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Ezafing

Negotiated narratives: Peruvian Andean filmmakers navigating artistic autonomy amidst Ministry of Culture grants

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List of acronyms

MinCul   Ministry of Culture of Peru
DAFO   Directorate of Audiovisual, Phonography, and New Media of the Ministry of Culture

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Abstract

In a context where a film grant scheme implemented by the Ministry of Culture of Peru operates within a hierarchical structure of society that deems Andeanness as inferior, Andean filmmakers navigate a specific framework that is shaped by certain conditions. This research explores how Andean filmmakers use their autonomy within the film grant scheme, and examines the interplay between cultural policy, filmmakers' artistic autonomy and the social dynamics that may shape the process of filmmaking and films made by Andean filmmakers. Using a qualitative approach, interviews with a sample of Andean filmmakers who received funding from the grant scheme between 2012 and 2023 were analyzed. Thus, it is argued that Andean filmmakers engage in different forms of negotiation of their autonomy, with different degrees of freedom in how they exercise it. Through these negotiations, filmmakers challenge dominant societal narratives about the Andes, try to subvert the perceived expectation on what Andean filmmakers should represent in their films and balance specific policy's conditionalities with their own visions.

Relevance to Development Studies

Considering that cinema has the power to shape imaginaries, create symbolism and meanings and reflect on popular perceptions (Lewis, Rodgers and Woolcock, 2013; Banks, 2017), and that Andeanness in Peru is a charged identity which is often devalued in a hierarchical social structure (Quijano, 2014b), the examination of the dynamics that arise within a policy that aims to fund films made by Andean filmmakers becomes relevant. Understanding the strategies employed by Andean filmmakers to use their autonomy and agency to convey their artistic visions within a grants scheme is crucial since filmmakers challenge perceptions that society hold of Andeanness. This research also contributes to discussions on how cultural policy can enable and constrain autonomy, and how filmmakers can use this space to negotiate their autonomy.

Keywords

artistic autonomy, Andean filmmakers, film grants, cultural policy

Chapter 1:   Introduction

1.1.   Understanding the focus

Currently, the Ministry of Culture of Peru (MinCul) implements a grant scheme for the arts that includes grants for the production of films. To decentralize the cultural policy, this scheme includes a category for the production of films made by filmmakers residing outside of Lima. This research explores the interplay between Andean filmmakers' artistic autonomy and the conditions in which public film grant schemes is embedded.

Artistic autonomy encompasses reflections on the extent to which artist can make self-governing decisions and produced their artworks in a process with freedom of action. However, the conceptualization of this type of autonomy acknowledge that any decision come within structures that ultimately constrain the real freedom of choice that artist can exercise (Adorno, 1991; Banks, 2017). In this context, Andean filmmakers navigate a certain framework and structure, when they choose to participate and apply to the film grants implemented by the MinCul. The framework in which they operate is the cultural policy in itself, but also the social context in which the policy is implemented. This context is characterized by hierarchical and stratified social relations that positions Andeanness as subaltern and inferior. Furthermore, coloniality shapes the power differentials that are rooted in a racial stratification (Quijano, 2000), and where Andean culture is also subjected to hierarchical forms of cultural ordering.

In this context, this cultural policy acts as an enabler of artistic expression, since it provides financial resources to filmmakers to convey their visions, but also comes with constraints in the form of specific conditionalities delineated in the policy's guidelines. These conditions add to the social structure in which all these actors operate. So, as Banks (2010, p.262) argues, autonomy plays a role when artists use degrees of agency within certain structures to resist and subvert the pressures that those structures hold. In this sense, this research explores the negotiations of autonomy undertaken by Andean filmmakers in response to the grant policies set by the MinCul. It aims to delve into the dynamics of negotiation made by filmmakers, which occur within this policy framework of grants and within the hierarchical system where everything is embedded. An examination of how different spaces of negotiation emerge across various dimensions of filmmaking will be analyzed, considering that these negotiations unfold at different stages in the filmmaking process. Therefore, this research seeks to answer:

1.2.   Research question(s)

Main question:
How do Andean filmmakers negotiate their artistic autonomy within the film grant scheme implemented by the Ministry of Culture of Peru?

Sub-questions:
- o   How do Andean filmmakers who are recipients of film grants conceptualize artistic autonomy?
- o   How does the Peruvian social structure influence Andean filmmakers' navigation of the grant scheme?
- o   How do Andean filmmakers balance the conditionalities of the grant scheme with their own artistic visions and cultural values?

1.3. Methodological approach

1.3.1. Methods and methodological considerations

Since this research aims to explore the experiences and knowledge of Andean filmmakers navigating the public film grants rather than making a generalization of the Peruvian filmmaking industry, a qualitative approach was applied. The methodology used in this research included document analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Understanding the implementation of the cultural policy was approached by document analysis of the policy documents, terms of references, policy guidelines, jury evaluation reports, and formularies to be filled by filmmakers. All this information informed my general understanding of this policy and was used to shape the questionnaires applied in the interviews to filmmakers, considering the evolution and current state of the cultural policy and the nuances of the implementation. The questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews was developed during the month of July 2024. In that sense, reviewing these documents gave insights throughout the whole process of conducting this research into the contextual background, criteria that the filmmakers must adhere and shifts that the policy has experienced.

To capture the experiences of Andean filmmakers navigating this institutional framework, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Therefore, a sample of those who have been recipients of grants for the category of "Feature Film Production exclusively for Regions outside Lima Metropolitan Area and Callao" since its inception in 2012 was necessary.

While Andeanness can encompass geographical, racial and social identities, for practical and methodological purposes, the notion of an Andean filmmaker in this research is defined more narrowly, considering filmmakers who received grants representing Andean regions, meaning where the Andes Mountains are located. The Andean regions considered were Ayacucho, Cusco, Huancavelica, Junín and Puno. It is worth noting that there are other Andean regions in Peru, but none of them have had any grant recipients, and that, given that a requirement to apply for a grant in a particular region is that the applicant must reside there, all filmmakers sampled were born and currently live in the selected region.

The number of filmmakers from these regions who have receive grants for this category since 2012 is 20. The selection of the filmmakers to interview was a mix of purposive and snowballing sampling. This to ensure a diverse and representative sample of Andean filmmakers, that has a balanced distribution of the regions and considers a balance between filmmakers with extensive experience and those recipients of the grant for their first feature film was important. Avoiding the overrepresentation of a region was also ensured. It is important to note that from all the grant recipients, only one was from Huancavelica and, despite attempts to contact him, I was unable to reach him. As a result, no filmmakers from that region were included in the research. Additionally, I intentionally sampled one filmmaker who was recipient of a grant under the category for "Feature Film in Indigenous Languages", category that was available in 2017 and 2018, but served as a key category for filmmakers from the selected regions

In cases where a selected filmmaker could not be reached, moving to the next relevant candidate was the criteria to secure the diversity of the sample. Each application is attached to a project manager, who is usually the director or producer. It is worth noting that for all the selected participants, the interviewee was the director of the film, functioned as the project manager and main creative contributor, being the screenwriter as well. Having already a sample defined, initial contact with the filmmakers was made at the beginning of August 2024.

In total, I conducted one-time interviews with seven filmmakers. The initial contacts were made through a close member of my family, who contacted me with two filmmakers from Puno, and another filmmaker was reached via their social media. For contacting the rest of the filmmakers, four additional interviewees were contacted through a snowballing process, where these three initial contacts provided the information of the rest. Since I had a predetermined sample, I specifically asked the filmmakers whom I had already their contact if they had the contact information for the other filmmakers from my sample. As a result, I interviewed five filmmakers from my initial sample, while the other two interviews were conducted with other filmmakers that I considered relevant as well.

These interviews were conducted during the month of August and beginning of September and all of them were held online using Microsoft Teams. Online interviewing was chosen because of its reduced costs, flexibility for scheduling multiple interviews and the simplicity to reach interviewees in different regions, which is relevant since the interviewees live in various regions of Peru. The sampled filmmakers typically lived in urban areas with reliable internet access and were familiar with online communication

The duration of the interviews ranged from 1 hour and 6 minutes to 1 hour and 46 minutes. All interviews were recorded and consent for the recording was asked and obtained at the beginning of each online meeting. Microsoft Teams has a live transcription tool, which I used in the interviews as well. However, given that the tool does not work entirely accurate in Spanish, I manually edited the transcriptions afterwards.

After completing the transcriptions, I began a manual coding process of each interview. This included going through every paragraph, and sometimes every sentence, to code the information that was relevant to this research. Initially, during the first interviews, I assigned codes based on what it seemed relevant to the research, but as I continued with coding the subsequent interviews, codes were refined, since I already could identify recurring themes and patterns with more clarity.

After coding all the interviews, I identified recurring themes across the interviews. I organized these themes in a matrix, which allowed me to put the information that each interviewee provided on each specific theme. This matrix allowed me to map the patterns, noticing common or contrasting opinions in their responses.

1.3.2. Ethics and reflection on positionality

Drawing on Patel's (2016) call for reflection on "Why me?", "Why now?" and "Why this?", given that research is relational, I reflect on the following section about my positionality as a researcher.

Reflecting into 'why me?' involves for me several factors. Part of it is related to the ethical considerations I have while dealing with research. I was born and raised in the Andean South of Peru and am a woman who has predominantly received a western education. While I spent my early childhood and teenage years in regions outside Lima, most of my formative years took place in the capital. Perhaps it is precisely because I have received a westernized education that I have come to value certain artistic expressions and, in particular, films. However, my upbringing allows me to notice that there are certain dynamics in which artistic expressions, particularly those in Andean regions, operate, and that these often carry tensions within Peruvian society. In that sense, the frameworks and methodologies I used may have been influenced by my background, which made me probably prioritize certain concepts that may be far from ways of understanding art and culture that Andean filmmakers hold. However, I made a conscious effort to be aware of my biases and tried to unlearn and learn in the research process.

Additionally, I believe this is a good moment to reflect on the way in which Andean filmmakers craft their films because there has been a notable surge in the visibility of films

originating from the Andean region. This has come with a surge in recognition of them that has contributed to some legitimacy surrounding the allocation of grants to filmmaking. But still, these grants are permanently contested, because investing in cultural expressions seem like a misplaced priority in Peru.

Finally, regarding the ethics of the research, since the information provided by the participants contains sensitive personal data, such as political opinions, mentions of names or any identifying information was omitted, and personal data was anonymized along this research paper. Moreover, voluntary informed consent was addressed before each interview.

1.3.3. Scope and limitations

Since this research focuses on the navigation of Andean filmmakers within the grant scheme established by the Ministry of Culture, this limits the scope to a specific group: those who have received grants and their experience within this framework. In consequence, it does not include the views of filmmakers who never applied for these grants and produced films independently or those who have applied but were never recipients. This limitation could produce a partial

The selection of Andean filmmakers was primarily based on a geographical focus, acknowledging that the notion of 'Andeanness' transcends mere geography and can encompass cultural, social, and economic aspects. However, this geographical selection also imposes limitations, as it cannot generalize the experiences of all Andean filmmakers.

It is important to note that, within the grant recipients of this category, there has been a disproportionate representation of men, with only one woman receiving the funds in the years and regions considered in this research. Although there was an intention to interview this filmmaker and was selected in the initial sample, it was not possible to establish contact with her. As a result, the sample consists only of men, which limits the perspective on the topic and erases the voice of women filmmakers from the analysis. This absence highlights a significant limitation, as the unique experiences and challenges faced by women filmmakers in the context of grants and film production cannot be captured.

Chapter 2: Framing the research: conceptualization and context

This chapter aims to provide context to understand the terrain of Peruvian cultural policy on film in which Andean filmmakers operate. It also establishes key concepts which will support the analysis of the research findings in the following chapters. First, the chapter explores the history of the film grant scheme in the Ministry of Culture of Peru (MinCul) and how it has been and is implemented since its inception until now. Next, a conceptualization of artistic autonomy is presented, considering different theoretical perspectives, followed by an examination of cultural policy. Finally, the chapter integrates these to explore how artistic autonomy and cultural policy connect, considering how this can affect Andean filmmakers as they navigate the film grant scheme.

2.1. The inner workings of film grants in Peru

The Peruvian Cinema Law (Law No. 26370, amended by Law No. 29919) aims to promote cinema production in the country and was created in 1994 and, among other mandates, it always included establishing funding competitions for films. Nonetheless, it was not until the 2010s that this was really enforced, following the creation of the MinCul in 2010, which also established the Directorate of Audiovisual, Phonography, and New Media of the Ministry of Culture (DAFO). Before that, CONACINE was the office that oversaw the Cinema Law, and was part of the Ministry of Education. However, the Ministry of Education never had cinema as a priority or cared to pursue adequate funding to enforce what the Law dictated (Bedoya Forno, 2019). With DAFO, the implementation of the Law became consistent and funding for films started to be given on a regular basis, which gave predictability to filmmakers and institutionalized the cultural policy.

The purpose of the grant, as outlined in the guidelines, is to "promote the country's cultural activity through the development and production of Peruvian fiction feature films."[1] Additionally, it aims to "enrich the film market quantitatively and qualitatively with a larger and more diverse range of national productions" (Ministry of Culture of Peru, 2024, p.3). This objective has not changed since the inception of the cultural policy and has included a mention of another goal from 2012 to 2023: decentralizing film activities in Peru.

Beyond the purpose of the scheme, the implementation of the cultural policy regarding filmmaking is as follows. To begin with, there are various categories, which include the production of short films and documentaries; for the distribution of films, facilitating their insertion into exhibition circuits; for the implementation of screening spaces, and finally, for fiction projects. In this last section, there are three subcategories: the development of feature films, which include pre-production activities such as research, script development, etc.; the production of feature films at the national level; and the one that this research focus on: the production of feature films exclusively for the regions of the country outside Lima Metropolitan Area and Callao.

The project presented by filmmakers in the competition must consider all stages of filmmaking (pre-production, production, and post-production) and the grant applicant must be presented as a legal entity, rather than as an individual, with a company required to apply.

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[1] Translation from Spanish of the 2023 grants policy purpose, which includes the mention of decentralization: "Fomentar la actividad cultural del país a través de la creación de obras cinematográficas peruanas de largometraje de ficción, así como enriquecer cuantitativa y cualitativamente el mercado cinematográfico con una mayor y más diversa oferta de producción nacional. Del mismo modo, se busca descentralizar la actividad cinematográfica en el Perú." (MinCul, 2023)

It must primarily be carried out in regions of the country outside Lima Metropolitan Area and Callao within a maximum of two calendar years following receiving the grant. Additionally, one of the requirements is that the team which includes the director, screenwriter, producer and, if applicable, other crew members, such as the composer of the original music, as well as the heads of technical departments, must predominantly consist of individuals residing in the regions of the country, excluding Lima Metropolitan Area and Callao, as indicated in their identity documents. Also, at least one lead actor/actress must reside in one of these regions, with the possibility of requesting an exemption.

The film must have a duration of more than 75 minutes and the jury must consists of the following members: a film director or producer; a screenwriter; and a film critic, educator or a cultural specialist. From a review of the guidelines, juries from 2012 until 2017 were predominantly, Lima-based directors, screenwriters or film professors. Additionally, since the inception of the grant scheme, the funding allocated to regional film projects has ranged from 70% to 80% compared to the amounts given to the national projects. While filmmakers from regions outside Lima can also apply for the national category, a minority does it and over 95% of these projects have always been allocated to Lima-based filmmakers. However, in 2023, there was a change on the policy. The funding amounts for the national and regional subcategories were equal, with both now receiving 800,000 soles (approximately €200,000).

It is worth noting that a feature film category specifically promoting the use of indigenous languages only existed in 2017 and 2018. After this, it was removed in 2019, with no mention of indigenous languages in the 2020 guidelines either. In 2021 and 2022, the guidelines indicated that the use of them is encouraged but did not include specific detailed guidance. As of 2023 to 2024, there is a consideration for the use of them by a bonus point awarded during grading the proposals when indigenous languages are incorporated.

It is also important to note that DAFO, since 2017 until now, implements annually two Film Project Workshops, one focused on script development and the other on film production, in which regional filmmakers can apply to participate. These workshops involve also a selection process and are carried out within one week.

Finally, a big concern among the Peruvian filmmaking community revolves around potential changes on the Cinema Law, in light of a recent Congress proposal made in June 2024. This attempt to modify the law, which took place during the data collection for this research, has been debated and approved, but observed by the executive, meaning it cannot be enacted until it undergoes further debate. The modified law seeks to change, among other things, funding aspects and introduce vague terms that could be interpreted as censorship. For instance, it stipulates that film projects must secure additional funding, around 50% of their total budget, beyond what the MinCul provides as a prerequisite for applying in the grant scheme (Pimentel, 2023).

2.2. On artistic autonomy

The term 'autonomy' derives from the Greek words *autos,* meaning 'self', and *nomos* meaning 'law', which ultimately results on the notion of self-governance or 'giving yourself your own law'. In the context of artistic expressions, then, artistic autonomy would refer to having the freedom to create art works by giving themselves their own rules or guidelines. However, as Holmes (2004, p.548) asserts, this concept becomes more complex when considering that artists, as social beings, exist and express themselves through language shared with others. In that sense, this complicates the notion of an artistic decision by reflecting to what extent it can be entirely self-governed.

Taking into account that a fully self-governed artistic decision is almost impossible to achieve, Reiter (2024), drawing on Kant, suggests that artistic autonomy lies in how an artist

selects and adapts artistic rules or canons to meaningfully express an aesthetic vision. He explains, however, that this autonomy does not simply imply following or disregarding rules, it means for the artist to selectively adapt them, wishing to communicate a deeper idea rooted in reason. So, true artistic autonomy exists when artists modify established rules not arbitrarily but to convey their original vision. This transformation exemplifies self-governing and only an artist with a unique vision has the freedom to reshape rules to realize that vision. Artistic autonomy, in this sense, is the artistic freedom that emulates, but does not imitate. While he believes that imitation involves a certain degree of freedom, autonomy is only achieved by freedom guided by reason at the moment of shaping rules.

On a more pessimistic side, Adorno (1991, p.98-99) argues that while autonomy may offer artists a basis for acting creatively, freedom is inevitably compromised. He suggests that, over time, any autonomy an artist possesses is gradually erased by the influence of the dynamics of the culture industry and by the system in which it operates, erasing true creative freedom. The system and the industrialization of art ultimately lead to a de-autonomization of artists, as they become part of a labor system that commodifies their creative work. Similarly, Bourdieu (1980) points out that artists may aspire to different forms of capital, whether economic or symbolic, usually going for the latter. In doing so, their pursuit inevitably compromises their autonomy. He asserts that even when they seem to aim for symbolic recognition, they seek prestige or status by performing disinterest, which also does not allow them to have autonomy. In a way, both notions resemble on the idea that the social and economic dynamics surrounding art constrain genuine autonomy.

In another view, Banks (2010) describes autonomy as the ability to "exercise discretion or apply freedom of choice", and explains that often artistic autonomy in the world of cultural production is seen as the "freedom from the particular demands and constraints of the commercial world" (p.252). Further, he mentions that, in the current cultural industry, autonomy is often seen as a necessary or wanted attribute of an artist and, therefore, cultural workers seek to provide it for the "profitable commodification of culture" (p.252). Nonetheless, the author recognizes that there are several ways in which an artist's autonomy may be compromised. For instance, this commodification could limit artistic expression since the demands of the market or managerial frameworks can shape creative freedom. However, within the management of artistic expressions, whether by the market, the state or artists themselves, autonomy can be perceived as a resource rather than as a concession (p.260) and, in a more optimist view, he believes that with that resource an artist is not only a "bearer of established structures" (p.261), but also can have the agency to deviate from them.

Moreover, Holmes (2004) argues that if an object or work of art can no longer represent a unique and independent subject or artist, autonomy itself becomes an existential dilemma. Without a clear boundary between self and the external forces shaping decisions, sense of identity and autonomy weakens by thinking that thoughts are shaped by constant external images and signs. Additionally, Holmes reflects on collective creation of artworks, asserting that "the attempt to give oneself one's own law becomes a collective adventure" (p.548) when considering artists are social beings that constantly exchange ideas with others but also with their audience. Therefore, 'giving oneself a law' in the arts becomes a shared journey as well: a collective autonomy. This autonomy is not only about an individual or a small group's artistic vision but also is shaped by cultural policies that influence and limit possibilities. In this way, individual expression intersects with larger societal frameworks, making autonomy in art a blend of personal creativity and structure. Besides, it is also collective because the reception of an artwork and the dynamics of expression are shaped by a lot of people and cannot be controlled by only artists making decisions.

Finally, also about the collective and artistic autonomy, Burgdorf and Hillmann (2024, p.329) examines the New Hollywood film industry to explore the tension between individual

autonomy and group cohesion, especially in film movements that prioritize individual expression but still feel that they need a cohesive community to establish their artistic vision. They find that adhering to auteur cinema facilitated filmmakers to avoid collaboration, since it was viewed as a potential threat to the artistic autonomy of the director/writer filmmaker.

2.3. Scripting realities: about cultural policy

In general terms, public policy involves decisions to address a problematic or issues of concern within the state with the aim to impact its citizens. Choices made by policymakers translate into policies, and these policies eventually have outcomes. Cultural policies are a particular subset of public policy focused on supporting the preservation and promotion of cultural activities. Generally, creating policies for culture involves interventions to address and promote cultural heritage, humanities and arts, in a way, shaping the cultural identity and canon the state wants to promote and establish (Mulcahy, 2006). So, when these policies tackle art industries, they engage to some extent with the symbolic and the aesthetic of the artworks, since they can have a "strong influence on the very way we understand society" (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005, p.6). Moreover, these policies may vary significantly with different governments, reflecting changes in political priorities and cultural values (Mulcahy, 2006; Gray, 2007).

Conversely, Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005, p.4) point out that cultural policies have persisted because of a growing consensus across political spectrums, neoliberal conservatives and the progressive left, that lead to embrace and see the commodification of culture as inevitable. Moreover, these policies were also seen as more democratic and inclusive, because, contrary to the elitism of subsidizing only cultural forms that could not survive in the market, these policies promoted the idea of making culture more accessible (p.5). However, while cultural policies emphasize making culture more accessible, they could also reinforce existing inequalities by only favoring cultural expressions that are already marketable.

In this context, creative justice becomes important in reflecting on who gets to be a cultural practitioner and how to make fairer the distribution of opportunities in the cultural sector, promoting a space where everyone can have a chance to enter, participate and make a living from cultural work (Banks, 2017). This is an issue that cultural policy can address. Through public funding, resources can go to those who might be excluded from the cultural sector. However, the effectiveness of these efforts and the criteria used to allocate funding can be subject to debate and scrutiny.

To some extent, this highlights the social role of art and, consequently, the argument to fund it. There is likely a reflection carried out by governments on what forms of art can contribute to individuals and society and whether the effects they carry are valuable enough to give funding and support. Thus, discussions about public funding for the arts are intrinsically linked to debates on the social value of art. Moreover, this debate exists partly from the difficulty of measuring the impact of these policies, leading governments to seek legitimacy. Due to this, these policies experience constant scrutiny and contestation (Mulcahy, 2006; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007; Dewinter, Rutten and Bradt, 2020).

Since the relationship between art and politics is connected through the distribution of the visible and invisible (Dewinter, Rutten and Bradt, 2020, p.99), funding artistic expressions bring visibility to certain works. This funding impacts not only the immediate receiver of the fund, who is able to create its art, but also how the artwork in itself affects society by reaching audiences that can see it because was funded in the first place. In this sense, the reflection within public funding involves analyzing the social role of art, which shapes cultural production and enables the creation of artworks. Additionally, as Belfiore (2020) notes,

cultural policy inherently involves decisions on what forms of cultural expression are considered 'valuable' or 'deserving'.

Finally, it is worth noting that, as Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005, p.4) argue, although cultural policies are fairly widespread at the national level in several parts of the world, there is still limited implementation of these policies at a local level. This might push to reflect on difficulties that may arise when trying to address specific cultural needs and expressions within different communities in a country.

2.4. Finding the way through autonomy, policy and cultural clashes

As discussed above, public policies are designed to impact specific subjects, and this particular cultural policy analyzed is directed to filmmakers residing outside Lima. This research, however, focus on Andean filmmakers for reasons previously explained. In bringing together the conceptualization of cultural policy and artistic autonomy within the context of these public grants, this section seeks to provide a conceptual framework to understand what it means for an Andean filmmaker to operate in such a scheme.

Understanding Andeanness involves delving into the dynamics of power that shapes Peruvian society, one being coloniality of power. As Quijano (2000) describes, coloniality goes beyond the remains of colonial rule, and manifests as a hierarchical and stratified system rooted in race, which is perpetuated through the codification of differences. In this dynamic, dominant groups adopt Eurocentric values and views as their own (p.229), which creates a coexistence of dominant and dominated groups, where race is a key factor in structuring social relations. In Latin America, whiteness generally retains control over power structures, while Indigenous people are marginalized and positioned as subaltern (Quijano, 2014b, p.639).

In the Peruvian context, Andeanness is a complex intersection of geography, race and social identities. While Andean can clearly refer to the regions where the Andes Mountain runs, it also serves as an identifier of spaces where mostly non-white populations live. The term "*indio*" associated with Indigenous communities, is frequently applied to Andean people as well, in that way racializing Andeanness or "*lo andino*" (Quijano, 2014a, p.239). Consequently, Andeanness in Peru is both culturally and geographically racialized within a social hierarchy that subordinates and deems the '*indio*'/'*andino*'/Indigenous identity as inferior.

Therefore, this hierarchical system permeates all aspects of social interaction, in which culture and the arts, also take place. Thus, beyond the regulatory control that a (cultural) policy seeks to establish, power is not limited to policy and its implementation. Even in its application, policies can reflect and interact with these hierarchical dynamics, with coloniality playing a role in this case. This means that a cultural policy, and the one is subject of analysis in this research, is not isolated, it operates within and alongside structural dynamics.

As Mignolo and Vázquez (2013) assert, coloniality has meant the "control over the senses and perception" and propose "decolonial aestheSis" as a practice and approach that can challenge and decolonize these perceptions. As Poblete (2020, p.147) points out, cinema and coloniality use visuality to convey meanings, and considers that film presents a paradox since it can be seen as "both a form of colonialism and a tool to overcome" the limits of epistemological and aesthetic colonialism (p.152). Additionally, Ponzanesi and Waller (2012, p.127) suggest that the visual characteristic, ability to manipulate time and space, and appeal to multiple senses, make cinema capable of subvert perceptions and create new narratives.

In this way, these authors believe in the ability of filmmakers to question and redefine dominant visual orders, playing a critical role in reshaping cultural and social perceptions.

In that sense, in the intersection between artistic autonomy and this specific cultural policy, filmmakers must operate within a framework, due to the need of securing grants to bring their films to life, this leads them to navigate this framework to realize their creative visions. Furthermore, as mentioned, a cultural policy introduces its regulations but also operates within certain dynamics, which can be complex when implemented on a national level. All of this can shape how autonomy is exercised. In that sense, artists navigate their creative process by making a film and doing it in institutional, political, and social frameworks that come with public funding.

As Banks (2010, p.262) argues, artists while producing art engage in "quotidian struggle within" certain structures, managing opportunities and limits. He suggests that autonomy can play a liberating role when artist can exercise degrees of agency within certain structures. Similarly, Oakley (2009, p.282) argues that for some artists the value of being one often is about wanting to create work that is personally meaningful and that maybe can have social impacts, going beyond commercialism and other limitations, and in that sense counteracting restrictions with their autonomy.

For Banks (2010), autonomy "exists in a constant flux" and involves "endless negotiation" and the capacity to "exercise the necessity of choice in explicit defiance of agents and structures of power". This allows artists to engage in ways of using autonomy that range from subtle forms of resistance to conscious political action (p.265). In a similar but more cautious way, Beirne, Jennings and Knight (2017) explore how spaces for artistic agency, that can be strategic and reactive, can emerge in a "relational conceptualization of struggle". In that sense, these spaces that exist within conditions can lead to creative resistance, however, as the authors illustrate in the case of community artists who rely on public funding, these spaces sometimes may be little.

These authors believe that while navigating certain frameworks, there is space for negotiation of the artwork artists want to convey. In that sense, navigation refers to moving within a certain framework or going through a journey, and negotiating involves a conscious process of making decisions on how to defy different limitations, constraints or pressures that exist in a specific framework. Negotiation, then, becomes an intentional part of navigating, where artists move from only operating within a framework to actively upholding their creative choices in the middle of certain limitations.

Chapter 3: Coming of stage: from vision to cinematic reality

"[Having freedom] allows you to express what you have planned. Because if there were too many restrictions, I think we would end up imitating someone [...]. It's necessary to try to establish a distance and have a unique voice, to express the things you feel" (Interviewee 1)

This chapter delves into how Andean filmmakers conceptualize artistic autonomy, exploring how they understand and practice it. Additionally, it addresses the role of DAFO within the MinCul as an enabler of artistic expression. By providing funding and fostering professionalization, DAFO allows the filmmakers to produce films which align better with the artistic goals they wish to pursue.

3.1. Our own way: picturing artistic autonomy

Artistic autonomy, as conceptualized by Andean filmmakers who have received public film grants, revolves around self-determination and freedom of choice. For them, autonomy in the artistic context responds to the ability to express their visions and ideas through films, which may be to some extent free from external interference. Nonetheless, some filmmakers consider also that total freedom is rarely possible, not only to artists, but in life in general. This freedom is not just about choosing what stories to tell but also how and with who, ensuring that their choices during the production of a film are not extremely contested and are aligned with their goals, which may change along the way.

At the same time, artistic autonomy is not seen as the most important aspect in the film production. Filmmakers emphasize that the fact of being able to reflect their realities or create something unique or they can be proud of as more important. However, they assert that achieving this is through having autonomy, recognizing its relevance. In this sense, autonomy is not an end, but a tool that allows them to fulfil other goals.

Thus, the perspective of Andean filmmakers that were interviewed mostly aligns when talking about the concept of artistic autonomy. An important part of their conceptualization is that having it means being able to do what they want when they express themselves creatively, in the ways they want, but including the expression of their ideas as they have planned or envisioned. In that sense, filmmakers' concept of autonomy includes freedom to plan what they want to represent, how the process of execution of that vision is done freely and how to ensure that the final work reflects their vision.

This aligns with Reiter's (2024) notion that only artists with a unique and preconceived vision are able to achieve autonomy, as having a well-thought and developed idea serves to find true artistic autonomy by reshaping other artistic influences, reaching emulation. Some of the filmmakers add that only by having the ability to express freely and convey what they want, original pieces are possible, allowing them to differentiate from others and give originality to their work, escaping from mere imitation.

In that sense, artistic autonomy is not only about freedom but also about creating a distinctive and personal voice. Autonomy enables them to produce uniqueness. When comparing it with a scenario when they have multiple limitations or restrictions, they believe that could lead to imitation or conforming with established approaches or ways of doing films, which would mean a way of only having homogenous art expressions. This relates with the fact that most of them view their approach to cinema and their careers through auteur cinema, which allows them to differentiate from others. An approach related with the notion

of a writer/director as a visionary, who conveys through their films unique canons (Andrews, 2013), but who ultimately seems to pursue an individual autonomy instead of a collective pursue to differentiate from others (Burgdorf and Hillmann, 2024).

> "In the end, that [autonomy] is what sets one work apart from another. Because if we put everything into a mold, all the films would look the same. It's like what's happening with films made with private capital, almost all of them look the same." (Interviewee 6)

Moreover, autonomy is thought not only as a means of differentiation but as a way to go against the standardization that, according to them, commercially driven projects may lead to, preventing replication or following a formula that might work. As Banks (2010, p.252) notes, within capitalistic cultural production, autonomy is often linked to resist the constraints that the commercial art sector can impose.

Furthermore, beyond the freedom from external control that filmmakers believe may limit their ability to tell stories in ways they want, autonomy also extends to aesthetics and ways of representation. Autonomy gives filmmakers the freedom to create visual and narrative styles that align with their vision, free from specific aesthetic canons. For instance, some filmmakers view the lack of formal film education as a source of creative freedom, as it allows them to explore and express without preconceived technical or stylistic ways of doing films.

> "Because that [creative freedom] is where the uniqueness, the originality of an author lies. Surely, maybe, if I had formal training in a film school, I don't know, I think I'd be very constrained by set parameters. So, instead, we express ourselves freely. It's thanks to our free-form and self-taught education. I research what I find relevant. And that's how we also develop projects according to our interests." (Interviewee 4)

However, not all filmmakers share the idea that formal film training is not necessary. Some feel that additional film education is needed, especially since there are no film schools in any region outside Lima. Nonetheless, as it will be explored in following chapters, many filmmakers, regardless on their take on training, value this aesthetic autonomy and believe that the ability to create outside of standardized aesthetics fosters a distinct and, for some, authentic style. For these filmmakers, autonomy is also a mean of bringing visibility to subjects and perspectives that might be overlooked or erased and addressing themes they feel are important to explore, portraying lived experiences or perspectives that mainstream and conventional narratives do not show.

> "It's very important to have this perspective, which many people might not dare to show—how certain realities are—and to be able to portray them and guide them based on how you've truly experienced them or your vision of certain things that might make others uncomfortable or even lead them to try to censor it. That's where I think it's crucial to have creative freedom and the ability to make visible certain aspects you believe are important." (Interviewee 3)

Furthermore, some filmmakers acknowledge that total control is not always the best scenario and there is nuance in the notions of autonomy, especially when considering filmmaking within a collaborative nature. Therefore, while many filmmakers emphasize the important role of having freedom, others assert that filmmaking always involves the exchange of ideas with others, due to the inherently collective nature of doing films (Andrews, 2013; Burgdorf and Hillmann, 2024). They see the fact of hearing other perspectives and comparing them with theirs as a form of tension, which may guide some filmmakers to refine their vision, but for others, it just provides a new angle to consider. This tension in some cases can become a negotiation process, which they find key to achieve a better final artwork. It introduces challenges that require creative solutions, forcing them to defend their vision or rethink it, allowing them to enhance their work.

"A film is a collective effort, […] [I think that] not having that struggle of confronting your idea and explaining to others why it's interesting and how you make it more interesting takes away a lot of your narrative muscle […] for me, having total control isn't that important" (Interviewee 5)

"A feature film is completely different from a short film. [It] requires the ability to connect with others, to learn from others." (Interviewee 3).

Finally, a few filmmakers question if artistic autonomy exist at all, emphasizing that even perceived freedom in art is ultimately constrained, aligning with Adorno (1991) who argued that artists, despite perhaps aspiring for independence, are inevitably shaped by the structures of the culture industry, which imposes boundaries. Here, the filmmaker suggests that cinematic genres inherently contain limitations, and each come with established norms that ultimately shape creative choices.

"The language of cinema has its own boundaries and limitations. There are the limits of fiction, of non-fiction, of experimental cinema, of commercial cinema, [...] If I like fiction, I'll go towards it and may navigate freely within that. But I don't know, I don't believe in freedom. [...] I mean, in the end, freedom exists within something, within boundaries—like life. Within fiction, there's commercial cinema, or more auteur cinema. One can choose that, but you're still moving within limits. Now, that's an artistic choice. [...] But even if you choose one of those paths, there are still limits. There's no freedom. You're free within a bubble, ultimately. That's why I was saying it's like life. Our limitation as human beings is death […] So, yes, that's why I don't believe in freedom." (Interviewee 7)

This resonates with Holmes's (2004) view, where boundaries between self-determination and external influences turns artistic autonomy into an existential dilemma, even raising doubts if freedom can be real and apprehensive. This leads to think freedom as existent in a bubble where it exists only within specific limits. Nonetheless, this view contrasts with Holmes's idea of artistic autonomy as a "collective adventure" (p.548), suggesting that autonomy, in reality, is not achievable. Freedom may come from navigating within certain boundaries, but these boundaries do not turn that freedom into a shared experience with other artists pursuing similar work, and also autonomy cannot be achieved by emulating others, as Reiter (2024) suggests. Instead, for this filmmaker, it may not exist.

3.2. Scaling up: grants as enablers of artistic expression

For the filmmakers, this cultural policy has enabled them to express themselves to create films that are larger in scale or, as it may be perceived, more professionally made than in a scenario where this grant does not exist. All of them acknowledge that without this support they would only be able to make lower quality films, which means that most likely those would not be in line with their vision, or maybe they would have never been able to make a film at all. Therefore, they believe this grant allows them to make their projects, which has led to a general sense of gratitude towards the existence of the policy. In that sense, it represents more than the financial support, it also serves as a means of producing films with a level of quality they can be proud of.

"There are projects and projects. [Some] you can do with your friends; everyone gives a small fund, other friends act. But there are projects like this one that I had been planning for so many years that couldn't be done that way. [They] require a minimum technical team. […] And to get people on board, to commit people, you must pay them. In other words, if there hadn't been a grant, I don't think I would have been able to make this project." (Interviewee 6)

Additionally, being able to work with a team is something that, in the past and without the grant, seems like a situation out of reach for many filmmakers. The ability to work with a team can redefine filmmaking for them and can be seen as a transformation from an amateur practice into more of a professional pathway. As Beirne, Jennings and Knight (2017) note in their exploration of a public funding scheme for the arts in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the implementation of it often viewed artists as amateur and this resulted in more "controls as a way of professionalising the field" (p.217). Thus, filmmaking is no longer a practice that can only be shared with friends or family, something that some still do, but a practice that has become a structured job, where assembling a team is a practice towards creating films with more quality. By collaborating with a team, some filmmakers believe they can create more meaningful work, emphasizing the value of collective efforts, where individual abilities can be better used.

> "I've always thought that I should work with more responsibility, with better-prepared people. That's why I was determined to secure funds, because otherwise I wouldn't have made a project that I consider significant. We worked responsibly, respecting all areas, […] with the proper departments for a production. […] We worked as a team. […] because before, the way we did it was that we were 'do-it-all.' The director did the photography, camera work, sound, even acted and everything, but not in this case." (Interviewee 2)

Additionally, the film grants have enabled them to work with paid collaborators, a situation that was often out of reach before. Those filmmakers with longer careers remember times when they had to manage every aspect of the filmmaking process themselves, using their own savings without a financial return. Expanding the scope and quality of their projects, which align better with their creative visions, allows them to challenge perceptions of the amateur nature that the industry may have on them. In this way, the policy provides financial means to make their artistic aspirations happen, but also allows to bridge a gap between what they envision and what is practically possible. Ultimately, these grants offer a way of legitimacy within the film industry.

> "It would have been completely impossible [to make his film without the grant]. There's no way to achieve the level of production one would like. Previously, before regional cinema became stronger, I understand that there were quite a few filmmakers from the regions, and we [regional filmmakers] were actually labelled "videographers" because, well, they would say: "No, that's not cinema". I understand it was critics from Lima who said that kind of film wasn't really film, that it was nothing more than home videos. Because we would just grab the camera, and the technical crew was only about 4 or 5 people, and of course, the production level was very, very low." (Interviewee 3)

Even for filmmakers who express explicitly that they don't necessarily identify filmmaking as their profession: *"Film isn't my profession either. I wanted to make a movie, and that desire led me down these paths of securing funding, working with more people"* (Interviewee 7), the policy itself can be perceived as a pathway toward professionalization. A process of a certain scope needs a large funding, and the policy not only provides the resources, but also shapes how filmmaking is approached, leading the filmmakers on a more structured and logistical process.

In this regard, the grants serve as enablers of artistic expression and professionalization for filmmakers, allowing them to create at a scale that aligns with their specific vision of their project. This financial support facilitates logistical aspects of filmmaking, with monetary resources to enhance production quality through better equipment and more crew members, but also fosters a sense of autonomy. As discussed in the previous section, Andean filmmakers conceptualize artistic autonomy as the ability and freedom to follow their creative vision and this grant allows them to overcome financial barriers that could prevent this. However, as will be explored in subsequent chapters, while this policy gives this opportunity

to filmmakers, it also requires them to navigate certain conditions and contextual frameworks when they choose to engage in this scheme.

Chapter 4:   A certain glance: dealing with outer perspectives

"What I think about is how my film will transcend over time, how it will be appreciated. It's like a being, as I see it, it's like a living being that has life." (Interviewee 4)

In a context where this cultural policy plays a crucial role for Andean filmmakers, one challenge they face is navigating a framework with certain expectations arising from various sources. These filmmakers face the task of balancing what is expected of them in terms of cinematic production, especially because they live in the Andes, while also trying to create films that challenge and transcend these expectations. The chapter will analyze how they perceive the cultural and societal expectations on one side, and how certain practices set by DAFO may shape their work on the other. The chapter will conclude with an exploration on how filmmakers use their autonomy to negotiate these expectations and subvert them.

4.1.   The cinema of the 'other'

Peruvian society is characterized by a cultural and race-related social stratification, with a disdain towards indigenous communities, Andeanness and individuals with traits associated with those communities. This hierarchy influences interactions and social relations (Quijano, 2014b), affecting diverse dimensions ranging from economic opportunities to cultural representation. Lima, in particular, is often seen as the center of power, where political decisions are made, and as a space where hierarchical structures are reinforced, including cultural ones. Additionally, Peruvian society is characterized by being heavily centralized as well, because policies are usually formulated at a national level or because institutions tend to function better in the capital.

The Peruvian film industry has remained largely centralized in Lima and dominated by white, upper-class elites. In response, a goal of this public policy is trying to counteract this by giving the opportunity to filmmakers outside Lima to create films as well. However, the categorization of regional filmmaking on the grants scheme can create and reinforce a notion of these filmmakers as cultural 'others' in the industry. This can be particularly the case for Andean filmmakers, since Andeanness and its related culture is often deemed inferior within the social fabric of Peru. In that sense, their films can end up representing 'otherness', contrasting from the norm or hegemony, which is a Westernized and urban perspective. As a result, Andean filmmakers must navigate societal expectations and stereotypes that can shape their artistic expression.

This dynamic can relate to the phenomenon of 'world cinema' and its reception. As Berghahn (2021) argues, non-western filmmakers can encounter pressures to exoticize their films, also finding themselves driven to meet certain expectations, especially when there is a transnational audience involved. In that sense, depictions can be influence by certain pressures, turning them into objects of a particular gaze. As Columpar (2002) argues, a 'gaze' in this context can function to situate non-Western artworks as different from hegemonic artwork. For instance, this interviewee mentions that the Ministry may not impose pressures or expectations directly, but there is a perception that societal notions put pressure for how Andean depictions should look like.

> "[Expectations come] not so much from the Ministry, because ultimately the Ministry just calls for proposals. And I don't think it's the juries either, but rather a reflection of the same capital-centric ideology. The idea of a regional or Andean film responds to certain criteria

for them. They even seem to like it, in my opinion, because they show it in their daily lives and in their politics; they don't like the indigenous person who speaks out (…). Instead, they like the ´good´ indigenous person, the one who speaks 'their' Quechua, who is in love with their land, who dreams of going to Lima, in some way, that's what they like. But I don't know where they get this idea of an Andean person from." (Interviewee 5)

This perspective on cinema of the 'other' captures how Andean cinema is often subject to external expectations. To some extent, it is awaited for Andean filmmakers to act as cultural 'informants', a dynamic (Berghahn, 2021) explains where non-Western filmmakers are often pressured to deliver 'authentic' narratives for audiences that cannot relate with realities portrayed. However, for Andean filmmakers, this may come from foreign audiences but also from people within Peru, Lima's cultural gatekeepers, who may also expect that a film representing the Andes will show 'authentic' portrayals, thinking it can be shown in an international festival. This shows a tension between autonomy and the demands to produce certain narratives. Additionally, according to Halle (2010), 'quality' films that are screened outside their domestic markets are usually the ones that satisfy a desire to watch stories that are culturally distinct.

In another view, there is a notion on how policies work and how the state functions, which is believed to influence the perception on how to navigate this public funding when dealing with the state. Nonetheless, this filmmaker argues that he does not uphold to those beliefs that other filmmakers may have.

"I don't worry about what others will think of what I'm going to do. But now I'm going to elaborate a little. Society, at least in Peru, operates in a certain way. And people believe that to make a film, to get funding, you have to meet certain criteria. I've discussed this with some colleagues as well. Of course, they say, 'Oh no, you need to have a recognized actor', 'you need to have connections' or any of those things. 'You shouldn't talk about certain topics', or 'you shouldn't say certain things for the Ministry to accept you.' But that's more about an idea of how the State has functioned until now." (Interviewee 7)

Additionally, Peru's cultural landscape is embedded in tensions over what is considered valid as art in cultural production. These comes to front when some filmmakers mentioned how art created by Andean people is often seen as craftmanship rather than art, showing the tension that exist when there is an idealized and hegemonic culture, generating tension on what is perceived as 'high' and 'low' culture (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005). Moreover, they emphasize the role of Lima as the cultural arbiter, where European aesthetic dominate ideas on what constitutes 'true' art. This relates on how Western institutions have usually the monopoly of power to establish artistic canons, define what is art, which leads to financial implications as well, due to the fact that at the end of the day they "own" the art (Shohat and Stam, 2014, p.365). This, as well, reinforces the notion that the relationship between western culture and other cultures reflect a colonial domination (Quijano, 2007, p.169).

Navigating these aesthetic and cultural expectations have mixed and intertwined effects on their artistic autonomy, the authenticity of their depictions and the perception of the Andes that films could create. As this interviewee mentions, Europe influence significantly artistic trends and suggests that European notions may hinder a more authentic form of expression for them, but also in general.

"If a film comes close to reality, then it will give a more or less accurate perception of what the Andes are like. But I think the role of cinema isn't just one, it's many things. It can serve as an educational tool, or a way to draw attention, or simply to expose a problem or a lived experience. I prefer not to box myself into one thing, not to close my mind, because sometimes cinema—or, well, Europe sets the trends. It even sets the trends for what's done in the US, meaning the main censorship comes from Europe." (Interviewee 1)

Yet, despite the pressures, the filmmakers emphasize a wish to break free from those categories and a preference of not being boxed. By doing so, they seek to reclaim a space of autonomy, where they could tell stories beyond perceived Western expectations. While there may not be an explicit pursuit of authenticity, Andean filmmakers assert that they can portray Andean culture in ways that avoid exoticization and that are closer to show realities they experience. When comparing their work with films from Lima based filmmakers touching on Andeanness, they feel that those depictions are made through a Western lens that easily leads to exoticism. So, having the freedom to create based on their lived experiences allows to generate more authentic films depicting Andeanness.

> "It's very important that one can truly reflect their culture. It's very different when someone from Lima makes a film in Cusco. The exoticism is noticeable from the first minute, [...] being fiction, you don't necessarily want everything to be completely real, but I do feel that in many films made by regional filmmakers, they truly understand their culture and want to make it visible. [...] But it's clear that when a director from Lima goes to the regions and makes a film, […] the story doesn't resonate, move you, make you think. Many times, I find it empty. [...] But it's very difficult for a regional film made by a filmmaker from the regions not to reflect what's really happening in their city" (Interviewee 3)

4.2. The (in)visible hand: meddling with representation

The majority of the filmmakers consider that DAFO does not interfere at all or in an obvious way with their artistic freedom and they do not feel directly censored. As shown in this assertion: *"The jurors don't have a limitation. DAFO doesn't tell them, 'Hey, don't award this'"* (Interviewee 7), or this one: "*In my last film, there are [description of specific characters], and if through censorship, DAFO, the Ministry or Congress tell me, 'You know what? You must change it' then I would have a problem. But right now, there's no censorship, there's still no censorship. […] Creative control, I have it right now"* (Interviewee 5). However, many of them still perceive that it exists themes that are more likely to receive funds. This perception comes from observing which films often receive them, and they relate it with what the state expects to be depicted in particular with Andean filmmaking.

Many believe that what is expected from Andean cinema is to show rural life, *"That rural cinema from the countryside is favored by the Ministry"* (Interviewee 6), to be spoken in Quechua or Aymara, and to depict nationalistic stories. There is a sense that the MinCul favors films that adhere to a version of what the Andes and its people mean within Peruvianness. Showing "nationalistic depictions', as described by the filmmakers, is perceived as a criteria in the selection process. They perceive that even if a film tells a more 'universal' story, if it does not align with the narrative of what it means to be Peruvian, it could struggle to receive the funding.

> "What is nationalistic, what speaks about our history and has a strong Peruvian identity, obviously will receive more support. I mean, it's not an obligation, but in most cases, when there are projects with those components then that project has a better chance. […] In most cases, no matter how brilliant a story may be, if it doesn't relate much to Peru, they won't support it. Even if it could be a universal story. I think in Latin America, we still haven't overcome the notion that a story doesn't necessarily have to be nationalist; it could be human." (Interviewee 1)

However, filmmakers often do not mention what they understand by 'nationalistic' cinema. The understanding of it seems to be based on the idea that a portrayal of life in the Andes involves rural life and spoken in indigenous languages. In this context, as Shohat and Stam (2014, p.183) argue, representations, within hegemonic narratives, expect subaltern characters or settings to be part of an homogenous community, where there is no space for nuanced narratives. In contrast, the authors assert, depictions of dominant or Western

groups are generally expected to be more diverse and complex. This shows the difference in expected representations, where non-Western films are seen as more simplistic.

Furthermore, beyond general perceptions, some provided more specific examples of adjustment in their work due to DAFO´s influence, conforming with the perception of what is expected. One filmmaker recalled how he began to self-censor himself after meeting a jury who explained why his project, that criticized the state apparatus, did not receive the funds. Since then, he avoided any references to the state or ensured that his characters do not navigate governmental spaces:

> "I had another project that criticized the Judiciary, and someone once told me in the DAFO that these are censurable topics. Even though it had an interesting script, it couldn't be funded because it was against, well, it spoke out against the state and state institutions. So, it's also a learning experience to know what to present. Because, really, the range of possibilities for writing a script or saying certain things is somewhat limited, so you must limit yourself to that range and create something that they want to sponsor." (Interviewee 1)

In another example, a filmmaker spent years applying with different versions of a script, feeling compelled to include something related to the internal armed conflict in Peru, as the region he comes from was one of the most affected. He did this because he received advice from advisors hired to facilitate DAFO's workshops on screenplay development. Each year he did not win, he modified even further that aspect, ultimately feeling it was a 'forced inclusion', because the overall story did not relate with that topic. Nonetheless, the year he finally obtained the grant was the one when he decided to disregard that advice and return to his original script, presenting it in the way he always wanted and reclaiming his artistic autonomy. He attributes being finally a recipient because that decision led to a better project and portfolio due to being more honest.

> "But at some point, I felt that it was like a forced inclusion that I wanted to bring the topic of terrorism into a story that didn't originally contemplate that. So, every year I applied to DAFO, it was with this idea, that I had to include [it] in some way, and that also made me feel that the story wasn't entirely honest. So, for the last year I presented, I decided to take my first version, and wrote what I wanted. [...] This [advice for that inclusion] came from the workshop advisors, since I spent about three years attending DAFO's workshops, [...] all the years I applied and couldn't obtain the award, that's how I felt" (Interviewee 6)

Additionally, many filmmakers express a shared perception that the MinCul would never fund more genre films, such as comedies, horror, commercial or entertainment films. Although some of them would like to make these types of films, whether because they want to try having a greater financial revenue or because they want to explore those genres, they feel that if they present those projects, they will likely be rejected.

> "We also have a project prepared purely for entertainment cinema. We submitted [it] to the Ministry, and surely the jury didn't like it, they realized it was entertainment cinema, and didn't approve anything. [...] When we think about making an auteur film, I don't think it affect us. What really matters is when you want to make your movie, [...] to be seen by a larger audience. [...] And sometimes, I've submitted films like that, and they haven't won, it's proven." (Interviewee 4)

It is worth noting that there is a tension between the notions of auteur cinema and entertainment cinema, with many of the filmmakers pointing that the projects that usually secure funding align more with what is categorized as art cinema or auteur films, which they often use interchangeably. According to Andrews (2013), across film history, 'art cinema' has been an elastic category as broad as 'mainstream cinema', and often embodies ideals of 'anticommercial purity' and individual authorship. Similarly, Andean filmmakers view the

term 'art cinema' as a category opposing entertainment or mainstream cinema. This distinction is similar on Galt and Schoonover (2010, p.4) assertion of art cinema having a "comparativist impulse".

For Andean filmmakers, the preference of the MinCul for auteur cinema is related with the idea that this type of cinema leads to depictions of Andean life that aligns with an expectation that their films should be more serious or contemplative: *"Just by looking at many of the projects that have won, there's almost a certain preference for the contemplative"* (Interviewee 6), which can capture 'better' the Andean ways of living. Filmmakers consider that entertainment films will not necessarily will delve into a portrayal of 'authentic' Andean reality and that is the reason why they seem to be overlooked. This suggests that also the policy may look only for Andean filmmakers to act as 'cultural informants' (Berghahn, 2021). Ultimately, they perceive this could limit genre diversity, since comedy and horror films could find more difficult to meet those criteria than 'contemplative' cinema.

Furthermore, the grants' guidelines establish that, despite being hired by the MinCul, juries are autonomous and they evaluate the projects independently from external interference, and filmmakers perceive this to be true as well. However, there is a recognition that the juries operate in a societal context and framework. In that sense, the perception of filmmakers is that there are stereotypes and essentialist views of the Andes that may influence their decisions. Some filmmakers share that the juries may lean towards projects that have stereotyped elements. And if a project deviates from these, juries may think of it as having cultural values that are misaligned with the region represented, values they attribute to the Andes or a version of Andeanness that aligns with the juries' own interpretations.

> "It's the limitation of the jury as individuals. […] there are juries for everything, [...] and there are juries that like the Andes to be a form of advertising. 'Oh, what a cute film about little llamas' or 'Oh, it's in Quechua!'. The dialogues [in the screenplay] aren't even written in Quechua, but they've been told it will be in Quechua, and that makes them happy. So, I think there are juries of all kinds, and I imagine they must come into conflict with other juries if they're all together. […] So, there are jurors who, for example, like to see llamas in all the films from Cusco, and when a project comes along that doesn't have that, they find it strange and come into conflict with the filmmakers. Not a direct conflict, but they do clash with those producers because they say, 'No, this film doesn't have Cusco's cultural values'" (Interviewee 7)

Nonetheless, while some filmmakers acknowledge that there may be some juries that uphold these simplistic views, they also argue that it is not that one jury's perspective will dictate the whole outcome, since decisions are made collectively. Moreover, they mention that the composition of the juries has evolved over time, being more diverse and including juries from the regions and from abroad. They consider this may balance the biases and stereotypes that only Lima-based juries may uphold, since they perceive that juries from abroad, outsiders from Peruvian social dynamics, are less likely to impose expectations based on a national identity building and may focus on more technical considerations. Ultimately, they view a diverse jury as a good sign, as it reduces the likelihood of all juries reinforcing exoticized views of Andeanness and allows for more discussion between them.

> "It could be that, to some extent, if it's something rural, and, let's say, something more exotic in the eyes of a Lima-based, centralist jury, then yes, that might be a factor of greater interest for that jury. But, seeing the various compositions of juries, not only from Lima but also from the regions and from abroad, it seems to me that this breaks down that stereotype we might assign to the juries." (Interviewee 3)

Finally, the division of the categories in the grant scheme, having one specifically for filmmakers outside Lima, generated mixed opinions among filmmakers. Many think that this separation is positive, arguing that it shows an effort from the MinCul to leveling the playing

field in the industry, because this allows them to participate on more equal terms with filmmakers in the same context and similar filmmaking knowledge. However, there is also a concern that a categorization like this may perpetuate centralism, while trying of doing the opposite, especially since the grant amounts allocated to filmmakers outside Lima were lower for many years until recently, which make them perceive as if one category was regarded as more important than the one in which they participate. This structure also urges to reflect about the cultural canon the MinCul seeks to create, how it views the Andes in relation to the national identity and if it sees Andean filmmakers as artists in the margins or the periphery. As Columpar (2002, p.38) points out, cinema plays a crucial role in constructing national identity for both dominant and marginalized populations.

4.3. Autonomy in motion: challenging views of the Andes

As analyzed in previous sections, Andean filmmakers navigate a particular terrain when they decide to make their films and apply for funding from the MinCul. In this space, they perceive that there are some expectations regarding how the Andes should be depicted. However, these filmmakers also acknowledge the use of their autonomy in challenging the simplified views others can uphold. In that sense, in their filmmaking process and in their depictions they feel free to contest those perceptions, engaging in a form of "negotiated autonomy" (Banks, 2010). Similarly with how Banks identifies spaces of negotiation for artist within capitalist systems, their autonomy can also be viewed as a way of challenging other forms of oppression and erasure, such as coloniality (Quijano, 2000), and hierarchical views of Andean people and their culture. In this regard, filmmaking and films, besides being a medium to tell a particular story, also are a way of reshaping and contesting a perception of the Andes.

> "That's why I always say, for our people [Aymaras], for them, it's normal [to watch Andean customs depicted in films]. So, the last movie we made, I did it with another purpose. The purpose is to decolonize the Andean people. That's why I included some cruel scenes. So, for that same reason, I think it shocks the city people, let's say, from Lima. There it is. The purpose is, perhaps, for the people from the Andes to watch this film and lose their fear of the oppressor, of the colonizer." (Interviewee 4)

This filmmaker explains how he used his creative freedom to challenge the senses and perceptions and engage in a decolonizing process with his film. By including specific scenes, he aims to unsettle colonial structures of power that exist in people's minds, people that may watch his film. This resonates with Mignolo and Vázquez's (2013) concept of 'decolonial aestheSis' that involves how, through art, senses can be decolonized from colonial aesthetics, which means to free them from modern aesthetic rules. This aligns as well with Ponzanesi and Waller's (2012, p.127) idea of how, on postcolonial cinema, revisiting a violent and damaged past allows to reimagine the future, which calls attention to how cinema can help rethink history and how this can reshape perceptions.

> "History is generally written by the victors; the defeated never write it. So, regarding [the historical events depicted in his film], it's the victors who have written it. What we'll always see or read, then, is that the oppressor—whether it's the colonial power or its modern-day aftermath—suppresses the Indigenous population. […] I reversed that perspective. […] For what purpose? So that they [Andean people] can at least free their spirit, their soul, to heal. [...] But obviously, there's another side to it as well. For those who enjoy marginalizing others, so they can also feel the blow, the punch. That's how I see it. I think those are the purposes, in this case, of an artist." (Interviewee 4)

This exemplifies how filmmakers exert autonomy from aesthetics that define Andeanness through a coloniality lens. This freedom allows filmmaking that challenge perceptions. In reshaping narratives and aesthetics, the filmmaker practices a negotiated autonomy (Banks, 2010), generating spaces where Andeanness can be shaped not by external expectations but by a purposeful reimagining. Additionally, the filmmaker's choice of words: *shock*, *heal*, *feel the punch*, *spirit*, *soul*, *victors*, and *defeated*, is a powerful linguistic use when envisioning a decolonization of the senses and perceptions of audiences. This hints on his desire on how his film could convey a movement towards healing, with an aim of repair, that is not individual but of collective historical trauma, and a recognition of the colonial wound as well (Mignolo and Vázquez, 2013).

Furthermore, autonomy and the freedom of choice here extends beyond to the creation of an artwork, but also to a deliberate desire of what to evoke on different audiences and a conscious reflection on the different interpretations that may arise from different audiences. This could reflect the notion of 'collective autonomy', when an artist, by exerting his own autonomy, also tries to elicit a multidirectional effect, since "the dynamic of expression and use can never be directed by the one, by any single, sovereign instance of decision" (Holmes, 2004, p.548). In that sense, trying to have an impact on the audience is an intent to collectively reach an autonomy from colonial forms of representation. Additionally, as Poblete (2020, p.150) suggests, visual representations created by minorities or marginalized groups, living in societies marked by coloniality, are acts that inevitably must deal with power dynamics through a set of decisions, such as reflecting thoroughly on how to determine the audiences their works of art are for.

The filmmaker has purposes in which autonomy plays a role allowing him to express and not only considering the possible impact on the audiences but trying to convey a specific reception with his creative expression. In this case, the exertion of autonomy is made by making a film that 'speaks' to Andean viewers with the intention of 'healing', while at the same time confronting societal dominant audiences. This serves as an act of resistance and a path for transformation. In this sense, a film could act as "tool to overcome the limits of epistemological and aesthetic colonialism" (Poblete, 2020, p.152), by reshaping ways of thinking, knowing and perceiving the world.

Moreover, as some filmmakers mention, art and filmmaking are intertwined with issues of centralism and racism and autonomy can become a facilitator to protest certain expectations and resist against cultural hegemony.

> "So, ultimately, art, the films we make, is closely related to centralism, it's very much related to racism, closely connected to how from Lima there is an idea of what films should be like, what stories we should tell, how the people from the regions should be. Everything is connected. And finally, one way that I, through the films I make, protest is by making cinema exactly how I conceive it (...). Everything I've just told you is part of my cultural struggle against this imposition of expectations and the censorship that comes from certain parts" (Interviewee 5)

In that sense, filmmakers employ their autonomy to challenge hegemonic societal constructs, making them participants in a cultural struggle. This struggle implies a negotiation and resistance against dominant views of what is expected from the representations of Andeanness. Thus, autonomy conveys the power to seek to subvert and resist these pressures. By making films as they truly conceive them, filmmakers assert their agency and reject a cultural hegemony that seeks to put boundaries or shape their work. As Shohat and Stam (2014, p.303) assert, there are multiple ways to subvert a canon in the film industry, through the depictions in themselves, but also through different resources in the process of filmmaking and storytelling, and these filmmakers find ways of doing so. For instance, one

filmmaker, asserting that Andeanness is not confined to rurality, feels that making a film in his region that depicts urban life goes against expectations.

> "I like the fact that I could showcase my city, not only from the rural side, which is good, but I also feel that in recent films, the urban side isn't being shown specifically. And I do believe that Andeanness is also present in the cities." (Interviewee 3)

Ultimately, many filmmakers are aware of the expectations placed upon them, but they assert that the films they make are close to what they genuinely want to make. So, this process is embedded in an awareness that forces them to take a stance, which comes in ways of resisting, even if they consider that they do not face direct censorship, or subverting structures of power. They may aim to rewrite history, elicit new sensations or impacts, bringing to light underrepresented aspects, constructing collective narratives, resisting subtle pressures from the MinCul, expanding perception and challenge expectations.

Chapter 5:   Wishes against conditionalities

"The Ministry says that the majority [of the technical crew] must be from the regions, but if there's no technical training, where are they supposed to come from? It's a bit difficult and contradictory in that sense"
(Interviewee 3)

This chapter discusses the contrasting opinions of the filmmakers regarding specific conditionalities of the grant scheme and how they exercise their autonomy in more practical and logistical aspects. First, it explores the dilemmas, solutions and responses that filmmakers face regarding the requirement of having a technical team and actors residing in regions outside Lima. Secondly, the chapter delves into the different perspectives on the bureaucratic processes and the practical demands the policy require. With these discussions, the chapter highlights how filmmakers balance practical constraints of the policy with their artistic visions and overall values.

5.1.   The dilemma of assembling a crew

"A film is a collective effort", one of the filmmakers assert, pointing out the collective nature of filmmaking. Indeed, assembling a whole film crew and all the processes of pre-production, production and post-production that carry making a film are inherently collective. From working with actors, editors, cinematographers, to cast or scout locations, all those activities are not made by a single person (Andrews, 2013; Burgdorf and Hillmann, 2024). Moreover, in this context, grants have allowed these filmmakers to even work with larger groups of people. However, this shared work comes with conditionalities in the grants' guidelines, present since 2014 until now: *"The creative, technical, and, if applicable, artistic staff, as well as the heads of technical areas, must, in each case, be primarily composed of individuals residing in various regions of the country, excluding Metropolitan Lima and Callao, as indicated in their identity documents".* Similarly, a requirement regarding lead actors: *"At least one lead actor or actress must be residing in one of the various regions of the country, excluding Metropolitan Lima and Callao"* (Ministry of Culture of Peru, 2024).

This residency requirement introduces challenges, dilemmas and even reaffirming views. It compels the filmmakers to make comparisons between Lima and the regions that include perceptions on people's characters, but also perceptions on how regional filmmakers must approach filmmaking, ultimately leading to dilemmas for some, while others have strong opinions on how this should be dealt with. While many filmmakers see the requirement as a well-intentioned, positive effort to decentralize the labor of filmmaking and uplift aspiring regional technicians and actors, it also brings practical, tricky and complicated situations, because most film-related technicians live in Lima.

Some filmmakers, especially those from Puno and Cusco, fully embrace the idea of working only with technical crew from their regions, believing that it is the right thing to do and a way to foster local filmmaking. Their alignment with the requirement comes from the desire to instruct new filmmaking technical crew. Considering that there is no formal training in any region outside Lima in the country, those who want to be involved in filmmaking most likely will not pursue this career path by moving to the capital, therefore, for the filmmakers, including these people into their projects and teaching them how to operate the different aspects of the production of a film is essential and necessary.

"It [the conditionality] doesn't affect us at all; rather, who might it affect? Perhaps the colleagues who always prefer working with people from Lima, who might not have taken

the initiative to train new technicians. But for us, it's quite the opposite; it's a great satisfaction because we already have things set up this way." (Interviewee 4)

For all filmmakers, this requirement generates various considerations and reflections. However, for some it poses dilemmas about what is the best practice. They are forced to balance their personal values with practical constraints, such as the shortage of experienced filmmaking technical crew in the regions, a challenge that they unanimously mention. They wish to work mainly with a regional crew, but when they look to assemble the crew, they face that there are no many people working in the sector coming from there. Choosing the team with whom they work is part of the freedom to choose and a way to exert their autonomy in more practical and logistical issues, but this comes with challenges.

"It's very important to choose [the technical crew], but also, there aren't many professionals in our field. There are more and more, but it's not like everyone is making films. In the end, many people end up doing a bit of everything." (Interviewee 7)

Additionally, for one filmmaker, this tension creates a dilemma not only about with who to work but even leading him to think whether he should avoid applying for this category due to the challenges faced and considering that he has produced more than one film with the grant. While he believes it is a good requirement, he is not sure if he is willing to fully uphold to it anymore. Nonetheless, for those who do not see the condition as a major problem, it is also argued that access to information and resources has been democratized, and that with online filmmaking courses and resources they find, they can adequately meet their needs without relying on Lima-based technical crew.

Moreover, there are contrasting opinions when considering the visuality of their films, in that context, there is a tension between maintaining their autonomy to convey what they want in a visual way and collaborating with people from outside their regions. So, they acknowledge that there can be a potential impact of other perspectives on their creative vision, as well as a fear that a crew member with a training in more mainstream ways of doing cinema would bring certain visual aesthetics that do not align with their worldview. This reflects on the importance, for some, of maintaining the control over the visual language that their films will have as a way to exert their autonomy not only by choosing who to work with but by giving meaning to why working with people from their region will also allow not to risk and disturb what they want to convey with a specific aesthetic vision. Furthermore, as Burgdorf and Hillmann (2024) assert, director-writer filmmakers often feel an impulse to maintain their autonomy by minimizing collaboration, since working by themselves allows them to have more freedom of choice.

"It's very difficult for me to hire a director of cinematography [from Lima] because they will break the way I see the world, they might impose certain parameters on me, according to the training they have, which often and probably comes from Hollywood, and that's why I do the cinematography myself." (Interviewee 4)

In an opposite end, only one filmmaker expressed a different viewpoint, considering that hiring people from Lima and the contribution they may bring is beneficial. He did not think it as a dilemma of some sort and believed that collaborating with Lima-based technicians would enhance the quality of the films and help him ameliorate his filmmaking practices, not considering that an outside view will disturb the visuality of he wants to convey. Nevertheless, while he employed his freedom of choice by bringing those technicians, he mentioned that it was positive that they left knowledge to more junior crew members from his region.

"I was looking for a director of cinematography in Lima because I felt that, with their experience, I needed something from them, I needed their contribution to strengthen the story" (Interviewee 2)

Ultimately, recognizing filmmaking as a collective effort means that, while the final work will mainly reflect the filmmaker's vision, it will also to some extent reflect the perspectives of those who contributed. Thus, a concept of "collective autonomy" (Holmes, 2004) is relevant, especially regarding aesthetics, since only members of a community who share similar experiences and ways of seeing the world can collectively make a film that have elements informed by that.

On a different perspective of collaborative work, it is not only about how people from the capital may influence their films with different perspectives, but some filmmakers also mentioned perceptions of perceived differences on attitude and work ethics when working with people from Lima. For that, they express frustration with what they perceive as a more demanding, hierarchical attitude from Lima-based crew members. In that sense, there is a tension between more of a collective approach that Andean filmmakers value and a more individualistic and structured work habits they feel Lima-based technicians have, with some filmmakers comparing it because they have had the chance to work with them. Moreover, there are also perceptions of how these technicians treat in a condescending way to regional crew members. All of these leads filmmakers to make decisions based on practical and logistic considerations but also from an assertion of shared values.

> "There are people from Lima who are very picky. They want good food, nice accommodations, to work exclusively from this hour to that hour. They have every right to do so, but it bothers me terribly. […] I'd like for everyone to commit." (Interviewee 4)

> ""I wanted everyone to be from my region, I mean, beyond it being a requirement [...] Because it's more expensive to bring someone from Lima [...] and, besides, many colleagues from Lima aren't good people, they're not nice, they think they know more, and they often look down on colleagues from the regions." (Interviewee 7)

In addition to the dilemmas over the technical crew, there were also opinions on the specific requirement of the actors needing to reside in the regions. When touching on more urban topics, usually filmmakers not from the Andean South regions, but from Junín and Ayacucho, have additional problems with the acting crew. Three filmmakers that wanted for their actors to know how to play specific instruments or being able to play specific sports struggled with finding actors with such characteristics. This led them to find ways to navigate this, leading them to consider several options to tackle the difficulty, like doing acting workshops for the whole acting crew.

> "In some way, they [specific conditionalities] have pushed me to... I mean, I like solving problems, finding an interesting solution to the challenges that come my way. [...] Finding a solution, I think is more interesting than if I had simply had the full power to hire an actor from Lima. [...] So, for me, these aren't impediments, I think you just have to look for a more creative way out" (Interviewee 5).

Nonetheless, even if it meant to spend time and resources, they found that this ended being a good thing for the production, feeling they contributed to ameliorating the acting capacities of people in their region. Therefore, practices of autonomy surface also in logistical aspects that the policy conditions, yet this forces filmmakers to reflect on the objective of the policy, considering its purpose and thinking on how some policy's objectives speaks to their own values.

5.2. Papers, please: across the bureaucratic gates

Navigating public funding for films comes along with an engagement with how the policy is implemented and this involves dealing with bureaucracy, reflecting on certain practices, like jury selection, and engaging with how policymakers enforce the objectives of the policy.

Additionally, they must manage practicalities, like knowing which documents they must submit, presenting them, and even creating a company to be able to apply to the grant. All of these are a set of conditions that filmmakers encounter when choosing to navigate this policy framework and these conditions elicit opinions on them.

Practicalities and paperwork led to divided opinions among filmmakers. For some, report writing, gathering all the required information, compiling documents, is seen as a burden and a consumption of time that they could use in other more important and creative tasks. Some of them, mainly older filmmakers from Puno, find these activities complicated because the tasks are beyond their usual knowledge, or because financial resources are limited, and they cannot hire someone to deal with it. In Puno, a local film industry has long existed, historically being one of the regions with more film activity (Bustamante and Luna-Victoria, 2014), with some of these filmmakers having accumulated experience throughout the years without public funding. This allows them to compare the current scenario with the one where they did not have to meet these conditionalities.

> "Some of these [bureaucratic] things seem quite tedious to me, and honestly, sometimes they [policymakers] don't realize, because they haven't been through it, that the accountant won't solve everything. When your funds run out, and you can't hire an accountant, you must do it yourself. It seems like the most tedious work I've ever done, gathering all the invoices, putting everything together, all the details. And to be honest, if I could get money on my own, like through a business or something, I really wouldn't apply for these grants because of how tedious it is. No, I wouldn't apply, not at all. Because it drains your energy and causes a lot of stress." (Interviewee 1)

For this filmmaker, there is even a tension between need to comply with all these and the wish to make films without upholding to them. Additionally, some of the filmmakers mention that some bureaucracy involved stem from a lack of knowledge from the bureaucrats of the filmmakers' realities. For instance, the more informal nature of the film sector in the regions they come from makes it challenging to gather all the invoices required to justify the production expenses.

On the other hand, some filmmakers, predominantly younger ones, view the bureaucracy as somewhat necessary, believing that it is the only way that the state apparatus can function efficiently. Additionally, they consider that it is not excessive, nor too difficult to navigate. This generational difference on opinions come from a perception of easier access to information, with some of these filmmakers praising that DAFO ensures to keep their website updated with all the information needed, which helps them navigate the requirements in an easier way.

> "An organization as large as the State can only function through bureaucracy. There is no other way for such a large entity to operate effectively. [...] If I request an extension for a deadline, I must provide a justification. To me, that's normal, it's standard." (Interviewee 5)

> "From the first time I read through the grant's conditions, it didn't seem overly complicated to me. [...] I haven't felt that there is excessive bureaucracy." (Interviewee 7)

> "It's partly okay that they demand from you, the part about fulfilling requirements, because I see there are directors who have won but don't comply [with reports], they've been working on the same project for years and they don't deliver the final project" (Interviewee 2)

Additionally, those filmmakers that have applied more than once, refer to the bureaucratic demands and something that must be dealt with and that, while very challenging at the beginning, it is a learning process like any other. This highlights also how the first

application can be a big entry barrier for filmmakers, exemplified by these bureaucratic challenges but also by one other condition: that individuals cannot apply, only legal entities. In other words, only registered companies can submit applications to the grant scheme.

Regarding this other condition, many younger filmmakers are the ones that find it burdensome, as it feels like a big and unmanageable requirement. This has even led some of them to delay their application because they did not know how to open a company in the first place. Many recall viewing the task of opening a company as almost impossible and extremely difficult. However, later, they realized that was not that complicated as they thought.

> "I knew about the existence of this award, but I never applied because I didn't know how it worked, plus only companies could apply, so I had no idea even how to set up a company." (Interviewee 6)

Nonetheless, while they comply with this condition, some mention that it is not something they would have chosen to do if it were not a requirement. Consequently, establishing a company for eligibility is seen as a response to the policy requirement and not an autonomous decision. In that sense, there is a tension and mismatch between what cultural policy bureaucrats expect from the artists and how the filmmakers perceive their capabilities and desires. As Haugsevje, (2024) explain, in a Norwegian context, it exists a tension between bureaucrats focused on cultural policies and artists, especially regarding the entrepreneurial expectations that bureaucrats uphold for the artists, with a notion that the way for being more professional is to take an entrepreneurship attitude.

> "Starting a company wasn't that complicated. It was a requirement, but I didn't want to start a company. […] I don't consider myself a businessman […]. I just wanted to make a film. […] If I had the option to choose, I wouldn't have made a company." (Interviewee 7)

On a more positive note, DAFO is generally praised and regarded as a well-functioning office compared to other offices in the MinCul and even within other state entities. Many filmmakers appreciate the effort DAFO has made to ensure an autonomous jury, value its organizational practices and its effort to make information available: "*I believe that DAFO is one of the most forward-thinking offices in the entire state apparatus.*" (Interviewee 7). For instance, they praise how the office sends constantly reminders about important deadlines, which helps them to comply with the requirements. Another practice that is considered is that the office has been trying to disseminate information regarding the grants to the population, specifically those interested in filmmaking, through more presence in social media or a more informative website.

This appreciation can be explained by the role this public policy plays, being directed at a specific community, which allows for comparisons with other state institutions. As people from regions often overlooked by other public services, these filmmakers naturally compare their experiences with DAFO to other state sectors, such as health or justice, where they also supposed to receive support as citizens but frequently do not. Coming from places where access to quality public services is limited, it is not totally surprising that they regard DAFO in a positive manner. Ultimately, the filmmakers in the sample are recipients of grants, which may influence also having positive reflections on the policy's implementation. As mentioned, navigating the grant process often involves both enabling and constraining experiences.

Chapter 6:   Final reflections

Through an exploration of Andean filmmakers' views, perspectives, and experiences, this research aimed to address the following question: *How do Andean filmmakers negotiate their artistic autonomy within the film grant scheme implemented by the Ministry of Culture of Peru?* To answer this, I have examined how the tension between filmmakers' artistic autonomy and the implementation of the public film grant scheme manifest. However, neither Andean filmmakers nor cultural policy exist in a vacuum; the interplay between them can only be understood within a broader societal context. Thus, the negotiated spaces, where filmmakers assert their autonomy, are shaped and influenced by Peruvian social dynamics as well as by the specific conditionalities of this cultural policy. This multiplicity of spaces also means that there are forms and degrees in which Andean filmmakers negotiate their autonomy, ranging from challenging expectations to trying to reshape dominant narratives to assembling a film crew amidst complications. To expand on this argument and to better understand the nuanced forms of negotiation, a revision and reflection of the themes of the research follows.

Filmmakers navigate a certain framework, which includes the intricacies of the grant scheme and a hierarchical social structure, where Andeanness is racialized (Quijano, 2014a), often deemed inferior and seemed as an 'other', relative to dominant groups that uphold Eurocentric values. In that sense, coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) manifest in Peruvian society establishing hierarchical and stratified social relations, but also creating a terrain where cultural struggles emerge. As a result, multiple perceptions and expectations arise from various fronts and from those involved in this framework, and manifesting in different views on what Andean filmmakers are expected to represent in their films. Additionally, these expectations are also 'suggested' in instances of the process, such as advices given in workshops within the policy framework, or through lived experiences of filmmakers themselves, which inform and shape their perceptions.

In this sense, juries may have specific expectations about what filmmakers should depict, the policy's implementation also sets expectations, and the filmmakers themselves carry perceptions of what is expected from them. This turns the navigation of the policy on more than a tick-boxing process, but precisely because these expectations arise from all directions, the spaces for negotiation surrounding perceptions of Andeanness creates different forms to exercise artistic autonomy by the filmmakers. Thus, filmmakers attempt to rewrite and reshape dominant and hegemonic narratives that often positions Andeanness in simplified and essentialist terms. These notions equate Andeanness with rurality, assume certain aspirations from Andean characters or circumscribe filmmakers to a more contemplative genre of filmmaking. Filmmakers, then, assert that by having the ability to express with freedom of choice, as they conceptualize artistic autonomy, they use their autonomy as a tool to convey their visions, seeking to challenge and subvert those notions.

Additionally, filmmakers view autonomy as a resource to avoid imitation and resist being confined in a mold, but also as way to try to subvert dominant aesthetic canons. Many emphasize the importance of having the freedom to create visuality that aligns to their notions and worldview. They achieve this by being aware of how existing dominant visual styles may be different from the ones they want to convey, seeking to defy the dominant ones. Moreover, some carefully choose with whom they work with, ensuring that their crew shares or aligns closely to what they envision. Others consider that by bringing to light aspects they deem important to portray about Andeanness, they are challenging these perceived expectations placed upon them. Ultimately, all these practices and courses of action show forms of resisting, defying and attempts to subvert structures of power, which exemplify a 'negotiated autonomy' (Banks, 2010), where cultural struggles manifest. But

beneath these struggles is the structure of power shaped by coloniality, which continues to shape perceptions and maintain hierarchical relations that also permeate and impact artistic expressions.

Moreover, there are more rigid spaces where filmmakers must simply comply with the policy's requirements. While the policy enables their creative visions by providing financial resources, it comes also with certain conditionalities, such as the obligation to create a formal production company to be even eligible. This, for instance, leaves little room to exert autonomy. However, there are also more flexible spaces where filmmakers' decisions and exertion of autonomy align with the policy's conditionalities, such as assembling a crew with people from regions outside Lima. Also, these conditions often generate dilemmas and contradictions, but it also creates creative solutions, such as organizing acting workshops or finding other innovative ways to meet the policy's demands. Ultimately, these conditions force a reflective process where filmmakers adapt to guidelines or even make the policy's purpose their own, such as wishing to train film-related technicians from their region. This engagement and (re)interpretation of the conditions make the filmmakers not only meet them but negotiate and balance them with their own visions and values.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Introduction

[Introducing myself and the topic of my research]

All your responses will remain confidential, and your identity will be anonymized. Please note that you have the right to withdraw from this research at any time, with no consequences. Do you agree to participate and give your consent for this interview? Is it okay if I record our conversation?

Background Information
- Could you introduce yourself and mention the film(s) for which you received funding from the MinCul, and for which region?
- How many years have you worked in filmmaking? How did you start in film production? Could you briefly tell me about your career path as a filmmaker?

Experience within the grant scheme
- How many times have you applied for the "Feature Film Production exclusively for regions outside Lima Metropolitan Area and Callao" funding from the MinCul? How many times have you received the grant? If there was an application for which you did not receive the grant, why do you think that happened?
- What motivated you to apply for this funding? Do you think it would have been possible to complete your production without this funding?
- When did the initial idea for your film come about? When did you decide to apply for the grant?

Impact of grants on filmmaking
- How important is it for you to have the freedom to choose the visual and narrative style of your productions? Do you think that the grants have influenced your creative decisions? How? Are there elements of the film you would have explored differently if you weren't applying for the MinCul grant?
- How do you decide who to collaborate with on your projects? How important is it for you to have the freedom to choose your collaborators?
- Do you consider having the freedom of choice a valuable resource for your work?

Specific conditionalities
- Have specific application requirements (e.g., for at least one lead actor or for most of the creative team to reside in regions outside Lima) ever affected you? How?
- Did you find the application process complicated? Do you think the bureaucratic procedures and requirements reflect an understanding of your needs and reality?

Appendix 2: List of interviews

Identifier	Age group	Film-related information (grant winner[2], number of films made)	Interview date
Interviewee 1	45-60	One-time grant winner, has made multiple films	8/08/2024
Interviewee 2	45-60	One-time grant winner, has made multiple films	15/08/2024
Interviewee 3	30-45	One-time grant winner, first feature film	20/08/2024
Interviewee 4	45-60	Multiple grant winner, has made multiple films	23/08/2024
Interviewee 5	30-45	Multiple grant winner, has made multiple films	24/08/2024
Interviewee 6	30-45	One-time grant winner, first feature film	30/08/2024
Interviewee 7	30-45	One-time grant winner, first feature film	1/09/2024

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[2] Specifically to the category of "Feature Film Production exclusively for regions outside Lima Metropolitan Area and Callao"