patricia Richard (2010; 2013) incorporates the rural elite's perceptions regarding the conflict. Still, after reading her work one cannot help being left with the impression that all Chileans are racists.

Therefore, the first contribution that this ethnographic endeavour offers to an academic audience is to provide an account that blends a variety of voices from La Araucania, including indigenous, non-indigenous, and even corporate, in order to provide a more nuanced and grounded narrative that delves into those facts connected with struggles and power imbalances but without ignoring those facts which shed light on: (a) the interactions among farms with different characteristics; and (b) the elements that make rural inhabitants eager and willing to embrace capitalist ventures such as the fruit industry, something which is less commonly encountered in the literature<sup>19</sup>.

Likewise, the second contribution is to fill the literature gap whereby seasonal farm workers are depicted as individuals massively exploited by the industry. Nevertheless, when these agrarian workers are coupled with fruits, the power imbalances between workers and orchard owners need to be reconsidered. Hence, it is fair to claim that seasonal farm workers have some bargaining power to improve their working conditions, due to the perishability of fruits combined with the large number of orchards competing for their labour. Following this is a third contribution, which relates to the literature neglecting the fact that many seasonal farm workers are, in fact, members of rural communities and family farms. In the case of La Araucania, this means that such work is vital for accessing capital which, in turn, is invested in their own farm enterprises. In the same way, these seasonal jobs are especially important for women as they can juggle childcare and work.

Meanwhile, the fourth contribution lies in the effort made in the ethnography to use the local terms I came across during my fieldwork. In so doing, I have been better able to capture the vitality of rural life. This approach demonstrates how the lay expressions employed in everyday life by my informants contest certain notions enshrined in the literature. A particular point of analysis relates to the emergence of *el Fundo* as offering better leverage to uncover the relations among farms than *la*

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<sup>19</sup> Notable exceptions include Hugh Campbell (2009), with his call to seek a food from somewhere regime, or Tania Murray Li (2007), who nuanced the work carried out by development agencies in rural Indonesia.

*Hacienda*. Authors such as Echeverria (1963) had observed that various terms, including *rancho* or *el Fundo*, are likely to appear depending on the specific Latin American region under analysis.

Nonetheless, in my view, this is merely a shortcut to not engaging with the richness represented by each concept; it is much easier to generalise and say that every large estate in Latin America is more or less the *Hacienda* in practice. Yet, as has been shown, the *el Fundo* concept is quite revealing in at least two senses. Firstly, from the point of view of agrarian workers, *Fundo* does not specify who owns the farm as it can equally be a corporation or a family farm; thus, it comes down to a matter of size in agrarian workers' eyes. Secondly, the *Fundo*, in its family farm version as a space that organises many rural affairs, is distinct from the *Hacienda*. This is because it has two sources of agrarian workers: landed indigenous people and landless peasants that became tenants. This fact alone necessitates a change of departure point for any subsequent study that aims to comprehend countryside life in La Araucania.

In terms of how this research contributes to filling gaps in the literature, a fifth insight can be pointed out. Unpacking the relationships growers have with their crops is a complex process which encompasses matters related to cultural exchanges, development interventions, gender roles, the material basis, power, and culinary culture. One advantage offered by this viewpoint is the possibility to emphasise the cultural role of food, allowing the capture of wheat's symbolic value among peasants and farmers. This finding is closely linked to the aforementioned principle of pursuing those narratives that challenge notions coming from above which portray food (cereals in this case) as power devices rampaging through the countryside (Escalona and Barton, 2021). Conversely, the present ethnography has looked from below at the intimate relations that indigenous peasants and farmers have with cereals to achieve a certain degree of security, either in the form of direct food security or as a more general sense of protection in a somewhat troubled context.

The sixth contribution that this ethnography has made relates to overcoming commodity fetishism by drawing on the social agency behind fruit orchards and family farms. As a result, the qualitative nature of this inquiry complements the quantitative data already examined, and also casts doubt upon the ability of solely quantitative approaches to fully capture rural life. In this respect, a few insights are worth reflecting upon. Firstly, the existence of hidden fruits was revealed, with it being shown that these are not taken into account in official statistics because “subsistence orchards” fall below the arbitrary minimum threshold of half a hectare, the questionable rationale being to record only those orchards that are market-oriented. However, the ethnographic data has made the counterpoint by signalling that, in fact, even one eighth or one quarter of a hectare allocated to growing fruits can be highly profitable. It is thus nonsensical to characterise these plots as mere subsistence plots.

Moreover, this thesis has supported the figures provided by the last rural census to endorse the idea that subsistence farms co-exist with more market-oriented ones. Nevertheless, I also elaborated a critique about the ways in which the figures portray these family farms as if they were isolated from one another, thereby omitting the interactions they maintain to ensure their reproduction, almost as if paying tribute to Marx’s sack of potatoes allegory to define peasants and farmers. Thus, this ethnographic endeavour has paid attention to those social mechanisms that play a significant role in everyday rural life and connect one farm to another. For example, it has been shown that subsistence plots need access to those subsistence commodities that cannot be produced on the farm, such as oil. Therefore, they rely on social mechanisms such as bartering or selling their labour power to their neighbours in order to obtain these commodities. Moreover, practices such as *goce* point in the same direction, revealing the everyday lives and tacit agreements that link farms of different sizes and varying forms of conducting agriculture.

The seventh novel insight offered by this thesis relates to its methodology. Firstly, the fieldwork was conducted during the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, many barriers arose when carrying out the ethnography due to mobility restrictions, but, at the same time, the documentation and provision of a local rural

account of a worldwide event that shook the foundations of globalised human society became possible. For instance, it was indicated how export-oriented farmers were affected by the ports shutdown, which allowed for further theorising about agri-food systems and the characteristics of fruits. Given that the pandemic heavily influenced and shaped the research, themes such as the rural as a place that emanates security for its inhabitants gained a further boost. Additionally, lessons regarding researching La Araucania were offered, emphasising the role of the ethnographer when engaging in field relations with the informants. In this vein, the controversies emerging due to the researcher being a Latino but also a member of a Western university in the UK were also pondered.

#### **7.4 Revisiting the Research Questions.**

Having identified the main insights obtained from this academic endeavour that enrich the realm of rural studies, I now turn to briefly responding to the research questions that have guided the development of this thesis by drawing upon the evidence gleaned from my research.

1. What are the characteristics of the agrarian structure before and after adopting fruit production?

La Araucania's agrarian landscape was influenced by the cultural exchanges that Mapuche people had, initially with the Incas and subsequently with the Europeans and the Chileans. At least three different routes aligned in creating the rural elite: (a) offspring of European settlers; (b) people with strong connections to the political class; and (c) inhabitants who came from the north of Chile and settled in the south. Meanwhile, two different sources of agrarian workers engaged in the farm duties required by the *Fundos* [large estates]: (a) landed indigenous peasants; and (b) landless peasants.

The combinations of activities carried out by these individuals in relation to their own family farms and surroundings (particularly other family farms) has led to an agrarian structure in which cereals and livestock breeding are particularly well regarded. In terms of the means of production, this is due to cereals having been the first crop to be mechanised through the deployment of the Green Revolution and other development schemes which sought to promote the modernisation of agriculture in the countryside. Although full mechanisation of grain production is not affordable for every agrarian class due to the expense of owning a tractor and gears, these are nonetheless available through hiring. Seeds and other inputs such as fertilisers are also obtainable, although access to them is dependent upon agrarian class. Therefore, some growers employ social mechanisms such as seed keeping or barter, while others purchase these inputs or rely upon their links to the better-off farmers.

Furthermore, public institutions, NGOs, and international aid have allowed those less favoured growers access to enhanced seeds and other material improvements. On a different note, mill owners exercise power dynamics over cereal growers, which can become a struggle. Still, their role in rural communities is vital as they provide key services, especially in terms of food security.

Although fruits had a relatively minor role historically, they were always present in the countryside, either in a wild state or grown in small patches called *quintas*. However, the incipient state of fruits paved the way for the fruit sector to expand its operations into a new frontier, in the sense that if there were already fruits growing in the wild or in precarious states then it would evidently be feasible to establish new orchards. Thus, the deployment of the fruit sector through the setting up of orchards has been embraced to different degrees by different growers who were already differentiated within the countryside. The better-off farmers are, to some extent, more reluctant to adopt fruit production unless it involves cherries or hazelnuts. Therefore, it is clear that some feel more comfortable sticking to cereals due to the risk that fruits represent.

On the other hand, smallholders are keen to embark on cash crops, especially berries, but in a prudent manner by allocating only small patches to this endeavour. Given that fruits require a higher degree of labour, this role has been taken either by landless indigenous people (the new generation that has not yet been able to inherit land) or by landed indigenous people who deem the nearby fruit orchards to be a good source for earning cash without having to leave their communities. This aspect is particularly significant for indigenous women.

With regard to the production of fruits, the fruit sector tends to be more involved in the dynamics of commodification, especially because growers who are export-oriented must deal with intellectual property and royalties when they grow the varieties demanded by the global market. The machinery is less affordable, and in any case it is not very common to find machinery within these orchards due to the markets being located so far away. Similarly, in common with the mills, exporters exercise power over fruit growers by creaming off a percentage of the profits. Meanwhile, smallholders must also deal with the perishability of fruits and thus engage in social mechanisms to sell them as quickly as possible, such as via the *callejero* practice.

## 2. What issues unite or divide the different agrarian social classes within the agrarian structure?

To answer this question, one should consider that in agrarian societies it is far more pertinent to understand how power imbalances are reproduced over time rather than to look at the exploitation exercised by one class over another, mainly because these types of societies are heavily influenced by tradition (Scott, 1976; Weber, 2007). As such, concepts such as class alliances, class struggles and common ground among farmers are helpful to consider. The first area to address is those experiences that bind the farm owner with the agrarian worker. It has been documented through the preceding ethnography that the patron's welfare goes beyond mere wages. On some occasions, the owner's obligation to his employees takes the form of services, such as providing a space to play football or to sharpen tools. In turn, a certain degree of

loyalty can also be expected by the owner, as the relationship is not mediated by wages alone. Despite the dissolution of patron-client relationships, certain remnants of this dynamic are still present in the countryside. In this vein, traditional practices that link farms are found in the *goce*, a tacit agreement ensuring daily co-existence. This social mechanism allows smallholders pressurised by land constraints to sustain their cattle in spite of their lack of land. Furthermore, assistance from better-off to less favoured growers in the form of consultancy also occurs.

On the other hand, the struggle can be framed in terms of access to land and reclamation of ancient land. Consequently, tactics such as sabotage, arson attacks, and land seizures confront rural dwellers against each other. However, it has been documented that, depending on the cohesion of the rural social fabric, Mapuche indigenous people could be offered protection against potential attacks by other indigenous communities. For example, this might be facilitated by pretending to seize a farm, hence the importance of the aforementioned social mechanisms that strengthen ties among farms of different sizes and with varying modes of production.

When treating rural inhabitants as growers and food producers, elements that unify them arise. In this way, it can be stated that growers share certain agricultural practices when cultivating the land, regardless of the agrarian class to which they belong, such as burning stubble. The other elements in which they share common ground stem from the challenges they face when attempting to sell their products, many of which they regard as unfair trading practices, such as the return of unsold waste products, late payments, and excessive efforts to identify dubious product flaws.

3. How do the customs, the subjective ideas, and the material factors involved in farming enter into motion when facing dynamics of agrarian change?

According to the evidence elicited during my fieldwork as well as from secondary sources, La Araucania possesses material conditions that mean it is regarded as a

grain bowl. Prior to colonisation, despite not employing any sophisticated practices to grow cereals (for instance, broadcast sowing was common practice), indigenous people enjoyed reasonable yields. Shortly after colonisation, the region was able to embrace this comparative advantage by becoming an exporter of grains. Furthermore, across agrarian classes, grains have been conceived as a safe bet to ensure the reproduction of the rural household, whether as a business or as means of achieving food security. Indeed, the relatively long shelf life of cereals has led to the establishment of a range of associated culinary plates, which ultimately shed light on their symbolic value.

It has been documented that growers' trust in grains lies in their ability to cope with frosts, their predisposition to thriving in a rain-fed environment, and their annual cycle. Furthermore, as cereals were the first crop to be susceptible to the Green Revolution's rationale, cereals in general saw an increase in yields. In this way, regardless of class location, farmers and peasants began to embrace these principles. Over the years, all of these elements crystallised into an identity that is hard to decouple from the devotion which growers have to cereals, and is ultimately reflected in the culinary practices of rural dwellers, the latter being especially important for those located at the extreme polarity of being barely able to sustain their livelihoods.

In this way, when the dynamics of agrarian change encounter a territory mainly devoted to cereals, the elements mentioned above are pondered subjectively by each grower. The forces embodied in the dynamics of switching crops toward cash crops resonate with every grower to differing degrees. However, certain reactions rest on the combination of material conditions, capital access, and risk perception. For instance, some of the material conditions that constrain the adoption of fruits include access to irrigation systems and anti-frost mechanisms. Both issues can be addressed through capital or credit, such as by investing in digging wells, installing irrigation hoses, or even roofing orchards to buffer fruits against frosts.

However, whether or not such investments are ultimately made is dependent upon the risk perceptions of individual growers. Nevertheless, some fruits are better regarded than others; strawberries cope better with frosts, while hazelnuts require less water. Similarly, the former are short cycle fruits while the latter are long cycle fruits. That is to say, when it comes to hazelnuts the production time is longer and it involves a couple of years to reach peak production, which is not the case for strawberries. Thus, production time and labour time are two factors which are carefully considered by growers as they are related to risk. Therefore, subjective factors come to the fore when growers make the decision to embark on a route that encompasses more innovation from their side and with which they are relatively less acquainted (in comparison with cereals).

Clearly this transition toward cash crops does not happen all at once, but rather it involves a slow shift where trial and error define the fates of orchards. Indeed, just one failed harvest could lead to a crop being dismissed out of hand by a grower. Meanwhile, smallholders operate at an advantage as long as they can provide family labour. This is due to orchards generally being labour intensive, thus implying a higher cost of production for those farmers who cannot provide the labour demanded by fruits. On the one hand, mid-sized and large-sized farmers are tempted toward making the transition by the higher returns that fresh fruits offer, but on the other hand they are discouraged by the higher risks associated with their perishability.

#### 4. How do family farms and their members engage with both traditional and cash crops?

To answer this question, a few lines must be drawn to show the heterogeneity of rural communities. The first idea to recall is that rural Araucania is characterised by the co-existence of various family farms expressing agriculture in diverse ways, ranging from subsistence holdings to capitalist export-oriented farms, including rural landless dwellers and other classes in-between these two extremes. Thus, this thesis has looked at the intersection between rural households and agrarian classes. Accordingly, attention has been paid to the everyday interactions that family

members engage in regarding certain crops. Some of these patterns of relations were found in patron-client relations, a few others operate based on the owner/agrarian worker distinction, while many others operate based upon solidarity, mutual aid, and reciprocity.

Further disentanglement can be achieved through the lens of which crops are grown in each farm. Thus cereals (the most mechanised crop) point in several directions. Firstly, it has been suggested that smallholders have a more intimate relationship with cereals, as they find food security in these grains. The tasks involved in growing are typically undertaken by family members; holdings are small meaning few hands are normally needed, yet when threshing season arrives more labour is required than the family can provide, thus smallholders draw on a form of reciprocity from the wider rural community to pull through. Remarkably, the tractor operator, even though this person can also double as a member of the aforementioned rural community, is the only role in the division of labour that has been commodified when it comes to growing and harvesting cereals.

Slightly differently, when a plot is leased out the resulting relationship exists between a smallholder and a mid-sized farmer or large holder, with the agreement between the parties being based on cash. Nonetheless, there is room for asking for a share of the harvest. Meanwhile, large holders' relationships with the other farms when growing cereals are characterised by their need for a reliable source of agrarian workers. Consequently, their relations are filled with patron-client social dynamics which entail a certain degree of loyalty, especially in the case of cereals as these require fewer agrarian workers. Therefore, the relationship tends to endure over time. In turn, agrarian workers might receive endorsements from better-off farmers to enable them to improve their own rural enterprises (for instance, through providing access to machinery, consultancy, and inputs such as premium seeds at low cost).

In contrast, fruits entail a different set of relationships between family members and family farms. For example, a stark difference between the sectors is that the fruit

sector requires more seasonal farm workers than cereals. In addition, seasonal farm workers are paid on a piece rate basis, which is not the case with seasonal cereal workers who are paid per day at a fixed rate according to the tasks agreed.

Meanwhile, those orchards run by smallholders tend to be as big as is possible to labour by themselves. They also tend to realise that, if they wish to expand their orchards, it would mean hiring an extra pair of hands. Given that orchard roles are largely mediated by wages, growers will tend to hire someone from the rural community first if their orchard is relatively tiny. It is worth highlighting that those family members who work off farm might act as investors in their own family farms, speeding up the process of shifting toward cash crops. These individuals also provide family labour, but in a less regular fashion. In the same way, family and rural community networks play a role when selling fruits, as the fruit can be offered in bulk or sold it before it rots by employing the *callejeo* mechanism. One side note to consider is that, when a new fruit orchard appears in the territory, it might lead to conflict between neighbours if livestock trespassing occurs.

Meanwhile, those fruit growers who have embraced a more intensive way of farming and targeted the international market need to deal with the complexity of hiring hundreds of agrarian workers per season. La Araucania is seen as a place where agrarian workers can be easily found in rural communities, with the downside being that many tend to stop showing up for work after a while. Thus, to achieve a thriving fruit sector, the role of smallholders in providing labour is vital, at least during picking season. Consequently, these rural enterprises tend to offer rewards to win the commitment of agrarian workers.

## **7.5 Future Research and Further Avenues to Explore.**

The outcome of this research has, to a great extent, been shaped by the outbreak of Covid-19. Thus, some aspects of the research designed before the fieldwork took place could not be developed in great depth. Consequently, in this subsection, I

revisit those themes that would have contributed to gaining a fuller picture of the case study, along with pointing out those future avenues worth exploring.

My initial approach to addressing the research site was through the local rural development office (PDTI-INDAP). As explained earlier, I regularly attended the office for a few months until the virus hit, resulting in its closure. Consequently, public policies aimed at rural development were not elaborated upon to the extent they deserve. Despite being touched upon in some parts of this thesis, relationships among family farms and individuals are also influenced by being beneficiaries of public policies, and this is an area worthy of further examination. One avenue that might be derived from this discussion would be to map such interventions, tracing the international aid that impacted La Araucania over several years to understand the state's role in promoting rural development, together with unravelling the approach taken by rural planners when designing rural development pilots. Even more interesting would be to shed light on what constitutes success and what constitutes failure when it comes to rural development.

A second avenue is related to incorporating the voices of those people who are part of the value chain and whom I could not interview due to mobility restrictions. For example, it would be instructive to elicit the perceptions of traders, exporters, mill operators, and farm managers. Along these lines, analysing the contracts between farmers and mills or between growers and exporters is a third avenue worthy of exploration. This would indicate the power relations exercised by one party over the other while showing how the hegemonic agri-food system is shaped, which has direct consequences in terms of food justice. Furthermore, given that such contracts are also diverse, a study looking more closely at these types of contracts would help to distinguish those deemed to be somewhat fairer or closer to a win-win situation.

In the spirit of continuing to employ a relational approach from the local perspective, a fair question to ponder for future research would be to assess the degree to which outsider farmers are driving the transition to cash crops; that is, those that have

thrived in establishing the fruit sector in the Central Valley and who are now seizing the opportunity to expand their businesses into La Araucania.

Meanwhile, there is a strong argument for adopting a global perspective, aligning with Smelser's (2003) observation that sociology should essentially be a comparative discipline (otherwise, the pitfall of mere description is just around the corner). Therefore, examining countries with indigenous populations, members of the OECD such as Canada, New Zealand, or Australia, could yield interesting insights about our agri-food system. Notably, these three countries, along with Chile, are all members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. In this respect, it is pertinent to ask questions such as who the owners are, who the workers are, which crops are on the brink of being lost following the liberalisation of agriculture, and what kinds of reactions are triggered among farmers by the signing of free trade agreements. This is especially relevant for envisioning the future of agri-food systems.

## 7.6 Final Remarks.

Thus, *Grains and Fruits: Agrarian Change and Class Relations in La Araucania, Southern Chile* was conceived to be an academic endeavour that sheds light on the social forces shaping our agri-food systems. This has been achieved by examining the adoption of cash crops in relation to the establishment of agrarian capitalism through combining narratives from the past and the present, grounding them within a context characterised by an indigenous population empowered to enrich the various rural studies debates. This thesis has emphasised the complex roles of family farms and has made an effort to place them at the centre of the analysis from a relational perspective when comprehending processes of agrarian change. The diversity of family farms suggests that each farm engages with its surroundings in a peculiar way to ensure its own reproduction. These dynamics allow us to understand the cultural factors underpinning the production of food, and how they can become barriers or enablers when switching crops to more profitable ones. It has been suggested that there is a tension between traditional crops and commercial varieties of fruits. While the exact response to that tension depends on each individual family farm, this study

has revealed those underlying factors which cause farmers to lean toward one particular crop or another.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1: Certificate Granting Formal Ethical Approval.



### CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Project #: 19-COR-019 AMENDMENT

**Project Title:** The social life of fruit: Public policies, labour and mobility in modern fruit farming, South Central Chile.

This certificate confirms that the amendment made by **Carlos Cordova (PGR student in SNES)** was **APPROVED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS** on 01/04/2020.

**Conditions of approval (If applicable):**

- i. You must provide us with final copies of all participant documentation for approval **before** using them.
- ii. Ensure that participants are fully debriefed after taking part in the study and have an opportunity to ask questions/raise complaints.
- iii. Ensure you are sensitive to the needs of the local community and provide a clear avenue for any issues/complaints.
- iv. You must use University electronic storage to store/transfer your documents and **not** Dropbox.
- v. You must take necessary precautions to ensure data privacy and security and be aware of any potential breaches/risks.

*It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that any conditions of approval are fully met before proceeding with the research. Applicants are also required to notify the Faculty Ethics Committee (sage.ethics@ncl.ac.uk) if they wish to make any changes to the design/methods/participants of the study **before** commencing with any changes.*

Signed: 

On behalf of Patrick Degenar due to Covid-19 restrictions

Date: 01.04.2020

## Appendix 2: Prior Informed Consent.

**Newcastle University  
Centre for Rural Economy  
School of Natural and Environmental Science**

**Prior Informed Consent**

To..... (Participant's name)

**PETITION DESCRIPTION:** I would like to invite you to take part of my PhD research, which aims to analyse how fruit production is being carried out in La Araucania by looking at the social relations of production.

Carlos Felipe Bolomey Cordova, PhD student based on the Centre of Rural Economy, Newcastle UK will carry out the research.

The research is titled "*The social life of fruit: politics, social classes and value in modern fruit farming, South-Central Chile.*" and is funded by both; the Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University and CONICYT from the government of Chile.

The information and data gathered will be registered by field notes alongside with audio recording (as long as the informant has given his/her approval or consent signing this form).

**RISK & BENEFITS:** This research does not involve any risk for you or your organisation. Even though there are no direct personal benefits, it can be stated that whereby your participation in the research project you will contributing to the understanding of the challenges when embracing fruit production in the region, and therefore pointed out how the public policy can be improved

This project has had taken into account and throughout all the stages of research, the international agreements and national law regarding indigenous people. By doing so, it recognises the following contracts, namely: ILO 169, the UN declaration of the right of indigenous people and the indigenous national law 19.253

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The information provided by you will treat it with confidentiality (the interviewee's identity will not be revealed) unless you explicitly manifest the contrary. Thus, the personal data will remain and storage in the researcher's computer, in addition, the data will be labelled with codes that will ensure anonymity.

**TERMS & USE OF INFORMATION:** The data emerged throughout the research will be used exclusively for research purposes, that is to say, the results will be disseminated in scientific congress, seminars, scientific journals or specialised publication.

**RIGHTS:** Your participation in this research is under your own will, so you are allowed to withdraw from the investigation at any moment, without justification needed. Also, you can refuse to be recorded during the interview or in some part of it. In addition, you can request further information about the research and the implication of your participation to the researcher, who must reply to any of your inquiries

**INCENTIVE:** you will not be monetarily rewarded for your participation

**BEAR IN MIND:** The researcher commits to provide a handout with the results to every institution, organisation or person that have participated in the research, in order to democratise the knowledge created during the study.

Prior Consent Signature

Researcher in charge: Carlos Felipe Bolomey Cordova

- I have read and discussed the research with the researcher, and I have had the opportunity to make any enquiry regarding the purpose and the proceedings related to the study.
- My participation in the research is under my own will. I can refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any moment without justification needed.
- It has been pointed out to me that the researcher will take special care regarding the people's right in particular with those related to indigenous people that have been acknowledged for ILO 169 convention and the United Nations declaration of indigenous people.
- Any information that emerges from the research project that might lead to identifying myself cannot be revealed without my consent.
- If in some point I have some doubts or inquiries regarding the research, my participation or my rights I can contact the Researcher Carlos Felipe Bolomey Cordova who will answer my question through his email C.F.Bolomey-Cordova2@newcastle.ac.uk or his mobile phone; +569 89413328. Also, his supervisors Sally Shortall (sally.shortall@newcastle.ac.uk) and Menelaos Gkartzios (menelaos.gkartzios@ncl.ac.uk) can be reached
- I declared to receive a copy of the present form.
- My signature means that I agree to be part of the research.
- My signature indicates that I give consent to be recorded.

Informant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Informant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3: Debriefing information.



#### Debriefing Sheet

#### **The social life of fruit: Politics, classes, labour in modern fruit farming, South Central Chile.**

Thank you for taking part in this study. What I would like to find out from this research is how the fruit industry is been undertaken in La Araucania. I am looking at this sector in particular because is the paradigmatic form of neoliberalism in the countryside, so I am interested in the social and cultural consequences of this mode of production in La Araucania. As you might know, the region holds peculiar characteristics, such as being the most deprived region of Chile and the ethnic conflict. These variables add another layer of complexity in understanding how the fruit industry has been undertaking within the region. Therefore, an effort need to be made in order to identify the grower and workers alongside their degree of involvement in this industry and the different forms of production.

Let me remind you the data you have provided has been anonymized and cannot be tracked back to you. If you would like further information about the findings, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me on +569 89413328 or C.F.Bolomey-Cordova2@newcastle.ac.uk

### Appendix 4: Interview Themes Guide (English Version).

Rural Elite Interview Guidelines	
With the aim to analyse, the process of shifting crop in La Araucania (south-central Chile) and adopting fruit production. I am going to ask you some questions in order to understand how this transition is being undertaken. I remind you that the information provided will be useful to accomplish the aims of my PhD, so I am in advance grateful for your collaboration and honesty in your responses, In addition, the recording of the interview (only if you wish so) is for research purposes, therefore I will ensure your anonymity.	
Themes, General enquiries	specific enquiries

<p>Life Course Trajectory - Life Story Interview</p>	<p>Where are you from? Do you have any Indigenous, European or mixed heritage?</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>Did you experience the land reform?</p> <p>Did the counter-reform affect you? In what ways?</p> <p>What are your memories about these periods?</p> <p>How did you become a farmer?</p> <p>Who taught you to be a farmer?</p> <p>How the landscapes and the infrastructure have changed during your life in La Araucania?</p> <p>How involved is your family in looking after the farm?</p>
<p>Challenges when adopting fruit as crop</p>	<p>What have you produced on this farm before?</p> <p>How would you define your mode of production?</p> <p>What makes you shift crops to fruit production? (specify the variety)</p> <p>How many hectares do you have planted with fruit?</p>

	<p>How long have you been experimenting with fruit?</p> <p>Does anyone is helping you in adopting fruit production?</p> <p>What are the key things that need to be taken into account when deciding to shift crops</p> <p>What have you learnt so far about this crop? Could you please explain to me how the season is divided from planting to harvest?</p> <p>Do you use any machinery, fertilisers or pesticides? What kind and how much?</p> <p>Who provides you with the seeds? Do you think seeds should be private or common? On what basis?</p> <p>From where do you get the water? Do you have any irrigation system deployed here? Do you think water should be private or common? On what basis?</p> <p>What are your thought about commonland</p> <p>How do you hire your workers? On what basis? Do you know where they are from?</p> <p>How do you engage in the market?</p>
	<p>There is any indigenous community nearby?</p>

<p>The relationship among other actors of the territory (indigenous communities, state officials)</p>	<p>Do you have anything in common with them? (e.g. did you attend to the same school)</p> <p>What are you thought about the conflict?</p> <p>Do you think the state is addressing the issue in the right way? What are your concerns?</p>
<p>Perception of the territory</p>	<p>What are the good things to be a farmer in la Araucania?</p> <p>What are the bad things to be a farmer in La Araucania?</p>
<p>envisioning</p>	<p>What do you think is the main cause of making La Araucania the most deprived region of Chile?</p> <p>Do you think fruit production will be established in la Araucania in the following years? What do you think is going to happen with wheat and dairy?</p>

## officials interview guidelines

With the aim to analyse, the process of shifting crop in La Araucania (south-central Chile) and adopting fruit production. I am going to ask you some questions in order to understand how this transition is being undertaken. I remind you that the information provided will be useful to accomplish the aims of my PhD, so I am in advance grateful for your collaboration and honesty in your responses, In addition, the recording of the interview (only if you wish so) is for research purposes, therefore I will ensure your anonymity.

themes , General enquiries	specific enquiries
Life Course Trajectory - Life Story Interview	<p>Where are you from?</p> <p>Did you experience the land reform?</p> <p>Did the counter-reform affect you? In what way?</p> <p>What are your memories about these periods?</p> <p>How long have you been working on this?</p> <p>What do you think about agriculture and rural development?</p> <p>What are the best projects that you have worked on? Why?</p> <p>What are the worst projects that you have worked on? Why</p> <p>There is any concern when it comes to agriculture and rural development that you would like to mention.</p>

<p>Challenges when adopting fruit as crop</p>	<p>What are the main crops that you can find here?</p> <p>What are the competitive edges of fruit over other crops?</p> <p>In your view, how is the access to pesticides, fertilisers, seeds and water? is it equally distributed</p> <p>There is any difference between small, medium and big farmers when adopting this transition?</p> <p>How are they coping with this transition?</p> <p>What are the key things that need to be taken into account when deciding to shift crops</p>
<p>The relationship among other actors of the territory (indigenous communities, rural elite)</p>	<p>Are you involved with in any way with an indigenous community?</p> <p>Are you involved with any large estate?</p> <p>In your view, who provides the labour-force in this area?</p> <p>In your view, who owns the land in this area?</p> <p>How can you define the recipients of the public policies in terms of the size and the quality of their land along with their mode of production?</p>

	<p>Can you distinguish different modes of production in this area in terms of organic production, indigenous production or export-orientated?</p> <p>In your view, what are the main characteristics of them?</p>
<p>Perception of the current schemes of rural development</p>	<p>In what topics are you currently working on now?</p> <p>How do you people address the indigenous identity variable when applying your policies?</p> <p>What are the main barriers that you usually face?</p> <p>What are the main enablers when doing your job?</p>
<p>Perception of the territory</p>	<p>What are the good things to be a farmer in la Araucania?</p> <p>What are the bad things to be a farmer in La Araucania?</p>
<p>envisioning</p>	<p>What do you think is the main cause of making La Araucania the most deprived region of Chile?</p> <p>¿Do you think fruit production will be established in la Araucania in the following years. What do you think is going to happen with wheat and dairy?</p>

## Indigenous Communities and Seasonal agricultural workers interview guidelines

With the aim to analyse, the process of shifting crop in La Araucania (south-central Chile) and adopting fruit production. I am going to ask you some questions in order to understand how this transition is being undertaken. I remind you that the information provided will be useful to accomplish the aims of my PhD, so I am in advance grateful for your collaboration and honesty in your responses, In addition, the recording of the interview (only if you wish so) is for research purposes, therefore I will ensure your anonymity.

themes , General enquiries	specific enquiries
Life Course Trajectory - Life Story Interview	<p>Where are you from? Do you have any Indigenous, European or mixed heritage?</p> <p>How old are you?</p> <p>Do you own land?</p> <p>What kind of job have you performed so far?</p> <p>What makes you become a farmer?</p> <p>Who taught you?</p> <p>Why do you work off-farm?</p> <p>When did you start to work off-farm? What was your first job, and where? In what industry?</p> <p>There is any job that you recall it in any particular way? Why?</p>

	<p>How would you define the production of your farm?</p> <p>What are the good things to be a farmer in la Araucania?</p> <p>What are the bad things to be a farmer in La Araucania?</p>
<p>The relationship among other actors of the territory (indigenous communities, rural elite)</p>	<p>There is any big state nearby?</p> <p>Do you have anything in common with them? (e.g. did you attend to the same school)</p> <p>What are you thought about the conflict?</p> <p>Do you think the state is addressing the issue in the right way? What are your concerns?</p> <p>How could you define your territory?</p> <p>How do you think the privileged are distributed? In what things is it manifested?</p>
<p>Perception of the previous schemes of rural development</p>	<p>Do you recall any public schemes implemented here? What were the good things? What were the bad things?</p>
<p>Challenges when adopting fruit as crop</p>	<p>What have you produced on this farm before?</p> <p>How would you define your mode of production?</p>

	<p>What makes you shift crops to fruit production? (specify the variety)</p> <p>How many hectares do you have planted with fruit?</p> <p>How long have you been experimenting with fruit?</p> <p>Does anyone is helping you in adopting fruit production?</p> <p>What are the key things that need to be taken into account when deciding to shift crops?</p> <p>What have you learnt so far about this crop? Could you please explain to me how the season is divided from planting to harvest?</p> <p>Do you use any machinery, fertilisers or pesticides? What kind and how much?</p> <p>Who provides you with the seeds? Do you think seeds should be private or common? On what basis?</p> <p>From where do you get the water? Do you have any irrigation system deployed here? Do you think water should be private or common? On what basis?</p> <p>What are your thought about commonland</p>
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	<p>How do you hire your workers? On what basis? Do you know where they are from?</p> <p>How do you engage in the market?</p>
envisioning	<p>What do you think is the main cause of making La Araucania the most deprived region of Chile?</p> <p>¿Do you think fruit production will be established in la Araucania in the following years. What do you think is going to happen with wheat and dairy?</p>

## Appendix 5: Growers Interviewed Main Features.

Name/ Alias		Household	Farm Size (Hectares)	Property Tenure	Main production	Subsistence	Market Orientation	Family labour	Farm workers hired	Off-farm work
1	Pablo	A	5	Community-owned	Lettuces, Raspberries, Lambs	No	Farmers' market	2 adults + 2 lads	1 or 2 for specific tasks, usually from their family network	Used to be SFW
2	Fatima									Used to be childminder
3	Yvonne	B	0.5	Owner	Berries	No	Farmers' market	Her + 3 daughters	4: sisters and neighbours	Used to be SFW and Maid
4	Jackie					Yes	Sells surplus	They as a couple	N/A	Used to be
5	Felix									Used to be SFW
6	Franco	C	1.3+36 rented	Mostly rented	Cereals (wheat, oat) Legumes (Lupin)	No	merchants	1 nephew during the threshing	1 nephew	Used to be SFW
7	Amelia									Used to be SFW
8	Victor	D	7.8 + 3	Parents are the owners + Community-owned	Cherries, berries, Lambs, y <del>peas</del> and oats	No	Regular customers	Sisters	No	Used to work apatronado
9	Camila									Used to work as a maid
10	Melinda	E	3.32	Community-owned	Horticulture	Yes	Co-workers in the orchards	Yes	No	SFW
11	Adriana	F	3.37	Community-owned	Flower & Vegetable	Yes	To her sister	Yes	1 from the community	SFW
12	Stefano	G	3.3	Community-owned	Potatoes, maize, goats	Yes	Sell surplus	Yes	No	Used to be SFW
13	Mireya									Used to work as a maid
14	Sonia	H	3.5	Individual titling	Horticulture, poultry	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	SFW
15	Silvio	I	3+10 let	Individual titling	Pulses, cereals & Blackberries	No	Regular customers	Yes (10 people)	No	SFW
16	Tomas	J	0.5	Father is the owner	Pulses, cereal & Blackberries	No	Regular customers	Yes (10 people)	No	SFW
17	Leonel		0.5	Individual titling						SFW

## Growers interviewed main features (18-33) (Continued)

Name/ Alias		Household	Farm Size (Hectares)	Property Tenure	Main production	Subsistence	Market Orientation	Family labour	Farm workers hired	Off-Farm work
18	Hector	J	2	His wife is the owner	Cereals, horticulture, and poultry	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Used to be SFW
19	Salvador	K	5	Joint titling	Husbandry, pulses, and horticulture	No	Farmers' market	Yes	No	Used to work as a patrón
20	Irene									Used to work as a maid
21	Felicinda	L	0.5	Individual titling	Herbs, spices, and poultry	Yes	Farmers' market	No	No	No
22	Marco	M	7.2	Father is the owner	Potatoes, oat, wheat	No	Farmers' market & Mills	Nephews and siblings	Nephews and siblings	No
23	Melipal									Used to work Apatrón
24	Emma	N	2.5	Individual titling	Plant nursery	Yes	Farmers' Market	Yes	No	No
25	Pedro	O	1.5	His wife is the owner	Horticulture	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Used to be SFW
26	Rebeca	P	3	Own 1 ha & rents 2ha	flowers	No	Farmers' Market	Daughter helps	No	SFW
27	Nina	Q	N/A	N/A	Herbs and spices	No	Farmers' Market	Yes	No	No
28	Osvaldo	R	13.9	Community-owned	Husbandry	No	Farmers' Market & Livestock Fair	Yes	No	Used to be SFW
29	Jose	S	6.33	Individual titling	Cereals	No	Mills	Yes	No	No
30	Eileen	T	11	Rents	Wheat, oats, and lupin	No	Mills	No	5	Yes- School Teacher
31	Mercedes	U	200	Individual titling	Dairy and meat	No	Livestock fairs	No	No info	Yes- Politician
32	Gina	W	150	Individual titling	Truffles	No	Export-oriented	No	4 permanent + 1 in summer	No
33	Andres	X	900	Mostly rented	rapeseed, wheat & oats	No	Mills	No	15	No

## Growers interviewed main features (34-42) (final)

Name/ Alias		Household	Farm Size (Hectares)	Property Tenure	Main production	Subsistence	Market Orientation	Family labour	Farm workers hired	Off-farm work
34	Ernesto	Y	320	290 Ha rented	Wheat and oats	No	Mills	No	4	No
35	Adrian	Z	570	Mostly rented	Mint, cereals & Blueberries	No	Mills and export-oriented	No	13 (cereals) & 53 (fruits)	No
36	Mario	A1	500	Mostly rented	Cereals and cherries	No	Export-oriented	No	8 permanent + 60 seasonal farm workers	No
37	Santino	B2	950	Mostly rented	Cereals and Cherries	No	Export-oriented	No	100 seasonal farm workers	No
38	Saint Anne	N/A	60	owned	Blueberries	No	Export-oriented	No	20 permanent + 600 seasonal farm workers	N/A
39	Rauque	N/A	520	owned	Apples	No	Export-oriented	No	3,600 seasonal farm workers	N/A
40	Blue Dwell	N/A	520	owned	Blueberries	No	Export-oriented	No	80 permanent + 4,000 seasonal farmworkers	N/A
41	Forcella	N/A	500	owned+ vertical integration	Hazelnuts	No	Export-oriented	No	1 worker per 10 Ha.	N/A

