# International Institute of Social Studies

*Ezafus*

**Working title:**

*Tramando cuidados:* **contested care perspectives in re-shaping institutional arrangements in Chile**

A Research Paper Draft

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**SPD**

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November 2022

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| | |
|---|---|
| **CC** | Constitutional Convention |
| **FCN** | Feminist Care Network (Red Feminista por los Cuidados) |
| **SINTRACAP** | Sindicato de Trabajadoras de Casa Particular (Private Household Workers Union) |
| **ANAMURI** | Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indígenas (National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women) |
| **MAT** | Movimiento por el Agua y los Territorios (Water and Territories Movement) |
| **NCS** | National Care System |
| **IPN** | Iniciativa Popular de Norma (Popular Proposal for a Constitutional Norm) |
| **ECLAC** | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |

# Abstract

In this research paper, I delve into the importance of feminist and popular movements during the cracks in Chilean institutional politics during 2019-2022 in Chile. By analysing the care politics of five organisations inside and outside of state institutions, I visualise how their understanding of care informs their relationship *with-against-and-beyond* the state. I argue that their understanding of care, in terms of the distribution, conditions and recognition of this labour, guides their positions on the state's role in the social organisation of care and informs how they deploy their action in relation with state institutions.

# Relevance to Development Studies

This research paper explores Chilean care politics during a unique moment of social mobilisation and changes in institutional politics. By exploring the spaces that contemporary politics have opened to counteract Chile's structural unequal care distribution, I contribute to building different understandings of care and visions of the state's role in social reproduction. To do so, these pages include the voices of subjects often marginalized from the discussions of care policies. Bringing their experience to the forefront of this investigation, I show how they have contributed to giving a community and territorial perspective to care policies. In sum, this research offers an original approach to care policy studies and contributes to the Latin American perspectives that have situated the communities and caregivers at the centre of the agenda.

# Keywords

Social reproduction, care, communities, state, commons, social organisation of care, struggles for the sustainability of life, community and territorial perspectives, care systems, *caring state.*

# Acknowledgements

First, I want to thank my mother, Cecilia and grandmothers, Inés and Mariana, who have cared for me all my life without any recognition. I hope that with this research, I can show them part of my gratitude for their eternal care.

Then, I would like to thank the organisations and people who participated in this research. Thanks to Francisca, Gloria, Isabel, Maria, Paloma and Veronica for sharing your struggles and horizons with me.

I want to thank Wendy Harcourt for her careful reading and supervision. Also, to my compañeras of research and activism, Catalina and Fernanda. Thank you for guiding and inspiring this investigation.

Finally, I thank my friends that sustained and cared for me while I was away from home and supported me in facing this great academic challenge, and Rebecca, for her love and tenderness during this process.

# Chapter 1 | **Introduction**

My investigation is focused on the period from the Chilean social outbreak of October 2019 to the referendum on the New Constitution in September 2022. It focuses on the cracks in the institutional politics triggered by the massive process of mobilisations that exploded on October 18th, 2019. These massive protests resulted in a constituent process to draft a new Chilean constitution from 2020-2022. This would prove to be the most important institutional political process since the end of the dictatorship in 1989. The process involved a Constitutional Convention (CC), composed of citizens elected with gender parity, participation of indigenous peoples and independent candidates. The CC changed the traditional logic of participation in the Chilean state and opened up a new space for social movements' participation. During this period, a new left-wing government was also elected. The government of Gabriel Boric (March 2022) came to power with the support of social movements, and during the first months, the government installed an intense care agenda, framing its action as a *caring state*.

My investigation contributes to the visibility of care politics during these political processes in Chile through examining the different meanings of care in the debates of this historical period. To do so, I focus on the struggles of feminist and popular organisations – or struggles for *the sustainability of life (sostenibilidad de la vida)*[1] – and how they have related to the state. Specifically, I look at how they engaged with the question of the state's role in social reproduction and how that has informed their political strategies as movements. By looking at care politics inside and outside of state institutions, I analyse how these struggles stand *with-against-and-beyond* the state (Angel & Loftus, 2017; 2018, 2019) from the lens of the *social organisation of care* (Razavi, 2007; Rodríguez Enríquez, 2015).

## 1.1. Research problem: care politics and the role of the state in social reproduction in the cracks of institutional politics in Chile

The historical changes in the traditional way of doing politics in Chile have created a new set of debates around care. This dynamic has provided a unique opportunity for feminist and popular networks to position themselves in mainstream debates. In this investigation, I explore the *care politics* of five organisations (*Asociación Yo Cuido, Ciudadanas Cuidando, SINTRACAP, ANAMURI* and *MAT*).

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[1] As developed in Chapter 2 and 3, this investigation works with two feminist and popular networks that can be understood as struggles for *sustainability of life*. First the Feminist Care Network (FCN), that articulated 14 organisations from different areas of care during the previous months to elections of the Conventional Constitution (April 18th, 2021). Second, the network of organisations involved on the mapping carried out by the articulation "Carpa de las Mujeres"[1] (2021), which systematizes and archives the experiences of fifty-five feminist and solidarity economy organisations.

Each of the selected organisations sees care as intersecting with their political work: they are unionised private household workers[2], they are caregivers of dependants, or they are activists for the care of nature, water, and seeds. Another commonality is that all five organisations have some degree of involvement inside the state institutions, understood as the constituent process, the central government, and the local governments. As much as they have things in common, they show differences in their understanding of the state's role in the social organisation of care. Therefore, my main interest in this investigation is to analyse how their relationship with the state is informed by their understandings of care, specifically their perspectives regarding the distribution, conditions, and recognition of this labour.

## 1.2. Research questions

**Main question:** How are the understandings of care informing the five organisations' relationship with the state amid the cracks in Chile's institutional politics from 2019-2022?

### Sub-questions:
1. Which conceptualisations of care are present in the debates between the organisations?
2. Which are the current understandings of the new government on the state's role in the social organisation of care?
3. How do the organisations materialise their understanding of care with state institutions?
4. How do the organisations deploy actions to transform the state?
5. Which strategies do the organisations take to reproduce life beyond the state?

## 1.3. Methodology

Methodologically, I combine two qualitative research methods to capture details, nuances, connections, and complexities of the debates on care (Sultana, 2021). The questions developed in the last section will be answered through (i) participant observation and (ii) qualitative interviews:

Participant observation. The main question of this investigation arises from active participation in feminist and popular networks during the period of (1) the campaign for the composition of the Constitutional Convention (CC) (February-April 2021) and (2) the campaign for the final plebiscite for the new constitution in Chile (August-September 2022). The participation observation gave the lens to this investigation; thus, the discussions I had in these instances are the backbone of the theoretical framework and the context.

Qualitative interviews. The organisations I interviewed are a non-randomised sample of organisations linked to the struggles for the *sustainability of life*. For selecting the five organisations, I considered two analytical dimensions: (1) how they develop their political action around care, and (2) how their political action deals to some degree with the state. As seen in Table 1, the five

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[2] In Chile, SINTRACAP defines itself as union of private household workers, rejecting the concept of *domestic workers* to define themselves.

organisations are composed of three caregivers' organisations that work on dimensions of paid and unpaid care and two ecofeminist organisations that work on care for nature[3].

**Table 1: Participant organisations, by type of organisations and care dimensions**

| Type of organisation | Care dimensions | Participant organisations |
|---|---|---|
| *Caregivers' organisations* | Unpaid care | **Asociación Yo Cuido** ("I care" Association) |
| | | **Colectivo Ciudadanas Cuidando** (Caring citizens collective) |
| | Paid care | **SINTRACAP** (National Union of Private Household Workers) |
| *Ecofeminist organisations* | Care for nature | **ANAMURI** (National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women). |
| | | **MAT** (Movement for the Water and Territories) |

**Source:** Own elaboration.

All the participants received a description of the investigation before the meetings and informed consent of their participation (See Appendix B). They also received a description of the topics of the interview, which covered (a) the role of the interviewee in the organisation, (b) their understanding of care, (c) their role during the country's political processes since 2019, (d) their understandings of the role of the state in social reproduction and (e) their work beyond the institutional processes (See Appendix C). Based on this, the interviewees guided the conversations, and questions were made only on topics not covered. All the participants wanted to appear in this investigation with their names and organisations.

## 1.4. Ethics and positionality

During this investigation, I paid attention to how to do ethical investigation, including practices of reciprocity, integrating reflexivity practices and questioning my positionalities (Sultana, 2021). The methodology tried to remain honest to the existence of partial and situated knowledges and truths (Bauhardt and Harcourt, 2019). The systematisation and analysis of the interviews aimed to show the diversity of the positions expressed and did not seek to summarise the visions. My analysis of the organisations remained attentive to their nuances, not seeking to make them converge but rather to enhance the creative tension that this generates in the investigation.

Following the guidelines for anti-oppressive research, this investigation aimed to be aware of the dynamics of the social construction of knowledge (Pos and Brown, 2005, p. 261) through a political, theoretical, and practical exercise. Political in the focuses and the expected results of doing investigation, theoretical in the disobedient epistemological framework in which it was framed, and practical in the accountability practices and the daily care and co-reflection with

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[3] For a developed description of the participant organisations, see Appendix A.

whom and about whom I did this investigation  (Potts and Brown, 2005, p. 268). Hence, I approached this investigation from the Cooperative where I work (*Cooperativa Desbordada*), integrating practices of research-action during the process. Research activists work from a situated position, compromising their labour to strengthen struggles. Therefore, the main purpose of the investigation is to contribute to the struggles and visibility of the organisations involved.

The investigation was conducted from decolonial feminist standpoint epistemology (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1992; Rodríguez Castro, 2020). That meant problematising the biases I hold as an educated and urban white-mestiza and practising what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2018) defines as decolonising the subjectivity -  such as applying practices to the problem from more angles. For this reason, I met with people who could tension my different ways of seeing the latest insurgency events in Chile.  However, as my focus was on the institutional processes, the analysis did not cover communities completely marginalised from a dialogue with the Chilean state. Such as fully autonomous organisations or coordinators are in resistance to the coloniality of the Chilean state.

## 1.5. Limitations

The first limitation of this investigation relies on defining care as the framework of the organisations. Even when the intention was to address care from a holistic perspective that includes economics, social, and environmental dimensions, this definition might not have resonated in the organisations. To counteract this limitation, during the interviews, I asked how they understood care and how it was part of their work. In my analysis, I tried to be faithful to the conceptualisations of care present in their reflections. However, I take responsibility for the biases I brought to translate their understandings, being aware of the politics of knowledge implied (Mignolo, 2009).

Another limitation arises from doing the interviews in the same period as the referendum for the new constitution with people directly engaged in the campaign. Therefore, the reflections can only be read as part of an ongoing process that impacted this investigation directly. In addition, the referendum's result was the rejection of the new constitution, which significantly affected the questions of this investigation. Given that the time between the referendum and the publication of this investigation was very tight, these pages do not include an analysis of the reasons for the rejection of the proposed constitution. Faced with this adverse context, I am deeply grateful for the solidarity of the *compañeras* who met with me and shared some of their time in their overloaded workdays to reflect on the shifting ground we were walking on.

Finally, the selection of organisations only provides a partial overview of the care politics in Chile since I did not work with organisations outside the institutional framework. This limitation is due to my positionality and the place from where I conducted this investigation.  Integrating perspectives from positions entirely outside the state would give this investigation a much more critical view of the state's role in social reproduction and open up more spaces for integrating decolonial critique.

## 1.6. Structure of the paper

Following this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2, I expound my theoretical framework, which explains how I read communities and state relations. I first look at the debate on the commons and the conceptualisations of the relationship with the state in political ecology and decolonial theory. I then delve into the debates on the ethics and politics of *commoning* care. Here I elaborate on how care is conceptualised in care politics in Chile, especially their approaches to community and territorial care. Next, I elaborate on the debates on social reproduction, the notion of crisis, and the alternatives of "buen vivir". I conclude the second chapter with a diagram that shows the relations that caring communities have *with-against-and-beyond* the state inside the diamond -or trapezoid- of care building on Razavi (2007).

In Chapter 3, I review the context where this investigation is situated, describing the main events in institutional politics since the social events of 2019. First, I describe how feminist mobilisations influenced the political agenda during the most intense months of mobilisations in 2019, and I develop how the struggles for the *sustainability of life are* expressed in the Chilean context. Lastly, I narrate the main milestones of the constituent process and which spaces opened for the participation of social movements. Finally, I describe the current government's care agenda and its interpretation of the state's role in the social organisation of care.

In Chapter 4, I analyse the interviews by looking at the similarities and differences in the organisations' conceptualisations of the distribution, characteristics and subjects of care. In the following three sections, I develop how these organisations deploy trialectic strategies of *with-against-and-beyond* the state. Here, I look at how the organisations find space within the state to materialize their understandings of care, showing in which dimensions the state should be more present in social reproduction. I then discuss how the organisations deploy strategies to transform the state. Finally, I describe which strategies the organisations have beyond the state. Here, I analyse how this is expressed in their strategies inside the communities and with other agents present -or not- in the proposed social organisation of care model.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I provide concluding remarks on this investigation through a visual synthesis of my analysis. I consider how the different participant organisations' understandings of care inform their conceptions of the state's role in the social organisation of care and how this affects their relationships with state institutions.

# Chapter 2 | Theoretical approaches to unpack the relationship between communities and the state

In this chapter, I draw the theoretical framework of my investigation. Each chapter develops the foundational concepts that inform my analysis of the relations between caring communities and the state. Firstly, I explore the debates on the commons and the state, building on political ecology and decolonial approaches. Secondly, I delve into the debates on the ethics and politics of *commoning* care. In this section, I elaborate on how different meanings of care frame my investigation, focusing specifically on community and territorial care approaches. Thirdly, I discuss the concept of social reproduction, the notion of the care crisis, and the alternatives of "*buen vivir*" in Latin America. In this section, I first draw on the dialogue between north and south feminist economists in their understanding of the care crisis. Then, I propose the alternatives that had emerged from feminist and indigenous movements to face this crisis. Finally, I connect these debates in a visual analysis of the *social organisation of care*. Here, I explain what drove my analysis of communities' relations with-against *and beyond* the state.

## 2.1. The debates on the commons and the state

According to Albert Hirsh (1978), it is important to consider how "the state apparatus functions from the context of the reproduction and crisis of the capitalist system" (p. 76). Taking this point up, I draw on discussions from Cumbers (2015) and Angel and Loftus (2017; 2018, 2019) on the global commons and the imaginary of the state. These authors propose alternative approaches to state-centric understandings of the production and management of commons. They do so by expanding the imaginary of being with-and-against the state to a trialectic of being *with-against-and-beyond*, "suggesting a form of politics that not only opposes the state form but, moreover, transcends it" (Angel and Loftus, 2018, p. 127). They propose this trialectic as a way of continuing the engagement with the question of the state meanwhile rejecting a form of centralised nation-state apparatus (Cumbers, 2015). Thus, they argue that it is possible to continue engaging with the state while simultaneously thinking about the common's emancipatory politics.

Angel & Loftus (2017; 2018, 2019) analyse the trialectic *with-against-and-beyond* the state in two cases: the struggles for the right to water in Durban, South Africa and to energy in Berlin, Germany (Berlin Energietisch). First, they describe how these struggles engage with the state by demanding the democratisation of state institutions or claiming stronger citizenship participation (Angel, 2017). Also, the authors describe how the action *with* the state can be seen in their rights-based approach demands, reflecting how emancipatory politics can find their way through levelling demands on the state to change the relations of water/energy access (Angel and Loftus, 2019). Secondly, they establish that these struggles cannot be understood without simultaneously accounting for the

attempt to work *against* the state's form and relations (Angel, 2017). For example, in the Energietisch struggle, the authors saw a sense that worked against the state, betraying the "understanding of state institutions' role within the reproduction of dominant relations and aspiring to disrupt this" (Angel and Loftus, 2018, p. 129). Therefore, they understand that the action against the state can also be from its participation, "acting in ways that subvert the social relations through which state institutions are constituted" (Angel, 2017, p. 568). Finally, the authors analyse how Durban and Berlin's struggles recognised the need for a struggle beyond the state. Drawing from Faranak Miraftab (2006, 2009), they describe how the water struggle in Durban would make claims on the state through official channels vis a vis creating other spaces for more emancipatory and confrontational politics (Angel and Loftus, 2019).

Drawing on the contributions of Silvia Federici (2012), I will discuss this framework from the ethics and politics of care. Federici looks at the role of unpaid reproductive labour during the struggles, arguing that social reproduction has been overlooked in maintaining social movements that seek to build emancipatory alternatives. The author establishes that the reproduction of life has been historically a collective process in extended families and communities on which people used to rely, and it was only with the advent of capitalism that it became privatised (Federici, 2010b). Following this argument, Federici establishes the need for the recollectivisation of social reproduction. The intrinsic relationship between the debate on the commons and care is essential to my analysis of how organised caregivers and ecofeminists see the state. Life reproduction is a constant in these organisations' activism since their everyday social reproduction activities are the backbone of their politics, and most cannot stop caring while they are politically active.

In addition to the feminist contributions to the debates on the state, this investigation draws on decolonial approaches to critically examine the formation of nation-states in Latin America. This investigation draws on Anibal Quijano's (2000) coloniality of power, which is a critique of the European-like nation-building process based on the view of coloniality. Pointing out the racialised forms of control that foreign powers established over the populations of the Americas, Quijano argues that the formation of European nation-states depends on racial homogenisation. Therefore, in Latin America, it is not possible to find any country that has fully realised a nationalised society and a realised nation-state (p. 228). He argues that coloniality -a base form of racial domination- has always been a limiting factor in the European-like nation-building process in the region (p. 229).

For the countries in the so-called "Southern Cone" (Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay), Quijano suggests there was a limited though real homogenisation process. Due to the massive genocide of indigenous peoples and the attraction of millions of European immigrants, the "whiteness" of their societies appeared to be consolidated through this homogenisation (p. 225). In Chile, "Indian" serfdom was restricted, and "Negro" enslaved people were a tiny group and not an important sector of the economy. That implied a reduced source of gratuitous work; from the beginning, an increasing proportion of the local production was based on salary and capital (p. 226). This supposed homogenisation process has

been constantly challenged by indigenous movements that have contested the *uni*-national character of the Chilean state[4].

Understanding the colonial relations of the state-making process in Latin America is essential to elaborate on the non-state-centric imaginaries of emancipatory struggles in the region. In that vein, Raquel Gutierrez (2017) discusses the alternatives we have to produce and administrate the commons beyond the state. She proposes to look at the production of the commons beyond capital and the state, understanding that the logic of its production lies in everyday, local community practices that solve specific problems and satisfy urgent needs. To do so, Gutierrez describes and reviews experiences of the production of the commons in Latin America. She argues that it is possible to generalize and articulate these practices beyond the local, to understand them as the foundations of plural political projects that can go beyond the limited horizon of extractivist progressivism (p. 76). Drawing on Gutierrez's understanding of the production of the commons, in this investigation, I describe how they are present in the practices of some of the five participating organisations. Specifically, their strategies to produce, care for and reproduce the commons, with spaces for deliberation and agreement, with defined ends and established steps, rhythms, and scales (p. 127).

Decolonial approaches propose forms of production that oppose modern and developed understandings of the state informed by colonised perspectives, such as the extractivist or productivist strabismus of state-centric left projects (Escobar, 2001; Pérez Orozco, 2014). They argue for alternative discourses to economic growth and extractivism as the foundation of development (Dávila, 2019),  looking to the production of the commons that have been erased. For this investigation, decolonial approaches were essential to understanding the struggles *beyond* the state of the participant ecofeminist organisations, especially their positioning against the productivist and extractivist logic of the state.

## 2.2. Ethics and politics of *commoning* care

Care can be defined as an "inseparably, a vital affective state, an ethical obligation and a practical labour" (de la Bellacasa, 2012, p. 1). This inherent and ethical character of care has been developed in the discussions around the *ethics of care*. One of the first contributions to the *ethics of care* was Joan Tronto in 1993. Tronto argues that notions of care can vary between societies and groups but is undoubtedly a universal aspect of human -and non-human- life (p. 110). She argues that since the definition of care is extensive, we can think of care as an ongoing process that consumes many parts of human activity (p. 104). To avoid the vagueness of the definition, the author delimits the understanding of care, asking what is not care, and she enlists activities like creative activities, production and

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[4] Following the constituent processes in Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous movements in Chile have claimed the possibility of characterising the state as plurinational. From their anti-colonial and intersectional perspective, many feminist and women's organisations have adopted this conception. Thus, during this research, the plurinational concept appears in the names of meetings and documents of feminist networks.

destruction[5]. Tronto establishes that to have any critical perspective on our culture, we need a systematic way of thinking about care (p. 112).

Tronto's approach is a good starting point for understanding the complexity of care and how it is expressed in its politics. This investigation draws a politics of care based on a *community* perspective, inspired by my participant observation and the interviews I conducted. Specifically in the theoretical elaborations during the meetings of feminist and popular economy organisations that I was part of in the space-time of this investigation. First, it is based on a mapping carried out by the articulation "Carpa de las Mujeres"[6] (2021), which systematizes and archives the experiences of fifty-five feminist and solidarity economy organisations. They define their conception of community care by studying their experiences during the social outbreak and the pandemic. They describe their action as guided by other forms of consumption, production and care, relationships based on the fundamental needs of people and communities, and in harmony with nature. Secondly, the care manifesto developed from discussions with activists in the context of the Feminist Network for Care during the constituent process (Cooperativa Desbordada, 2022). This manifesto describes the multiplicity and complexity of activities that care involves. This manifesto situates how care is understood from its transformative power, mobilising many organisations to confront reproduction processes collectively. In this way, this investigation defines care that will include relations mediated by a salary and those not, such as family relations, emotional ties, ties with the territory, nature and identity (p. 4).

These organisations' conceptions of community care help me to situate another essential concept: *territorial*. To define this concept, I draw on ecofeminist and decolonial contributions to the body-territory relationship from a non-essentialist perspective. Therefore, I delve into visions that link violence to land with violence towards bodies - in their diversity-. In that vein, Lorena Cabnal (2010) develops an interesting definition of this term from *community feminism*[7], situating it in a historical struggle of the peoples for the recovery and defence of territory, where the life of bodies is manifested. Cabnal highlights this vision in the struggles against mining and the patriarchal capitalist development model that threatens men's and women's relationship with the earth and life (p. 130). I use the concept of body-territory to explore the extractive relations carried out

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[5] Tronto also includes the *pursuit of pleasure,* but I omit this following the critique of the eros of power (*Audre Lorde*) and the discussions on the importance of self-care and co-care in social struggle, that describe how the distribution of leisure is defined by class, race, and gender.

[6] "Carpa de las mujeres" is an articulation of feminist organisations engaged in the struggle against extractive capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, racism and structural violence, formed by: Red Chilena contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres; Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indígenas - ANAMURI; Colectivo VientoSur; Movimiento por el Agua y los Territorios - MAT; Comité Socioambiental de la Coordinadora Feminista 8 de Marzo - CF8M; Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres and Fundación Heinrich Böll (Carpa de las Mujeres, 2021).

[7] Community feminism is a political and theoretical movement that emerged in Latin America in the early 1990s (Martínez, 2019, p. 25). It emerged from Bolivian Aymara and Xinka women members of the Association of Indigenous Women of Xalapán, Guatemala, as a contribution to the abolition of ancestral native patriarchy and Western colonial patriarchy (p. 28).

on nature and bodies, not associating it with any specific gender. Amaia Perez Orozco (2015) addresses an interesting non-binary approach to body-territory positioning as a claim to the "right to decide over our bodies" in the campaigns for Aborto Legal in Argentina., refusing the predefined sex/race/ability norm. This transfeminist perspective of the body-territory relationship is present in the spaces that, as a scholar-activist, I participated in during this investigation. In these spaces, there was critical participation of trans (*queer*) and lesbian organisations[8] alongside organisations against heteropatriarchal violence and abortion networks.

Following feminist political ecology, I am also interested in their contributions to *commoning* care. Defined as "a communal, largely unpaid, yet socially recognised mode of reproduction that can be a fruitful way of envisioning […] caring activities beyond the deep separation structure between a visible and valued "productive sphere" and an invisible and devalued "reproductive sphere" on which capitalist economies rely" (Dengler and Lang, 2022, p. 3). This perspective emphasises the imperative of redefining our economic values to include care for our families, communities, and other knowledges and cultures to think about post-capitalist futures (Harcourt, 2014, p. 1325).

Finally, it is crucial to highlight critical views on the community care strategy that alerts us on how the state can use the care narrative to exploit and intensify unpaid care work, reducing social spending. Sherilyn MacGregor (2010) argues for the importance of claiming an ecological feminist citizenship that rejects the privatisation and feminisation of care and pushes for its reorganisation so that women can participate on equal terms as citizens. MacGregor sees the politicisation of care as an essential part of citizenship rather than a natural resource in the public sphere (p. 13). I take this up in chapter 4.1 when I analyse the caregivers' organisations' call to be recognised as subjects and citizens and how their knowledge and labour must be treated in the political discussion, not just as a resource.

## 2.3. The crisis of care is a crisis of social reproduction

Asking what care is and how we care is a way of analysing the economic system and recognising how welfare is distributed. The role of care in social reproduction is a question that both feminists in academia and activism have asked extensively in Latin America in dialogue with thinkers in the North (Quiroga Díaz, 2010; Borderías, Carrasco and Torns, 2011; Folbre, 2014; Fraser, 2016; Carrasco Bengoa *et al.*, 2018). This dialogue has created nutritive reflections around the notion of the crisis of social reproduction and the struggles for the sustainability of life (*sostenibilidad de la vida*)[9].

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[8] This critical participation of the transfeminist movements is very important in the current feminist articulation in Chile. They have been crucial in the reflections on issues addressed in this research, such as the discussion of gender parity in the constituent process. For a more extensive review of how transfeminist movements contributed to a non-binary conception of gender parity in the state in Chile see Baron, C. et al. (2022).

[9] As developed in Chapter 3.1, *sustainability of life (sostenibilidad de la vida)* is one of the many concepts used in  Latin America to frame the conflict capital-life (Pérez

Nancy Fraser (2016), in her famous essay on the contradictions of capital and care, defines the crisis of care as "the pressures from several directions that are currently squeezing a key set of social capacities: those available for birthing and raising children, caring for friends and family members, maintaining households and broader communities, and sustaining connections more generally" (p. 1). Fraser establishes that the reproduction of capitalist system is brought on by "the depletion and decimation of social reproductive functions" (Bhattacharya and Vogel, 2017). Nancy Folbre (2014) similarly argues that patriarchal capitalism is increasingly shaping an uncaring world, rewarding those who seek individual interest, maximising self-utility, and penalizing those who care and commit their life to it. Fraser (2016) claims that we are in front of a social reproductive "crisis tendency" on capitalism: "on the one hand, social reproduction is a condition of possibility for sustained capital accumulation; on the other, capitalism's orientation to unlimited accumulation tends to destabilize the very processes of social reproduction on which it relies" (p. 100). Therefore, the result of this contradiction, according to Fraser, is a major crisis, not simply of care, but of social reproduction (p. 99).

The exacerbation of the care crisis can be linked to the weakening of states in the administration of public goods. The deepening of this crisis is temporarily located in the implementation of the austerity measures proposed by the Washington Consensus, which resulted in the cutback and privatisation of social goods and services, labour flexibilisation and the abandonment of full employment as explicit objectives of the state (Quiroga Díaz, 2010). Other authors problematise the deepening of the crisis in the context of a re-privatisation of reproduction and, at the same time, an increase in the demands of care, and they find expressions of these simultaneous dynamics in less industrialised countries as well as in those of the so-called first world (Borderías, Carrasco and Torns, 2011).

In the analyses of the crisis of care, the question of the state and how it administrates the commons is also very present. For example, Amaia Pérez Orozco (2014) establishes that the state is a crucial instrument in constructing collective responsibility for welfare. Therefore, the state must be focused on responding to this crisis's urgencies and halting its advance. It places on the state the responsibility of guaranteeing systemic change by taking steps in three directions at the same time, firstly, detracting resources from the logic of capital accumulation; secondly, democratising households; and finally, constructing liberating economic spaces committed with a collective *buen vivir* (p. 279).

The understanding of *buen vivir* - or also *küme mogñen* (Mapudungun), *sumak kawsay* (Quechua), and *suma qamaña* (Aymara) - stem from the indigenous cosmogonies of the original peoples of southern Latin America with solid ideological input from the indigenous movements of the Southern Cone (Cabnal, 2010, p. 123). *Küme mogñen* -the expression of good living in the Mapuche[10] indigenous culture- refers to the quality of life or social well-being where the

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Orozco, 2014) and to highlight the strategies of popular and feminist movement to counteract the permanent plundering of the material conditions of reproduction in the capitalist system with activities for sustainability of life. This conceptualisation is addressed in this research with the aim of integrating a framework that is more pertinent in the context that I am working in.

[10] Mapuche people are the biggest indigenous group in Chile, according to the last census (2017) they represent 9,9% of the population with 1.8 million people.

elements that constitute the structure of the Mapuche world are found: land, language, religion, identity and cultural memory (Ibacache, Morros and Trangol, 2002; Díaz Mujica *et al.*, 2004; in Padilla Navarro *et al.*, 2015). For the *küme mogñen*, the human being is in a horizontal relationship with nature, in complementarity with the rest of the elements and in consideration of not only the human interest but also that of life, the land, the community and the family.(Huanacuni, 2010; in Padilla Navarro *et al.*, 2015). *Buen vivir* is an alternative to the myopic productivism of some statist-centric visions. It is a strategy for managing the commons that differs from individualistic or maximising conceptualisations of productivism and extractivist modernisation. It is also an invitation to leave behind the individual notion of care activities that some Eurocentric political demands have (Pérez Orozco, 2014)[11].

## 2.4. Communities in the social organisation of care

Finally, to fully understand the politics of care, we need to unpack the concept of the *social organisation of care*, which describes how families, the state, the market, and communities produce and distribute care in an interrelated manner (Rodríguez Enríquez, 2015, p. 40). To visualize the relations of these four agents involved in the social organisation of care, Razavi (2007) proposes the care *diamond* (Razavi, 2007, p. 21). Based on the debates with other feminist economists, I re-draw the model since the diamond creates the illusion of an equal distribution of power relations among these four agents. I adapted Razavi's diamond to a trapezoid of care, with families and communities at the base, sharing the main activities of social reproduction and sustaining the market and the state above.

**Figure 1: Relations *with-against-and-beyond* the state in the trapezoid of care**
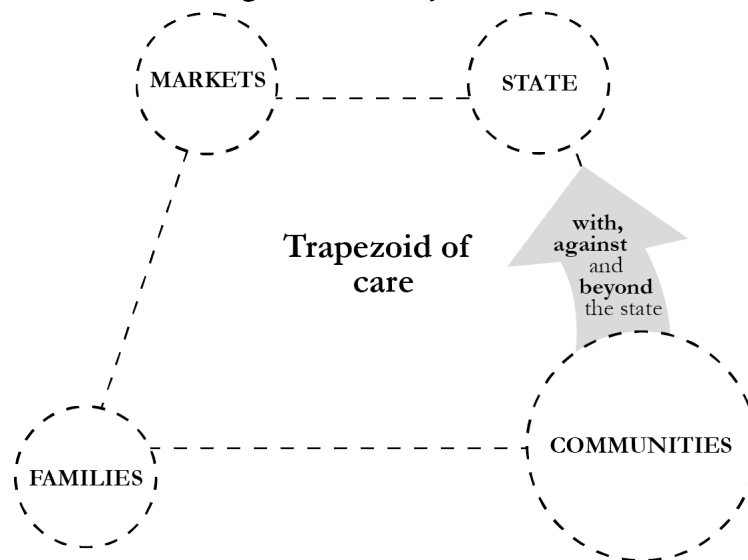


**Source:** Own elaboration, based on Razavi (2007), Cumbers (2015) and Angel and Loftus (2017; 2018, 2019).

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[11] For the critiques to the rights-based approaches of the struggles around care in Chile, see below Chapter 4.2, when I develop care rights discussions during the draft of the New Constitution.

Since the focus of this investigation is on the organisation's understandings of care and how that informs their relationship with the state, I draw this figure from the communities to the other agents of the trapezoid. This figure is the visual representation of how I analysed the relations *with-against-and-beyond* the state of the five organisations ([Chapter 4](#)). I return to this figure in the conclusions ([Chapter 5](#)) of this investigation, with the diagram analysis based on the reflections shared by caregivers' and ecofeminist organisations.

# Chapter 3 | **Cracks in the institutional politics in Chile since the social outbreak**[12]

In this chapter, I review the context of this investigation, setting out how the feminist movement's agenda has influenced the milestones of institutional politics since the social uprising of 2019. In the first section, I review the importance of feminist mobilisations since the 2019 social uprising. In the second section, I narrate the main milestones of the constituent process after the social uprising. This section explains how the process developed and opened spaces for social movements. Finally, in the third section, I develop the narrative of the *caring state* that feminists working for the government have instigated. Here, I describe the current government's policy approaches and contrast them with the five organisations' visions after the failure of the constitution to pass.

## 3.1. "*Nos deben una vida*[13]": the relevance of feminist mobilisations in periods of uprising

In this section, I analyze the importance of feminist power during the periods of uprising in Chile from 2019 until now. I take a brief look at the recent history of the feminist movement in Chile to see how they have articulated their struggles for the *sustainability of life*. Here I elaborate on the connections with the debates on the crisis of social reproduction - or the crisis of care - discussed in chapter 2.2 in the Latin American context.

In October 2019, the people of Chile took to the streets after the government decided to raise the cost of subway fares by 30 pesos[14]. Faced with this measure, the secondary students throughout the metropolis began to take over the city's stations, calling on people to evade the fare. The massive levels of social mobilisation during October and December 2019 became known as the Chilean social outbreak and were only stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a period of radical, widespread, and significant mobilisation that represented a critical juncture for social movements and the future of institutional politics in Chile (Tricot, 2021).

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[12] This chapter is interwoven with reflections of feminist researcher-activists in Chile that have emerged since the social outbreak. In particular, the Desbordada Cooperative and the nourishing reflections that emerged in the writing of the chapter "*Estrategias feministas ante la insistencia neoliberal: recorridos desde la revuelta de octubre*" with Camila Barón, Fernanda Moscoso and Catalina Valencia (2022).

[13] "They owe us a life" is graffiti that could be frequently seen on the streets of Santiago during the uprising period and that framed the call "Let's go for the life we are owed" of the Feminist General Strike in March 2022.

[14] This represents almost 4% of the subway fare, and while it may not seem like much, it was the measure that sparked the protests and was the enter point to a critique on the entire socioeconomic model that had prevailed in Chile since the return to democracy in 1989. Therefore, the slogan of the beginning of the protests moment was "It's not thirty pesos, it's thirty years" (Guardiola-Rivera, 2019).

Although there are many interpretations of the reasons why people protested, it is possible to trace a list of demands that were left unheard for the last thirty years: public health and education, pensions, job insecurity, low wages, indebtedness, the ominous privatisation of natural resources, water, for example (Castillo, 2020). At the moment of the outbreak, there was an accumulated history of struggles from 2006, starting with secondary students' protests, followed by university mobilisations for free, public, and good quality education (2011), the movement against the private pension system (2013), feminist mobilisations against patriarchal violence (2018) and the permanent uprisings of the indigenous peoples for autonomy and restitution of ancestral lands (Nohales and Zúñiga, 2020). This track of mobilised forces firmly directed the social outbreak protests towards the dynamics of deprivation of the Chilean neoliberal, colonial and patriarchal model. Therefore, one of the main knots identified as the cause of this crisis of social reproduction was the institutional ties left by the 1980 political constitution of the military dictatorship (1973-1989).

The social outbreak was marked by police repression that led to serious human rights violations, including killings, indiscriminate arrests, eye mutilations, and sexual harassment (INDH, 2020; Nash, 2020). Feminist movements responded to the patriarchal and racist police violence with the chant of "Las Tesis", which called out the responsibility of the state - the police, the judges and the government - in violating human rights. Overall, the social outbreak co-occurred with -and to some extent, was driven and sustained by- the feminist movements (Vergara-Saavedra and Muñoz-Rojas, 2021).

In a demonstration of feminist power, the protest confronted and overcame the Eurocentric history of a male, salaried and white working-class struggle and proposed a revolt that connected political dimensions historically denied in social protests, such as the reproductive work of feminised and racialised bodies (Gago, 2019). During the social outbreak, feminist movements visibilised the patriarchal violence within the everyday, private life and the damage the neoliberal economic model does to bodies. They made political linkages between these two spheres by calling attention to the double working day of women and the care work they do to sustain life (Castillo, 2020). A series of feminist interventions throughout the outbreak appealed to the importance of social reproduction during the struggle, as described by Federici (2012). It was a call to strike in all forms of work, productive and reproductive, in support of a feminist program against the precarisation of life (Coordinadora Feminista 8 de Marzo, 2021b). This aligned with the claim that Latin feminist movements had built around the General Feminist Strike: "si nosotras paramos, para el mundo" (*if we strike, the world stops*). Following that claim, the three "plurinational meetings of those who struggle", one of the main spaces of articulation of the feminist movement in Chile, have addressed unpaid work and the need to socialise care as one of the central issues of the feminist struggle (Coordinadora Feminista 8 de Marzo, 2019, 2020, 2021a).

In sum, the activism of many feminist organisations in Chile can be framed in terms of what Latin feminist activist scholars have called struggles for the *sustainability of life* (Carpa de las Mujeres, 2021; Pérez Orozco, 2014; Rodríguez Enríquez and Partenio, 2020). These struggles integrate the diagnosis of the precarisation of life into their feminist articulation, and their action revolves around care in its multiple forms (Baron *et al.*, 2022). This is expressed in the political definitions of one of the feminist and popular networks in which

the participant organisations in this investigation articulate. This network defines their struggle as a "response to the neoliberal system, based on self-management, collective processes and the praxis of the communities themselves, which allows us to identify a common horizon: the sustainability of life" (Carpa de las Mujeres, 2021, p. 5).

## 3.2. Constituent process (2020-2022)

The conflictive and radical social mobilisations from October-December 2019 led to a political crisis and had an unthinkable success in channelling a process of institutional overflow from below (Parra Coray, 2021). On November 15th, 2019, representatives from most of the institutional political spectrum, from the new left to the far right, negotiated a way out of this crisis through a "Peace Agreement". This was an agreement to draft a new Chilean constitution from a blank sheet, departing from the dictatorship's constitution. The political agreement outlined a constituent process that opened space for an elected convention to draft a new Carta Magna for the country. In this section, I review important milestones within the constituent process that came from the social outbreak and the importance of the social movement's participation within it. This journey will be vital to understanding the strategies of the participating organisations during this process.

The timeline defined by the "Peace Agreement" set first an initial plebiscite that would decide whether the people of Chile wanted a new constitution and how this would be drafted[15] (25 October 2020), secondly an election of the people who would draft it (18 April 2021), and thirdly a final plebiscite that would approve or reject the fundamental charter written by this body (4 September 2022). One of the social movements' strongest criticisms of this agreement was the failure to guarantee gender parity and the participation of indigenous peoples, and therefore, this process could not guarantee the transformative policies that were demanded. For this reason, during 2020 and after pressure from feminist politicians and social movements in parliament, the constituent process guaranteed the participation of indigenous peoples through 17 reserved seats (11%), gender parity with equal participation of men and women in the convention, and the possibility of having independent candidates competing against political parties (Law No. 21.216 and Law No. 21.298).

Amid these negotiations to establish democratic minimums for participation in the assembly, the contributions and alliances between feminist, popular and indigenous movements were essential. The exclusion of indigenous peoples in the design of the state has not been different from the exclusion of impoverished populations and women (Namuncura, 2016). This process of recognising the diversity of the popular organisations and, at the same time, the links between the oppressions was fundamental for shaping a convention unique in the history of institutional politics in Chile. The results of the popular elections

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[15] There was two existing possibilities: a Constitutional Convention, fully elected by citizens, and a Mixed Convention, with half of the members elected by the citizens and the other half integrated by existing parliamentarians (Tricot, 2021).

reflected this. In October 2020, the initial plebiscite resulted in the population overwhelmingly approving the drafting of a new constitution (78.27%). The results chose a Constitutional Convention (CC) (78.99%) composed of a fully elected body with guarantees of gender parity, participation of indigenous peoples and lists of independents detailed above. After that, elections in April 2021 proposed potential candidates who would draft the new constitution in the convention, and the population voted for an unprecedented level of independent candidates.

As the rules that defined this assembly differed from any previous state body in Chilean history, this opened an opportunity for communities, such as popular organisations, neighbourhood assemblies, and socio-environmental organisations, among others, to be elected to draft the new constitution. This broke the dichotomy of participation inside /outside the state, and organisations internally coordinated their participation from both spheres. They reconsidered this dichotomy because the space opened as never before to push different social movement agendas. This dynamic characterised the feminists' role within the assembly, who participated in the convention as a "speaker " for the movements they were part of, moving away from the traditional idea of political representatives.

Finally, the gender parity and participation of independents implied that the feminist perspective was in the final text. "*The constitutional text was the expression of multiple struggles because we women were there*", commented one of the constituent convention members at an encounter of neighbours organised before the final plebiscite. The transversality of this feminist perspective in the new constitutional text was reviewed in a feminist encounter with six thousand people one week before the referendum of September 2022 (Radio Universidad Chile, 2022a). At this encounter, all the articles reflecting the historical demands of the feminist movements were reviewed. Here, it was emphasised how parity, sexual and reproductive rights, recognition of domestic and care work, access to water, food sovereignty and security, among others, were embodied in this new text.

Unfortunately, the plebiscite of 4 September 2022 resulted in the rejection (62%) of the new constitutional text. While it is too early to agree on the reasons for this result, it is important to reflect on why the social movements' demands for structural change in this process did not resonate with the wider population. Why did these demands for structural change not resonate with the majority of the population's daily problems, and why are right-wing ideologies (even fascism and terror campaigns) more successful in convincing the population. Undoubtedly, several contradictions emerge from this result, such as a text that recognised the right to care or the right to water was rejected by women in drought-affected areas. The reason for the failure is beyond the scope of the investigation; therefore, the analysis focuses on what the constituent process meant for the participating organisations and how their discussions, approaches and disputes were present in the debates leading to and during the constituent process.

## 3.3. "Caring State": new government care politics

Since this investigation is situated on the cracks in state institutions of the last three years and how they changed the map of social movements' political participation, it is necessary to delve into their dialogue with the new government care

agenda. In this section, I analyse the care agenda of the government of Gabriel Boric, outlining the narrative of the *caring state* that feminists working inside the government developed. I argue that there are arguments to frame this narrative of the state as a caregiver.

The narrative of the *caring state* in Chile correlates with the demands of the feminist movement in the region and reflects the broader care policy agenda of Latin American governments. As a result of profound demographic changes and structural gender inequalities in the functioning of labour markets, the care crisis in these countries has been mainstreamed as a fact within institutional politics (ECLAC, 2019). Along these lines, the discussion on the relevance of care work for social reproduction has contributed to the development of public policies that consider care the fourth pillar of social security (Sistema de Cuidados, 2020). This has been materialised in the construction of care systems in countries such as Uruguay, Argentina and Mexico and local care policies in other countries. The main contribution of these systems to the care policies debate has been the focus on community care and on thr caregivers as subjects of rights in the programmes.

Based on the understanding that if care is not well distributed, care provision is generally privatised, feminised and familiarised. Feminists in the government and caregivers' movements have claimed the need for co-responsibility in care, meaning that social provision systems should organise and distribute care, not reduce it. Care systems, in that sense, seek to defamiliarise care provision and take the ultimate responsibility for social reproduction off the shoulders of feminised bodies.

The universal right to care has been recognised in the commitments adopted in the Regional Gender Agenda of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (2010, 2014) (Bustamante Pérez, 2021). In line with this political agenda for care in the region, caregivers' organisations have started talking about a *caring society* and political parties in the current government about the *caring state* (p. 256). During the presidential campaign, the elected president, Gabriel Boric, had in its programmatic proposals the construction of a National Care System (NCS)[16] that would redistribute care between households, state and community, with a focus on the care recipients, including children, dependant and older people, and also in the caregivers (Apruebo Dignidad, 2021, p. 37). One of his campaign clips emphasised this proposal and showed a conversation with *Yo Cuido*, one of the organisations participating in this investigation, where he promised: "to work tirelessly so that we have a state that does not abandon, but rather a *caring state*"[17].

[16] In the region, these systems have been called comprehensive and/or national systems of care (ECLAC, 2022). In Chile, the central government agenda is pushing for a National Care System (NSC), but it is also possible to find policies for neighbourhood or local care systems (Radio Universidad Chile, 2022a). Also, as will be seen in chapter 4.2, in the proposal of the new constitutional context that was rejected, it was named Comprehensive Care System (Convención Constitucional, 2022a) .

[17] Campaign clip during Gabriel Boric's presidential campaign on the international day of caregivers, November 6th 2021 (available at: https://twitter.com/gabriel-boric/status/1456760690178412544)

Likewise, the current Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Antonia Orellana, has on several occasions stressed her position on the role of the state in the provision of care. Before taking her position in the current government, she was a candidate for the CC and used this platform to argue that it was necessary to stop thinking about fragmented demands for social rights and start talking about a *caring state* as a whole[18]. In her role as minister, she has emphasised how they are "establishing a new paradigm of a *caring state*"[19], defining care recipients and caregivers as the target population in the NCS. Like Orellana, other representatives of political parties both within the parliament[20] and the Constitutional Convention[21] have elaborated on this concept along the lines of the need for the state to take a more active role in the social organisation of care, to free up caregivers' time to devote to other self-care activities, leisure and paid work.

In concrete terms, in the first months of government, care issues have been at the top of the political agenda. The national registry of caregivers was launched, which will allow the collection of information on those who are permanently taking care of the dependent population (Diario Financiero, 2022). Also, a new Law on Parental Responsibility and Effective Payment of Child Support was enacted quickly (Law No. 21.484). In addition, a pack of policies mainstreaming the gender perspective was informed[22], including special entry hours and care leave for people with children under 12, a reduction of the working day to 40 hours and an increase in days off for domestic workers, and the construction of 40 community care and protection centres. One of the communicated measures that generate more expectation is the prioritisation of the care system among the policies to be financed with the potential new tax system (Ministerio de Hacienda, 2022). If the tax reform is implemented, the system would have the possibility of permanent financing corresponding to 0.3 GDP points.

This narrative of the *caring state* will be contrasted with the visions of organised communities in Chapter 4, especially in the contradictions that arise when applying a territorial and community perspective on care. The disagreements on how to confront the welfarism of social policy, the different strategies to promote co-responsibility and the challenges of the participation spaces that the government is deploying will be critical issues in understanding how this narrative is being expressed in practice. The important thing is to define how these organisations are part of and/or criticising the government's care agenda and how that informs not only their political stances but also the action that guides the strategies of action they deploy within, against and beyond the state.

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[18] Antonia Orellana as a candidate for the CC in a TV debate, "Aquí se debate" on CNN Chile, February 6th, 2021. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBpCPIHamRE

[19] Antonia Orellana, minister of women and Gender equity in an interview in TV, "CNN prime" on CNN Chile, June 6th, 2022. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkvdIbK_r10

[20] Claudia Pascual, senator of the republic 2022-2028, in an interview in an online radio, "Super Ciudadanos" on Súbela Radio, November 19th, 2022. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eY_YuvbhlYo&t=805s

[21] Constanza Schönhaut, as a candidate for the CC, "Mesa Central" on Canal 13, February 7th, 2021. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0i9SHJ8Y44

[22] The detail of this program, can be found at: https://www.gob.cl/chileparatodas/

# Chapter 4 | **Debating care: the communities vs the state**

Drawing on Cumbers (2015), Angel and Loftus (2017; 2018, 2019), in this section, I examine care politics analysed from each strand of the trialectic *with-against-and beyond* the state. I analyse care politics by looking at five organisations: three caregivers' organisations, composed of private household workers (*SINTRACAP*) and informal, unpaid caregivers (*Ciudadanas Cuidando* and *Asociación Yo Cuido*), and two ecofeminist organisations, composed of indigenous and rural women in defence of food sovereignty (ANAMURI), and a movement for the defence of water and territories (*MAT*).

I look at how care informs their relationship with the state amid the cracks in Chile's institutional politics from 2019-2022 in four sections. First, I delve into their conceptualisations of the distribution, conditions, and recognition of care, describing their similarities and differences. Based on this analysis, I develop how these organisations deploy their strategies in the trialectic *with-against-and-beyond* the state. I start analysing how organisations find space *with* the state to materialize their understandings of care, pushing for bigger state participation in social reproduction. I then examine the organisations' strategies on the state working *against* it, transforming its form and relations. Finally, I describe which strategies the organisations deploy *beyond* the state. Here I conclude by examining how their care politics can be read on their actions inside their communities and with other agents present -or not- in the traditional understanding of the social organisation of care.

## 4.1. Understandings of care and its social organisation

This section addresses the conceptualisations of care and its politics, specifically, the debates around the social organisation of care (Rodriguez and Pautassi, 2014) and its unfair distribution (ECLAC, 2017). This section establishes the baseline of this investigation's argument by delving into the organisations' understandings of care, which inform their views on the state's role in the social organisation of care. To do so, I first develop how the organisations describe care as feminised, invisible and permanent. I later go onto elaborate their discussions on caregivers on their agency, connecting with reference to MacGregor (2010)'s *ecological feminist citizenship*.

### Feminised, invisible and permanent

The feminisation, invisibilisation and devaluation of care work are one of the main structural nodes of gender inequality in Latin America (ECLAC, 2017). This unequal distribution is historically marked by the division of public and private life, and the consequent pronounced gendered division of labour it generates (Federici, 2010a; Pérez Orozco, 2014). In that same vein, María, president of the union of private household workers *SINTRACAP*, argued how the feminisation of care is linked to the historical erasure of this labour. She argued that housework belongs to women because of a culture and mentality

constructed for centuries. María established that the supposition that women had to stay at home and *not work* is why it "has been invalidated as an economic contribution to the development of families and the country" (María, *SINTRA-CAP*). Likewise, in conversations with unpaid and informal caregivers' organisations, they also emphasised the feminised characteristic of care. Based on their studies of the situation of care in Chile (Castro and Sepúlveda, 2018), they argued that "most of them are women and with intense workloads" (Gloria, Ciudadanas Cuidando). They related the feminisation to issues like precarisation, undervaluation, and invisibilisation, arguing that it is necessary to defend the right of caregivers to free themselves from their burden because "in Chile care is provided in precarious conditions and without dignity" (Verónica, *Ciudadanas Cuidando*).

Another characteristic that comes up frequently is the permanent nature of care. All the organisations described somehow care activities as essential to maintain life and, consequently, explained how they never stop. Nevertheless, they hold different valorisations regarding this characteristic. For example, Isabel from the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (*ANAMURI*) defined this in the framework of care activities related to food sovereignty. She argued that the main difference between women and men in rural is that women take the responsibility of caring for children, food and nutrition. For her, the permanent character of care is associated with the conditions of nature and reproduction. She defended this vision of rural women as a strategy to sustain life, working ecologically, in harmony with nature and respecting the rhythms of re/production. This valorisation informs their understanding of the role of communities and the state in social reproduction. As I explain in the next pages, their actions are directed at generating space for their care activities to be developed without imposed extractive or productivist dynamics and not necessarily in distributing these activities to the state.

Paid and unpaid caregivers' valorisation of the permanent character of care differ. From the viewpoint of unpaid and informal caregivers, Paloma (*Yo Cuido*) described the constraints that this permanent character implies. She defined care for dependents as long-standing labour that does not allow women to live their lives, shutting them inside their homes and, consequently, being invisible to society and the state. In the same vein, Veronica, and Gloria (*Ciudadanas Cuidando*), described how taking care of dependents has made them give up their lives. Their associations between care and restraint inform their agendas, focusing on building strategies to reduce the burden of care workers. Therefore, they emphasise the importance of social co-responsibility, meaning that the state should take a greater role in the social organisation of care, taking over part of the activities performed by unpaid caregivers. For private household workers, the permanent character of care is expressed in how it ends up being a full-time job for them. Maria (*SINTRACAP*) mentioned that in many cases, they are hired to do one activity in their workplaces, yet they end up working 24/7 and are never paid for those extra hours. Therefore, the state's role is to create legislative frameworks to define the limits of private household work clearly.

The approaches on the permanent character of care between unpaid and paid caregivers also differentiate their demands around training. For example, the demand for improving and validating skills is very present among private household workers. They ask for more and better training to increase their bargaining power and capacity to offer and charge differently for their services (María, *SINTRACAP*). On the contrary, informal caregivers do not want to be

trained to care better; they claim a smaller burden in care activities (Paloma, *Yo Cuido* and Verónica and Gloria, *Ciudadanas Cuidando).*

**Being recognised as caring subjects**

A second topic that came up related to care and its social organisation was the discussion that unpaid and paid caregivers' organisations elaborated on their agency as caregivers. In discussion with Sherilyn MacGregor's (2010) contributions on the need for *feminist ecology citizenship*, I elaborate on the arguments of caregivers' organisations on being recognised as relevant subjects and not as a resource on care policies.

Informal and unpaid caregivers argued how care policies do not see them as subjects with agency, depicting them as victims and making them irrelevant in the debate (Gloria y Verónica, *Ciudadanas Cuidando).* They described how policies create a dyad between caregivers and care recipients and argued that they must be considered different subjects since they need different things from the state. The critique of the dyad is shared by Paloma (*Yo Cuido*), who added that it is the system which generates that convergence, reproducing unhealthy dynamics for caregivers.

Private household workers addressed the discussion of caregivers' agency, questioning how the figure of the caregiver is being thought of and how they will be considered within care policies. María (*SINTRACAP*) argued that they often carry out care labour behind an official registered caregiver. She argued how they are often hired to provide personalised and specific care services and end up doing all the housework. The low visibility of the complexity and variety of activities involved in care means that they are not recognised for the value of their roles, whether they are employed for specialised care or domestic work. María argued that it should be clear who the caregiver is and that private household workers should be clearly included in care policies.

These discussions on agency by the caregivers' organisations resonate with MacGregor's (2010) concept of *ecological feminist citizenship*. MacGregor argues that the politicisation of care is an important struggle to prevent it from being assumed as a natural resource in the public sphere and instead promote the participation of caregivers as citizens. The author argues that to speak of an *ecological feminist citizenship* implies breaking with the neoliberal definition of citizenship, destabilising the private and public boundaries and promoting the collectivisation of commons such as care. This approach contributes to a non-essentialist vision of an ethic of care, disassociating women from a natural or given role as caregivers and politicising care relations. The perspectives discussed around the caregiver agency influence their demands in the public debate, such as the private household workers' campaign[23] to promote formalisation or the struggle of unpaid caregivers to be recognised as subjects of rights in the Law of Disability (see [Appendix A]).

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[23] "Household that values" was a campaign carried out in 2019 by SINTRACAP in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) to promote the formalisation of private household work by raising awareness among workers and employers of the benefits of registering their employment relationship through formal hiring and paying social security contributions (SINTRACAP, 2019).

## 4.2. Care politics with the state

With a focus on how the care rights agenda has been deployed in three state institutions- the Constitutional Convention (CC), the current central government and the local governments- I explore how the five organisations' struggles are finding their political action in or with the state (Angel, 2017). In this section, I first analyse how the organisations decided to participate in the constituent process and then elaborate on their role in drafting the articles of the proposed constitution. Next, I examine their relationship with the current central government agenda on the "Caring State". Finally, I reflect on how they have developed their work within local care policy.

### Participation in the constituent process

As described earlier, the constituent process allowed many organisations to participate in state institutions, breaking the traditional inside/outside dichotomy of participating in the state. Organisations that had never occupied positions of popular representation had a seat in the CC. They entered with their historical demands, many built up over decades; this is the case of the two ecofeminist organisations in this investigation, *ANAMURI* and *MAT*. Isabel (*ANAMURI*) described how the demand for a constituent assembly has been present since their congresses in 2006 and 2014, where they agreed that a new constitution was needed to guarantee food sovereignty. The same is the case for Francisca (MAT), who described how the only way of changing the relations of property of water in Chile was changing the constitution since a reform would not be able to end with the privatisation of water.

MAT and ANAMURI mentioned that the social outbreak was a high point of activation and political encounter for their organisations. The intense political activism of that time opened the door to a historic opportunity for constitutional transformation beginning from a blank sheet. For them, proposing a constituent assembly in that conditions was, until that moment, always seen as utopian (Isabel, *ANAMURI*). For this reason, when they managed to open this space, they actively participated and were present at the three election moments of the constituent process: campaigning for "Approval" on the first plebiscite, constituting lists to be part of the CC, and campaigning for "Approval" to the proposed constitution in the final plebiscite. Francisca (MAT) described that the movement defines their political action as non-statist -as influencing the state but not being part of it-. However, for them, the CC was different from any other state institution in the history of Chile. Therefore, they understood the convention members not as public servants but as drafters of a constitution that could have been an umbrella for their demands (Francisca, MAT). From that position, ANAMURI and MAT participated in the process, with two and six representatives in the CC, respectively.

Among the caregivers' organisations, Yo Cuido and SINTRACAP, each had one candidate to compose the convention. Both candidates occupied one slot as independent in left political parties lists[24]. Yo Cuido got their candidate elected, and during the drafting, members of the association worked for her, supporting coordination, contents, and territorial work.

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[24] Both political parties that are in the current government of Gabriel Boric (2022-2026).

## Care rights discussions in the constituent process

During the constituent process, discussions held in networks of feminist and popular networks on care were brought to institutional decision-making spaces. Within the unpaid caregivers' organisations, discussions focused on the right to care in its most direct form; meanwhile, in the case of ecofeminist organisations, the focus was on the care for nature, water, seeds and animals.

The informal caregivers' organisations proposed articles on the right to care, to be cared for, and to self-care. Rights-based struggles have paradoxical outcomes when they empower the institutions from which injustices emerge (Angel & Loftus, 2017). This paradox appears in the discussion on how enshrining the right to care helps to make caregivers visible and important subjects in care policies, but on the other hand, the ways they enshrined this right reinforces the assumed social responsibility of women to care. Faced with this paradox, Ciudadanas Cuidando argued for the need to discuss the right not to care. They described the critiques they commonly receive when they claim a non-romanticised perspective of care and talk about the right to stop caring. This position did not resonate in the CC, and the article on the proposed constitution established that everyone had "the right to care, to be cared for and to care for oneself from birth to death" (Art. 50), not including the right not to care.

The paradox raised by Ciudadanas Cuidando is also discussed by Amaia Perez Orozco (2014) in dialogue with Latin American colleagues, warning us about the possible individualistic bias of some political care demands. For many rural and indigenous women, care is a community reality that cannot be isolated in self-contained subjects or individual notions. This tension between the individual and the collective generates difficulties in disputing care distribution from a right-based approach. Pérez Orozco (2015) discusses this tension between trying to value care and defending being able to disengage from it. She argues that the right not to care only can be ensured when there is a social responsibility on who performs care. In that ideal context, the right not to care would guarantee that no one, because of their position in the world, is imposed the individual resolution of the reality of interdependence, denying their autonomy (p. 250).

Then the difficulties of disputing this right lie in the fact that in a society where care is distributed unequally, only a few would be able to realise the right not to care. Currently, a part of the population refuses to take responsibility for care, while another part of the population cares all their life. In Chile, most women do not retire from their caring roles at any point in their lives, contrary to the orthodox life-cycle model, which defines that at the beginning and the end of life, people do not work (Cooperativa Desbordada, 2020). On the contrary, women after 70 years old continue to work close to full-time hours, more than 35 hours per week. Since 2015, Chile has had a recognition policy for maternity care work in the pension system through a bonus per child. However, there is no policy to free women from their work burdens at the end of their lives.

Aware of that situation, *Yo Cuido*'s work within the constituent debate was focused on reducing caregivers' workloads. Thus, their mission was to provide a legal framework to make women stop caring: "we want to be mothers, sisters, daughters, not caregivers. We want there to be professionals and a system to do the work" (Paloma, *Yo Cuido*). Following that argument, Paloma explains that inside the CC, their fight was directed to the freedom of choice, which means allowing informal caregivers to work and leave the care receiver in a place

where they are treated with dignity. In this sense, their advocacy work in the political debate of the CC was on two levels. Firstly, to guarantee the right to care as an independent fundamental right and not to be added as an appendix to another right. Secondly, to constitutionally guarantee a Comprehensive Care System.

Paloma argues that the biggest fight was giving the care system guaranteed and sustainable funding since, in dialogue with other feminists in the region, they understood that if there was no guaranteed funding, at any moment, the policy could become insufficient (Paloma, *Yo Cuido*). Inside the CC, their negotiations were successful, and the proposed constitutional text guaranteed an Integrated Care System with progressive, sufficient, and permanent funding (Art. 50). Faced with the rejection of the proposed constitution, Paloma was concerned mainly with this point: "we are afraid that since the new constitution was not approved a new government could take away the funding in any moment" (Paloma, *Yo Cuido*).

Within the debates on care rights related to humans and non-humans, ecofeminist organisations brought to the convention historical discussions from their congresses and community bodies. *ANAMURI* was very influential in the articles that defined that it was the duty of the state to ensure food sovereignty and security (Art. 54), guaranteed the right of peasants and indigenous peoples and nations to the free use and exchange of traditional seeds (Art. 55) and established the right to adequate, healthy, sufficient, nutritionally complete, and culturally relevant food (Art. 56).

Like *ANAMURI*, *MAT* was part of drafting the rights for water and energy sovereignty enshrined in articles 57, 58 and 59. The constitutional text that was rejected guaranteed the human right to water (Art. 140) and recognised indigenous peoples' traditional use of waters located in their territories (Art. 58). The movement designed a brochure in the context of the final plebiscite called "Approval for Water", that explained how the new constitution built the basis for community-based water management, ending the privatisation principles of the current water rights legislation. Among others, the rejected text created a National Water Agency (Art. 139) that would have protected water and guaranteed it for future generations, promoting participatory watershed management and a nature defence institution (Art. 148) that would have promoted and protected the rights of nature guaranteed in the proposal (Art. 128). Overall, the constitutional proposal mainstreamed the visions of the movement in different articles related to environmental human rights and the territorial organisation of the state (MAT, 2022a).

**Work at the central government level**

The participant organisations have different approaches to working with the central government. Although they all participate in the spaces where they are called upon and consulted to present their remit, not all are involved in directly influencing the new government's public policies. Only *Yo Cuido* and *SINTRA-CAP* mentioned policies in which they have participated directly during the current government, policies that had been part of the government framing of the "caring state" narrative.

In the case of the private household workers union, their struggle is mainly dedicated to direct dialogue with governments. Some documents register

the existence of *SINTRACAP* since 1947 and its long tradition of governmental dialogue to push for demands of organised workers[25]. The union is considered the main negotiator in the sector of households as employers, a difficult sector for unionisation, particularly in a country that does not have sectorial bargaining. María (*SINTRACAP*) commented that they had programmatic commitments with the government, and their permanent working table with the Labour Ministry would be reactivated after the final plebiscite. During the first months of government, they have continued negotiations on reducing the working day and the proposal to extend holiday days for full-time workers. This measure is already present in the government communications on the care agenda, specifically in the programme "Chile para Todas"[26].

Likewise, *Yo Cuido* has had a strong influence on the current administration's care agenda. Paloma (*Yo Cuido*) detailed how they were part of the government campaign programme and are now part of the National Care System (NCS)[27] construction. They have had an important role in positioning the new government as a *caring state*. They participated in the policy that will open 40 new community care centres nationwide to support caregivers. In addition, they pushed for including the NCS as one of the policies to be financed with the proposed tax reform. *Yo Cuido* is aligned and working alongside this government because they see that alliance enables their agenda to put care at the centre of public policy and guarantee the resources for financing the NCS.

However, some caregivers have a different perspective on the care policies being developed by the central government. *Ciudadanas Cuidando* is constantly invited and attends government launches and events to present their experience. Nevertheless, they see these dialogues with the central government from a critical viewpoint, questioning the centralised approach to care policy and how the government deal with grassroots and local organisations[28].

**Work at the local government level**

As care policy has advanced at the central level, local governments have begun to lay the foundations for developing a coordinated care system (ECLAC, 2022; Radio Universidad Chile, 2022b). An example of this is Ciudadanas Cuidando's work at the local level in Conchalí, a locality in the metropolitan region of Chile. The collective beginnings were forged when municipalities recognised their labour and invited them to work on a paid basis in the management of care policy. They argue that in working with policies at the local level, they have encountered difficulties in strengthening the community care approach due to the design of central government programs that do not have a socio-territorial focus.

*Ciudadanas Cuidando* works in the community management of care in the locality; the participants in this investigation are both municipal officials and

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[25] See [Appendix A](#) for more details of the last two decades main milestones of SINTRACAP agenda.

[26] Detailed in chapter 2.3

[27] They have participated jointly with the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality and the Ministry of Social Development and have met with ministries from different sectors (transport, housing, sport, health, education, labour and social development) to give shape to this policy.

[28] This is developed deeply in section 4.3. when I develop the critical views on the centralised form of the state

coordinators of the collective. From this dual role, they work with 100 families coordinating the programs for severe dependency and caregivers. Since all the programs are segmented, access is difficult for the beneficiaries, and they help caregivers in Conchalí to be registered and receive all the benefits to which they are entitled. Besides coordinating the programs, they register the conditions of public and private infrastructure for care in the locality and coordinate mental and physical health care for the caregivers. In that sense, the collective defines how its activist work is channelled through the state in its local form. This allows them to implement a policy on a small scale, where they can directly coordinate community care and be remunerated for their coordination work.

## 4.3. Care politics with-against the state

The struggles *with* the state analysed in this investigation cannot be understood without simultaneously accounting for their attempt to work *against* the state. Therefore, this section examines how the participant organisations understood their participation *with* the state as a way of transforming the state institutions in their reproduction of dominant relations (Angel and Loftus, 2018). They worked *against* the state by challenging, first, the state's traditional class, race, and gender composition, second, the centralised form of the state; and third, the temporal rhythms of state institutions.

### Participating in the state to transform its forms and relations

Following Angel (2017), I read how these organisations direct actions to transform the state by subverting its forms and relations. First, I examine the influence of paid and unpaid caregivers' organisations in the central government to transform the state institutions' *qua social relations* (Angel, 2017). They do so by representing groups historically marginalised from institutional politics, like indigenous and working-class women. As Angel and Loftus (2018) developed in their analysis of the Berlin Energietisch, "by struggling to incorporate the interests of "normal people or oppressed people [...] they believed that internal relations within state institutions could be shifted, with transformative implications for the state's form and function" (p. 129). Direct involvement in government decision-making spaces can be understood as a way of transforming the state in the reproduction of its relations of domination. In that sense, they disrupt the relational composition of the state through direct participation in it. For example, Maria (SINTRACAP) talked about when the union's former president joined the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality as vice-minister. She argued how the recognition of her *compañera* meant a valorisation of all private household workers and their capabilities.

Secondly, I analyse how ecofeminist organisations push for democratic and bottom-up participation mechanisms during the constituent process can be seen as a way of working *against* the state *qua apparatus* (Angel, 2017, p. 568). ANAMURI, together with twelve other organisations of peasants and *ferias libres (open markets)*, proposed an *Iniciativa Popular de Norma (IPN)[29]* to guarantee the

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[29] "Iniciativa Popular de Norma (IPN)" was a mechanism of popular participation during the constituent process (Convención Constitucional, 2021). It defined that any person or group of people could present proposal for constitutional articles, and with 15,000 signatures it was discussed in the plenary of the CC.

right to nutrition (N° 17.046). The proposal obtained 16.641 citizens' signatures and could be discussed in the plenary (Convención Constitucional, 2022b). Likewise, *MAT,* with other two organisations, proposed an *IPN* to guarantee the right to water, nature and glaciers (N° 40.230), received 28.379 signatures, and the articles were discussed in the CC. This is an expression of their political commitment to participate in an institutional process and, through this participation, to exercise direct strategies of transformation of the form of the state.

Finally, ecofeminist organisations' struggles can be understood as *against* the state *qua eco-social relations*, pushing for changing the state extractivist logic of relating with nature. The struggles of the ecofeminist organisations inside the Constitutional Convention can be understood as an effort to change the state's colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal logic. Francisca (MAT) described how their work in drafting the new constitution focused on transforming the state's eco-social relations, specifically its extractivist and colonial logic of relating with nature. They integrated this focus on drafting all the articles related to environmental human rights through the approaches of *buen vivir* developed previously. In its first pages, the rejected constitution recognised that people are interdependent with nature and, therefore, an inseparable whole. It defined the state's role to recognize and promote *buen vivir* as a relation of equilibrium between people, nature, and the organisation of society (Art. 8).

Sadly, since the constitutional text was rejected, there are no more elements to know how this rights-based approach would have been applied in practice. From the Latin-American experience, we know that the possibility of integrating decolonial ways of relating with nature in the state institutions is very contested. Drawing on Bustamante et al. (2013) in their discussion around the water rights in the Bolivian constituent process, recognising rights means making the state responsible for guaranteeing their fulfilment. This approach may deny other non-institutional -and even not human- instances that are not recognised (p. 227). This is a critique that Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) draws in the same context. She argues that the Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia established rights for nature but did not define whether nature has agency. That implied that all ancestral communication practices with nature were denied: "if you recognise rights to the earth, then you have to design some way of consulting if you want to be coherent" (p. 110). This is an unresolved issue of merging colonial institutions with the understanding of indigenous people of their relations with nature.

**Against the state in its centralised care policy**

Caregivers and ecofeminist organisations showed their nuances on how care is understood in the central versus the local policy. These distinctions are essential to understand the centralist biases of care policies and how these organisations are breaking them.

In the case of Ciudadanas Cuidando, they had a critical view of the state in terms of the management of care programmes at the central government level. All of the collective's work focuses on getting around the segmentation of the different programs and supporting families in getting around state bureaucracy. They criticised the current *caring state* narrative due to the inattention when the government launches policies with no infrastructure or programmes in operation. They detailed the shortcomings of implementing the care system and highlighted how local management of policies can be more direct and relevant to the

multiple needs of caregivers. Their role in local government shows that this critical position does not disengage them from state management, but rather they attempt to transform the underlying processes that condition access to care through institutions that constitute relations of domination and violence (Angel and Loftus, 2019). This position of Ciudadanas Cuidando can be understood as a position against the centralisation of the state.

The organisations also drew the differences between rural and urban care. Isabel (ANAMMURI) argued that care in rural areas is performed differently from in the cities, where the space is reduced, and there is a need to multitask for a remunerated job. In that same vein, Paloma (Yo Cuido) argued that structural social barriers in rural areas generate different perspectives between caregivers' organisations on what policies mean to people and what they think about institutionalising care. Paloma suggested that performing care in localities of different classes or areas (urban/rural) informs the caregivers' perspectives on care policies. Therefore, she concluded that because of cultural differences in each locality, there is a need for a territorial approach (Paloma, Yo Cuido).

Recommendations for implementing care systems in the region follow the same argumentation. ECLAC (2022) suggests that creating spaces for institutional articulation with local governments is necessary. To this end, governments should conduct an in-depth analysis of competencies and economic resources from a territorial perspective, generating programmatic goals that can be achievable and embodied in local care plans—addressing cultural and territorial diversity through the generation of mechanisms for community participation in the elaboration of these plans.

## The temporality of institutional politics

Finally, care politics can be understood *against* the temporal rhythms of state institutions. The difference in rhythms between the state and communities is something that decolonial thinkers have reflected on extensively in terms of how modern states imposed other temporality on indigenous lives. Elisa Loncon Antileo (2019), in her reflection on time in Mapuche thought, argues that in her culture, time is not linear as imposed by modernity but as a relationship of balance and reciprocity. In dialogue with Gainza (2019), she argues that the productivist notion of fast life based on economics and business destroys nature and dispossesses other forms of life.

Francisca (MAT) addressed this discussion in drafting the new constitution, arguing that the times of social movements entered into tension with institutional time. The constitutional process had a temporality conditioned by the parliamentary agreement that shaped it (Fernández, 2021). These rhythms clashed with their collective deliberative dynamics, which required time for reflection and decision-making. This reflection resonated strongly after the rejection of the proposed constitution when she argued how the movement needed time to process and explain everything they managed to guarantee in the text. Paloma (Yo Cuido) also presented the issue of dealing with temporality during the constituent process. "Time was very short", "there was no time", "it was intense", and "there was a lot of pressure" are expressions she used to refer to the dynamics within the CC.

These organisations, inside and outside the constituent process, had to deal with the contradiction arising from the time constraints imposed by institutional

politics. On the one hand, they had to respond promptly and rapidly to the urgent demands on the ground. The urgency to change the material conditions was pressing. On the other hand, they needed to slow down the fast pace of the process, which did not allow time for discussion within the organisation or self and collective care. In sum, the participating organisations were overwhelmed by the temporality of the state and were not successful in working *against* its rhythm. However, as I review below, their community care practices were key to coping with the exhaustive pace it imposed on their organisations.

## 4.4. Care politics with-against-and-beyond the state

In this final section, I examine the participating organisations' care politics, looking at their struggles *beyond* the state. First, I examine their actions beyond the state read as from within the communities. Drawing on Federici (2012) and Gutierrez's contributions to the production of the commons, I argue that reading their struggles as ways of *commoning* care practices during their activism is possible. Then, I analyse how these organisations deal with the dynamics of commodification and familiarisation of care and how their struggle can be read beyond the state to the markets and the families. Finally, I discuss the need to understand care politics beyond the four agents- family, communities, state and market- of the trapezoid.

### Commoning care as a politics that was present and remains

I draw on the analysis by Silvia Federici (2012) of social reproduction as well as the reflections of Raquel Gutierrez (2017) on the production of the commons. Taking these authors as a starting point, I argue that the participant organisations have *commoning* care as part of their politics *beyond* the state. Firstly, I describe how that is expressed in the collective care during their political activism, making space for absences due to care responsibilities and self-care practices. Secondly, in their practices for producing the commons, like local community practices that solve specific problems and satisfy urgent needs. Here, I understand the politics of *commoning* care as a way of working *beyond* the state from within the communities.

Federici (2012) describes how the role of unpaid labour has been devalued not only in reproducing the workforce but, further, in the reproduction of social movements that seek emancipatory alternatives (Angel, 2017). Taking this starting point, I address the practices of collectivisation of care that these organisations deploy during political activism. In their internal and external dynamics, I argue that the organisations aim to counteract the privatisation of social reproduction. During activism, the individual and collective wellbeing of their *compañeras* were very present in the narratives of the caregivers' and ecofeminist organisations.

The unpaid and formal organisations (*Yo Cuido* and *Ciudadanas Cuidando*) mentioned collective care practices as one of their strategies to keep working on their agendas. They described how they find support inside the community to face the intense care workloads. For example, inside *Yo Cuido*, Paloma described, "they take care of each other, and if a colleague is doing more extreme care, we replace her". The health of the people they care for is a relevant factor in the time they have available for other parts of their lives. Therefore, they organise to manage their workloads and try to integrate self-care practices. Even when it

is complicated, dimensions that help are the possibility of having online meetings and leisure spaces in the open air. Likewise, Verónica and Gloria (*Ciudadanas Cuidando*) stated that community and self-care among their members is one of their missions as an organisation. They describe that even when a large part of their resources is managed at the municipal level, the collective's work relies on community care. Therefore, they coordinate with other organisations to provide toiletries and health care for member families. They also integrate leisure spaces within their overload workdays. The interview took place in a space for self-care that they set aside for themselves every Wednesday.

*Commoning* care can also be read in the practices of the organisations on producing the commons. Specifically, creating spaces for deliberation and agreement and defining agendas with their own times and scales (Gutiérrez, 2017). For example, Francisca (MAT) explained how they built their consensus around the demand for community water management. She detailed the process of elaborating their *decalogue* – a ten-step guide- for community water management (MAT, 2019). The *decalogue* synthesised more than 60 encounters throughout the country, all developed during the social outbreak. This consensus was their route guide for their work in the Constitutional Convention (CC) and oriented the discussions on the rights for water and nature of the movement described before.

In addition, they developed a guide for care in their internal politics through 12 assemblies of women in the different territories where the movement work (MAT, 2022b). This guide describes three axes for a politics of care inside the organisation from the perspective of *buen vivir*. Firstly, it sets out how to generate physical, mental and spiritual self-care in defence of the territories—sharing the rites of indigenous organisations and putting food at the centre of their meetings. Secondly, it defines the dynamics of collective care, integrating community healing spaces through dance and fun in their meetings. Thirdly, it frames their perspective of collective care in the perspectives of *buen vivir*, sharing a politics and ethics of care that integrates the different ontologies in the movement.

Likewise, Isabel (*ANAMURI*) described their spaces of collective deliberation, such as the two national congresses of *ANAMURI* held in 2007 and 2014. The first congress was organised in 2007, where they called all the organisations in the different territories to meet around a big *trafkintu*, a Mapuche tradition of exchanging knowledge and goods between people and communities (ANAMURI, 2007). For the second national congress in 2014, they called all their organisations from north to south to share a debate space to strengthen their construction of alternatives for indigenous and rural women and peasants. The work of ANAMURI is based on the collective discussions they have been sharing for almost 25 years. The definitions of their social struggle for defending the land, food sovereignty, biodiversity, and human rights, come from these spaces of open and collective deliberation.

**Relations with other agents inside and outside the trapezoid.**

The strategies the participant organisations deploy *beyond* the state also converge to other agents inside and outside the trapezoid. To de-romanticise the strategies beyond the state, I examine how the organisations find strategies that deal with the commodification and familiarisation of care. Thus, I analyse the relations beyond the state understood to the market and the families. To finalise this

section, I examine the relations *beyond* the trapezoid, which alerts us to the possible anthropocentric bias in our demands for the distribution of care.

Often, we think of care beyond the state because of a lack of state rather than alternatives for autonomy. Faced with market deregulation in the areas of the economy where they concentrate their care, both *SINTRACAP* and *ANAMURI* face the commodification of their work, directing their efforts towards marking the borders of the markets. For example, María (SINTRACAP) discussed this in terms of the incapability of the legislation to establish limits on the working hours and functions of private household workers. Faced with that unfeasibility, they deploy other strategies to access training and improve the conditions in which they offer their job. In this sense, they are in negotiations with gig economy firms trying to enter the market. María described how these apps could help them charge differently for their services and not keep working 24/7. However, she was clear on the borders that these applications should have, not losing sight of the fact that the dynamics they insert into the labour markets can contribute to making work more flexible and precarious. One of the minimum agreements to let them enter would be the respect of local legislation on the rights of private household workers. By defining this border, she clarified that the modernisation of practices must be accompanied by companies taking responsibility for training their workers and "not creating more precariousness among in our sector" (María, *SINTRACAP*).

Similarly, *ANAMURI's* actions can also be read as defining the edges to the market. The union of agro-industrial and seafood workers that forms part of *ANAMURI* have deployed a long fight against free trade agreements because of the tie-ups they generate to fulfil food sovereignty. Expressly they direct their critiques to the extractivist investments that these agreements generate, undermining the sovereignty of peoples in their territories (ANAMURI, 2022). Therefore, their work can also be read as defining boundaries to the market so that it does not undermine the living conditions of those who care in rural contexts.

Regarding how the organisations understand the problems of familiarisation of care, *Ciudadanas Cuidando* argued there is a class difference in the access to quality care and the possibility of delegating the caregiver role. Private care homes that have specialised professionals and offer high-quality care, in general, are only affordable for affluent families. The concentration of care responsibilities in families and the absence of the state in the social organisation of care imply that poor women end up doing most of the unpaid work in Chile (INE, 2015)[30].

Finally, I argue that some of their actions are understood from a perspective of care that goes *beyond* the framework of this trapezoid, alerting about our anthropocentric ways of understanding the social organisation of care. Francisca (MAT) argued how modernity creates an ideology of progress at the expense of nature. On the contrary, they see nature as an interdependent organism in the movement. Francisca described how they had followed Arturo Escobar and Eduardo Godina in approaching nature from a *relational ontology*.

The existence of relationships of care beyond humans that both decolonial authors and feminist political ecologists have discussed resonates with the perspectives Francisca brought to this investigation. Specifically in terms of how

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[30] According to the National Time Use Survey (2015) women from the lowest income quintile are the ones that spend more hours in unpaid care work activities.

she integrated nature's agency and the importance of being in a caring dialogue with nature rather than an extractive one. This reflection gives us space to think of nature as an interdependent agent of the social organisation of care, meaning that care policies should be much more aware of the environmental conditions -and conflicts- in the territories where they are implemented.

# Chapter 5 | **Conclusions**

To conclude, I draw the final remarks on the debates on care between communities and the state developed in this investigation. To do so, I use the visual analysis of with-against-and-beyond the state in the trapezoid of care to illustrate the conclusions from the interviews (See Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** Analysed relations with-against-and-beyond the state in the trapezoid of care
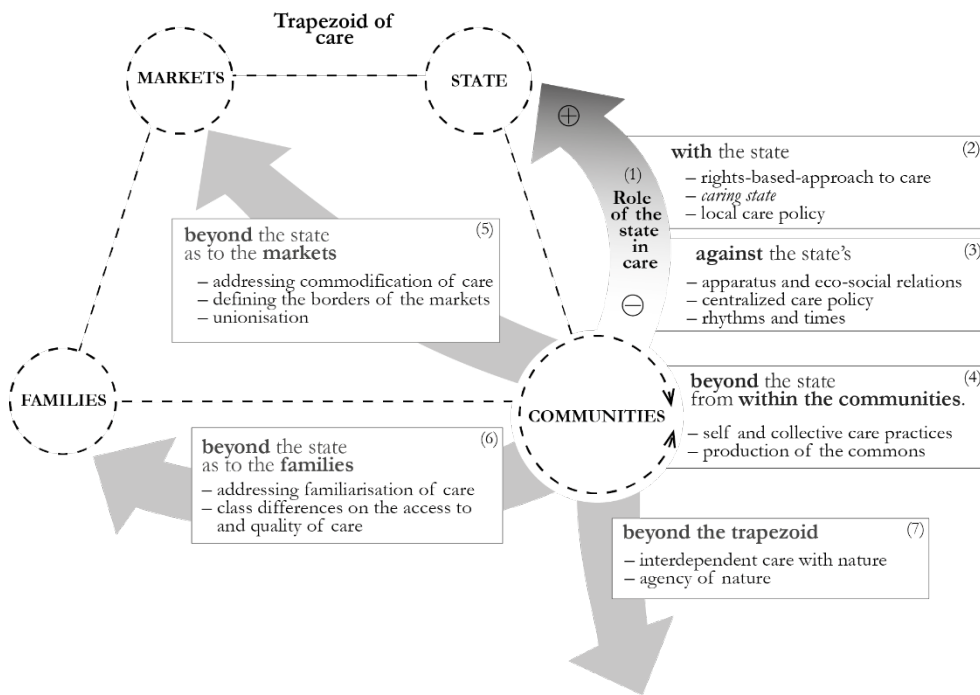
This diagram aims to give order to the reflection on the research questions. Firstly, the diagram shows the state's role in care with a gradient from lower to higher (See Arrow 1). This arrow shows how the organisations' conceptualisations of care, in terms of its distribution, conditions and recognition, guide their positions on the state's role in the social organisation of care. For caregivers' organisations, the precariousness and long duration of the activities they carry out lead them to strongly argue for a more predominant role for the state in care to decompress the work of families and communities. In contrast, ecofeminist organisations practice care from spheres that do not always demand a greater role for the state. Rather, systemic and autonomous care activities are seen as alternatives for (re)production.

These conceptualisations of the state's role in social reproduction guide the rest of the analysis *with-against-and-beyond* the state. The diagram shows how organisations engage with the state in their agendas during the period under review (See Box 2). In particular, in three dimensions, the rights-based approaches to their demands during the constituent process, the participation in the new

government's *caring state* and the local care policy work. This engagement with the state, although transversal to the organisations, is much more present within the caregivers' organisations. This closer relation can be linked to the need for the state to be more present in reorganising care, thus decompressing their workloads.

Then the diagram shows how the organisations' direct actions transform state institutions, read in this investigation as their actions *against* the state (Box 3). In this investigation, I argue that these organisations apply this strategy in three dimensions. Firstly, in transforming the state apparatus and its social - class, race and gender - and ecological relations. Secondly, against centralised notions of the state in the area of care, in favour of local policy with a territorial and community perspective. Thirdly, against the times and rhythms of state institutions, even if this action ends up working against them, overloading their work.

Finally, the trapezoid shows the relationships that organisations have *beyond* the state. It shows how these organisations generate strategies from within the communities (See Box 4)—on the one hand, integrating collective care and self-care practices, an issue that is transversal to all the organisations in this investigation. On the other hand, by generating spaces for community deliberation for their agendas of struggle. In this dimension, ecofeminist organisations show more concrete expressions of the production of the commons.

The diagram also shows their actions towards families and markets (See Boxes 5 and 6). While some organisations address the problem of familiarisation and commodification, I could only see actions against the advance of markets in the distribution of care. Within caregivers' and ecofeminist organisations, workers' unions are generating actions to fix the edges of the market through local and international legislation. Finally, the diagram shows the conceptualisations of care that ecofeminist organisations show beyond the trapezoid (Box 7). This reflection appears as something new during this investigation as non-human agents in the social organisation of care were initially not considered.

This diagram is a visual simplification of the analysis I conducted in this investigation, so it cannot show many important dimensions for understanding how these actions lead to material changes. Nevertheless, it can visualise how the understandings of care are informing the five organisations' relationship *with-against-and-beyond* the state amid the cracks in Chile's institutional politics from 2019-2022. Analyzing the map of care politics in Chile leaves at least three conclusions.

Firstly, during this period, there was a historical space to define how the state would have been part of social reproduction in Chile. This process failed with the rejection of the constitutional proposal, but the experience of the organisations that were part of it is essential to understand how to move on. This process reflects how deciding to contest the state is a titanic challenge and how the dynamics of state institutions can work against emancipatory practices and projects.

Secondly, in the period analysed, caregivers' organisations also had a very active policy agenda at both local and central levels. Some have found resonance in the *caring state* agenda and have been actively pushing care policies in coordination with the central government. Others have found their work more directly in local care policy. The experience of organised caregivers in local policy shows the possibility of generating community care networks with municipal support

and recognition of the work of caregivers. This map of the political agenda of care in Chile provides key tools to understand how to give community and territorial approaches to a Comprehensive Care System. Therefore, the analyses developed by caregivers' organisations during this investigation can be key recommendations for *feminists in governments* on how to think about care policies from a context-based perspective.

Finally, this investigation draws out key elements of the expressions of the communal and territorial in ecofeminist organisations. The practices of production of the commons that these organisations integrate show the need to understand the limits of the state in the management of care. Their experience reflects the importance of thinking about a politics of care that considers the dynamics of deliberation that organisations integrate into the territories. Likewise, it shows the need to integrate ways of relating with agents outside the traditional understanding of the social organisation of care, considering nature as a relevant and interdependent agent in the social distribution of care.

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# Appendix A: Descriptions of the participant organisations

**Table A.1:** Description of the participant organisations

| *Type of organisation* | *Care dimensions* | *Participant organisations* |
|---|---|---|
| *Caregivers' organisation* | Unpaid care | **Asociación Yo Cuido ("I care" Association):** This is an association of unpaid caregivers born in Villa Alemana, Chile, in 2017 and now has a national scope. By 2021 they were composed of 500 caregivers, with a total of 1000 family members distributed in 6 regions of Chile. Their work is concentrated on supporting their members, influencing public policies and doing research.<br><br>Since 2018, the association has been working with parliamentarians to amend Law 20.422, the Law on Disability, to recognise carers as subjects of rights. However, the law is still being discussed and has not been published (Observatorio de Género y Equidad, 2022). In addition to the legal advocacy work, they have internal training focusing on co-responsibility and public policies in Chile and the world. They have an area of entrepreneurship, which also helps members generate income, even though they discuss how it can lead to an overload of work.<br><br>**Paloma**, the participant in this investigation, is the metropolitan regional coordinator of the association. She describes herself as a woman, mother of three children, grandmother, and caregiver of a 5-year-old. |
| | | **Colectivo Ciudadanas Cuidando (Caring citizens collective):** This is a collective of unpaid caregivers constituted in 2019. Their purpose is to make care work visible in the territories and to generate a space for accompaniment among caregivers. The collective concentrates its work in the municipality of Conchalí, Metropolitan Region, Chile, and has been supported by the municipal administration since 2019. Both are municipal officials and coordinators of the collective. They work coordinating severe dependency and caregiver programmes in 100 families of Conchalí. They are in charge of registering the situation of care in the territories, paying attention to the conditions of public infrastructure and homes for care, as well as the caregivers' mental and physical health conditions.<br><br>Among their activities, they list administrative assistance to families to become beneficiaries of the public programmes, the delivery of boxes of goods, the coordination of visits by occupational therapists, the coordination of psychological consultations for caregivers and the collective management of materials that families are vacating.<br><br>**Gloria** and **Verónica**, both participants in this research, are caregivers of relatives with disabilities. In Gloria's case, she has been |

| | | caring for her sister with a severe intellectual disability for three years. She also cared for her parents before they passed away. Verónica is a sociologist with a master's in urban development, and before being a caregiver, she used to work in housing local policies in a locality in the south of Chile. Veronica cares for a 3-year-old boy with Dandy-Walker syndrome; her first son, who also had a disability, died at 13. |
|---|---|---|
| *Caregivers' organisation* | Paid care | **SINTRACAP (National Union of Private Household Workers):** This trade union was founded in 1947, is part of the national federation and has links with other federations at regional and international levels. In recent decades, they have pushed for laws that have gradually improved their conditions. In 2008, law 20.279 was passed, establishing the minimum wage for full-time work, and law 20.255 established a taxable base of no less than the minimum monthly income for social security contributions. In 2015, new amendments to the regulation of domestic service were approved, and law 20.786 came into force thanks to pressure from the union. This law modified the labour code by regulating working hours and resting periods (Cooperativa Desbordada, 2021). In 2015, they also pushed for the ratification of ILO Convention 189 on domestic workers.<br><br>During the pandemic, the conditions of private household workers were affected by the impossibility of teleworking and the high rates of informality that left them outside employment protection. During this health crisis, they included private household workers in unemployment insurance, ending this discriminatory treatment of employment protection in Chile. In late 2020 and early 2021, a former union president, Luz Vidal Huiriqueo, was a candidate for the Constitutional Convention but was not elected. In March 2022, she became the new vice-minister for women and gender equality in Gabriel Boric's government.<br><br>The participant in this research is **María**, the union's current president. Besides being a private household worker, she is a mother and grandmother. During the week, she works at her employer's home and spends most of her weekends at the union's centre. The union centre is understood as a place to meet and build networks since unionizing in this sector is very difficult because of the little free time they have and because each one has a different employer. |
| *Ecofeminist organisation* | Care for nature | **ANAMURI (National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women):** It was constituted in 1998 and is composed of members from Arica to Coyhaique. They are part of Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo (CLOC) and La Vía Campesina. They are diverse women who, from their commonalities, seek to end the violence of the capitalist, extractivist and patriarchal economic system.<br><br>They work on defending peasant agriculture, food sovereignty, land, territories, justice, equality, and dignity for women of the countryside and the sea. They have three main areas of action: (1) the union of women workers in agroindustry and the sea, (2) the coordination of the Latin American agroecology institute (IALAs), and (3) permanent campaigns for seeds and against gender violence in the rural. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | **Isabel**, the participant in this research, is a political scientist, and she works in communications and the political-pedagogical coordination of the agroecology institute. The institute is conceived as a space for theoretical and political education based on economic, social and cultural rights principles. The institute has a gender perspective and includes popular education practices, basing the methodologies on situated knowledges of indigenous and peasant women. |
| *Ecofeminist organisation* | Care for nature | **MAT** **(Movement for the Water and Territories):** The movement was formed at the end of 2012. It is composed of organisations from different urban and rural territories from the north to south of Chile, with organisations of indigenous peoples, peasants, migrants, and Afro-descendants. They define themselves as anti-patriarchal, anti-colonial and anti-extractivist. It is a movement with great diversity, but they have a basic agreement on two levels. On the one hand, they work at the state level through political advocacy. On the other hand, the construction of autonomy, with community and territorial management of their projects.<br><br>They organise regular "plurinational encounters" where they meet among the people and organisations that make up the movement and report on their actions and strategies of resistance. These meetings generate consensus on their positions in the national political debate.<br><br>**Francisca**, the participant in this research, is part of the movement and its assembly of women. She is also part of a popular supply cooperative called *La Cacerola*. Francisca has a PhD in American Studies and is a university lecturer. |

**Source:** Own elaboration, based on the conducted interviews, the webpage and social media of the organisations, the archive of experiences of Carpa de las Mujeres (2021).

# Appendix B: Presentation of the research and informed consent[31]

| Investigation project | Tramando cuidados: contested care perspectives in re-shaping institutional arrangements in Chile |
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| Institution | International Institute of Social Studies/ ISS- Erasmus University, Rotterdam |
| Collaboration | Proyecto Cuidados en Resistencia, Cooperativa de Economía Feminista Desbordada (Care in Resistance Project, "Desbordada" Feminist Economy Cooperative) |
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| Supervisor | Wendy Harcourt harcourt@iss.nl |

### 1. What is the aim of the investigation project?

This research is situated in the current Chilean context and the social mobilisations of the last decade, specifically in the constituent process triggered by the social outbreak of October 2019. One of the main themes in these mobilisations is the role of the Chilean neoliberal state in the crisis.

This research focuses on the struggles of feminist and popular organisations that have participated in the mobilisations to demand the state's responsibility in social reproduction during the last decade. Understanding the bias of the lenses through which this analysis is conducted, this research focuses on care organisations involved in these debates.

The existence of participation within and/or in dialogue with institutional politics has led to changing forms of political participation by feminisms in Chile. This investigation focuses on understanding how organisations, from their different visions of care and sustainability of life, have rethought the state's role in social reproduction.

### 2. What is the purpose of this investigation?

This investigation aims to understand how organisations' different conceptions of care are reconfiguring the current Chilean state's understanding of care provision and its role in social reproduction. The investigation aims to identify the resonances that different - and sometimes conflicting - narratives have had in drafting the new constitution's articles and the programmatic proposals of the new Chilean government.

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[31] The presentation of this investigation and informed consent was made on the basis of Poveda-Clavijo (2022).

### 3. Who participates in the investigation?

The organisations considered for carrying out the investigation are:

a. From the point of view of unpaid care: Asociación Yo Cuido and Ciudadanas Cuidando.
b. From paid care: SINTRACAP
c. From the ecofeminist struggles: ANAMURI and MAT

### 4. Is my participation compulsory?

No, your participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, an informed consent form will be shared detailing how the information will be treated and how you can withdraw from participation if you wish to do so.

### 5. What are the steps to follow if I agree to participate?

An interview will be arranged at a time and place of your convenience. The informed consent form will be read and completed at the beginning of the interview. The completed form will be sent to you for your signature if the interview is virtual.

### 6. What will be the characteristics of the interview?

The interview will not last more than 1 hour (60 minutes). If you agree to a recording of the interview, only your voice will be recorded. If you do not agree to the recording, you will be asked for permission to take notes to record your contributions to the investigation.

### 7. What kind of questions will I be asked?

The interview topics will be detailed in advance and are listed at the end of this document. No personal or organisationally sensitive questions will be asked. Only your views on the political processes that have taken place in Chile from 2019 onwards will be asked.

### 8. Can I withdraw from the investigation after the interview?

Yes, you can withdraw from the interview at any time. If you would like to withdraw your contributions after the interview, you may do so at any time until 1 November 2022. To withdraw, you can contact the researcher using the contact information at the beginning of this document. If you withdraw from the investigation, your contributions will not be included in the analysis, and the notes and/or voice recordings will be deleted immediately.

### 9. What will be done with the information I provide during the interview?

The interview records, in both formats, will be systematised for analysis and subsequently anonymised. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the records. The records will be stored in the researcher's files and deleted two years after the start of the investigation.

# Informed Consent

Thank you very much for being part of this investigation. After we have detailed the investigation and interview characteristics, we will fill out the informed consent form. If you still have questions at this point, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher before deciding to participate in the investigation. After filling out the form, you will receive a copy of this consent form so that you can store it and make it valid at any time. This form will be translated into English to support the investigation at the developing institution.

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I _____ understand that by filling in or crossing out each box I am consenting to the items specified below. By not filling in the box, I understand that I am NOT consenting to that item. I understand that by not filling in any of the consent boxes, contributions may be entirely excluded from the investigation.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the contents of the investigation and interview presentation, which details the general aspects of the investigation project and the interview characteristics.

☐ I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider the information provided therein and what is expected of me in the investigation. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions, which have been answered to my satisfaction, and therefore I would like to participate in the investigation through an individual interview.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw the information I have provided to the investigation until 1 November 2022.

☐ I understand that the information provided in this interview will be processed anonymously and securely if I want to. I also understand that if I want, my name and the name of my organisation can appear in the investigation. Name of the participant: Yes ☐ | No☐ Name of the organisation: Yes ☐ | No☐

☐ I understand that I will not be asked for personal or sensitive information about my organisation.

☐ I understand that my participation in this interview is voluntary, and if I withdraw, the digital records and notes taken will be deleted.

☐ I understand that only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the details of this interview.

☐ I understand that the information collected throughout the study will be available after 20 November 2021.

☐ I understand that the researcher will NOT receive material compensation for this interview.

☐ I understand that I will NOT receive any material compensation for this interview.

☐ I understand that this investigation is funded by the researcher's resources and the Dreilinden scholarship for LGBTI activists, resources that do not compromise the researcher's independence.

- ☐ I understand that the information I will report will form part of a final investigation report. I understand that I can request a copy of this report if I wish: Yes ☐ | No☐

- ☐ I consent to the audio recording of this interview ☐ and/or through written notes. I understand that this interview's records will be deleted two years after the end of the investigation.

- ☐ I understand that there are no risks involved in being part of this investigation and that any questions I do not wish to answer can be communicated to the researcher.

- ☐ I am certain whom I should contact for further information on the outcome of the investigation (Researcher and supervisor details in the interview presentation).

- ☐ I confirm that I have read this consent form in full and wish to participate in this investigation.


_____     _____     _____

Participant's name                      Date                         Signature


_____     _____     _____

Researcher                              Date                         Signature

# Appendix C: Topics addressed in the interviews

The topics described in this Appendix were sent to the organisations before the interviews and were the only guide to the conversation I held with them. The version presented here is a translation of the original document.

**(a) Relationships between the interviewee and the organisation.** The reciprocal relationships the person has with the organisation. The daily activities they carry out, and their roles within the organisation.

**(b) The organisation's views on care**. Specifically, the views of their (i) daily care activities, (ii) care relationships within the organisation, and (iii) their conceptions of care in social reproduction.

**(c) The organisation's role in the country's political processes since 2019.** Its participation and role in three different moments (i) the social outbreak of 2019, (ii) the constituent process during 2020-2022 and (iii) the new left-wing government that started in March 2022. This part of the interview aims to get your opinion on your organisation's relationship with the changes in institutional politics in the last period. The questions will focus on the doors that have been opened, the spaces that remain closed and the hope/disillusionment they have in these processes.

**(d) Organisations' views on the role of the state.** This last part of the interview will try to gather their views on the state's current role in social reproduction and how it can - or cannot - be transformed.

**(e) Visions of the organisation's work beyond the institutional processes.** How they projected their work beyond the outcome of the constituent process. In what spheres outside the institutional political debate the organisation has worked and will continue to work. How they think about their work beyond the state.